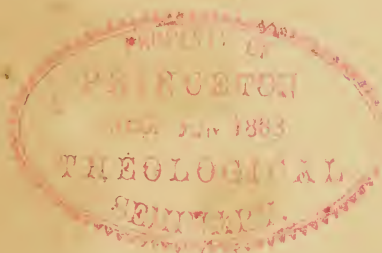




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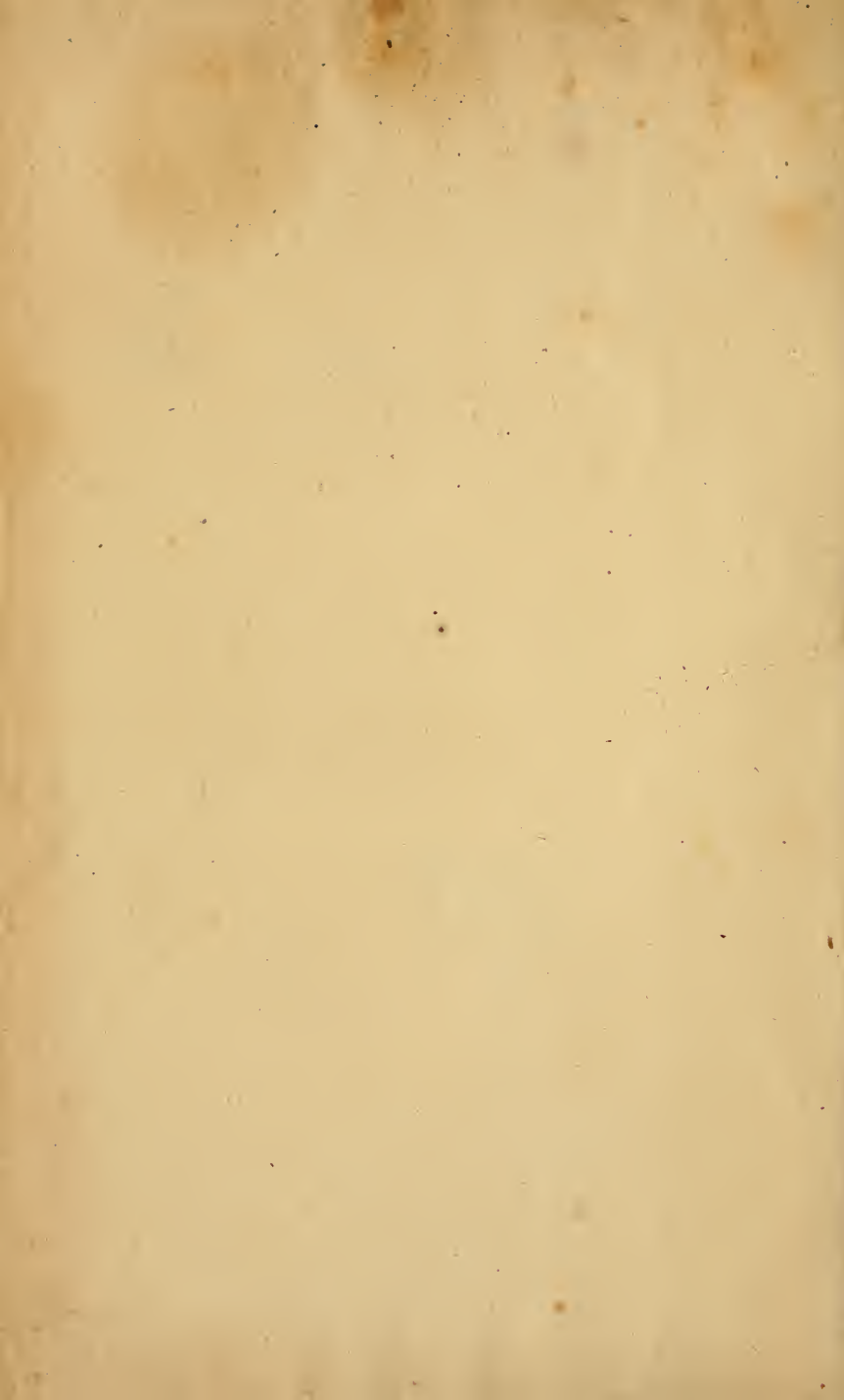
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Our SAVIOUR'S  
DIVINE  
SERMON  
ON THE  
MOUNT,

CONTAIN'D

In the V<sup>th</sup>, VI<sup>th</sup>, and VII<sup>th</sup> Chapters of  
St. MATTHEW'S Gospel,  
EXPLAINED:

And the Practice of it Recommended in divers  
SERMONS and DISCOURSES.

In FOUR VOLUMES.

To which is prefix'd,

A PARAPHRASE on the whole  
SERMON on the MOUNT:

And Two Copious Indexes annex'd; one of the Scriptures  
explain'd, the other of the particular Heads treated of in  
the Work.

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By JAMES BLAIR, M. A.

Commissary of *Virginia*, President of *William and Mary*  
College, and Rector of *Williamsburgh* in that Colony.

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The SECOND EDITION.

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WITH

A Recommendatory Preface by the Reverend  
Dr WATERLAND.

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THE HISTORY OF THE

ROYAL SOCIETY OF LONDON

FROM THE FOUNDATION OF THE SOCIETY

TO THE PRESENT TIME

BY JOHN VAUGHAN



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OF THE  
Third VOLUME.

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# S E R M O N I.

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M A T T. VI. I.

*Take heed that ye do not your (a) Alms before Men, to be seen of them; otherwise ye have no Reward of your Father which is in Heaven.*



WE are now entering upon the sixth Chapter of this Gospel, being a Continuation of our Saviour's Sermon on the Mount. As to the Connexion and Dependance on the former Discourse (tho' that is not always necessary to be enquired into) there seems to be a very plain Connexion in this Place; for in faulting the Righteousness of the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, our Saviour first went upon their Corruptions, or imperfect Glosses and Interpretations of the Law. And having finished that in the fifth Chapter, he goes on now to guard his Hearers against some other Blemishes, which marred the Righteousness of

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(a) *Your Righteousness.*

the same *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, tho' without any Pretence of Countenance from the Law. These Blemishes were chiefly Pride, Covetousness, and Cenforiousness, which they so mixed with other commendable Duties, that they marred the Grace of them; and therefore it was necessary for our Saviour, who had taught his Disciples that *unless their Righteousness exceeded the Righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, they should in no Case enter into the Kingdom of Heaven*; it was necessary for him, I say, after he had detected such Faults in their Righteousness, as proceeded from their corrupt Interpretations of the Law, to discover likewise such additional Blemishes of it, as, by long Custom, without Pretence of Law, they had introduced. These Blemishes, intermixed with their Righteousness (for he doth not meddle here with their other Personal Faults) are, as I said, chiefly Pride, Covetousness, and Cenforiousness; and against these our Saviour guards his Disciples, from hence to the 7th Verse of the next Chapter.

To begin first with that Part of their Righteousness which was marred with Pride; there are three noble Duties our Saviour instances in, namely, Almsgiving, Prayer, and Fasting, which they corrupted with this Moth of Pride; and our Saviour here carefully guards them against it, in them all. But, first, he seems to me, tho' he instances only in these three, to give in this first Verse a general Caution concerning all Duties whatsoever, that we should take care to do them so, as not to hunt for the Applause of Men, but to approve ourselves in them to Almighty God. And for supporting this Sense, I am to acquaint you

you that the Word *Righteousness*, which instead of that of Alms, is here put into the Margin of your Bibles, is countenanced by the Copies of the best Credit, and by most of the ancient Fathers, and some of our best modern Criticks, who read this first Verse thus, *Take heed that ye do not your Righteousness before Men, to be seen of them.*

Following then this Reading, which seems to me to be backed with the best Authority, there are these two Things contained in the Words.

I. A Precept to avoid Vain-glory, and Self-seeking, in all our good Deeds: *Take heed that ye do not your Righteousness before Men, to be seen of them.*

II. The Reason of that Precept: *Otherwise ye have no Reward of your Father which is in Heaven.*

I. *First*, We have here a Precept to avoid Vain-glory in all our good Deeds: *Take heed that ye do not your Righteousness before Men, to be seen of them.*

By *Righteousness* I think is to be meant, not only all Works of Charity and Alms-Deeds, but all manner of good and commendable Actions whatever: Such as are, for Example, a Man's diligent minding the Duties of his Calling; as in the Apostles, the careful preaching of the Gospel. No doubt this Precept of avoiding Vain-glory, reaches that, as well as the giving of Alms, and the giving of ourselves to Fasting and Prayer. St *Paul* complains that some preached Christ out of Envy and Strife, while others did it of good Will: And it is likewise to be feared, that some in preaching hunt for Vain-Glory, while others



sincerely propose to themselves the Glory of God, and the Good of Souls. This Vain-glory is a Moth which is apt to breed in our best Actions, as Worms breed in Roses, and therefore ought carefully to be watched. In speaking to it, I shall endeavour,

1. To give a Description of it, that we may know wherein it consists.

2. To shew the dangerous and insinuating Nature of it, that we may take heed and beware of it.

1. As to the first, the Description of it, we have it in these Words of the Text ; it is the doing of our Righteousness, that is, our good Actions before Men, with an express Design to gain Praise and Honour to ourselves. In which Description, we are not to imagine, that we are obliged to do all our good Works so much in Secret, that the World may know nothing of them ; nor that it is unlawful for us to contrive to give good Examples ; but all the Sin lies in contriving our good Works in such a Manner, or with such an Intention, as that the Praise and Glory of them may terminate solely or principally in ourselves. A right Aim and Intention is absolutely necessary in all our good Actions ; and there is not any one Thing, perhaps, which doth more essentially distinguish the Virtue of a good Christian from that of an Hypocrite, than this regulating the Intention. The Hypocrite in his good Actions, has a Design to be observed by Men, for his own temporal Ends of Honour or Profit ; whereas a good Christian, in all the Good he does, aims at the Glory of God, his Neighbour's Good, and his own eternal Happiness. And these two last are never



never separate from the first, but they go hand in hand together.

But that we may the better understand this Duty of my Text, it will not be amiss to consider more particularly, both what is not, and what is prohibited by it.

1. First then, we are not to think that all public good Works are prohibited, or that we are commanded so to conceal our good Actions, that the World may know nothing of them. This would be directly contrary to a Precept of our Saviour's, which we had under our Consideration in the last Chapter, *Matt. v. 16. Let your Light so shine before Men, that they may see your good Works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven.* Nay, contrary to the giving a good Example, which is a necessary Duty at all times.

2. Nor, *Secondly*, is every Degree of Praise and Commendation for our good Works to be avoided, so it be not principally designed by us, but in Subordination to the Glory of God. A Stock of Esteem and Credit, like other worldly Blessings, may be accepted and employed to good Ends and Purposes, and is a Spur to virtuous Actions; but great Care is to be taken, that it come in in its own Rank, in an inferiour subordinate manner, aiming still at the Glory of God in the first place, and at the Good of our Neighbour, and the Salvation of our own Souls; and if it please God to add any of these inferiour Blessings, such as the Love, and Esteem, the Praise, and good Word of others, they may be admitted as Accessaries.

But, more positively, by this Duty in my Text, is prohibited a wrong Intention in doing good Works, such as an Intention of Praise, or Profit,

or Lust, or Ambition, which wicked Men often propose to themselves in doing their good Works; that is, Works externally good before Men; for that is what they aim at, and not the making them truly good before God.

The great Necessity of this Precept will appear, if we consider both how bad Men are apt to counterfeit religious Practices from wrong Ends and Intentions, and likewise how good Men are apt to be too much in love with those inferiour Things, the Praise, Applause, and other Rewards attending external virtuous Actions.

1. *First*, I say, bad Men are apt to do good Things from wrong Ends and Intentions. Whatever Virtues are popular, or fashionable; whatever will gain, or preserve an Interest; (for a worldly Interest serves for many Designs and Purposes, which worldly and designing Men are sharp-sighted enough to see through, or find out) whatever Virtues are creditable, and well-spoken of, that may fetch in People's good Word and Applause; whatever Virtues do suit the Temper and Inclinations of the Person whom we design to oblige or gain: These designing Men are apt to run into, with no further Aim or View, than that of gaining these Men to their Interest.

2. *Secondly*, Good Men, tho' they begin with a better Intention, yet are in danger of being too much pleased and tickled with that Applause, and other worldly Encouragements, which commonly attend good Actions, and, by Degrees, are stolen away with these inferiour Considerations, which it has pleased God, for wise Ends and Purposes, to annex to good Actions.

The great Duty then here aimed at, is, that in all the Good we do, or design, we set God before our Eyes, and that we go about it with an express Design to promote his Glory, and in Obedience to his Commands, and with Application for his Aid and Assistance. So much for the Description of the Duty.

II. In the next Place, I am to consider the Caution here given, with relation to the Vice guarded against. *Take heed that ye do not your Righteousness before Men, to be seen of them.* Now this Caution has an Aspect to these two Things.

- |                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| 1. The Greatness          | } of the Sin here<br>} guarded against. |
| 2. The insinuating Nature |   |

Both which it will be requisite that we consider more particularly.

*First,* The Greatness of this Sin of doing our Righteousness before Men, to be seen of them. To convince us of the Heinousness of this Sin, I offer the following Considerations.

(I.) That the Design and Intention, is the Life and Soul of the Action. The best external Work, without a good Intention, is but a dead Carcase. What signified, for Example, (a) *Ananias* and *Sapphira's* selling their Possession, and bringing a great Part of the Money, and laying it at the Apostles Feet? This, had it been done with a Charitable Design, that Christians might be relieved out of that common Stock, had been an excellent Work; but while they designed thereby, only to put a Trick upon the Church, and to entitle themselves to a better Share in that

B 4

common

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(a) Acts v. 1, &c.

common Stock; this Action of theirs was downright Hypocrisy. And accordingly, in all the good Things a Man doth, according as God knows his Heart and Design to be, so he accounts of the Action, and not from the external material Goodness of it; *e. g.* Does a Man do a good Work only to have Praise and Honour? God reckons this Pride and Vain-Glory. Doth he do it to get into the Favour of great Men, that by their Means he may get into a Place of Wealth or Honour? This, in God's Eye, is Covetousness or Ambition: But if he does it from a true Design of serving God, and doing Good, then it is of the right Stamp, and true Virtue in the Sight of God.

(2.) Let us consider that whenever we set up our own Pride, or Vanity, or Self-Interest, as the End of our good Actions, we rob God of his due Honour and Glory, and sacrilegiously invade his Property. As if a Person, who by the Prince's Favour is promoted to be General of an Army, should seduce that Army to set up himself, and turn it against the Prince. Or, as if a Master entrusted with a good Ship and Cargo, instead of going to the Port, where he should have gone by his Owners Instructions, and instead of disposing of the Cargo to the Owners best Advantage, should run away with Ship and Cargo, and set up for himself with the Produce.

(3.) Let us consider that no Man is entitled to any higher Reward of his Actions, than he himself proposes and aims at; and therefore if we propose only our own selfish Ends in this World, by our good Actions, we have no Reason to expect they will be rewarded in the Kingdom of Heaven.

This



This is the great Consideration our Saviour offers in all these Cases, *Verily, I say unto you, they have their Reward*: that is, they have got what they aimed at, and have no more to look for. They are payed once already in Commodities of their own chusing; and if these turn to no Account in the heavenly Country, they may e'en thank themselves, who were better informed, but would not believe.

(4.) Let us consider, that all Obedience which is levelled at a temporal Design, is a temporary, not a lasting Obedience. For as Times, and the Humours of Men do change, so change these Mens Actions. For the same Principle, which in a good Prince's Days obliges the Courtier to do good Actions, in a bad Prince's Days will induce him to do bad Actions. The same Principle which at one Time does good Things, because they are in Fashion and Popular, will do bad Things when the Fashion and the Popularity changes. So that there is nothing more uncertain than this Obedience which is calculated for temporary and selfish Ends.

(5.) And *Lastly*, Let it be considered, that acting religiously not to please God, but for our own selfish Ends in this World, is the proper Character of Hypocrisy. It is totally calculated for pleasing of Men, and for carrying on our Designs upon them, but not in the least for pleasing God, or for carrying on the main Design of our eternal Salvation with him. What then can be more heinous than that Sin, which turns all our Gold into Brass, all our Religion into Counterfeit and Hypocritical? and all our Reward into nothing

thing but a few momentary fallacious Enjoyments?

2. *Secondly*, This Warning to take heed of this Sin intimates to us the insinuating Nature of it; how commonly it prevails in the World, and how much in danger we are of being deluded with it, if we do not carefully watch our own Hearts and Thoughts in this Matter. There are chiefly two Reasons why this Sort of Sins is so insinuating.

(1.) Because Esteem, Praise, the Love and good Will of Men, and in short, every Thing that flatters our Self-Love, is very pleasant and taking, and so is apt to make us forget that nobler Aim and Reward, which we should always have in our Eye, like those Disciples, who said, *Master, it is good for us to be here, let us make three Tabernacles, &c.* O how gently does every Thing that gratifies our Self-Love, glide down like Mother's Milk; and how easily are we bewitched with the present Pleasure of it? It gives us no Time to consult our Reason, or to muster up the Principles of our Religion; but by a sleepy Potion as it were, lulls us out of our Senses e're we are aware. It is the bewitching Pleasure of this Sin, that makes it so very dangerous.

(2.) Another Thing which makes it so insinuating and dangerous, is its bordering so near upon Virtue, that it requires an accurate and nice Observation to perceive the Difference; for we are not prohibited, as I said before, to do good Works before Men, nor are we obliged to hide them, so that they may not be seen of them; nor are we obliged totally to reject that Praise, Esteem, and Interest, which a Continuance in Well-doing will procure

procure us in the World. What then are we obliged to by this Doctrine? Truly, to look beyond all This, even to the Favour of God, and to lay all this out for his Service. This is what crowns all our good Actions; this is the true Philosophers Stone, which turns all our Actions, though of never so mean Metal, into Gold. A Cup of cold Water given out of this Principle, is better than the greatest Treasures laid out for Vanity and Applause, and will turn to better Account in the End. And this leads me to

II. The second Thing in the Words, namely, the Reason of the Precept; *Otherwise ye have no Reward of your Father which is in Heaven.* This is a Reason which may shew us the vast Importance of this Precept, that the Neglect of it deprives us of all Hope of Reward in Heaven. I shall offer something, first, to clear the Justice and Equity of this Proceeding, and then shall draw an Inference or two from it, and so have done.

I. As to the Justice and Equity of it, it may perhaps to some seem hard, that all those good Works which were done out of Vain-glory and Ostentation, or upon some other selfish Design, should be cut off from all Reward in Heaven; for though they want several Degrees of Goodness, which they should have had, and are mixed with many Imperfections of Pride and Self-seeking which they should have been without, yet being very useful to the World, it might have been expected that some lower Degree, at least, of the heavenly Reward might have been bestowed upon them. But in answer to this, there is a great Difference ought to be made between Works sincerely



cerely meant and designed for God's Glory, tho' mixed with many Imperfections of human Infirmities, and Works principally designed for our own Vanity and Self-Interest. These last can in no Sense be called the Service of God, and therefore are no way entitled to the heavenly Reward; but as the Services are totally of an earthly Nature, it is agreeable to Justice and Equity, that they be attended only with earthly Rewards, such as are the gaining of Applause, and the carrying on and strengthening the worldly Interest of the Parties, who out of Vanity, and other worldly Ends; attempted them.

2. The Inferences I would draw, are,

(1.) From this Doctrine we may observe the great Purity and Perfection of the Christian Morals, taking so much care to regulate the Thoughts and Intentions of the Heart, and valuing all Actions according to the Purity of the Intention. Never was there any Doctrine that enjoined Sincerity with such pressing Arguments, or was a greater Enemy to Hypocrisy and sinister Designs. Never was there any Doctrine that did so exactly suit Rewards and Punishments to the true intrinsic Nature of the several Actions, not as they make an Appearance in the World, but as they are well known and discerned by the great Searcher of Hearts. Let this Doctrine teach us to watch carefully over the inner Man, that whatever Decorum we observe before the World, we may approve our Meaning and Intention, and inward Sincerity to Almighty God, who sees in secret, but will reward openly.

(2.) More particularly, there are two Sorts of Persons whom I would leave with a Word of Admonition;



Admonition, and I have done. These are first the Hypocrites, who do good Works for Applause and worldly Interest, and level all these good Things at the carrying on some worldly Design or other. I desire such Persons to consider what is so plain in my Text, that all the Reward they have for these their good Works, is that Applause or worldly Interest they gain; but that they have not the least Title to God's Favour, or to any Degree of Happiness in the World to come. He that does good Works for any other End than to please God, and benefit his Neighbour, and to save his own Soul, will be mightily mistaken in the End, if he expects any Reward in Heaven. The other Part of my Exhortation shall be directed to a better Sort of People, namely, to them who with all Sincerity are studying to serve and please God, and have him principally before their Eyes in all the Good they do. And the Advice to them is short, that in regard other worldly By-ends are apt to mix themselves with their pious Intentions, they be upon their guard against them, that they admit them only as Accessories, but not at all to supplant or displace their other better Designs or Purposes, or to intermit the doing of Good, when it happens to be deprived of those collateral worldly Encouragements.

The short Conclusion of all this Doctrine is, that the chief care of a Christian ought to be about his Heart; for that all Actions in the Sight of God take their Tincture and Complexion from it, and shall be rewarded accordingly; and therefore let us not only use our own utmost Endeavours to keep our Intentions pure, but pray to God for his Assistance in it, which we cannot do in better  
Words

Words than in that collect of our Church, with which I shall conclude.

*Almighty God, unto whom all Hearts be open, all Desires known, and from whom no Secrets are hid; cleanse the Thoughts of our Hearts by the Inspiration of thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love thee, and worthily magnify thy holy Name, through Christ our Lord. Amen.*



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## S E R M O N II.

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### M A T T. VI. 2.

*Therefore when thou dost thine Alms, do not sound a Trumpet before thee, as the Hypocrites do, in the Synagogues, and in the Streets, that they may have Glory of Men. Verily I say unto you, they have their Reward.*

Ver. 3. *But when thou dost Alms, let not thy left Hand know what thy right Hand doth.*

Ver. 4. *That thine Alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret, himself shall Reward thee openly.*

#### The First Sermon on this Text.

**O**UR Saviour having in the *first Verse* of this *Chapter*, cautioned his Disciples that in general they should do their Righteousness, that is, their Duties and good Works, out of a pure Intention to serve God and to promote his Honour and Glory, and not out of Ostentation or other selfish Designs; comes now to branch out the same Advice more particularly in three great Duties, *Alms-giving, Prayer, and Fasting*; which we are in the greatest Danger of corrupting by the Moth of Pride: Being all three Duties which the World deservedly has in great Estimation.

The

The Words I have read relate to the first of these, *Alms-giving*. And in them we have,

I. A Caution against Ostentation and Vain-glory in the giving of Alms.

II. The Reasons of that Caution, which are two.

1. *First*, that by these sinister Designs in our Actions we resemble the Hypocrites. 2. That by so doing we receive all our Reward in this Life; instead of securing to our selves the Approbation of Almighty God, and the true Honour, which otherwise we might expect in the great Day of Accounts.

I. I begin with the *first*, the Caution against Ostentation and Vain-glory in giving of Alms. *Therefore when thou dost thine Alms, do not sound a Trumpet before thee, as the Hypocrites do, in the Synagogues, and in the Streets, that they may have Glory of Men. But when thou dost thine Alms, let not thy left Hand know what thy right Hand doth: That thine Alms may be in secret.* In which Words we have the Caution expressed both Negatively and Affirmatively.

1. Negatively in a Prohibition of Ostentation, or an Affectation of Vain-glory.

2. Affirmatively in an Injunction of Secrecy and Humility.

Both want a little further Explication.

1. As to the Prohibition of Ostentation and Vain-glory in our Alms, it is here put in a figurative Expression of *not sounding the Trumpet before us, as the Hypocrites do, in the Synagogues, and in the Streets, that they may have Glory of Men.* For understanding the Meaning of it, the Original Words  $\mu\eta\ \sigma\alpha\lambda\pi\iota\sigma\eta\varsigma$ , signify only, Do not Trumpet or make a Noise. I called it a figurative

Expression;



Expression; for I cannot find in any of our Books, that the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, or any others among the *Jews*, did literally make use of a Trumpet upon those Occasions; though by themselves and others they took Care to have their good Deeds divulged and trumpeted about: The Thing then here intended to be cautioned against is, the unnecessary Publishing and Proclaiming of our Alms or Works of Charity, with a design either to gain Honour or Praise to our selves, or by the Means of that Honour to carry on any other ambitious, covetous or selfish Interest. And the further Explications of the Caution here added, confirm this Sense; first, from the Example of the Hypocrites, who affect to make a Noise with their Charities, and choose to give them before Multitudes of Spectators; then from the Discovery of the Design and Intention they have and propose to themselves in these their good Works; namely, that they may be seen of Men, for some temporal End or other, which they aim at.

2. The Injunction of Secrecy and Humility is in these Words. *But when thou dost Alms, let not thy left Hand know what thy right Hand doth; that thine Alms may be in secret.* Here again is a very significant proverbial Expression, *of not letting the left Hand know what the right Hand doth*; by which is meant that we should not only forbear Proclaiming and Publishing these Things to the World, but should forbear divulging them to our own near Friends and Acquaintance; nay, should forbear thinking of them our selves so as to feed Pride and Vanity.

From the Words thus explained there are these following Particulars with Relation to the Duty

here required, that offer themselves to our Consideration. First, there are some Things here supposed, and then there are some Cautions interposed.

The Things supposed are these three.

1. That the Duty of Alms-giving was practiced by the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, whose Righteousness our Saviour is here correcting and improving.

2. It is here supposed that in the Exercise of this Duty, they did not purely or chiefly regard the Pleasing of God, but carried on their own selfish Designs among Men; they did their Alms to be seen of Men.

3. It is supposed that Alms and other Works of Charity have an Aptness in their own Nature to gain the Love and Applause of Men, and so may easily be perverted to serve the selfish Designs of the Persons who put them in practice.

Then for the Cautions interposed they are four.

1. There is one principal one, concerning the Intention and Design we ought to propose to our selves in our Works of Charity; namely, the Glory and Honour of God.

2. Another Caution is, that we do not set up Vain-glory or any other By-ends of our own Covetousness or Ambition, in our Alms, Deeds or other good Works.

3. A third Caution relates to the Way and Manner of doing these our good Works, that it be with Humility and all requisite Secrecy; not to lay in for our own Praise or other selfish Ends.

4. That if from our Alms and other good Works any accidental Praise or Credit comes to ourselves, we do not feed ourselves with the Thoughts and Delectations of it, but suppress that

that Vanity, and employ all that Credit for God's Service.

These are the particulars of the Duty here described. It will be fit that we consider them more seriously and attentively; being Matters of great Importance in a spiritual Life.

I. The *first* Thing here supposed is, that the material Part of the Duty of Alms-giving was put in practice by the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, whose Righteousness our Saviour is here correcting and improving. The Supposition is always put in the Text; *when thou dost thine Alms, do not trumpet it as the Hypocrites do.* It plainly supposes that these Hypocrites, whoever they were, complied with the material Part of Alms, tho' they erred both in the End, and in the Manner. By *Alms* here we are to understand not only, according to the narrow Notion of the Word in our Language, the giving a little Relief to a Beggar or other indigent Person, but all Sorts of good Works, which tend to relieve any of the Distresses and Calamities of Mankind. The Observation resulting hence is, that the Duty of Bounty to the Poor is a Duty which not only Christianity, but even Judaism doth mightily countenance: And therefore they are worse than *Jews* who neglect it. For confirming this Supposition, I might shew you what Countenance is given to this Duty both in the Law and the Prophets; what strict Precepts enjoin it; what large Promises encourage it; what Threatnings there are to the contrary Practices; and what noble Examples of good Men in all Ages of that Church there are to countenance it. But seeing all this is well enough known, and the Duty comes in here only by



way of Supposition, I shall not now dwell upon it, especially having discoursed it at large from one of the *Beatitudes*; *Blessed are the Merciful, for they shall obtain Mercy.*

II. Another Thing here supposed is, that in the Exercise of this Duty of Alms-giving, the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* and several other Hypocrites did not purely or chiefly regard the Serving and Pleasing of God; but carried on thereby their own selfish Ends and Designs among Men. They did their Alms, that they might have Glory of Men. And that Glory might serve several other selfish Designs of Ambition and Covetousness. From hence we may observe that it is a Mark of Hypocrisy to do Works materially good out of a sinister Design of carrying on our own covetous and selfish Ends. The proud Man has no better Way to feed his Vanity, and to gain the good Opinion and Applause of the World, than by good Works and Alms-Deeds. But besides that this good Opinion and Applause of Men is a mighty Nourisher of Pride, it serves likewise for a great many other worldly Ends and Purposes, in which these Hypocrites find their Account. For it procures a Man great Credit and Reputation, which is really so much Interest and Advantage, whatever Course of Life he follows. It brings him in Wealth and Custom in his Trade; it gives him the Command of a great many Votes for himself or his Friends in all Elections and Promotions to Places of Honour or Profit: and so makes him considerable, and a Man of Note and Figure in his Country and Neighbourhood. If he has any Faction or Party to carry on, this good Word of Men, procured by his good Works, gains in  
Abundance

Abundance of Friends and Favourers to his Designs, out of the more simple and honest Sort of People, who see his outward good Works, but are Strangers to his secret Hypocrisy. So that he is commonly one of the most popular Men, and therefore becomes the most necessary to the State or Government where he lives. If he has occasion to aspire to any Places of Honour or Profit to satisfy his Ambition; or to preserve himself in the Possession of any such, he knows how to gain the Favour of all the better Sort of Courtiers; it is but launching out something towards the promoting of any good Works they have at Heart. And this he knows will more effectually gain these good Men to befriend him, and to espouse his Interests; than if he could have persuaded them to accept of a Bribe to double the Value. Upon all which Accounts, and many more than I can enumerate, the subtle Hypocrite finds Alms-Deeds and good Works one of the most powerful Engines to promote his worldly Designs. And therefore there was very great Occasion for our Saviour to guard his Disciples against this subtle Sort of Hypocrisy, not by discouraging good Works, but by recommending to them an Innocence and Simplicity in all the Good they did.

III A *third* Thing here supposed is, that Alms and other charitable Works have an Aptness in their own Nature to gain the good Opinion and Applause of Men; and so may easily be perverted to serve the selfish Designs of the Persons who put them in Practice. It is no wonder at all that Charity and good Works, which are so lovely in themselves, should recommend any Person, who



gives himself to them, to the good Opinion of the World. Nor is it any Disparagement to these good Works, that they are liable to be abused. For what good Thing is there in the World that may not be abused? Our Victuals may be abused to Gluttony; our Drink to Drunkenness; our Clothes and Furniture to Pride and Vanity; and so our good Works to Pride, Vanity, Covetousness, and Ambition. But what must we conclude from thence? Not that we must forbear good Works; God forbid; but that we should so regulate our Intention in the doing them, and perform them in such a secret and humble Manner, as that they may answer the good End, without being perverted to those Hypocritical Purposes. And this is what our Saviour aims at in the Cautions he here interposes; which I come to consider in the next Place.

I. The *first* Caution I mentioned as interposed by our Saviour, is, concerning the Intention and Design we ought to propose to ourselves in our Works of Charity; namely, the Glory and Honour of God. For this is to be meant, by *having an Eye to our Father which seeth in Secret, and who will reward us openly*; in opposition to the aiming at having Glory of Men. But that we may the better understand and judge of the Uprightness of our Design in this Matter; in general we may be satisfied, that what we do in This with a pure Eye to God, is of the right Stamp. More particularly,

(1.) When we have a principal Regard to his Precepts in what Good we do.

(2.) When we do any lawful Thing with an express Design and Intention to promote his Service

(3.) When

(3.) When we do any good Thing out of pure Love and Compassion to our Neighbour, upon his Account.

(4.) When the chief Benefit we propose to our selves is, the Approbation of God, and the Salvation of our Souls.

(5.) When we look up to God for the Grace and Ability to do Good, and give him the Praise of it.

It will be requisite to give these a more particular, but short Consideration, that we may have a right Notion of this principal Caution we are to observe in doing of good Works ; namely, the aiming at the Glory and Honour of God.

(1.) When we do any good Work from a Regard to any of God's Precepts, it is a good sure Sign that we have his Honour and Service before our Eyes ; as what we do from our own Humour, or with an Eye to our own worldly Interest, or in compliance with the Customs and Fashions of the World, or from Example or Importunity, we cannot have that Assurance of the Goodness of the Principle from whence it proceeds. *Thou hast commanded us*, says the Psalmist, *to keep thy Precepts diligently.* He did not consider so much how the Observing of God's Precepts affected his worldly Interest ; it was enough to him that God had commanded the Thing. And whoever observes God's Commands from this Consideration, will not pick and choose such Precepts to obey as are most agreeable, leaving the other which are more ungrateful to Flesh and Blood : But it is enough to recommend a good Thing to him, if it be but commanded by God,

(2.) When we do any lawful and commendable Thing with an exprefs Design thereby to promote God's Service. Thus Christian Servants are exhorted by St. *Paul* to an honest, and modest, obliging Behaviour in their lower Sphere, from a noble Design of recommending the Christian Religion to their Heathen Masters, Tit. ii. 9. *Exhort Servants to be obedient to their own Masters, and to please them well in all Things; not answering again, not purloyning, but shewing all good Fidelity; that they may adorn the Doctrine of God our Saviour in all Things.* The End they were to propose to themselves was, not the getting a good Name to themselves, or the advancing their own Fortune, or the ingratiating themselves with their Masters, thereby to make their Lives more easy and comfortable; all which would have been inferiour innocent Designs; but they were to have a nobler Aim before their Eyes, even that of shewing the World how much the Christian Religion mends and improves all Sorts of People, thereby to recommend it to the good Esteem of the World. By this one Instance in Persons of the lowest Sphere, we may judge how much more it is in the Power of the superior Orders of Men, by their good Conduct and Example, to promote the Service of God, and how they should set that noble End before their Eyes.

(3.) Whenever we do any good Thing out of pure Love and Compassion to our Neighbour, especially upon Account of his Relation to *Christ*; this is to act for the Honour and Glory of God. Thus our Saviour says, (a) *Whosoever shall give to*

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(a) Matt. x. 42.



*to drink unto one of these little ones a Cup of cold Water in the Name of a Disciple, he shall in no wise lose his Reward.* In the Name of a Disciple, that is, by reason of his Relation to *Christ*; there lies the Emphasis. So *Matt. xxv. 40.* we are taught that whosoever shew any Kindness to any of our Saviour's Disciples, whom he there calls *his Brethren*, shall be rewarded as if they had shewed it to *Christ* himself.

(4.) When the chief Benefit we propose to our selves is the Approbation of God, and the Salvation of our Souls; then we act for the Glory and Honour of God. For the Salvation of our Souls being nothing else but a more immediate Enjoyment of God, there is nothing can tend more to God's Honour. Thus *Moses* is commended, *Heb. xi. 26.* for *having had a Respect unto the Remembrance of Reward.* For whereas By-ends in this World divert us from God, This leads us directly to him, and fixes us in the Love and Enjoyment of him.

(5.) *Lastly*, When we wait on God for the Grace and Ability to do Good, and give him all the Praise of it; this is to act for God's Honour and Glory. There can be nothing more contrary to Pride and Self-seeking, than this contriving the Praise of all good Things to God. And for This we have the Examples of our Saviour's Apostles, expressly renouncing the Honours done them for their good Works, and giving them entirely to God. Thus when the People stood admiring *Peter* and *John* upon their Curing of a lame Man who had been a Cripple from his Mother's Womb, *Act. iii. 12.* *St Peter* argued with them, *Ye Men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? Or why look ye*  
so

so earnestly on us, as though by our own Power or Holiness we had made this Man to walk? The God of Abraham and of Isaac and Jacob, the God of our Fathers hath glorified his Son Jesus—And his Name through Faith in his Name hath made this Man strong, whom ye see and know: Yea the Faith which is by him, hath given him this perfect Soundness in the presence of you all. And so careful were they to put off the Honour of great Actions from themselves, and to centre it upon God, that they stuck not sometimes to depreciate themselves that they might more effectually honour him. So at *Lystra Paul and Barnabas*, to divert the divine Honours, which they were going to pay them, chid them for doing such Things, telling them that *they were Men of like Passions with themselves.*

I have insisted so long on this first Caution concerning the main End we ought to propose to our selves in our good Works and Alms-deeds, the Glory and Honour of God; that I find there will not be Time enough left to handle the other three Cautions I mentioned as contained in the Text. And therefore I shall reserve them, together with the Reasons of this Duty, to another Opportunity. Only there are two Inferences I would make from what has been said, before I have done.

*Inf. 1.* One is from the supposed Duty of Alms-giving among the *Jews*, our Saviour's Hearers at this Time. And from hence I would infer, that if the doing of Works of Charity was not neglected in the Religion of a *Jew*; if the Righteousness of the *Scribes and Pharisees*, which was a lower Sort of Righteousness, took in the Sub-  
stance



stance of these Duties, and wanted only to be rectified in the Intention, to purify them from that Pride and Vain-glory, which doth so easily cleave to them in this imperfect State : Then we Christians, under the greater Light of the Gospel, and a more plentiful Effusion of the Spirit, are much more obliged to follow Works of Charity and Alms-deeds. It is most certain, that our Saviour recommended, both by his Doctrine and Example, much higher Degrees of Charity than ever had been taught the *Jews*, in that Duty of close Friendship, or brotherly Love, which he established among his Disciples. And it is certain, the first Christians practised it to a Degree beyond what ever the World had seen before. But alas ! we are fallen into the degenerate Ages of Christianity, when Faith is scarce to be found upon the Earth, and the Love of many is waxen cold, to that Degree, that I doubt the very *Jews* will rise up in Judgment against us, and condemn us. For they did many good Works ; their Defects were only about the Form of them ; but we are deficient in Matter and Form too, and are so immersed in the World, as if we had forgotten that Charity is a Duty. I speak not only of the poorer Sort, who have so much to do with their own Necessities, that no great Matters of Charity can be expected of them ; but of the Rich, to whom the Charge is more peculiarly given, (a) *To be rich in good Works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate, laying up for themselves a good Foundation against the Time to come.* O sad, sad is the Account

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(a) 1 Tim. vi. 18.

Account rich Men must make, who do not by good Deeds lay up Treasures in Heaven, but either hoard up, or hide their Talent in a Napkin, or spend their Income in the way of Luxury and Prodigality. And blessed are they who are diligent now to supply Christ's poor Members; for he will amply reward them in the future State, to which we are all hastening apace.

*Inf. 2.* The other Inference I would make, is with relation to that higher Improvement of this Duty enjoined by our Saviour, as to the Difference in the Manner between our Charities and Alms, and those of the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*. And it shall consist briefly of these three short Advices, and I have done. 1. The First I give you in the Words of *St Paul*, Rom. xii. 8. *He that giveth, let him do it with Simplicity*; that is, let him clear his Heart of all sinister and By-ends in giving, but let him do his Charities out of a pure single Intention to please God; with which, if he joins the Love of his Neighbour, and a Desire to further his own Salvation, they are no way inconsistent. 2. Let us in doing our Charities, avoid Ostentation and Vain-glory, and both prudently chuse the secretest and discreetest Ways of doing them, and when they are done, let us avoid trumpeting them either by ourselves or others. 3. Let us, as much as is possible, avoid the complacent feeding of our own Minds with Self-conceit and Flattery, from the inward Contemplation of our own good Deeds; or by admitting the Praises and Commendations of others for them. But let us still give all the Praise, and Honour of them to God. Let us praise him that we had any Thing to give; and let us praise him  
that

that we had a Heart to give it ; and let us praise him that we are not proud of what we have given; but own it to be more his Gift than ours; both the Matter of the Gift, and the Grace to bestow it in the right Manner : Saying, *Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to thy Name be the Praise.*

Now to this great God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, be all Praise, Honour, and Glory, for ever and ever. *Amen.*



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## S E R M O N III.

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### M A T T. VI. 2.

*Therefore when thou dost thine Alms, do not sound a Trumpet before thee, as the Hypocrites do, in the Synagogues, and in the Streets, that they may have Glory of Men. Verily I say unto you, they have their Reward.*

*Ver. 3. But when thou dost Alms, let not thy left Hand know what thy right Hand doth :*

*Ver. 4. That thine Alms may be in secret : and thy Father which seeth in secret, himself shall Reward thee openly.*

#### The Second Sermon on this Text.

**I**N a former Discourse on these Words, I took notice of two Things contained in them: A Duty enjoined, concerning the right Intent in doing our Works of Charity, and the right Manner of doing them, with Secrecy and Humility: Then the Reasons for enforcing that Duty, namely, that the Neglect of it equals us with Hypocrites, and cuts us off from the great Reward in Heaven, which is annexed to good Works, when sincerely designed for the Glory of God; and  
reduces



reduces us to those low Rewards upon Earth, which commonly attend external good Works.

After a general Description of the Duty, the Particulars I propos'd to consider from the Words, were, First, some Things suppos'd or implied in the Text, namely, 1. That the Duty of Alms-giving was practis'd by the *Scribes and Pharisees*. But 2. That in this Duty they had low selfish Regards to Vain Glory, and other worldly Interests, and did not perform it chiefly with an Eye to God. 3. That Alms, and other Works of Charity, are in their own Nature apt to gain the Love and Esteem of Men. Then I propos'd to consider some Cautions interpos'd in the Words, of which the first and principal was concerning the Intention and Design we ought to propose to ourselves in our Works of Charity, namely, the Glory and Honour of God. And thus far we proceeded at that Time.

There are three Cautions more I observed from the Words, namely,

II. That we are to be watchful against Vain Glory, and all other By-ends of our own Covetousness or Ambition, in our Alms-deeds, and other good Works.

III. That as to the Manner of doing our good Works, we are to be careful to do them with Humility and Secrecy.

IV. That if any accidental Praise or Credit comes to our selves from our Works of Charity, we do not feed our selves with the Thoughts and vain Pleasure of it, but that we suppress all such Insurrections of Pride, and employ all that Credit for God's Service.

These

These three Cautions, together with the Reasons for enforcing the Duty, I propose for the Subject of our present Meditation.

II. *Secondly* then, We are to be watchful against Vain Glory, and all other By-ends of our own Covetousness or Ambition, in our Alms-deeds, and other good Works. *Therefore when thou dost thine Alms, do not sound a Trumpet before thee, as the Hypocrites do in the Synagogues, and in the Streets, that they may have Glory of Men.* In speaking to which Caution I shall briefly consider,

1. The Aim of these Persons, here said to be, *that they may have Glory of Men.*

2. The Actions they do to attain this End, here called *the sounding of a Trumpet before them.*

3. How liable Men are to fall into this Sin. And,

4. Some Considerations, shewing the Unreasonableness of it.

1. *First*, We are to consider the Aim of these Persons, which is to have Praise and Glory of Men. This may be considered, either as merely a vain-glorious Design, if this Glory is pursued only for its own Sake; then it is a Branch of Pride, which is an unfit and unbecoming Thing for a Man. Or this Praise and esteem of Men, is with a farther Eye of employing it to serve the Ends of Covetousness, Ambition, Faction, Lust, or some such sinister Purpose, and so principally proceeds from other bad Designs, or is entangled and involved in them. But which soever Way it steers its Course, it leads a Man quite out of the Way of Duty; it sets up the Humours and Interests of Men, instead of a Conscience of Duty; and

and instead of a Spirit of Humiliation and Repentance, it feeds the Mind with Pride and Vanity, and empty Applause; and contents itself, instead of Sincerity, with acting of a Part.

2. We are to consider the Actions these Men do to attain this End, called here *the sounding of a Trumpet before them*. In opening of the Words, I shewed you that this was a figurative Expression, and that we are not literally to understand that a Trumpet was made use of in this Case. The trumpeting then here meant, is the contriving Ways and Means to set off our Actions in the best Colours, and the publishing and proclaiming them, in such a manner, as may best answer these our carnal Ends. Sometimes the vain-glorious Man doth himself make publick his own Praises and good Deeds; but because This he knows would be the Way to mar his Design, if he should follow it too much, therefore more commonly he employs other Instruments to be subservient to him in this Work, and often, with Pains and Cost, procures the Means of publishing and propagating his own selfish Designs in his good Works, instead of the Glory of God.

3. We are to consider how prone and liable Men are to fall into this Sin. Self-Love is so inherent in our corrupt Natures; and Flattery is so agreeable to Self-Love; and of all Flatterers, we are the greatest Flatterers of our selves; and this Self-Flattery has so many secret Channels through which it conveys itself; that it is really difficult for any Man to avoid it, or not to be taken and delighted with it. More particularly, good Men are in danger of sliding insensibly into this Vanity of being delighted with the Praises that rise from



good Works. That good Works are of all Things the most worthy of Praise and Commendation in themselves, there is not the least Doubt: That there is likewise a due Measure of Esteem and Praise due to the Instruments by whom good Works are brought about, there is no Question. And therefore, think they, why may not we taste a little of this Praise, which is one of the inferiour Rewards of Virtue? And it is very true, if they admitted it only in this low Degree, and did not make it their principal Aim and Design, there would be no great Harm in it; but as they set their Hearts so entirely upon it, this alters the Nature of the Thing, and makes it exceeding sinful, as I am to shew in the next Place, being led by my Method

4. To offer some Considerations, shewing the Unreasonableness of this Sin, of aiming at Vain-Glory, or other sinister Ends, in our good Works.

(1.) It cannot but be exceeding unreasonable and pernicious, in that it alters the End and Rule of all our Actions; like steering of a Ship by a wrong Compass, or mistaking some wandring Planet for the North Polar Star, which certainly must occasion innumerable Errors in the Course, or rather make it one entire Error from the beginning to the end. It makes a God of Man, and so is abominable Idolatry; for Idolatry is not committed only by paying external Worship and Adoration to Creatures, but by setting them up for Idols in the Heart, and aiming at their Praise and Glory instead of God's.

(2.) It is a Consequence of this, that a poor Creature thus set up to be idolized and deified, forgets himself, and instead of that Repentance, Humility,



mility, and Submission he owes to God, is apt to say in his Heart, as *Pharaoh* did with his Mouth, *Who is the Lord, that I should obey him?* And likewise instead of that modest, civil, and obliging Behaviour he owes to his Neighbours, is apt, from this one Error, to carry himself haughtily and insolently, and to be a much worse Neighbour to his Fellow Subjects, as well as a proud rebellious Subject to the great King of Kings.

(3.) From hence it follows likewise, that it is an high Dishonour to Almighty God, to make one of his mean Creatures equal with himself in Dignity; and that that Creature's Honour should be more studied and minded than his. What would we think if our Slaves should pretend to as good Cloathing and Lodging, and to be served with as much Respect, and to have every thing in as much Order as their Masters; and their Humour, and Orders, and Commands, as much, or more regarded than their Masters? Would not every one be apt to cry out that they are quite spoil'd, that it is a most disorderly Family, and that there can be no good Doings, where all Things are so out of Course? This is but an imperfect Resemblance of the Disorders, which this setting up our own Glory instead of God's, would introduce into the World.

(4.) All the Excellency of our Good Works is hereby lost; there remains only the Outside or Shell of them; but the Soul and Life of them, which is the Love of God, is quite gone; we do no more act from a Principle of Faith or Love. Instead of having Regard to the great Recompence of Reward in Heaven, we act upon low and mean Views of a little Honour or Profit in this World, and so follow Christ *for the Loaves*. And then

if these lower Ends should fail, as to be sure they will in time of Persecution, it is no hard Matter to foresee what will become of our Duties founded on so slight a Bottom.

Many other Things might be urged to this Purpose; but I must consider that Time must be left for the other Heads remaining on this Subject.

III. The third Caution I observed from the Words, is, that as to the Manner of doing our good Works, we are to be careful to do them with Humility and Secrecy: *But when thou dost thine Alms, let not thy Left Hand know what thy Right Hand doth: that thine Alms may be in Secret; and thy Father which seeth in Secret, himself shall Reward thee openly.* This figurative Expression of the Left Hand's not knowing what the Right Hand doth, denotes a great Secrecy; and this Secrecy is to cut off all Pretence or Occasion of Vain Glory, there being no Witnesses but God himself. But for the better Understanding this Part of our Saviour's Caution, we are to remember, that it is no Part of our Saviour's Design in these Words, to forbid or discourage publick Charity; for then, as I formerly told you, this Text would be contrary to many other, that require our giving a good Example in all manner of good Works. But the Thing here prohibited, is the Sin of Ostentation and Vain Glory, and having principally an inward Regard to the Eye and Praise of Men, more than to the Eye and Approbation of God. And one Thing more too I judge may be meant by this Expression of *not letting the Left Hand know what the Right Hand doth*, in the doing of good Works; namely, that

we should in a manner conceal them from our selves; to prevent a common Temptation of the Devil, who, when we have done any thing that is good, tempts us to please our selves with vain complacent Thoughts about it; all which our Saviour requires us humbly to avoid, and to expect the final Approbation of God, when true Honour will come in, in the Sight of Men and Angels. So that there seem to be three Things guarded against in this Caution of our Saviour's.

1. The inward vain Contemplation of our good Deeds, so as to nourish Pride from them. 2. An unnecessary talking of, or publishing them, by our selves, or our Tools and Instruments. 3. An Affectation of the most publick Places and Occasions to do them in, when we neglect Charity in Secret.

4. The fourth Caution I observed from the Words, is this, that if any accidental Praise or Credit comes to our selves from our good Works, we do not greedily entertain it, but that we suppress all such Insurrections of Pride, and employ all that Credit for God's Honour and Service. This I gather to be our Duty, because our Saviour here in this Discourse, aims at our staying off all grasping of Honour to our selves, before the final Retribution, when God shall reward us openly. This Design of his we comply with, if we neither act with an Intent to bring in Glory to our selves, nor use the popular Arts which bring it in, nor entertain it when it comes, but place it where it is due and proper, that is, to God. It is very certain that good Men meet with many Temptations to the Sin of Vain Glory here prohibited. The many good Things they do, it



were strange if they should not so much as meet with the good Word and Applause of the World for them. It would be strange, considering how beneficial good and charitable Men are to the World, if the World had no Sense of it, but should pass them by without some due Encomiums. And though good Men do not lay in for these, but avoid them as much as in Discretion they can, this doth not hinder but that Praise is heaped so much the more upon them, the less they seek after it. But where do we ever find that they assume any of all this to themselves? They constantly shift it from themselves upon their Master; telling us, that as for themselves they were Men of like Passions with others; and that it was not owing to their own Power, or Holiness, that they did any of the great Works they wrought, but that they were wholly owing to the Name and Power of Christ. And therefore whenever we are praised for any Good we do, let us consider who it was that made us to differ from others; and that there is always a great deal of Reason to pull the Crown of Glory off from our own Head, and to place it on God's. Our natural Capacities are by his Gift; our acquired ones by his Providence; the Opportunities of doing Good, of his presenting; the Ability to supply them, by his Blessing; the Good will to do it, by his Grace. And as to the little hand we have our selves in doing Good, we may well be humbled, and not exalted; for where we do one good Thing, we do a great many bad; and if the best of us were to be treated according to our own Merits, abstracting from the Merits of Christ, we should be in a woful Condition; and therefore



therefore let us not be high-minded, but fear ; and let us say, *Not unto us, O Lord, but unto thy Name be the Praise.*

So much for the Duty enjoined, directing the Design and Manner of our good Actions.

I come next to the *second* Thing in the Words, the Reasons enforcing this Duty ; which are two.

1. One is taken from the Resemblance this Practice of doing our good Works to be seen of Men, has to the Practice of Hypocrites, to whom it is resembled by our Saviour : *When thou dost thine Alms, do not sound a Trumpet before thee, as the Hypocrites do in the Synagogues, and in the Streets, that they may have Glory of Men.*

2. The other is taken from the Fruit of this Practice in the other World : And this is branched forth in two Particulars. (1.) That there is no other but present temporal Rewards to be expected for such, who do their good Works to be seen of Men. *Verily I say unto you, says our Saviour, they have their Reward.* (2.) That there is a certain glorious Reward for them, who do their good Works with an Eye to God : *Thy Father which seeth in Secret, himself shall reward thee openly.*

1. One Reason our Saviour urges to enforce the Duty he had recommended, is, that this wrong Aim in our good Works, alters the Nature of them, and makes them hypocritical. Now it is no hard Matter to detect this mighty Blot upon such good Works. For what is an Hypocrite, but he that pretends one thing, and is really another ; one that seems to act from Principles of Religion and Virtue, but acts upon quite other Principles, and so is inwardly quite another

Sort of Man than he outwardly pretends to be? And is not this the true Description of the Man that does good Works, not with a Prospect of serving God, but from a Principle of Covetousness or Ambition, or Vain Glory, or Faction, or any other sinister worldly Design? For it is not the part we outwardly act, but what we are inwardly in our Hearts, that proves whether we are sincere or hypocritical. *e. g.* If a Man, to make himself popular among a religious People, should very much frequent all religious Assemblies, and should launch out into Charities for the Encouragement of their particular Way of Worship, and do every other Thing to gain them to his Side and Party; they who do not discover his inward Design, might take all this for good Coin, and think he were a sincere Convert; but both God, and his own Heart, must know that it is only some selfish Design he has in all this, and that it is but acting of a Part. But how then? Is every Man a Hypocrite who is guilty of any secret Wickedness, and is not as good in Private, as he appears to be in Publick? In answer to this, there is great Distinction to be made between Persons sincerely designing the Service of God, though in the Struggle with their Corruptions they are often foiled; (this is a Sign of their Weakness, not of their Hypocrisy.) And they are very different from another Sort of People, who put on the Cloak of Religion only to serve some worldly End or other; for these are truly Hypocrites. So that the Denomination of Hypocrisy, is from the Intention of the Heart; and though in some Persons this is so plain, that by their Life and Actions it is clear to be seen, yet often too it is so

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hid, that it is not to be known, except by the Searcher of Hearts. And therefore this Mark of it here given by our Saviour, should be used more to reform our selves, than to censure others; for in the Matter of Censures, where Things are not exceeding plain, it is safer to err on the charitable Side; at least to forbear, and to leave all Judgment to God. But to return from this Digression, while our Saviour acquaints us here, that the doing our good Works with this Design, to be seen of Men, is one Sign of Hypocrisy, it is enough to induce us to purify our Intentions in them, and to be cautious of all Mixtures of Pride, Covetousness, or any other selfish Design in the doing of them.

II. The other Reason our Saviour urges to recommend this Duty is, the glorious Reward attending it in the other World. This Reason is branched out in two Particulars.

(1.) One is a Confession that good Works, tho' not sincerely designed for God's Glory, are attended with temporal Rewards. *Verily, I say unto you, they have their Reward.*

(2.) The other is, that only those which are done with an Eye to God, shall be rewarded in the other World.

(1.) As to the first, that external good Works, though not sincerely designed for God's Honour, are attended with temporal Rewards. We see this daily verified in Fact; such Men have the Praise and Credit they aimed at: they often gain the Interest, which these their good Works were levelled at. And there is a great deal of Equity in this Proceeding; for good Works, whatever Principle they come from, do a great deal  
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deal of good to the World; and therefore it is very reasonable they should be rewarded some how or other. And if the Principle from which they proceed be but temporal, a temporal Reward is most just and proper for them.

(2.) But the pressing Part of the Reason is yet behind; which is, that such external good Works as were not done out of any Principle of Religion, or with an Eye to God, but only with a view of reaping some temporary Advantage from Men, have all their Reward in this Life, and therefore have none to expect in the Life to come. A temporary Principle will rise no higher than a temporary Reward. This God has told us in my Text. This, Reason and the Nature of the Thing confirms. What a dreadful Condition then are we in, if we do not act from the true Fear of God? All our Labour is lost as to the other World: Our heavenly Father who seeth with what prospect we act, will suit us with Rewards accordingly.

Thus now I have done with my Text; and cannot I think conclude better, pursuant to the main Purport and Design of it, than with a short Exhortation to Purity of Intention. And in Commendation of it, I desire you to consider these few Things, which I shall but just name.

It is the great Secret of Christian Morals, which our Saviour drives at in all Duties whatsoever, and is the principal Thing which distinguishes the Righteousness of a good Christian from the Righteousness of the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*.

It is that which above all Things sanctifies the Heart, and keeps us in a good Frame and Temper. And if the Heart be right, it is a mighty Means to govern the Words and Actions well.

While



While our Intention is pure, the other Errors we commit can be but Sins of Weakness or Ignorance; and can never involve us in the gross Errors of Hypocrisy and Insincerity.

And while our Intention is pure, whatever be our Fortune in this World, we are sure of the Favour of God, and of his Approbation in the World to come; which is infinitely beyond all the Riches and Honour that can possibly be got by Hypocrisy and Diffimulation.

Now God give us all Grace to live so now, as we shall wish we had lived in the great Day, when God shall judge the Secrets of Men by *Jesus Christ*.

*To him with the Father and the Holy Ghost be all Praise, Honour and Glory for ever and ever. Amen.*



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## S E R M O N IV.

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### M A T T. VI. 5.

*And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the Hypocrites are: For they love to pray standing in the Synagogues, and in the Corners of the Streets, that they may be seen of Men. Verily, I say unto you, they have their Reward.*

*Ver. 6. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy Closet, and when thou hast shut thy Door, pray to thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.*

#### The First Sermon on this Text.

**I**N these Words our Saviour goes on in guarding his Disciples against the Hypocrisy of the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, which was a very great Blemish in all their Religious Duties: And in teaching them to go about all Duty with a more pure and single Eye to God; and with a prospect of Reward from him, without any Mixture of By-ends of Pride or worldly Interest. In the foregoing Words he had taught this in the Duty of Alms-giving; and now he goes on in the very same Manner to correct the Hypocrisy of their Prayers

Prayers and Devotions, and to furnish his Disciples with better Instructions on that Subject. In the Words we have

I. A Caution against an hypocritical Way of Devotion; in the fifth Verse. *And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the Hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the Synagogues, and in the Corners of the Streets, that they may be seen of Men. Verily, I say unto you, they have their Reward.*

II. A Direction to the opposite Sincerity and Secrecy; in the sixth Verse. *But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy Closet, and when thou hast shut thy Door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.*

But before I speak to either of these, it may not be improper to take notice of one Thing here supposed, in which both *Jews* and *Christians*, both *Christ* and the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* are agreed; and that is, that Prayer is a very commendable Duty. It is a Duty of natural Religion, in which all are agreed; and it necessarily follows from the Belief of God's Providence and Inspection into human Affairs, his Love to his poor Creatures, and Readiness to help them, and our own great Weakness and Indigency. This is so well known, that all who have ever pretended to any Degrees of Sanctity beyond their Neighbours, have used this as a special Means to establish that Character in the World; even to make the World believe that they were very assiduous in their Application to God, and in receiving the due Returns of Prayer from him. For they knew that there is nothing doth more establish their Character  
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of Piety, than the Belief of these frequent Inter-  
courses with the Deity. So it is storied of *Numa  
Pompilius*, that famous Roman Law-giver; that  
towards procuring greater Credit to his Laws, he  
made them believe that he had frequent Night  
Meetings with a certain Goddess, *Egeria*, in great  
request among them. This Opinion perhaps, as  
a great many others, might originally be owing  
to the *Jews*, whose Law-giver *Moses* was forty  
Days in the Mount with God, when he received  
those divine Dictates of Laws, which he presently  
delivered to that People. This as it gave a mighty  
Authority to his Laws, so it animated them cou-  
ragiously to go about every other Thing by his  
Direction, in confidence of the divine Aid to one  
that was so much, and so powerfully conversant  
with God by Prayer. They found by Experience  
that their Successes against their Enemies were  
more owing to the lifting up of *Moses's* Hands  
in Prayer, than to the lifting up of their own  
Sword in Battle. Our Saviour zealously encour-  
aged this Practice by his own Example; for there  
was nothing more common with him than to  
withdraw himself both from the Multitude and  
his Disciples, that he might converse with better  
Company than was to be found upon Earth, even  
with his heavenly Father. But we Christians have  
very particular Obligations to this Duty of Prayer  
beyond all others, in regard that we know of so  
powerful an Intercessor and Advocate at the Fa-  
ther's right Hand, that our Requests for good  
Things being recommended by him, cannot well  
miscarry, except by neglecting our Applications  
to him. It is no wonder then that the *Scribes*  
and *Pharisees*, the great Pretenders to Religion  
in



in those Days, were particularly admired for their Addictedness to this excellent Duty of Prayer. And certainly it was a Thing highly commendable, had they set about it from a right Principle, and to a right End. but they so perverted the Use of this excellent Duty, that instead of being an Instrument of Religion and Devotion, it became a great Means to feed their Pride and Vanity. Against which our Saviour found it necessary to guard his Disciples. And this leads me to the first Thing I observed in the Words. Namely,

I. Our Saviour's Caution against their hypocritical way of Devotion. *And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the Hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the Synagogues, and in the Corners of the Streets, that they may be seen of Men. Verily, I say unto you they have their Reward.* In which Words we may observe

1. A Description of one Piece of Hypocrisy; namely, an Ostentation of Devotion; for there are certain Hypocrites described here, *Who love to pray standing in the Synagogues and in the Corners of the Streets, that they may be seen of Men.*

2. A Dehortation from this Practice; *When thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the Hypocrites are.*

As to the *first*, the Description here given of Hypocrisy in Devotion, we are to consider these two Things. 1. What it is these Hypocrites are said to do. *They love*, i. e. they affect *to pray standing in the Synagogues, and in the Corners of the Streets*, that is, in Places of greatest Confluence or Resort. 2. The Aim and View they had in all this; which was, not that they might approve themselves to God; but that they might gain the Reputation

Reputation of mighty godly and devout Men. My Text says, they did all this *to be seen of Men.*

Hypocrisy is a very dangerous Vice, and hard to know or discover. Hypocrites had the great Vogue for Religion in those Days; and generally they have it in all Times; for they that have most of true Religion and Devotion, have it between God and themselves, and make the least Show and Ostentation of it; whereas Hypocrites contrive to be seen in their Devotions, that they may gain the Applause due to Men of Devotion, and by Virtue of that Character may so much the more effectually carry on their worldly Designs. Not to digress from the Text, we have two Characters of Hypocrisy here set down, by which we may know it, both in ourselves and others, if we are careful in making our Inspection and Observation. One is the End which we propose to ourselves; the other the outward Actions here described. As to the first, if our End is to please God, and with a regard to him, it is a true Sign of our Sincerity. But if it is to be seen of Men, to feed our Pride and Vanity, or to carry on any other worldly Ends, it is a Sign of Hypocrisy. This is a very plain Mark by which we may try our own Sincerity and Hypocrisy; but it is much more difficult thereby to try the Sincerity or Hypocrisy of others. For as to ourselves, we cannot but know our own secret Designs and Intentions, however we disguise them in the Sight of the World. *Judas* could not but know, when he spoke up for Charity, and blamed *Mary's* spending of the precious Ointment upon our Saviour, saying, *It might have been sold for much and given to the Poor.*

*Poor* (a). He could not be ignorant, I say, that it was not that he minded the Poor, that he said this; but because he would have People encouraged to bring their Charity into the Provision Bag, of which he was the Keeper, with an Eye to those indirect Gains he made of it. Nor could *Ananias* and *Sapphira* be ignorant with what Intent they joined themselves to the Christian Society, that it was not that they truly believed the Christian Faith, or valued the Holy Ghost who enabled the Apostles to work so many Miracles. It was not from any true Conviction upon their Spirits of the Truth or Goodness of Christianity, that they joined themselves to the Christians; but from a greedy Desire to partake in that great Beneficence and Charity, and those other worldly Conveniencies they observed were the Lot of Christians at that Time; namely, that none of their Body wanted any thing, but the Estates of the whole Society supplied the Wants of every individual Person among them. So that in all probability they entred into the Christian Society, and took upon them the Christian Profession, from no other View than as a Man makes a good worldly Bargain, in parting with a small Part of his Estate, that he may secure to himself a good Annuity for Life. Upon this they pretended to be zealous Christians, and to sell their Possession, as other most zealous Christians did in those Days, and to bring the whole Price of it (though they really brought but a Part) and lay it down at the Apostles Feet for the Service of the Church; thereby en-

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(a) John xii. 6.



titling themselves most effectually to the Care of the Church ; as if they had been not only true, but most zealous Believers : little considering or believing that the Spirit, which enabled the Apostles to work Miracles, could likewise detect all this their gross Diffimulation, and punish them for it. But though this Consideration of the secret End we propose to ourselves in our Actions, is an excellent Mark whereby to judge of our own Sincerity ; it is not so sure a Mark, whereby to judge of the Sincerity of others, except in so far as we can gather and collect their several Intentions by their Actions. For it is God's sole Property to have an immediate Inspection into Mens Hearts ; we cannot judge of one anothers Hearts, but from the Fruits of Good or Evil we observe in one anothers Life and Actions. *The Transgression of the wicked saith within my Heart, there is no Fear of God before his Eyes, saith the Psalmist, Psal. xxxvi. 1.* But it was not a small Degree of Transgression which made the Psalmist pass this hard Censure ; but an high Degree of habitual Wickedness, which made them odious in the Sight of all good People ; as it there follows. *He flattereth himself in his own Eyes, untill his Iniquity be found to be hateful. The Words of his Mouth are Iniquity and Deceit : he hath left off to be wise, and to do good. He deviseth Mischief upon his Bed, and setteth himself in a way that is not good ; he abhorreth not Evil.* Where we see from a great many outward bad Signs of Wickedness in wicked Men, the Psalmist is brought to think in his Heart, that the wicked Man had no Fear of God before his Eyes. These Signs were odious Actions, deceitful false Words ; a leaving off to do good ; an inventing and devising



ing of Mischief; and having no Abhorrence of Evil. And from all these he concludes, as well he might, of the Ends he proposed to himself, that they were not religious, but sinful and wicked.

But from this Consideration of the End of the Hypocrite's Devotion, which is, to be *seen of Men*, let us go on to the Consideration of his outward Actions as they are here described. And the Short of the Character here given of him, with respect to his Devotion, is, that he affects more to make Ostentation of his Devotion in Publick, than to follow it in Private. As to the publick Part of his Devotion, he overdoes it in all the most singular and unusual Instances; such as his Readiness to pray among Crowds of People, at unusual Times and Places, that he may be thought to exceed all others in those holy Exercises. But at the same time he is not half so assiduous in secret Prayer, where no Eye is upon him but God's; and where without any Danger of Pride or other worldly Ends, Prayer may most safely and usefully be followed.

For our better understanding this Part of the Hypocrite's Character, there are some Things worthy of our Consideration, with relation to the literal Meaning of the Words. 1. Whereas it is here said, *They love to pray standing in the Synagogues, and Corners of the Streets*, the Meaning of this is, that they choose and affect that sort of publick, before private Prayer, they are averse to the one, but very forward to the other. 2. The Word here translated *Synagogues* is often used not only for the Places of divine Worship, but for all Manner of Assemblies and Confluences of People;

and indeed the learned Dr *Hammond* in this Place translates it, *Places of Concourse*; and its being joined here with *Corners of Streets*, that is, the most publick Places of the City, where two or more Streets meet and cross one another, makes it probable that that is the Meaning in this Place. From all which we may gather, that our Saviour by this Description did not in the least design any Reflection on the publick Worship of God, either in the Church or Family, that being a Duty which he himself frequently performed; but only on that untimely Affectation of Prayer in the Streets, or wherever there was any great Concourse of People, to the End that they might be applauded and admired as Men of extraordinary Devotion and Piety. And answerably to this Scope of the Words, I take it to be one Sign of Hypocrisy, the choosing to be noted and singular in the unseasonable Exercise of publick Devotion. I say unseasonable, for what can be more unseasonable than when People are passing along the Streets, or met in great Numbers at Fairs and Markets about their worldly Business, to break in with our affected Devotions, only that we may be taken notice of as Persons of extraordinary Piety? Of the same Kidney we may reckon all Sorts of indiscreet Acts of publick Devotion, in which Men affect a Singularity, and draw the Eyes of Spectators upon them. Such as the inventing and using new religious Ceremonies, other than are prescribed or in use in the Place where we live; the enthusiastical extemporary Prayers and Sermons of Monks and Quakers in the Streets or other publick Places, where Men are met about their lawful Business or Recreations; unusual affected Gestures,

stures, Faces, and Grimaces, as Pretences to a more sublime and elevated sort of Devotion. So much for the Description of that part of the Hypocrisy of the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, which relates to the publick Ostentation of their Prayers.

2. We are next to consider our Saviour's Dehortation of his Disciples from this Practice. *When thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the Hypocrites are; and, Verily I say unto you they have their Reward.* In which Dehortation there seem to be these three Arguments pointed at, as Motives to dissuade us from that Practice. 1. That this Practice above described is taxed as Hypocritical. 2. That our Saviour assures us with an Affelevation, that it shall have no further Reward than what Hypocrites seek after, and commonly obtain in this Life. 3. From the Expression, *When thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the Hypocrites; Thou shalt not be,* Thou my Disciple, thou who professest thyself a Christian, shalt by no means be like them; intimating that that sort of Practice is totally inconsistent with the Spirit of Christianity. These are the three Arguments by which, in pursuance of the Design of my Text, I shall briefly endeavour to dissuade from this Practice.

(1.) *First* then, our Saviour points at a sufficient Blemish in this Practice, when he accuses it of Hypocrisy. *When thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the Hypocrites are; for they love to pray standing in Places of Concourse, and in the Corners of the Streets, that they may be seen of Men.* As much as to say, it is a base, disingenuous Practice, while under pretence of serving God they carry on their own vile designs of imposing on Men, colouring their Pride and Vanity, their Covetousness



and Ambition, and all their other Vices, with a false Show of extraordinary Devotion. This piece of Hypocrisy has two Aggravations; first, that it is nothing but false and counterfeit, void of that Honesty and Sincerity which becomes even an honest Heathen; it is all Varnish and Paint, and shews nothing in its true Colours, and therefore utterly inconsistent with Truth and Ingenuity, which are so lovely in the Sight of God and Man. Then, secondly, the Odiousness of it is aggravated, in that it serves itself of Religion for this base Purpose, to be that Varnish and Paint to deceive God and Man. *Corruptio optimi, we say, est pessima*; the Corruption of the best Thing is the worst Sort of Corruption. Now that Prayers and Devotions should be made the Arts to colour Villany, what can be more odious than This?

(2.) *Secondly*, Our Saviour assures us with an Asseveration, that all this hypocritical Devotion shall have no Reward beyond this present Time. *Verily, I say unto you, they have their Reward*; as much as to say, What they gain by this Practice in this World, is all the Reward that attends this Sort of Devotion; I can give you the greatest Assurance that there is no Reward attending it in the future State; but the quite contrary, the severest Punishment. Surely to any one who believes any Thing of a future State, this Declaration of our Saviour's must be sufficient to make us detest and abhor this Practice. What Profit can there be in it sufficient to make up this Loss, the Forfeiture of our Reward in Heaven? This makes me think that a deliberate Hypocrisy cannot consist with any Thing but Atheism, and an utter Disbelief of a future State.

(3.) *Thirdly*,



(3.) *Thirdly*, Thou my Disciple shalt not be as the Hypocrites, implies, that this Sort of Practice is totally inconsistent with the Spirit of Christianity. And indeed there needs no long Argument to make out this. The Christian Spirit is a Spirit of Truth and Honesty, this Practice is grounded on Falshood and Dissimulation; the Christian Spirit is a Spirit of Humility, this Practice proceeds from Pride and Vanity; the Christian Spirit is a Spirit of Simplicity, this Practice is all grounded on sinister Designs and By-ends; the Spirit of Christianity is a Spirit which in every thing Sets God before its Eyes, but this Practice setting God aside, doth all to be seen of Men; the Christian Spirit proceeds upon the Belief of an unseen Happiness, but this Practice proceeds altogether upon worldly Aims and Views: So that no two Things in the World can be more diametrically opposite, than this Practice, and the Spirit of Christianity, in every thing.

Thus now I have done with our Saviour's Caution against an hypocritical Affectation of Devotion. Time will not serve to handle the opposite Direction of *entering into the Closet*, at the sixth Verse; and therefore, after a short Application of what has been said, I shall conclude.

And First, as to what is here supposed, the practice of Prayer; as to the Necessity of which, there is no dispute between the Christian and the Jew, the Pharisaical, and the Christian Righteousness. I have some Reason to doubt that this Duty, though one of the first Rudiments and Principles of natural Religion, is very much neglected. It is visible how little there is of publick Prayer in Families, and how little Resort there is to the

Prayers of the Church; and I doubt our private Devotion thrives no better than our publick; and if so, it is no wonder there are so many other Disorders in our Lives: For Prayer being the constant Means whereby Grace is to be drawn down, if we neglect that, we shall be a very unequal Match for our Corruptions, if we attack them only on our own Strength. There is nothing like the constant use of Prayer for keeping the Mind in a good Frame and Temper; nothing draws down the continually needful Supplies of Grace like it; nothing does better oil the Wheels of Action; in nothing do we more nearly enjoy God, and have a Taste of Heaven upon Earth, than in the due Exercise of Prayer: And therefore let me leave this upon your Consciences as a Duty of the greatest Concern, and which, from Scripture and Experience, I can assure you, will facilitate all other Duties, and help you to run cheerfully the Way of God's Commandments.

As to the vicious Practice of the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* I have been preaching against, perhaps we may be apt to think our selves very clear of all Branches of the Sin of Hypocrisy, which commonly rises from great Pretensions to Religion and Devotion, of which, alas! in these Parts of the World, there is very little to be seen. But as little as there is, I wish that little were clear from Hypocrisy, and that when we draw near to God with our Lips, our Hearts went duly along with them. But without Breach of Charity, there is all the Probability in the World it is quite otherwise; and that our publick Devotions are more for Fashion's sake, and to be seen of Men, than from a true Fear of God; and that though  
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we pronounce the Prayers with our Mouths, we do not trouble our selves to make good the Meaning of them. In our Baptism we solemnly renounce the Devil, the World, and the Flesh, yet all our Days give way to the Suggestions and Temptations of all three. We say often that excellent Prayer, *Our Father which art in Heaven*; but how few are there among us, that love, fear, honour, trust, and obey God, as if we believed in good earnest that he is our heavenly Father? How few are there that shew any Desire that God's Name should be hallowed, that is, always used in an holy, and never in a profane Manner? How few are there that study the Advancement of God's Kingdom, or are any way concerned that his Laws should be universally obeyed? How few are there that forgive Injuries, as if they sincerely believed what they say in that Prayer, that the Forgiveness of their own Sins depends upon it? How few depend on God for their daily Bread, in the honest way of doing their Duty, and do not betake themselves to unlawful Shifts to procure it? How few desire in good earnest to avoid Temptation; and how many take the Devil's Office out of his Hand, and become Tempers both to themselves and others? We are mightily mistaken, if we think Hypocrisy is confined only to those who make more than ordinary Pretensions to Piety and Devotion; for it is Hypocrisy in all our Devotions, to pray for what we do not really desire, and will not use the proper Means and Endeavours to obtain. Instead of a Form of Godliness then, let us study the Power of it, which we shall never attain, till our Hearts join with our Words in Prayer, and we mind  
God

God in them more than Men ; and till the good Things we mention in Prayer, we afterwards use our own sincere Endeavours to acquire. And then when Prayers and Endeavours go hand in hand together, as we may have all Assurance that our Prayers are not hypocritical, but sincere, so we may be confident, that if we patiently hold on, our Labour shall not be without the desired Success, in furnishing us with a plentiful Stock of Grace here, and in bringing us to the Kingdom of Glory hereafter, through the Merits and Mediation of Jesus Christ our blessed Saviour and Redeemer. *To whom, &c.*





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## S E R M O N V.

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### M A T T. VI. 6.

Ver. 6. *But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy Closet, and when thou hast shut thy Door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.*

The Second Sermon on this Text.

**O**UR Saviour having in the preceding Verse, cautioned his Disciples against an hypocritical Way of Devotion, namely, against an Affectation to pray standing in the most publick Places, with a Design to be seen of Men, comes now, in the Words which I have read, to direct to the opposite Sincerity and Secrecy: *But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy Closet, &c.* In which Words we are not to imagine that we are discouraged from publick Prayer, whether in the Church or Family; for neither of these was our Saviour reprehending, but only the undiscreeet and hypocritical Sallies of Devotion, at extraordinary Times and Places. The Meaning of his Exhortation then is, as if he had said, The *Pharisees* are not contented with the ordinary publick Devotions in the Church

Church and Family; but because they would be thought godlier than other People, they break out into great seeming Flights of Devotion in the Markets, or wherever they can find any great Number of People assembled; instead of Devotion to God, aiming only at the Applause of Men: But instead of this vain Humour of pretended Devotion, I will teach you a way in which ye shall vent your real Devotion, and suppress your Pride. When thou hast a mind to shew any extraordinary Devotion, get thee to some secret Place, and let thy Devotions be between God and thine own Soul, and such Devotions he will reward. In the Words thus explained, we may observe these three Things.

I. We have secret Prayer here recommended, before those undiscreef publick Devotions in the Crowds of Spectators.

II. We have a Description of the properest Preparation for this secret Prayer, which is by entering into the Closet, or other secret Place, and shutting out all Company and Business.

III. We have a Promise of an open Reward to this secret Prayer.

These are the three Points which I intend, with God's Assistance, to treat of in this Discourse, in the same Order in which I have proposed them.

I. *First*, I observe here we have secret Prayer recommended, before those undiscreef publick Devotions, which were used by the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* in Crowds of Spectators: *But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy Closet; and when thou hast shut thy Door, pray to thy Father which is in Secret.* There is nothing here intended against the stated publick Devotions of the Church or Family;

Family; only the undiscrēt Sallies of publick Devotion at unseasonable Times and Places, are either condemned, at least in private Christians; (for to them in that private Capacity, I shewed you formerly this Discourse was spoke) or at least comparatively secret Prayer is preferred before it. The Word, *ταμειῶν*, which we render *Closet*, does not signify a Place only set apart for Devotion, but it signifies a Store-house, a Compting-house, a Wardrobe, as well as a private Chamber. I take notice of this for two Reasons. *First*; Because the Secrecy designed by our Saviour in these private Devotions, is such, that he would not have it known or divulged, no not so much as by the Place, what we are about. Now if it were a Place only dedicated to Devotion, every Time we enter into it, this would be a publishing what we are about, and in some Sort the contriving to be seen of Men, at least that it should be known how much Time we spend in our Devotion, which seems to be far different from our Saviour's Design, which is to have no other Witness of these Things but God only. Another Reason for which I take notice of this, is, that I may obviate an Excuse which some poor People have for neglecting this Duty of secret Prayer, namely, that they want the Conveniency of a Closet, for their secret Devotions. But supposing this were so, if they have a Chamber, if they have a Store-house, if they have any other Place where they do their other Business, if they have but a Door with a Lock or Bolt, any Place where they can secretly address themselves to God, this I believe is as much as is designed by these Words, *Enter into thy Closet.*

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But now to come to the chief Thing here recommended, which is secret Prayer, preferably to these undiscreeet Sallies of publick Devotion, at unseasonable Times and Places, there appear to me severall Reasons for this Injunction.

(1.) First, the Consideration of the Persons to whom our Saviour address'd this Discourse, who were private Persons, and in their private Capacity. This I formerly proved at large, and therefore shall not now spend time about it; that tho' the Persons of the Apostles were present, they were there only as private Christians, and had not as yet received their Apostolick Commiſſion. Now considering our Saviour's Hearers, I say, as private Persons, it was very proper to debar them from that way of taking upon them to pray in Publick, which the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* took. Publick Prayer, as well as publick Preaching, was proper to be annexed to the Ministerial Office, and so I find it reckoned by the Apostles, *Acts* vi. 4. Where the two chief Parts of the Province they assign to themselves, are the Exercise of Prayer, and the Ministry of the Word; *But we will give our selves continually to Prayer, and to the Ministry of the Word.* And it cannot be denied, that private Persons invading these Offices, has been the Occasion of much Disorder in the World. It is no Wonder then, that our Saviour, speaking to private Persons in their private Capacity, should recommend to them, whenever they find themselves in a devout Frame for Devotion, to employ it rather in secret Prayer between God and their own Souls, than in framing publick Prayers before the Multitude. This then I assign

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as the first Reason of this Precept, namely, the keeping up Order and Decency.

(2.) This Precept was exceeding proper to avoid Hypocrisy, which was the Sin which the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* were most guilty of, and against which our Saviour takes most particular Care always to guard his Disciples. The *Pharisees* turned Religion into a scenical, theatrical Business; and instead of that, our Saviour bends it all to an inward Principle, a Regard to God, more than a Regard to Men; an acting as in his Sight and Presence, and not a hunting for the Applause of Men. Now Hypocrisy being such a subtle, insinuating Vice, this was one good Way to keep us at a great distance from it, to withdraw us from the Eyes of Men, and to teach us to mind the Eye of God in our extraordinary Devotions. By this Means we may much more easily acquire the Comfort of knowing our own Sincerity, of which there is no better Mark than this, an avoiding of Ostentation in our Devotion, and a diligent drawing near to God in secret Prayer.

(3.) This Precept was excellent to avoid Pride, and to nourish Humility: For though it is possible that a Man may be proud of his secret Devotions, he is in much more danger of that Sin, when, besides the Corruption of his own Heart, he has the Applauses of a great many others to struggle with, and a strong Stream of Admirers, all contributing to feed his Pride and Vanity; and therefore it was not fit that every weak, and often undiscreeet private Christian, should have the Liberty of framing publick Prayer; but that That should be reserved for those whom God should

should endow with a larger Measure of Gifts and Graces, and by his Providence should call out to more publick Employments in the Ministry. So much for the first Thing I observed in the Words, That secret Prayer is recommended to private Christians, before the framing of publick Devotions in the Crowd of Spectators. I come now to

II. The second Thing I observed in the Text, namely, that the properest Preparation for secret Prayer, is by entering into the Closet, or other secret Place, and shutting out all Company and Business: *But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy Closet; and when thou hast shut thy Door, pray to thy Father in Secret.* There are three Things, as I apprehend, contained in this Advice, all very proper to dispose us for this Duty of secret Prayer: Namely,

1. Solitude; or a withdrawing from Company.
2. Leisure; or a withdrawing from Business.
3. A serious Application of the Mind to God; which implies a withdrawing it from all other Objects.

1. *First*, There is nothing more necessary to dispose us for secret Devotion than Solitude, or a frequent withdrawing our selves from Company: *Enter into thy Closet, and shut thy Door.* Every one who has any Knowledge or Experience in private Prayer and Devotion, knows that there is no greater Enemy to Devotion, (bating a scandalous wicked Life) than a Mind dissipated with much Company. Worldly Company and Business strongly diverts the Heart from that inward Recollection and Attention, which is necessary in order to our conversing with God in Prayer. It  
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is very observable, that our blessed Saviour, as he set us in his own Example, a Pattern of all other Virtues, so he gave us great Examples of Retirement for Devotion. For to say nothing of his private Life, before his publick Ministry, which we may well conclude was spent much in Devotion; (for as he grew in Wisdom and Stature, it is observed likewise, that he grew in Favour with God as well as Men) we may see with what a solemn Retirement he began his Ministerial Function, spending no less than Forty Days in the Wilderness. And how frequently do we read of his withdrawing himself from his Disciples into a Mountain apart to pray? And when he was most frequented with Crowds of Disciples and others that attended his Doctrine and Miracles, that he had no Time in the Day, he stole Time from his Rest in the Night, to spend in Devotion and secret Prayer. Devotion is like a fine Spirit, which quickly evaporates if it takes Air; and therefore to preserve it, we should often withdraw our selves from the Company of Men, and be retired with God. And certainly there cannot be a worse Sign of a bad spiritual State, than a great Aversion to Retirement and secret Prayer.

2. A second Thing requisite to dispose the Mind for secret Prayer, is Leisure, or a withdrawing from Business; or rather an inward Tranquillity; that is, not only a Freedom from Business, but from worldly Cares, Lusts, and Passions. For what signifies the withdrawing from Company without, if we carry our Company and Business along with us? Certainly then, *The entering into the Closet, and shutting the Door, must*

signify our affording our selves Leisure to attend on God: And the bare bodily Attendance signifies nothing, if we are absent in Mind; if we carry our Shops, and Stores, and Farms; our Accounts, Bargains, worldly Cares and Projects, along with us; or which is worse, our Lust, Ambition, and Revenge. These are the true Causes, both that our Devotion is so unsuccessful, and so unpleasant and irksome. For how can we expect that God will grant those Prayers which come not from the Heart, but are put up in such a lifeless Manner, and with as little Concern, as we commonly act, when we speak of one thing, and think of another? Or how can we delight in any Company, though never so good, when our Hearts are absent, and we entertain that Company only for Fashion's sake? If ever we design then that our secret Prayers should either be pleasant or successful, we must address our selves to them with Minds recollected, and disintangled from all other Company or Business, or so much as any hankering after them, that we may entirely wait on God.

3. And this leads me to the third Thing observed in this Advice about secret Prayer, namely, a serious Application of the Mind to God; *Pray to thy Father which is in Secret*. There are sundry very useful Subjects I might insist on from these Words; such as 1. The Object of Divine Worship; not Saints and Angels, nor the Virgin *Mary*, but God himself. 2. That we are to approach to God as dutiful Children to a loving Father, willing and ready to help them; *Thy Father*. 3. That there is no Place so retired, where God doth not see, and hear, and mind us; *Thy Father*



*Father in Secret.* 4. The intent Application of the Soul to him in this holy Exercise; *Pray to thy Father in secret.* But I shall say nothing of the first, because we have no Papists, nor Favourers of them here; but the Devotions we put up, we all put them up to Almighty God, thro' the Mediation of Jesus Christ. Nor shall I say any thing of the second, that we are to approach to God as dutiful Children to a loving Father, willing and ready to help us; because This will come in better on the Explication of the Lord's Prayer; which quickly follows in this Chapter. The third and fourth indeed, concerning God's seeing in secret, and the Intent Application of the Soul to him in this holy Exercise, it will not be amiss now briefly to consider. As to the first of these: What I observed from the Words, *Thy Father which is in Secret,* and *thy Father which seeth in Secret,* was, that there is no Place so retired, where God is not present, and doth not see, and hear, and mind us. This like several other of God's Perfections, we poor Mortals cannot easily comprehend, yet we profess to believe it: But O that we could act suitably to this Belief! How circumspect and exact would it make us in all our Deportment? How many Things are there, which the Sight of any sorry Mortal Witness will deter us from committing, which yet we boldly venture on, notwithstanding what we pretend to believe of God's Omnipresence and Omniscience. It is really to be feared, that we delude our selves in this Matter, and that we do not believe this Doctrine, seeing it has so little Influence on our Lives; for if we believed in good earnest that God sees into our Hearts, and all our secretest Transactions, it

would be a mighty powerful Curb to keep us to our good Behaviour. That which Divines call the Exercise of the Divine Presence, is a strong Preservative against Temptations, and deserves therefore to be recommended to our Study and Practice, as a Thing of the greatest Importance. But the last Thing I told you, was contain'd in this Expression of *Praying to our Father in secret*, is the intent Application of the Soul to God in this holy Exercise. For Prayer is not a drawing near to God with the Lips, but with the Heart, and therefore requires the closest Union of Affection to him. This makes it so difficult an Exercise, as being the applying of the Heart and Soul to an invisible and incomprehensible Object. For besides that the Devil sets himself, with all his Art and Cunning, to hinder this close Application to God, our own foolish Minds are so taken up with sensible Objects, and our Imagination is so replenished with the Pictures and Images of them, that it is the hardest Thing in the World to keep it from wandring in Prayer, and requires our utmost Efforts and Endeavours to that Purpose. For this End it is requisite that we be possessed of a very lively Faith in God, of a fervent Love to him, of a Trust and Affiance in his Mercy in Christ Jesus, of a particular Belief of those ample Promises, which he has made to the sincere Performance of this Duty of Prayer: and all little enough to keep the Mind bent to that Degree of Attention, and screwed up to that Measure of Affection which is requisite in Prayer. And this leads me to

III. The third and last Thing I observed in the Words, namely, the Promise of an open Reward

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to this secret Prayer: *And thy Father which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.* It is a very express Promise, and has its Accomplishment both in the many visible Blessings conferred on devout People as the Returns of their Prayers here upon Earth, and in the great final Reward of Glory, which before Men and Angels shall be bestowed upon them in Heaven. And certainly there is no Duty attended with more visible Blessings than this of Devotion. It would be endless to reckon them all up; for it is the great Means of obtaining all Blessings whatsoever, either for our selves or others, either for this Life, or the Life to come, as I have shewed at large on some other Occasions.

And therefore having now finished what I proposed to consider from the Text, I shall conclude with an Exhortation to the Practice of this much neglected Duty of secret Prayer. We all pretend to be Christians, that is, to obey the Laws, and to follow the Example and Conduct of *Christ Jesus*; Now there is nothing he presses more earnestly upon us than the avoiding of Hypocrisy; and This he gives as one of the principal Instances of our avoiding Hypocrisy, our frequenting of secret Prayer. And to encourage us to the diligent Performance of this Duty, he has assured us not only that God takes special Notice of it, as being a Duty performed with a pure regard to himself, but that he will amply reward it; and particularly that there shall be something in the Reward, that shall put a particular Honour on the Secrecy of the Duty; for as he sees it in Secret, he will reward it openly. There are Abundance of other Promises scattered both in the *Old and New Testa-*

*ment* to the same Purpose, with this further Assurance for our Encouragement, that we have a powerful Mediator and Advocate at the Father's right Hand, *Jesus Christ* the Righteous, to further all our Petitions. We are taught that the Condition upon which we are to expect to receive, is that we ask; the Condition upon which we are to expect to find God, is that we seek him; and the Way to have the Door opened to all the Treasures of his heavenly Gifts and Graces is, that we knock incessantly. Certainly if our Saviour had not known this to be the best and most useful Exercise and Employment for us, he would never have given us such extraordinary Encouragement to it. But all it seems will not do; there is nothing from which our corrupt Natures are more backward; there is nothing the Devil takes more Pains to hinder; there is nothing which the World with all its Lusts doth more powerfully divert, than the Exercise of secret Prayer. This is to stop the fountain Head from whence the Streams of all Blessings proceed. This is to put out the Life of Religion; for without This it is but a dead Carcase, all other Duties without this are but dull Morality; it is this blessed Intercourse by Prayer that feeds the Love of God, which is the Soul of all religious Duty. Take away That, and all the rest is a Body without Life; an Heap of Ceremonies without Reality, and any Thing rather than Religion. O! give me leave then to press this Duty of secret Prayer with an unusual Concern. Could we once persuade you to This, we should have an easy Task in all our other Business. For by a diligent frequenting of this Duty, such Light and Knowledge would be darted into  
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your Minds by God himself, that ye would become *Wiser than all your Teachers*. And ye would likewise acquire such a tractable Temper, that ye would not require many Arguments to stir you up to your Duty, but ye would be *a willing People in the Day of God's Power*. And if willing, Prayer in *Christ's Name* would draw down such a Measure of Grace as would anoint the Wheels of Action, and make them go glibly into all Duty. Let me then most earnestly entreat all to set about this Duty. Let those who are Young, *Remember their Creator in the Days of their Youth*, and beg his Blessing and Conduct in that dangerous Time of their Lives. Let Men of Business diligently pray for God's Blessing; otherwise they may in vain rise up early and go to Bed late, and eat the Bread of Carefulness all the Day long. Let Persons in publick Trust, who have the Management of the Publick upon their Hands, mind this Duty; for (a) *Except the Lord build the House, they labour in vain that build it; and except the Lord keep the City, the Watchman waketh but in vain*. Let old Men and Women who must shortly leave the World, think it most proper for them to extricate themselves from worldly Business, and to retire to the Duties of Devotion; let them *Trim their Lamps* and *gird up their Loyns* for their great Journey. In short, let us all *Seek the Lord while he may be found, and call upon him while he is near*. And think not that Devotion will hinder Action; quite otherwise, when ye are dull in other Duties, This will give you a

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(a) Ps. cxxvii. 1.

new Edge; when your Chariot Wheels go slow, This will new oil them; and to your own weak Endeavours This will add new Life and Vigour, that ye will be able to do all Things through *Christ* strengthening you. To conclude then with my Text, *Enter into your Closets; and when ye have shut the Door, pray unto your Father in secret, and your Father which seeth in secret, shall reward you openly.*

Now to him who thus invites and encourages our Addressees; to the Hearer of Prayer, and the God of all Consolation; *To the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, be all Praise, Honour, and Glory, Might, Power and Dominion, for ever and ever. Amen.*



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## S E R M O N VI.

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### M A T T. VI. 7.

*But when ye pray, use not vain Repetitions, as the Heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.*

*Ver. 8. Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what Things ye have need of, before ye ask him.*

**A**S to the Connexion; the general Subject our Saviour was now upon, was the cautioning his Disciples against some Blemishes in the Righteousness of the *Scribes and Pharisees*. Some of these Blemishes proceeded from their wrong Interpretations of the Law, of which we had several Instances in the *5th Chapter* of this Gospel. And some other of them were without any pretence or colour of Law; only through their Pride, Covetousness, and Censoriousness, mixed with other commendable Duties, which quite marred the Grace and Beauty of them. Their Pride ran through all their Duties; but was more notoriously conspicuous in three very eminent ones, Alms-giving, Prayer, and Fasting. The Pride of their Alms-giving we had an Account of, and a serious Caution against it in the *first*

*first four Verses* of this *Chapter*. The same as to their Prayers, at least one Branch of it, their Affectation to be seen of Men in their Devotions, our Saviour cautioned against at the *5th* and *6th Verses*, being the Words immediately preceding the Text. And now in these two *Verses* which I have read, another Part of the Pride adhering to their Devotions is guarded against; namely, the great Length of them. But this is mentioned with another Aggravation; namely, as an Heathenish Vice, and proceeding from their Ignorance of the Nature of God, and the Nature of true Devotion. *But when ye pray, use not vain Repetitions as the Heathen do, &c.*

From the Words I shall endeavour to do these two Things.

I. To give a Description of this Blemish of Devotion, called here *The using of vain Repetitions*.

II. To explain the Aggravations of this Sin, as they may be gathered from the Text and Context.

But before I begin, that we may not think our Saviour is wandering from his Subject, by bringing in the Faults of the Heathen, in the midst of his treating of those of the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*: Not to insist on it that some Copies, instead of the Word *Heathen*, have here the Word *Hypocrites*; we are to consider that even this of long Prayers, as well as hypocritical ones, was one of the Vices of the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*. This same Evangelist, *Chap. xxiii. 14.* gives us an Account of a Woe denounced against them by our Saviour on this Account, that for a Pretence they made long Prayer, in the mean time devouring



ing Widows Houses. *Wo unto you Scribes and Pharisees, Hypocrites, for ye devour Widows Houses, and for a Pretence make long Prayer; therefore ye shall receive the greater Damnation.* And both (a) St Mark and (b) St Luke give us an Account of his cautioning his Disciples against that Part of their Character. And therefore though to aggravate the Odiousness of it, it is added here, that it is an heathenish Custom, yet being likewise a Custom of the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, it was very pertinent to bring it in, in this Place; where he is cautioning his Disciples against the Blemishes of the Righteousness of the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*.

1. But now to come to the Fault itself, it is called here, *Using vain Repetitions, and much speaking in Prayer.* It is no easy Matter to give either a right Description of the Fault, or of the Reasons why it became so faulty. The chief Fault of it, it seems, lay in turning Devotion from the affectionate Work of the Heart, to the Work of the Invention, Memory or Tongue: Or to an idle Repetition of the same Thing over and over again. Some of the Jewish Writers tell us of the *Pharisees*, that they would make Prayers three Hours long; and we read of the Priests of *Baal* that (c) *they cried to their God from Morning to Noon, saying, O Baal bear us.* Now there were several Reasons for which they made these long Prayers. The *Pharisees* we are expressly told, did it for a Shew or Pretence, *Luk. xx. 47.* that is, that they might gain to themselves a Character of devout and religious People; a Character

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(a) Mar. xii. 40. (b) Luk. xx. 47. (c) 1 Kings xviii. 26.  
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which turned mightily to Account for their covetous and ambitious Designs. And this shews us how properly it comes in here, under this Head of their Pride. The Heathens had really no better Notions of their Gods; but thought they might be harangued and persuaded, like Men, by human Eloquence; or even wearied out by Dunning and Importunity.

2. And this leads me to the *second* Thing I was to explain; namely, wherein the Faultiness of this Practice doth consist.

There is great Probability the Fault of these Devotions did not lie only in the Length of them. For if a true Spirit of Devotion is kept up all the time, we cannot well exceed either in the Frequency or the Continuance of our Addresses to God; or even in an holy Importunity at the Throne of Grace. Nor is it unlawful to make Repetition of the same Words and Petitions in Prayer, so it be done from a Spirit of Devotion. We have several Examples in the *Holy Scriptures* of both these Practices. What a long, yet excellent Prayer did *Solomon* pronounce at the Dedication of the Temple? And *David* makes frequent Repetitions of the same devout Prayers and Thanks-givings in the Book of the *Psalms*. It is written of our Saviour too, that three several times he prayed in the Garden, that the Cup of Sufferings might pass from him; and that in these three Prayers he made use of the same Words. And as to the lengthning of his Devotions, in *Luke* vi. 12. we are told that *He went out to a Mountain to pray; and continued all Night in Prayer to God*. It is true, the Words are by some otherwise translated, that he continued all Night in God's House of Prayer,

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or in a Synagogue dedicated to God for that purpose; for the Greek Word *προσευχή* signifies both Prayer, and an House of Prayer. But granting this, it is most probable that that Night was spent in Devotion, for else why should he stay all Night in an House of Prayer? From all which it would seem that it is not the bare Length of Devotions, nor the using Repetitions in them, that is simply condemned.

To satisfy our selves then more positively in this Blemish of both Pharisaical and Heathenish Devotion, which is here condemned, let us a little more narrowly consider the Text and Context. From whence we may gather the following Observations, which will give us great Light into this Matter.

1. That Ostentation, and other worldly Aims and Designs from long Prayers are here condemned.

2. That unworthy Conceptions of God, as if he either knew not our Wants, or were unwilling to relieve them, till informed and moved by our Persuasions or Importunities; are here likewise condemned.

3. That the Prescribing to God in a great many worldly and indifferent Things, which lengthens out Prayers, is likewise here censured.

4. That our wrong Conceptions concerning the nature of Prayer, turning it from the Heart to a mere external laborious Service, are here rectified.

5. From the whole, that all Things considered, few Words in Prayer are best, and fittest for the generality of Mankind.



All these being founded on the Text, and affording us several good Helps and Directions for our Devotions, and particularly being introductory of that excellent Form of Devotion, which immediately follows in the Lord's Prayer, and casting great Light upon it, will require our more particular Consideration, and shall accordingly be the Subject of my Discourse at this Time,

I. The *first* Thing I observe from this Prohibition of Vain Repetitions, and much speaking in Prayer, is, that the Sinews of Ostentation and Covetousness, and divers other Vices, which the *Pharisees* carried on by means of their long Prayers, are here cut off: And we are taught a Simplicity in our Prayers, and a Freedom from all sinister Design. I gather this Observation, chiefly from the Context, and from comparing this Text with other Quotations of the same, by this same Apostle, and some other of the Evangelists. As to the Context, it is plain our Saviour in it is reprehending the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, particularly as to their Pride; that they did their Alms to be seen of Men; that they prayed in the most publick Places to be seen of Men; and that in fasting they disfigured their Faces, that they might appear unto Men to fast. It being plain then that this is the Subject our Saviour is here treating of, if this which is said of Vain Repetition and much speaking in Prayer, can be reduced to it, there is all the Reason in the World that it should be admitted. And there is no difficulty in the Thing, when it is so plainly marked to our Hand in the other Quotation about long Prayers already mentioned, that the *Pharisees* make them for a Shew, hereby turning their Devotion into Vanity; and out of Covetousness,



Covetousness, that they might make a Prey of the more simple, particularly that they might devour Widows Houses.

From hence let us observe what an abominable Practice it is, to put on Religion only for a Cloak to Pride, Covetousness, or any other carnal Designs. Time has been, and that in the Memory of some yet living, when a Sett of Hypocrites by their long Prayers, and other acted Devotions, came not only to impose upon Widows, and the more simple Sort, but upon a whole Nation, till they destroyed the King and Country by a Civil War; and seated themselves in the chief Seats of Government, and glutted their Pride, Ambition, Covetousness, and Cruelty to the uttermost. Then this excellent Form of Prayer, which our Saviour himself composed, was laid aside, as a mean Thing in comparison of their long extemporary Effusions. But I need not insist on this, for we are run into the other extrem; the Hypocrisy of that Age has begot the Atheism and Irreligion of this, and instead of their long Prayers, we are come to none at all. But before we have done with our Saviour's Directions here about Prayer, we shall meet with several Things relating to our own Case as well as theirs.

II. To go on then, the *second* Thing I observed from the Words was, that unworthy Conceptions of God, as if he either knew not our Wants, or were unwilling to relieve them, till informed and moved by our Persuasions or Importunities; are here likewise condemned. *They think, says my Text, that they shall be heard for their much speaking.* And again, *Be not ye there-fore*

*fore like unto them, for your Father knoweth what Things ye have need of before ye ask him.* Upon this Observation I must first remove an erroneous Notion of Almighty God, which this Practice was built upon; and then answer an Objection, which rises from the true Doctrine in this particular.

(1.) The erroneous Notion of Almighty God, this Practice of much speaking in Prayer is built upon, is, that he is like unto us weak Men; unknowing in many Things, till we inform him; averse to some Things, till we persuade him; forgetful, till we remind him; and wavering and unresolv'd, till we fix him by our Arguments and Importunity. All, unworthy Notions of God, which our Saviour by the Doctrine of my Text, endeavours to correct and remove. And indeed nothing could have been said more proper of them, than as our Saviour here doth, to leave upon them the blot of Heathenish Ignorance. The Heathens knew no better most of them; and indeed their Gods deserved to be no better thought of. But we Christians should have quite other Notions of God Almighty; namely, that he knows all our Wants before we ask him, and knows them infinitely better than we do our selves: That he knows the best Way of supplying our Wants, and the best fitted to our Circumstances: That he loves us, and is of himself ready and willing to relieve us, we doing our Duty in applying our selves to him: That all Rhetorick and fair Words signifie nothing with him, who knows our Heart, and looks only at that; and values the Sincerity thereof infinitely beyond the finest Speech that can be made to him. If we have these Notions  
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of God, we shall find long Prayers very needless on his Account.

(2.) But then if this be the Case, it may be objected, what signify Prayers at all? We cannot pretend to inform God of any Thing but what he knows already; nor to persuade him by our Prayers to alter his own wise Decrees and Resolutions: This Doctrine it is to be feared, if it teaches any Thing, teaches too much, and will induce Men to abstain from Prayer altogether. In answer to this Objection, the true Grounds of Prayer must be briefly remembred, that the Necessity of it may appear, notwithstanding God's previous Knowledge of our Wants, and Readiness to relieve us upon our doing our Duty. Prayer then, notwithstanding this Knowledge and Readiness, is still necessary upon these three or four Accounts. *First,* As an Homage due to Almighty God. *Secondly,* As a Condition without which God will not grant the Things that be needful to us. *Thirdly,* As a Means to put and keep our Souls in good Frame and Temper. *Fourthly,* To make us sensible of our Wants, and of our constant Dependance on Almighty God for Supplies. And we may assure our selves, if God loves us ever so well, his common Way of expressing his Love to his Children, is by exciting and giving them Grace to ask, and not by granting them his Favours without asking. These Things, if I had Time to handle them particularly, would shew us the great Use and Necessity of Prayer, though there is no Occasion to heap up many Words with God. To go on then,

III. The Prescribing to God in a great many Particulars, and those such often as we cannot be



sure are good for us, or do any way tend to his Service, (a Custom by which Prayers are much lengthened) is here likewise censured: *Your Father knoweth what Things ye have need of, before ye ask him.* How many are there, who, if they might be their own Carvers, would mightily exalt themselves, and depress others? They would be sure in their Prayers to reckon up a large Catalogue of earthly Blessings of all Sorts, which they would draw down upon themselves, without considering how prejudicial those very Things might prove, if they were granted. When the Mother of *Zebedee's* Children petitioned our Lord for her two Sons, that they might sit, one on his Right Hand, and the other on his Left, in his Kingdom; meaning thereby that they should be the two chief Statesmen and Favourites in his worldly Kingdom: Had she obtained what she aimed at, it might have been the Ruin of these her Children, by engaging them deeply in the worldly Spirit, and withdrawing their Minds from better Things. All those Parts of our Prayers in which we pray for worldly Blessings, more than a Competency fit for our Station and Circumstances, had better be cut short, and involved in a general Resignation to the Will of God. For we know not whether these Things are good for Persons in our Circumstances, and whether they may not prove Impediments rather than Furtherances of our eternal Happiness. This is the great Rule by which all is to be tried, and on which all depends. There are some Persons fitted for the Management of a moderate Fortune, who, if they were promoted to great Wealth and Honour, would be overcome with Pride and Pleasures; yet these  
Persons



Persons, admiring and envying the State of others above them, are apt to wish and pray for all the Gaiety and Splendour of those higher Stations; which, if they had it, God knows would be the only endangering their far more valuable, spiritual, and eternal State, for the empty Vanities of this World. This is but one Instance how our Prayers might be shortened, by leaving it to God's Wisdom and Goodness in general, to carve out for us what Portion of earthly Blessings he thinks fit, and knows to be best for us. And so for the Conduct of publick Affairs and the Government of the World, it is best to put up our Petitions in general Terms, and to pray, (a) *That we may lead quiet and peaceable Lives in all Godliness and Honesty.* But for the particular Ways and Methods how this is to be effected, it is best to leave them to God, and to meddle with Particulars no further than he has encouraged us in his holy Word. This same Notion of committing worldly Things in general to God's Care, without running out into many particular Suits, is not only observed by our Saviour in this excellent Prayer, which immediately follows, and is every where to be seen in the Practice of the Apostles, who confine their Petitions to spiritual Blessings, with a wonderful Resignation as to Temporals; but it has likewise been observed by some wise Heathens, who have really delivered admirable good Divinity on this Subject; only that they speak of the Gods, in the plural Number, instead of our one Great

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(a) 1 Tim. ii. 2.

God. What can be finer, or more divine, than that of *Juvenal*:

*Permittes ipsis expendere Numinibus, quid  
Conveniat nobis, rebusque sit utile nostris.*

*Nam pro jucundis aptissima quæque dabunt Dii.  
Charior est illis Homo quam sibi.*

Instead of putting up a great many Requests for Things which we cannot foresee how they will prove, he advises the leaving it to the Gods to chuse what they think most proper for us; as knowing much better what is fit for our Circumstances, and taking a better Care of us, than we do of our selves.

IV. *Fourthly*, Our wrong Conceptions concerning the Nature of Prayer, turning it from being the Work of the Heart, to a meer external laborious Service, are here rectified. Long Prayers are the Work of the Invention, the Work of the Memory, Sentences laid together by Art and Eloquence; but if they were reduced to what comes from the Heart and Affection (as there is nothing else God regards in Prayer) they would be short enough; for it is not the much Speaking, but the ardent Loving of God, that he minds. Now this Intenseness of Affection, requires a vast Degree of Devotion indeed, to make it hold out to any great Length.

V. The last Thing I observed from the Words, and it is an Observation resulting from the whole of them, is, That whether we consider God's Perfection, or our Imperfection, or the Danger of a Pharisaical Devotion; few Words in Prayer are best, and accordingly the Lord's Prayer is framed after this Model, the Petitions of it being very short, but very comprehensive.

(1.) God's

(1.) God's Perfection is such, that it requires a Treatment with all sort of Respect. It is *Solomon's* Advice, *Eccl. v. 2.* *Be not rash with thy Mouth, and let not thy Heart be hasty to utter any thing before God; for God is in Heaven and thou upon Earth, therefore let thy Words be few.* If we are to make our Addressees to a Superiour upon Earth, we take Care that our Words be few and deliberate. Further, we have shewed already from the Nature of God, that he does not want to be informed of our Wants, or to be stirred up by Arguments to relieve us; and therefore a great Part of our Prayers being lengthened from those Topics, may well be cut short. Further, the implicit Faith we ought to have in God's Care and Providence, and in the Mediation of Jesus Christ, may encourage us to rest upon general Addressees to God, without more particular Instructions, which would be more necessary, if we were to Petition a less perfect Being.

(2.) Our own Imperfection too is such, that we cannot indeed fit our long Addressees to God, without a great deal of Impertinency. As to worldly Things, it has been shewn that we know not what, or how much of them is good for us; and therefore all these are to end in begging our daily Bread, or such a Competency of the good Things of this World, as God knows will be most proper for Persons in our Circumstances. And as to spiritual Blessings, they are by our Saviour summed up in few Words; (a) *Seek ye first, says he, the Kingdom of God, and the Righteousness*

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(a) Matt. vi. 33.

*thereof, and all these Things (worldly Blessings) shall be added to you.* And elsewhere all is summed up in the Gift of the Holy Spirit, *Luke xi. 13. If ye then being Evil, know how to give good Gifts unto your Children; how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?* Though it is very decent for a Child to depend upon his Father, and to come to him for the Supply of all his Wants; how unbecoming and impertinent would it be for the Child to enumerate to the Father all Things that he must give, and even to prescribe the Sorts and Quantity, which are fit to be left to his Wisdom and Discretion?

(3.) If we consider the Danger of a Pharisaical Devotion; that is, Devotion not coming from the Heart; few Words are best. It is extream difficult to keep the Affections long bent; and much Speaking doth naturally dissipate Devotion; and the addressing to God without the Heart, as it is no acceptable Service to him, so it is attended with very bad Consequences as to our selves; it is apt to make us loath and grow weary of our Devotion; it is not attended with the due Returns of Prayer, which is apt to tempt us to a Disbelief of the great Promises which are made to that Duty; besides that long Prayers are apt to feed a spiritual Pride, and to tempt us to rest there, as if we had done our Duty; whereas Prayer is but one half; Endeavours must duly attend them, or else we do but tempt God, and lose our Labour.

To conclude then; what our Prayers want in Length of Words, let it be added to the Eagerness and Intensity of our Affection; let our Hearts be always kept in a good Frame, and in



in a right Disposition to receive the Influences of God's Grace; and let all be diligently backed with vigorous Endeavours to avoid those Sins which we pray against, and to put in Practice those Graces we pray for; and then we may be sure that our Devotion is sincere and to good Purpose.

But for a further help of our Devotion, here follows that excellent Form of it, commonly called the *Lord's-Prayer*, which we are next, God willing, to explain; for which I beg the Assistance of your Prayers to Almighty God, through the Mediation of Jesus Christ. *To whom, &c.*



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## S E R M O N VII.

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### M A T T. VI. 9.

*After this Manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in Heaven, hallowed be thy Name.*

Ver. 10. *Thy Kingdom come. Thy Will be done in Earth, as it is in Heaven.*

Ver. 11. *Give us this Day our daily Bread.*

Ver. 12. *And forgive us our Debts, as we forgive our Debtors.*

Ver. 13. *And lead us not into Temptation, but deliver us from Evil; for thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory, for ever. Amen.*

#### The First Sermon on this Text.

**T**HIS excellent Form of Prayer being composed and dictated by our Lord himself to his Disciples, deserves, on that Account, a very particular Regard; and therefore I shall apply myself to as diligent an Explication of it as I can.

But before I come to speak to the particular Petitions, there are several good Things we may observe from it in general, which, because I think they will not so properly fall in from any one of the

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the Parts, as from the whole, I shall therefore consider at this Time, before we enter on the Particulars.

I. The first Thing then I observe from this Prayer, is concerning the Lawfulness and Usefulness of Set Forms of Prayer. For, taking this Institution of our Saviour's at the lowest, namely, that it was a proper Help for his weak Disciples, to assist them, till the Descent of the Holy Ghost; when it is to be supposed they would learn to walk alone, without Leading-strings, and to frame Prayers of their own, fitted for all Occasions; taking it, I say, at present for no more but this, as a seasonable Supply to the Infirmities of his Disciples, I argue from thence for the Use and Conveniency of Set Forms of Devotion at this Day. For

(1.) If we consider the Circumstances of the Church, and what the Generality of Christians is, we must confess they want as much Assistance in their Devotions now, as our Saviour's Disciples did then. If there are any endowed with larger Measures of the Spirit, we must be sensible that there are but very few such, in comparison of the far greater Number of weak Christians, who want the Help of better Compositions for Devotion, than they themselves can frame.

(2.) If we consider the Difficulty of forming and framing our Devotions aright, we shall be convinced that well composed Forms of Devotion are very useful. There is nothing perhaps we are more ignorant of, than the Nature of God, and the right Manner of addressing him. It was an old Observation and Complaint of some wise Heathens, that Men mixed their own corrupt  
Sentiments

Sentiments and Desires in their Prayers to their Gods; nay, that they put up such Prayers to their Gods, as they would be ashamed to speak out, and to own to Men: Prayers, dishonourable to God, and hurtful to the Persons that present them, and to all their Neighbours, who would have been very much injured by the Grant of such uncharitable Petitions, as Men, when left to themselves, would be apt to present to God Almighty. And it was not only the Heathens were guilty of this, but the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, the best of the *Jewish* Doctors, who made such long Prayers, as if they understood not that *Our heavenly Father knows what Things we have need of, before we ask him.*

(3.) Let us consider that the *Jewish* Church, in our Saviour's Days, used several Set Forms of Devotion, which our Saviour was so far from reprov- ing, that he himself imitated them, taking most of this excellent Form of Prayer out of the *Jewish* Liturgies, as has been observed by several, who are well acquainted with that Sort of Learning. *John* the Baptist too taught his Disciples set Forms of Prayer, as we may gather from that Desire of our Lord's Disciples, *Luke xi. i. Lord teach us to pray, as John also taught his Disciples.* Upon which Request our Saviour taught them this same Prayer. The Primitive Church used always Li- turgies, or Set Forms, several of which are pre- served to this Day: And not only the *Romish* but the *Greek* and the Reformed Churches too, every one of them have their Set Forms. Which makes it so much the stranger, that the Presbyterians, In- dependents, Anabaptists, and Quakers, those late Sects among us, should muster up this as an Ob-  
jection



jection against the Church of *England*, that she has prescribed a Form of Common-Prayer.

(4.) But as to the Presbyterians, it is very observable, that after they had preached and wrote a great deal against Set Forms, they found it necessary at last, (to prevent the Nonsense, Rashness, and other Inconveniencies of extemporary Effusions) to prescribe Forms of their own, by the Name of a *Directory* for the publick Worship of God.

So much for the first Observation I made, that Set Forms of Prayer are neither usefess nor unlawful.

As this first Observation is made from our Saviour's composing a Form for the Use of his Disciples, the next three general Observations I shall make, shall be from the Connexion of this Prayer with what went before. Our Saviour had in the Context reprehended three Errors in the Devotions of those Times. One was a Pharisaical Ostentation; the other the spending Devotion in Words, without minding the Sincerity and Intenseness of Affections; the third was a prescribing to God, in many Particulars which he knew better than we, and before we ask him. Now in opposition to these Errors, and with a direct Design to amend them, as appears by the Particle, *Therefore, After this Manner therefore praye*; in opposition to these Errors, I say, there are three Things we may observe.

1. In opposition to Ostentation, that our Saviour calls us away from the Eyes of Men, to mind *Our Father which is in Heaven*:

2. That

2. That in opposition to vain Repetitions, and a great Luxuriancy of Words, he has set us a Model of a very short compendious Prayer.

3. That in opposition to our prescribing to God in a great many minute Particulars, we are taught here to propose our Wants and Requests in general Terms, leaving the Particulars to Almighty God, to answer those Wants in what particular Manner he pleases. Now then,

II. The second general Observation I make from this Prayer, is, that we are called off from minding the Eyes of Men, to mind only *Our Father which is in Heaven.*

In our Prayers our Business is solely with God; and therefore, laying aside Pride, and Vanity, and Affectation to be thought pious and devout; and laying aside all worldly Designs, of which the *Pharisees* were full, who *for a Pretence made long Prayers that they might devour Widows Houses;* let us open our Hearts to God, who is infinitely wise to know all our Wants, infinitely powerful, and infinitely good and willing to relieve them. And the Consideration, that it is to him, and to him only, that we speak, will be a good Direction as to all the other Rules we are to observe in our Devotions.

III. The third general Observation I would make, relates to the Shortness of our Prayers: *After this Manner therefore pray ye;* q. d. Seeing therefore ye have, or ought to have better Notions of God, than that he wants to be either informed or persuaded by us; or that he is delighted with a Fluency of Words and Rhetorick, as Men are; let us address our selves to him accordingly, more with Vehemency and Ardency of Affections, than

than with many Words: And accordingly I give you an Example here of a Prayer very short and substantial.

Before I leave this Observation, the Usefulness of this Prayer from its Brevity, is to be considered; notwithstanding something I said formerly on this Head. And here I can easily discern a threefold Use of Brevity.

(1.) That it suits better with the Conceptions we ought to have of Almighty God.

(2.) That it consults better our own Weakness and Infirmities.

(3.) That it gives us a truer Notion of Prayer and Devotion.

(1.) First, Few Words in Prayer suit better with the Conceptions we ought to have of Almighty God. If he were a Being that did not concern himself with Human Affairs, but as he is appealed to, and solicited to consider our Business, or if like some of the Princes of this World, he were so taken up in minding the great and weighty Affairs of State, that he had no Leisure to attend to our little Concerns; or if he were a Being drowsy or sleepy, or diverted with other Things, than the Addresses of his Creatures; (which seems to be the Notion the Priests of *Baal* had of him, and which *Elijah* mocked them for: (a) *Cry aloud, says he, for he is a God; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a Journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked.*) Or if God were a Being, like some Men, dull of Apprehension, that did not under-

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(a) 1 Kings xviii. 27.



stand a Thing, unless it were inculcated over and over again, and explained with abundance of Care to their weak Apprehensions. Or if he were a Being hard to be moved, as some Men are, to come to Account, and to pay their Debts, except they are wearied out with Abundance of Dunning and Importunity. Or if he were to be cajoled and flattered, as several inferiour Beings are, with fair Words, and a smooth Tongue: Then indeed there might be some good Ground for a great many Words in our Addresses to Almighty God. But all these are very unworthy Notions of God, and we are taught to have quite other Conceptions of him, namely, that (a) *His Eyes are upon the Ways of Man, and that he seeth all his Goings*: Nay, that (b) *the Eyes of the Lord are in every Place, beholding the Evil and the Good*. And therefore there is no Occasion of Words to stir up his Attention. That the smallest and most minute Things as well as the greatest, fall under the Care of his Providence. (c) *Not so much as a Sparrow falls to the Ground without him; and that the very Hairs of our Head are all numbred*: And therefore there is no fear that the minding of greater Affairs will so employ him, as to make him forgetful of our lesser ones. He is *The Searcher of Hearts, and Trier of the Reins*. (d) *He knows our Down-sitting, and Up-rising, and understands our very Thoughts afar off*. So that there is no Occasion to explain Matters minutely to him. (e) He runs out and embraces his returning Prodigals, and even pre-

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(a) Job xxxiv. 21. (b) Prov. xv. 3. (c) Matt. x. 29:  
 (d) Psal. cxxxix. 2. (e) Luke xv. 20.



vents their fine Speeches: He is more ready to hear than we to pray; and to grant more than we either desire or deserve. So that there is no Occasion of either Dunning, or long Arguments with him. And therefore all this Prolivity, and many Words in Prayer, is unsuitable to those reverent Thoughts and Apprehensions we should have of Almighty God.

(2.) Few Words in Prayer likewise suit better with our own Weakness and Infirmities. Not many know what to say to God, he is so infinitely above our weak Apprehensions. (a) *He is in Heaven and we upon Earth, therefore let our Words be few.* The Memories too of the greater Part of Mankind are but weak, and therefore short Prayers for them are best. And above all, our Affections are so wandering, that we cannot easily fix them long on so glorious an Object. And such is the Nature of Speech, that as it tires and flags the Spirit, so it dissipates a Spirit of Devotion, which as it is fed by Meditation, so it is spent by many Words and Talking.

(3.) Brevity in Words gives us a truer Notion of the Nature of Devotion. For Prayer is the Language of the Heart to God; and great Care is to be taken that it be not turned to *A drawing near to God with the Lips, while the Heart is far from him*; that is, to an outward Formality, instead of an inward Devotion. For avoiding of which, some have recommended in our secret Devotions the abstaining from Words altogether, and the betaking our selves to mental

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(a) Eccl. v. 2.

Prayer. And indeed the Use of Words in secret Prayer cannot be to express our Minds to God, who understands the Language of our Hearts; but only to affect our selves, and to kindle our Devotion to a greater Height; which Aim it misses of, when it runs out in too great a Length of Words.

IV. The fourth general Observation I would make, and which our Saviour seems to deduce from the Doctrine he had formerly laid down, relates chiefly to the avoiding too great a Minuteness or Particularizing in Prayer, as a Thing not so proper for us, who should come to God like Children to a Father, exposing in general our Nakedness and Wants, but leaving it to him to supply them in such a Manner as he thinks most convenient for us. This seems to be very fairly deducible from the foregoing Words, applied to this Prayer, with a *Therefore*. The foregoing Words were, *Your Father knoweth what Things ye have need of, before ye ask him*; then follows, *After this Manner therefore pray ye*. And the Prayer we find consists all of general Petitions, leaving the particulars to God himself to bestow, as he in his Wisdom and Goodness should think fit. In the *first* Petition we pray that his Glory may be advanced, which is the main End of all, to which all our other Ends and Designs ought to be subordinate. But we leave it to himself to contrive the infinite Ways and Means how to promote his own Glory. Only in the *second* Petition we pray for the Advancement of his Kingdom, that is, the Propagation and flourishing State of the Gospel; That being the chief Means whereby his Glory is to be promoted; leaving still the particular

ticular Ways and Means how This is to be carried on, to himself. In the *third* Petition we pray that he may be obeyed, and his Blessed Will better complied with here upon Earth, in imitation of the cheerful Service, that is performed to him in Heaven. But as to the innumerable Particulars of this Petition, and the infinite Ways and Means how it is to be effected, we leave all That to himself. In the *fourth* Petition, instead of prescribing to God what Portion of worldly good Things we would have him to bestow upon us, all is summed up in a Petition for our daily Bread. Then for our Souls, all our Petitions are comprehended in these two; the Pardon of Sin, and the Guarding us from being overcome with Temptation; leaving all the numberless Particulars of these Things to God himself; how, and when, and how much he thinks fit to bestow. This is a Thing we ought to learn, either not to enlarge upon Particulars of Things not absolutely necessary, or at least to submit them to God's wiser Choice, whether, and when, and how, and in what Measure he thinks fit to grant them.

V. A fifth general Observation we may make from this Prayer, is, concerning the right Preparations and Dispositions with which we ought to draw near to God. And of these we may easily observe a great many noble ones pointed at in this very Prayer. I shall instance in the following Graces. Faith; the Love of God; the Love of our Neighbour; Humility and Resignation; Watchfulness against Temptations, and a Readiness to join Obedience with Prayer; All noble Dispositions for the Duty.



1. I begin with Faith, which is a fundamental Grace, necessary in all our Addresses to God, as the Apostle says. (a) *He that cometh to God, must believe that he is, and that he is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek him.* Now this Disposition of Faith appears in the very first Words of this Prayer, *Our Father.* As Children come to a Father, believing him both ready and willing to relieve them, and with an implicit Faith in his Goodness, leaving it to himself to supply them in what Manner he thinks most fit and expedient; so should we go to God, with an holy Confidence presenting our Requests; but withal leaving it entirely with him in what Manner he will be pleased to relieve us.

2. Another good Disposition with which we are to address our selves to Prayer, is the Love of God; and this is very visible in this Prayer, both in that we are supposed to come to God as Children to a Father; and in that we pray in the first and chief Place for the Advancement of his Honour and Glory; and what we pray for our selves is only to fit us the better for his Service and Obedience.

3. A third good Disposition for Prayer, and very observable here, is Charity, or the Love of our Neighbour. For all the good Things which we pray for our selves, we pray likewise for our Neighbour. We say, *Our Father*, not my Father; we pray for his daily Bread, and for the Pardon of his Sins, and that he may avoid the Snares of Temptation, as well as we pray for these

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(a) Heb. xi. 6.



Blessings to our selves. Nay, which is very remarkable, we pray for the Pardon of our Sins, only upon Condition, and with such Limitation, as we forgive them that have injured us. So that we put their Souls and ours in the same Bottom, and even in our secretest Prayers exercise that great Law of Charity of loving our Neighbour as our selves.

4. A fourth good Disposition for Prayer, and very observable in this Form of our Saviour's is Humility and Resignation. The whole of it favours of this Grace. By coming in the Quality of Children, we acknowledge our own Ignorance and Want of Discretion to carve for our selves, and submit our selves to the wiser Will of our Father. By confessing him to be in Heaven and our selves upon Earth, we own our own Infirmities and his Perfections, and so do implicitly submit all our imperfect Desires to his all-sufficient Wisdom and Goodness. By preferring the Petitions for his Glory before those which are for our selves, we shew that it is our Meaning and Desire that all these should be regulated by those. By saying, *Thy Will be done*, we submit all our Desires to his. By praying for but a bare Competency of worldly Blessings, we shew that we are far from desiring great Things for our selves. By begging Forgiveness of our Sins, we shew that we are far from pleading Merit, but that in all Humility we implore Mercy. And lastly, by praying against Temptations we acknowledge our own Insufficiency to take the Conduct and Management of our selves, and that we are undone without the continual Assistance of the Grace of God.

5. A fifth good Disposition for Prayer, or at least Concomitant of it, is a Watchfulness against Temptations. Our Saviour joined these two together, *Watch and pray that ye enter not into Temptation*. And the bare Praying for Pardon of Sin, without great Vigilance and Care to guard against it for the future, is but a Mocking of God, and a Deceiving of our own Souls. The making of this then one Part of the Prayer, *Not to lead us into Temptation, but to deliver us from Evil*; shews us how we ought to have an Heart well fortified against all manner of Temptations, and ready to do our utmost Endeavour to shake off all evil Habits. For that Circle of confessing our Sins, and begging God's Pardon for them, and committing them quickly again, is a great Sign of Unfincerity, and must needs put a stop to the Pardon we sue out at the same Time.

6. I observe this Prayer is so framed, that all along it supposes an Heart ready to yield Obedience to God's Commandments. By addressing to God as *Our Father which is in Heaven*, we own his Authority to command, and our Duty to obey. By praying that his Name may be hallowed, that is, that he may be duly honoured, we shew and profess our selves disposed to pay him all Honour, which cannot be done but by paying a Respect to his holy Laws. By praying for the Advancement of his Kingdom, we own our selves his faithful and obedient Subjects. By praying that *his Will may be done on Earth, as it is in Heaven*, we pray for Grace to enable us cheerfully and readily to execute all his Precepts. By begging of him our daily Bread, we both shew our Dependance on his Providence, and that we  
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are resolv'd to endeavour after a Livelihood in an honest and lawful Way, such as we may look up to him for his Blessing upon it. By praying for the Forgiveness of our Sins, we profess our selves to repent of them in good earnest: And when we add, *As we forgive them that trespass against us*, we shew our actual Compliance with one of the difficultest Duties, *the Love of Enemies*. And when we pray *Not to be led into Temptation, but to be delivered from Evil*, we deprecate all those Things, which may lead us aside from our Duty.

VI. Lastly, there is but one general Observation more I shall make from this Prayer; namely, that it is both to be a Form and Model, upon which to frame all our other Prayers; and likewise as a Prayer itself. This I gather both from the two Accounts St *Matthew* and St *Luke* have given us of this Prayer, and from the Practice of the Church. St *Matthew* says here, *After this Manner therefore pray ye*, intimating that our Saviour brought in this Form as a Model to shew us how we were to avoid several Errors in the Prayers both of the *Jews* and *Heathen*; and what good Rules we should observe in our Devotions, the chief of which I have already mentioned. Then St *Luke* gives us an Account, *Luk. xi. 2.* how in answer of some of his Disciples Desire that he would teach them to pray, as *John* taught his Disciples; he taught them this Prayer, saying, *when ye pray say, Our Father which art in Heaven, &c.*

These are the Observations I have made from this excellent Prayer in general. I need not tell you how useful they would be in our Life and Conversation, if we would duly form our Devotion and our Practice by these Rules.



For by taking help from this, and some other well composed Forms, we should both shew more Reverence to God, and keep our selves from several Indiscretions, which the trusting to an extemporary Way occasions.

And by contracting the Length of our Words, and employing that Zeal in the Intenseness of Affections, we should make our Prayers more hearty, and should find greater Life and Warmth in them.

And by contenting our selves modestly with a general exposing of our Wants, without setting our Hearts too much on any one particular Manner of supplying them, and especially without prescribing it to God Almighty, we should both better consult his Honour, and much more surely obtain what we want.

And if we draw near to God with those right Preparations and Dispositions of Faith, and Love and Charity, of Resignation, Watchfulness and Resolution of Obedience, Devotion would be a great Pleasure; and we should be sure of many gracious Returns of our Prayers, which now for Want of those good Dispositions we go without.

And lastly, if we formed our Devotions by this Model, we should have God's Glory continually in our Eye, before the Thought of any Thing for our selves; we should be as glad of our Neighbour's Benefit as of our own; and we should have the Satisfaction in this difficult Part of Religion to follow the best Guide, and to steer by the Direction of so skilful a Pilot, till we arrived at the blessed End of our Voyage, the Salvation of our Souls, by the Merits and Mediation



VII.] *on the Lord's-Prayer.* MATT. VI. 9. 103  
diation of the same *Jefus Christ* ; who when we  
pray taught us, how we should address our selves  
to God.

*Now to him with the Father, and the Hcly  
Ghoft, be all Praise, Honour and Glory, for ever  
and ever. Amen.*



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## S E R M O N VIII.

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M A T T. VI. 9.

— *Our Father which art in Heaven.*

The Second Sermon on this Text.

**H**A V I N G at the last Occasion discoursed to you of some general Observations from the Lord's-Prayer; I come now to consider it more particularly in the several Parts of it. In the Prayer we have these three Things.

I. The Invocation; *Our Father which art in Heaven.*

II. The Petitions, being Six in Number, of which the three first relate to God; and the three last to our selves.

III. The Conclusion, or Doxology, intimating the Reason why we beg these Things of God.

I begin with the Invocation. *Our Father which art in Heaven.* In which we may observe these three Things; which I shall endeavour first to explain, and then to draw some practical Inferences from them.

1. In this Invocation we may observe that God is the sole Object of divine Worship.

2. We

2. We may observe under what Notion God would have us to address our selves to him, namely, under the Notion of *An heavenly Father*.

3. We may observe that in our Prayers we are not to content our selves with particular Regards ; but ought to extend the Charity of our Prayers to all Mankind ; saying, *Our Father*, &c.

I. The first Thing I observe in this Invocation is, that God is the sole Object of divine Worship : For that it is he who is meant by these Words, *Our Father which art in Heaven*, there is no Manner of doubt. But it may be objected that though this Prayer is addressed to God, yet there is no direct Prohibition here, of our addressing our Prayers to Saints and Angels, or the Virgin *Mary*, as is done in the Church of *Rome*. I answer, that this being a Form or Model of Prayer, prescribed for our Use and Imitation, with this express Precept, *After this Manner therefore pray ye* ; we are to take these first Words, as a Direction to whom our Prayers are to be addressed : Especially if we consider the Context, in which we are required *To pray to our Father in Secret*. For granting that it was not the principal Design of the Prayer to teach this ; the principal Design of it, as I suppose, being to guard against Prolixity, Superfluity, and Ostentation, the Vices of the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, as appears by the Context ; yet it seems plain enough that our Saviour undertook here to teach his Disciples a right Model of Prayer, which he would have failed in, if he had not directed to whom our Prayers are to be addressed. It is certain, If we address our Prayers to any other than to him, we do it without the least Warrant from the Word of God, and  
without

without any Colour or Shadow of Reason. But this is taught more expressly in many other Passages of Holy Scripture : That which our Saviour quoted to the Devil, when he tempted him to fall down and worship him, *Matt. iv. 10.* may be sufficient to mention at this time. *It is written, says he, thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.* The Sin of Idolatry here guarded against was formerly a very reigning Sin in the World; and the Devil deluded Men by his doubtful Responses, which he gave from his pretended Oracles in several Places; but God be thanked these all are silenced, wherever the Gospel of our Saviour *Christ* is preached. There were two great Evils consequent upon this Practice. One was the Dishonour done thereby to Almighty God; and the other the Unprofitableness of all these Devotions to Men; for as they forsook God the Fountain of living Waters, (a) *They hewed out to themselves Cisterns, broken Cisterns that could hold no Water.* But though the heathenish Idolatry is suppressed by the Gospel; it is to be feared it is brought in again at the back Door, by the Worship of Saints and Angels practised in the Church of *Rome*. For though their learned Men distinguish between the highest Degree of Worship, which they acknowledge to be due only to God, and the inferiour Degrees, which they pay to Saints and Angels, yet there is so great a Resemblance both in Words and Gestures between the one and the other, that the common People cannot distinguish them. And

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(a) Jer. ii. 13.



if they could, do they think That will excuse them from the Sin of Idolatry, that the Worship they pay to Saints is not the highest sort of Worship? If this would do, the Heathens might have been excused upon the same Account, for all the Worship they payed to the inferiour Deities; for they acknowledged but one Supreme, though they payed divine Honours to many inferiour Deities. And it is plain from the Writings of *Origen* and *Arnobius*, that the Heathens defended their worshipping of many Gods by this very Argument, by which the Papists defend their worship of Saints and Angels. The Scripture has taken so much Care to guard us against Idolatry, that it has not only confined us to worship one God, but to address him *by one Mediator Jesus Christ*, on purpose, as it were, to cut off all Application to Saints or Angels. But I leave this, and go on to

II. The second Thing I observed from the Words, under what Notion we are to address ourselves to God, namely, under the Notion of *our Father which is in Heaven*. There are many Compellations of God in the holy Scriptures, and many Notions under which he is represented to us, sometimes as a King and Lord, sometimes as a Judge, sometimes as a Rewarder of the Good, sometimes as a Revenger of Wickedness; but it is very remarkable here, that God is represented to us under that Notion, which is aptest to invite and encourage our Addresses to him, and to feed our Love of him, and our Trust and Affiance in him. But before I speak of the Use we are to make of this Observation, I must first briefly explain in what Sense God is *our Father*, and *our Father in Heaven*.

1. First then, God is our Father as he is our Creator, or the Author of our Being; and in this respect he is the Father of all Things, for as *St Paul* saith, *Acts* xiv. 15. *He made Heaven, and Earth, and the Sea, and all Things that are therein.* And *We are God's Offspring,* *Acts* xvii. 28.

2. God is our Father, as sustaining and preserving us; in which Sense *Job* said of himself, that (a) *He was a Father to the Poor and Fatherless,* because he relieved and protected them. Thus it is said of God, that *The Eyes of all wait upon him, and that he giveth them their Meat in due Season; that he opens his Hand, and satisfies the Desire of every living Thing,* *Psal.* cxlv. 15, 16.

3. God is our Father, as he is the King and Governour of the World; this being a Title which was commonly given to good Kings and Emperors, they were called *Fathers of their Country.* And on this Account, *Pater Omnipotens, the Almighty Father,* is a Title that the wisest of the *Pagans* gave to the supreme God.

4. But more especially, God's own People, in a more particular manner dedicated to him, may claim this Relation. Of the *Jews* of old it was said, (b) *Israel is my Son, even my First-Born.* And Christians are often put in mind of this Relation; *Thou art no more a Servant, but a Son,* says *St Paul,* *Gal.* iv. 7. *and if a Son, then an Heir of God through Christ.* *I ascend,* says our Saviour, *unto my Father, and to your Father,* *John* xx. 17. The cordial embracing of the Christian Religion entitles us to a State of Son-

(a) *Job* xxix. 16.(b) *Exod.* xxiv. 22.

ship: *As many as received him, says St John, John i. 12. to them gave he Power to become the Sons of God; where the Greek Word, which we translate Power, ἐξουσία, signifies likewise Privilege or Authority. And Behold, says the same St John, 1 John iii. 1. What manner of Love the Father hath given us, that we should be called the Sons of God. Further, the Renovation of our Mind by the Grace of God's Holy Spirit, is called Regeneration, or new Birth: (a) Except a Man be born again, (or rather from above, as it is in the Margin of our Bibles) he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.*

In all these Respects God is *our Father*, and we his Children. Let us next see how he is *our Father which is in Heaven*. This, I suppose, is added to distinguish him from our earthly Parents, who, though they may have the natural Affection which Parents have for Children, have it so mixed with other Infirmities of their own, and are often so stinted and limited in their Abilities, that sometimes they will not, often they cannot relieve the Wants of their Children, which our heavenly Father is always both able and willing to do. This Title then of *Our Father which is in Heaven*, denotes,

1. That God is free from all that Humour, Fondness, and Peevishness, which often hinders earthly Parents from receiving the Addresses of their Children, and from relieving their Wants in a proper Manner.

2. That he is not limited by any low and depressed Circumstances, but that he has full Power

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(a) John iii. 5.



and Ability to relieve his Children, when they make Application to him.

3. That he never fails by Death, as our earthly Parents do.

1. As to the first Sort of Infirmities, proceeding from the Ignorance, Fondness, Humourfomeness, and Peevishness of Parents, which prove very prejudicial, often ruinous to their Children; we are to remove all these from our Conceptions of God. (1.) Earthly Parents grant many Things to their Children ignorantly, not knowing, or foreseeing what the Effects of these Grants will be, till by dear bought Experience they find out the Evil of them, when perhaps it is too late to retract. (2.) Earthly Parents out of mere Fondness to their Children, are often blinded, and grant them Things, which if they themselves were to be Judges, they would condemn in other Parents. (3.) Earthly Parents, out of mere Humour, and Peevishness, or Crossness, deny the reasonable Requests of their Children, and dishearten them with their unreasonable Crossness and Severity. (4.) Earthly Parents often mistake the Natures and Tempers of their Children, and upon that account often spoil them, by restraining too much the modest and tractable, and by giving too loose Reins to the pert and stubborn.

2. Then as to the other Sort of Infirmities, consisting in want of Power to relieve our Childrens Wants; it is very frequent that Childrens Addresses are denied, on account of the Parents low and narrow Circumstances. But God will have our Addresses to him encouraged from this Consideration, that he is not like our earthly Parents, stinted for want of Power to relieve us; but



but can do all Things whatsoever he pleases both in Heaven and Earth.

Now all these Imperfections incident to earthly Parents, whether of Inability, or Fondness, or Frowardness, we are taught to remove by this Compellation of *Our Father which art in Heaven.*

3. Though our earthly Parents were ever so good, ever so wise, they may be taken off by Death; but we have this to consider to our Comfort of our heavenly Father, that *he lives for ever.* As the Psalmist says, *Psal. xxvii. 10. When my Father and Mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up.*

III. The third Thing I observed in the Words, was, that in our Prayers we are not to content our selves with particular Regards, but together with our Prayers for our selves, ought to extend the Charity of our Prayers to all Mankind. This Observation is grounded on these Words, *Our Father*, and that all the Petitions run in the plural Number, for our Neighbours, as well as our selves. This is one good Mark of the Divinity of this Prayer, that it favours not in the least of that Narrowness of Soul, which commonly limits our Thoughts. We are apt in our Devotions to think only of our selves; or if we think of others, it is only so far as they have some Relation to our selves; our Wives, and Children, our Servants, and Friends, our Relations, and Benefactors; or at most, those Bodies of which we are Members. But to have such enlarged Thoughts as appear in this Prayer, concerning the Glory of God, the Advancement of the Gospel, the Reformation of the World, the prosperous both spiritual and temporal Estate of all Mankind, the doing by our  
Neighbour

Neighbour in our very Prayers, as by our selves; here seems to be the Finger of God in all this.

But because we pray here for others, we are not to imagine that we are therefore to forget ourselves. The Prayer runs in such a Strain, as includes others with our selves, and therefore we are allowed to pray for our selves, as well at least as for others. Nay, further, we may say the same Thing in the Case of Prayers, as in the Case of Charity: In extending our Charity, tho' we are to exclude none, yet because we are ignorant of the State and Condition of the greatest Part, and our Power of relieving is but small, therefore, as we say, *Charity begins at Home*; so it is with Prayer: We are so great Strangers to the State and Condition of others, that we know not indeed what to ask particularly for them; and therefore our Prayers, as well as our Alms, will be extended but to a few, in so far as concerns their particular Wants. It is no wonder then if, as to others, we content our selves with general Prayers, while, as to our selves and Families, we enlarge a little more particularly, every one knowing best where his own Shoe wrings him; only we must take care not to forget others in our Prayers, but to extend them as generally as we can to answer all the Occasions of others. And indeed it cannot be denied that our Prayers, by the Largeness of our Charity, may be extended a great deal farther than our Alms, by reason of the Narrowness of our Circumstances, and the Want of Opportunity. And though we know the particular Case but of a few about us, yet general Petitions may be framed, according to the  
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excellent Model of this Prayer, such as will reach every ones particular Circumstances.

Having thus explained the Particulars of the Text, I come now to consider what Influence they ought to have on good Life and Practice. And indeed I find they have so great a Tendency that way, that I am persuaded this whole Prayer was calculated with a special Eye to the teaching us our other Duties of good Life, as well as to direct us how to offer up our Requests to God.

I. First then, from our observing here that God is the sole Object of divine Worship, we may learn how much we are beholding to the Christian Religion for recovering us out of that wild Maze of the Worship of so many Gods and Goddeses, superiour and inferiour, assigned by ignorant Men their particular Stations and Spheres of acting, and often differing among themselves in point of Jurisdiction, that it was impossible either to please them all, or to have our Prayers favourably received by one, without provoking another against them. It is true, Judaism was clear of this Inconveniency; but while they confined that good Doctrine within the narrow Bounds of their own little Country, how should we have been the wiser or the better? It is to the Christian Religion then that we owe our being called (a) *To turn from these Vanities unto the Living God*, which is an infinite Blessing to put our Devotions thus in the right Channel; and therefore, as many Rivulets gathered into one, make a

(a) ACTS xiv. 15.

strong Stream, so let our Devotions, which by the old Idolatry would have been divided among many Deities, be now collected into one strong Stream, directed to the one great God, the Father of Angels and Men.

II. Is God our Father, and are we to address our selves to him under this Notion? then this shews us both what we are to do, and what we may expect.

First, I say, this shews us what we are to do; that is, it directs us to a great many good Points of Duty, which all flow from this way of representing Almighty God. I shall instance in the chief of them.

1. First, this directs us to the Duties of Honour, Love, and Obedience: *A Son honoureth his Father*, saith God, *Mal. i. 6. If then I be a Father, where is mine Honour?* Now if these Duties are due to an earthly Father, notwithstanding the many ill Qualities, or Infirmities, he has to abate that Esteem which we owe to him, how much more are they due, where they meet with infinite Perfection? If we intend any Meaning then, when we say, *Our Father which art in Heaven*, let not our Lives give our Words the Lie, but let us put on the Character of dutiful Children, and never think we can do enough to express our Gratitude to our heavenly Father.

2. The Consideration that God is our Father, and we his Children, should make us endeavour to imitate and resemble him. It is natural for Children to resemble their Parents in Features and Complexion; and it is natural too for them to imitate them in their Manners and Actions; as our Saviour told the *Jews*, when they said

*Abraham*



*Abraham was their Father.* John viii. 39. *If ye were Abraham's Children, ye would do the Works of Abraham:* So if we are God's Children, we must do the Works of God; *Be ye therefore Followers, or Imitators of God as dear Children,* saith St Paul, Eph. v. 1. This the holy Scripture frequently inculcates. *As he who hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of Conversation,* says St Peter, 1 Pet. i. 15. And St Paul exhorts us *to be blameless and harmless, the Sons of God without Rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse Nation,* Phil. ii. 15. *Beloved, now we are the Sons of God,* saith St John, 1 John iii. 2. from whence he draws this Consequence at the next Verse; *Every one that hath this Hope, purifieth himself as God is pure.* And *be ye therefore perfect, as your Father is perfect,* says our Saviour, Matt. 5. ult. having immediately before exhorted to the Love of Enemies from this same Topick, *That we may be the Children of our Father which is in Heaven; for he maketh his Sun to rise on the Evil and on the Good, and sendeth Rain on the Just and on the Unjust.* In short, as it is reckoned a good Sign that Children are genuine, when they are like him that they call Father, so there is no surer Mark of a Child of God, than to be like him, and to imitate him in all his imitable Perfections.

3. This Consideration that God is our Father, should banish from us all mean carking Cares, and diffident Fears, and sordid Shifts for gathering and keeping this World. Children who have rich and noble Parents, do not commonly trouble themselves with any anxious Care or Sollicitude about the World, knowing that they have

good Parents to provide for them. So we are often on this very Account exhorted to trust to God's Providence, (a) *To be anxious for nothing, but in every thing by Prayer and Supplication, with Thanksgiving, to make known our Requests to God.* (b) *To cast our Burthen upon the Lord, for that he will sustain us.* (c) *Not to be anxious, saying, what shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or wherewith shall we be clothed; for our heavenly Father knoweth that we have need of all these Things.* Certainly these covetous Desires, and unjust Practices, with which the World aboundeth, and never more than at this Day, and in this our Country, are totally inconsistent with the Belief of God's paternal Providence, as well as highly ingrateful to his Bounty, which at this Time has bettered our Circumstances to that Degree, that one would think we needed not flee to any base shuffling knavish Courses, to decline the Payment of our just Debts, or to put any other Tricks on our Neighbours.

4. This Consideration that God is our Father, should teach us Patience in all Afflictions. What can be more comfortable, than to know that all our Afflictions are Chastisements of our heavenly Father, purely designed for our Good? (d) *Thou shalt consider in thine Heart, saith God to the Israelites, that as a Man chasteneth his Son, so the Lord thy God chasteneth thee.* And (e) *We have had Fathers of our Flesh, says the Apostle, which have corrected us, and we gave them Reverence;*

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(a) Phil. iv. 6. (b) Psal. lv. 22. (c) Matt. vi. 31, 32.

(d) Deut. viii. 5. (e) Heb. xii. 10.

*shall we not much rather be in Subjection to the Father of Spirits, and live? For they verily for a few Days chastened us after their own Pleasure, but He for our Profit, that we might be Partakers of his Holiness.*

5. This Consideration that God is our Father, and we his Children, should in general teach us to live up to the Dignity of so noble a Relation. What an indecent Thing would we reckon it, for a Prince to employ himself as a Scullion, in doing the Drudgery Work of the Kitchin? No less indecent is it for a Child of God, to wallow in the Mire of Sin. We should always remember our Quality, and endeavour to behave our selves suitably to it; as the Apostle says, *Phil. ii. 15. That ye may be blameless and harmless, the Sons of God, without Rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse Nation, among whom ye shine as Lights in the World.*

6. This Consideration should teach us how to behave our selves to our Fellow Christians: For as we are here taught to say, *Our Father*, the plain Consequence is, that we ought *to love as Brethren*. As our Saviour taught us this Prayer; so he gave us a new Commandment suitable to it, establishing a Friendship among all Christians: (a) *A new Commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another: As I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all Men know that ye are my Disciples, if ye Love one another.*

7. Lastly, As God is our Father in Heaven, this should teach us to be heavenly minded, and

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(a) John xiii. 34, 35.

to remember that all Things are under God's all-seeing Eye, that there is no concealing of our Faults from him, as we do sometimes from our earthly Parents. He sees not only into our Actions, but into our Intentions, and will treat us accordingly; and therefore there is the greatest Obligation upon us to behave our selves as dutiful Children, always under their Father's Eye, and expecting to render an Account to him of all their Actions.

Thus we see what an Influence this Notion of God, as our heavenly Father, would have upon all our Actions. I should next have shewn, what *we may expect* from it; for I do not think it was more designed to stir us up to our Duty, than to encourage our Hopes in these our Addresses to our heavenly Father. I have not Time to handle this as it ought. But in a Word,

1. Here is Encouragement for us, if we have been ever so great *(a)* Prodigals, so we do but repent and amend, and return to our Father; he will receive us with all the Joy imaginable.

2. Here is Encouragement for us, if we are under ever so great Afflictions. God is our Father; and *(b)* *like as a Father pities his Children, so he pities them that fear him.*

3. Here is Encouragement, if we have ever so great and many Enemies; it is but fleeing to our heavenly Father, *(c)* who is a Refuge for the Oppressed, a Refuge in Time of Trouble.

4. Here is the greatest Encouragement to all our Addresses to the Throne of Grace. God is

*(a)* Luke xv. 20.    *(b)* Psal. ciii. 13.    *(c)* Psal. ix. 9.  
our



our Father, and it is very natural to argue from thence, as our Saviour does, *Matt. vii. 11. If ye then being evil, know how to give good Gifts unto your Children, how much more shall your Father which is in Heaven give good Things to them that ask him?*

And therefore let us be much in Prayer, and let us put up our Prayers with all humble Trust, Faith, and Assurance, that our heavenly Father will deny us nothing, that he knows to be honourable to him, and good for us. He will give Grace and Glory, and all good Things, through the Mediation of Jesus Christ.

*To him with the Father, &c.*



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## S E R M O N IX.

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M A T T. VI. 9.

*Hallowed be thy Name.*

The Third Sermon on this Text.

**H**A V I N G, at the last Opportunity, spoke of the first Part of the *Lord's Prayer*, the Invocation; from these Words, *Our Father which art in Heaven*; I proceed now to the Petitions, which make the second and principal Part of the Prayer; the first of which I have now read, *Hallowed be thy Name*.

Before I enter on the Explication of this Petition, it may not be improper to consider a little the Order of the Petitions in general, that we may the better find out, both the Meaning and Importance of this, which is now under our Consideration. Now if we look upon the Prayer with this View, we may easily observe that the three first Petitions are drawn with an Aspect to God's Glory, and the three last with an Aspect to our own Good and Advantage: *Hallowed be thy Name; Thy Kingdom come; Thy Will be done*. And then follow the Petitions for our selves: *Give us; and forgive*

*forgive us; and lead us not.* Now that we may proceed gradually, something, I think, is to be learned from this Order and Method. As

I. That nothing is to be prayed for, but what makes either for God's Glory, or our own, or our Neighbour's Good.

II. That of these two, the Glory of God ought to be preferred.

III. That the Petitions for the Glory of God, are to regulate and limit all our other Petitions; for our selves or others.

I. First, I observe from the Petitions in general, that nothing is to be prayed for, but what makes either for God's Glory, or our own, or our Neighbour's Good. It is plain there is nothing else contained in this Prayer, which yet is given us as a Form and Model by which to frame all our other Prayers. And it is likewise plain, from the Nature of the Petitions, that there ought to be no other put up to Almighty God; for all other Petitions would either be sinful in themselves, as begging something dishonourable to God, or prejudicial to our selves, or others; or at least of a middle or indifferent Nature, such as we cannot know whether they are good or bad, but may be either, according as they are, or are not directed to these good Ends and Purposes.

II. The second Thing I observed from the Petitions in general, is, that where those two, the Glory of God, and our own Benefit, or our Neighbour's, come in Competition, the Glory of God ought to be preferred. This I gather not only from the Order of the Petitions, but chiefly from the Nature of the Thing; for as to God's Glory, and our own, or our Neighbour's spiritual and  
eternal

eternal Good, they never come in Competition; as to the External Felicity indeed of our selves, or others, it may often interfere with God's Glory, and then there is all Reason it should yield and give way, though it were to spoiling of Goods, Imprisonment, Banishment, or Death itself. For what better Use can all these be put to, than to be instrumental in procuring us eternal Life?

III. The third Thing I observed from the Petitions in general, is, that the Petitions for the Glory of God, are to regulate and limit all our other Petitions for our selves or others: So that this general Exception is to be understood to them all: Grant me this, or that, as far, and no farther, than is consistent with thy Glory and Honour, of which thou thy self art the best Judge. As our Saviour casts us a Copy in that Prayer of his, (a) *Lord let this Cup pass from me; nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.*

These Things being observed from the Petitions in general, I return now to the three first, which relate to God's Honour: Of which the first respects his Glory in general, *Hallowed be thy Name*; that is, above all, and in every thing we pray that God's Honour may principally be regarded. The second respects the chief Means of promoting that Honour among Men, by setting up his Kingdom, that is, the Gospel of his dear Son Christ Jesus in the World, *Thy Kingdom come.* The third respects the good Success of this Kingdom in subduing the sinful Lusts of Men, and in making them a willing People in the Day of his Power, *Thy*

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(a) Matt. xxvi. 39.



*Will be done in Earth, as it is in Heaven.* Or to take them in another not much different Aspect; the first Petition prays for the Knowledge, and Acknowledgment, and due Honour of God in the World, that *his holy Name be hallowed*, that is, had in particular Veneration and Esteem. The second Petition respects the Advancement of the Gospel, usually called the Kingdom of God, or of Christ, or the Messiah, *Thy Kingdom come.* The third Petition respects the Grace of the Holy Ghost for sanctifying the Hearts, and for reforming the Lives of Men, *Thy Will be done in Earth, as it is in Heaven.*

Having thus considered these Petitions in gross, and their Relation to one another, it will be so much the easier for us to apprehend the Meaning of this first Petition, which now I come to consider more particularly, *Hallowed be thy Name.* For understanding which Petition aright, it will be a great Help to us to consider what is usually meant in the Holy Scripture by *God's Name*, and what by *hallowing*, or *being hallowed*.

By God's Name in holy Scripture, is most commonly signified God himself: As in speaking to a King, instead of *Thou and Thee*, we say *Your Majesty*; to a Lord, *Your Lordship*; to a Commander in Chief, *Your Excellency*. By which yet we mean no more than that we make Application to the Person himself. So in speaking to God, we say, *Glorify thy Name*, instead of *glorify thy self*; *let thy Name be magnified*; *I will sing Praises to thy Name*; *they shall hear of thy great Name*; *that all People of the Earth may know thy great Name*; *let them that love thy Name be joyful in thee*; *I will declare thy Name unto my Brethren*;

*tbren*; and a great many more of the like Nature; which signify the very same thing as if we should say, *Glorify thyself, be thou magnified, I will sing Praises to thee, &c.* So that here, *Hallowed be thy Name*, is no more but, *Be thou hallowed by me, and all Mankind.*

In the next Place then, let us consider what is to be meant by the Word *Hallowed*. This Word generally signifies the setting apart of any thing from common Use, and the devoting and consecrating it to God's Service, which is the highest Degree of Honour any thing can be put to. And from thence, for Want of better Words, we are obliged to apply it to God himself, as if we should say here, *Be thou honoured by us and all Men, with the highest Degree of Honour, even the Honour due and peculiar to thy self.*

In general then, it is the Honour and Glory of God, which, in this Petition, is prayed for, and that preferably to all other Things. But all the Difficulty is not yet voided: For what occasion is there to pray for his Honour, which is so inherent in him, that it is not in the Power of any, or all the Creatures to deprive or rob him of it? For understanding this Matter then in a right Sense, we are to consider that the Honour here prayed for, cannot be that intrinsic Honour which is inherent in the Nature and Essence of God, and is inseparable from it; nor can it be any Addition, properly speaking, to his Satisfaction, that Men pay him that Honour and Glory which is due to him; for he is infinitely exalted above the Condition of receiving any Addition to his Honour by the Esteem of his Creatures, or of suffering any Diminution of it by their Neglect  
and

and Contempt. It must be then with an Eye to the Happiness of Men, that this Petition is put up; and it is only by way of Condescension to our Infirmities, that God is said to be honoured when his Honour is known and spread, and we his Creatures so think, speak, and act, as becomes those who have a due Knowledge and Sense of him. Though it is the Honour of God then, which is the Object of this Petition, yet the Subject that we regard in it, is all Mankind, praying that all Men may come to the Knowledge and Acknowledgment of God, and may honour him accordingly in their Thoughts, Words, and Actions.

This is a very comprehensive Petition, and for our more distinct understanding of it, it may not be amiss to enlarge a little on the Particulars reducible to it. I cannot pretend to enumerate them all, but shall mention some of the chief, that seem to belong to it.

1. First then in general; whereas we know not the particular Ways and Means which God makes use of for promoting his own Glory, we pray for Success to all those Means. Many of them are often very improbable Means to Flesh and Blood; sometimes the Sufferings of his Servants contribute more to his Glory, than their worldly Quiet and Prosperity; and their Patience, more than all their other most active Diligence. In these, and all other the like Cases, wherein, through our Weakness or Ignorance, we might be apt to ask amiss, by this general Petition set at the Top of all the other, we pray that whatever Methods will tend most to the declaring and spreading of his Glory, may be followed, though  
never

never so disagreeable to our Taste, or contrary to our carnal Reasonings. By this Petition then set at the Head, we regulate, correct, and renounce, whatever may be amiss in all our following Petitions. As if we should say, Lord, we know not what to pray for, and therefore beg that we may be directed to pray for such Things as tend to thy Honour and Glory; and if we should happen to ask any Thing disagreeable thereto, we beg that either it may not be granted at all, or at least only in so far as may consist with this our first and chief Petition.

2. By this Petition, *Hallowed be thy Name*, we pray that all Men may come to the Knowledge and Acknowledgment of him the true and living God. That Atheists, who acknowledge no God nor Providence, may by observing God's Works of Creation and Providence, and the Proofs of Divinity the holy Scriptures have acquainted us with, come to the Knowledge of a God. That Pagans, instead of that Multitude of Idols and false Gods, may become acquainted with *the true God, the Maker of Heaven and Earth*. That they who know God only in a dry speculative manner, may come to see him in the Beauty of his Providence, and learn to behave themselves obediently and reverently towards him in the whole Course of their Lives and Conversations; to honour him in their Hearts by inward Esteem, Love, Fear, Adoration, Prayer, and Thanksgiving, and by Faith and Hope in his Conduct and Direction; to speak reverently of him, not only forbearing Blasphemy, Cursing, Swearing, and Perjury, but defending his Providence, justifying his Laws, and governing their Tongue according to his Precepts. And lastly,



lastly, in our whole Life and Conversation to honour him, by doing all the good we can; (a) *That our Light may so shine before Men, that they may see our good Works, and glorify our Father which is in Heaven.* In short that all Men might be brought to the Principle and Practice of Natural Religion: For as to Christianity I shall not speak of it under this first Petition, because I think that belongs properly to the next, *Thy Kingdom come.*

3. By this Petition, *Hallowed be thy Name,* we pray that in all Things we set about, they may be directed to, and end in God's Glory and Honour. This will comprehend these Particulars.

(1.) That God may lay so strong Restraints upon us by his Grace and Providence, that we never so much as aim at any ill Thing.

(2.) That if we do aim at it, we may be disappointed, and not permitted to bring it to Effect.

(3.) That God would interpose to defeat all the evil Works and Designs of Men, that their Machinations may not prosper.

(4.) That in all our good Works, our Intentions may be purely set on his Honour and Glory.

(5.) That in all our indifferent Actions, we endeavour so to sanctify them, that they may be directed to God's Honour and Glory.

(6.) That God would be pleased so to over-rule the wickedest Actions of Men, that they may likewise turn to his Honour.

All these are the proper Subject of our Prayers, and do naturally belong to this first Petition, and therefore it will be necessary to explain them a little more particularly.

(a) Matt. v. 16.

(1.) We

(1.) We pray here that God by his Grace and Providence, may lay so strong Restraints upon us, that we may never so much as aim at any ill Thing. If we set his Glory before our Eyes, as the ultimate Aim and Design of all our Actions, we shall be delivered from all base sinister Designs and Intentions. For though we are free Agents, God has so many Ways of over-ruling or diverting our Contrivances, that it is richly worth while to apply to him for it. (a) *There are many Devices, says Solomon, in a Man's Heart, nevertheless the Counsel of the Lord that shall stand.* He has infinite Ways both of Providence and Grace, to divert our Hearts from evil Designs, without breaking in upon the Freedom of our Wills. And as the Beginning of all good Actions, is the settling of the Intention aright, it is but reasonable that this Petition to direct the Thoughts and Intentions of the Heart, should lead the Van of the other Petitions.

(2.) We pray here, that if the Thoughts and Designs of any ill Things should enter into our Hearts, God will disappoint them, and not permit us to bring them to effect. Thus God dealt by *Abimelech*, after he had sent and taken *Sarah*, God appeared to him in a Dream, and represented the Iniquity of the Action he was about, so lively to him, that he was quite diverted from it: And God told him that (b) *He had withheld him from sinning against him, and suffered him not to touch her.* There is a Promise, *Hof. ii. 6.* when his People played the Harlot, and said they would

(a) Prov. xix. 21.

(b) Gen. xx. 6.

go after their Lovers, that God would hedge up their Way with Thorns, and make a Wall that they should not find their Paths. This is mightily to be wished, that when the Devil has thrown in a Temptation into our Hearts, God in his Providence would contrive a Disappointment.

(3.) We pray in this Petition, that when wicked Men go boldly on in any evil Work, God would interpose to defeat their evil Designs, that their Machinations may not prosper. And this he does two Ways, either by converting them from the Evil of their Ways; as he did by *St Paul* in the very Journey, as he was going to execute that bloody Commission which he had received, to persecute the Christians at *Damascus*, it pleased God to open his Eyes, and to convert him to the Christian Faith. The other Way is by crossing and confounding them, if they are obstinate in an evil Course; thus he served *Pharaoh*, who stood obstinate after all the Wonders of Plagues God sent upon him and upon his People; and delivered the *Israelites with an high Hand and an outstretched Arm*; and at last got himself Honour upon *Pharaoh and all his Host*, so glorifying his Name in the Destruction of his Enemies.

(4.) In this Petition we pray that in all our good Works, our Intention may be purely set to God's Service, that is, to honour and glorify him by our good Works: That no covetous, or ambitious, or vain-glorious, or any other sinister Design mix in, to deprive us of the Comfort of having God's Honour chiefly in our Intention. It is a noble Precept of our Saviour's concerning all the Endeavours of our Life, (a) *Seek ye first the*

(a) Matt. vi. 33.

*Kingdom of God, and the Righteousness thereof.* And it is the very same Thing he teaches here in this excellent Pattern of Devotion, that the first Thing in our Thoughts and Desires should be the Glory and Honour of God, which is done chiefly by seeking his Kingdom and the Righteousness thereof, all which we pray for in the the three first Petitions; *Hallowed be thy Name; and thy Kingdom come; and thy Will be done.* So exactly do our Saviour's Directions as to Prayers and Endeavours suit, and agree together.

(5.) In this Petition we pray that all our indifferent Actions by good Intention and Regulation may be so ordered, that they may tend to promote this great End of the Glory and Honour of God. (a) *Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the Glory of God.* Ye may perhaps think it strange that such mean and indifferent Actions as these, nay, how all Actions whatsoever should be so gone about as to contribute to God's Honour. But there are many Ways how this may be done; I shall instance in this same Action of eating and drinking, how it may be gone about so as to make for God's Honour. *First*, If God be thankfully regarded as the Donor, if it be considered that it is he who made the Earth, Seas and Rivers, and gave them this prolifick fertile Virtue, to produce Meat and Drink for Man in great Plenty and Variety; if it be considered with Gratitude that he makes his Sun to shine, and his Rain to fall, that he attemperates the several Seasons of Seed-time and Harvest so

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(a) 1 Cor. x. 31.



as to fit them for the Production and Ripening the Fruits of the Ground ; if it be considered that he by his Blessing on our Labours and Industry, furnishes us wherewithal to purchase those Necessaries, and that he gives us Health and Hearts to use them. *Secondly*, We go about those Actions to the Glory of God, when we keep within the Bounds of Temperance and Sobriety in the Use of those Blessings, which are so apt to be abused, *Thirdly*. We eat and drink to the Glory of God, when we design to employ those Bodies and Lives so supported and maintained, in his Service. It were an easy Thing to apply this to all other innocent but indifferent Actions, and to shew that the Glory of God is the chief Thing we are to propose in them all. But I must not trespass on your Time and Patience.

(6.) *Lastly*, We pray in this Petition that God would be pleased so to overrule the wickedest Actions of Men, that they likewise may turn to his Honour and Glory. For as Chymists and Apothecaries extract and make some rare Medicines out of rank Poisons, so God brings many a good Thing to pass, very much for his own Honour and Glory, out of base sinful Actions: Though at the same time he is far from being the Author of the Sin, but hates it, and punishes the Sinner for it. What abundance of noble Events were occasioned by that unworthy Action of *Joseph's* Brethren selling him into *Egypt*, such as the keeping the whole Family alive in the Time of Famine; the gaining Honour upon the Tyrant *Pharaoh* and all the *Egyptian* Magicians; the leading the People of *Israel* to the Possession of the Land of *Canaan* through the Wilderness by the

Course of so many Miracles, as were sufficient to confirm them in the Belief of the true God, at least those of them that were any thing well disposed; and to render the rest inexcusable? And how did God bring the greatest of Blessings out of *Judas's* Treachery, and the *Jews* Infidelity, and *Pilate's* Facileness in acting against his Conscience? It is our great Comfort that as the wickedest Men can go no further than God permits them, so even the wicked Things they do, it is in his Power to make them all co-operate for his own Glory, and for the Good of them that love him. They make for the Glory of his Mercy towards the Poor oppressed, who patiently bear the Cross; and they make for the Glory of his Justice in the Punishment of the wicked Oppressors.

Thus now I have explained what seems to me to be the Purport of this Petition of the Lord's Prayer; I thought next to have said something to persuade you of the Reasonableness of making this the first and chief Request; and then to have considered what Influence it ought to have on our Practice. But there being no great Occasion to enlarge upon these, I shall very briefly dispatch them.

As to the Reasonableness of making this the first and chief Request, that what makes for God's Honour should be minded before any Thing that has a more immediate Relation to our selves; is it not highly reasonable that he should be preferred to us? If a Question should be started whether the Master or the Slave should be first served; we would think it a very unreasonable Question, and would not be long in deciding it. Besides, if we consider our Ignorance and Rashness in asking,

we shall soon be convinced that there is nothing  
 r and better for us than that there be so wise a  
 ck and Controul upon all our Requests as in-  
 finite Wisdom to direct and amend our Ignorance  
 and Folly.

Lastly, as to the Influence this Doctrine ought  
 to have on our Practice, there are many useful  
 Lessons it might teach us, if we would duly ad-  
 vert to them.

1. From hence we may learn carefully to ab-  
 stain from all Sin, as being a Thing which be-  
 sides its other Malignities, is a Contempt of God's  
 Authority, a Preferring of our own Wills to his,  
 a Despising of his Wisdom and Judgment con-  
 cerning our Duty and Happiness, and a Setting up  
 of our own in Competition, which is a manifest  
 Dishonour to God, and directly contrary to this  
 first Petition.

2. As there are some Sins, which reflect more  
 immediately upon God's Honour, such as tearing  
 his sacred Name with horrid Oaths and Blasphe-  
 mies, calling him in to witness a Lie by Perjury,  
 ridiculing his Word and Ordinances, arguing a-  
 gainst his Being or his Providence; all these I say  
 being more immediately contrary to this Duty of  
 honouring and hallowing God's Name, should not  
 only most carefully be avoided by our selves, and  
 even all Approaches to them; but we ought in  
 our several Stations to be animated with a parti-  
 cular Zeal against them in others.

3. From this Doctrine it will plainly follow,  
 that nothing prohibited by God ought to be used  
 as a Means to promote his Honour; for this is to  
 set aside his Wisdom, and to set up our own, or  
 rather the Devil's.

4. Lastly, let this Doctrine teach us the great Duties of Self-denial, Resignation, Cheerfulness and Contentment in all States and Conditions. Let us not murmur at any Dispensations of Providence, remembering who sits at the Helm ; and that it is no less than infinite Wisdom, that assigns us all our several Parts, and directs all to the best Ends and Purposes.

*Now unto the King Eternal, Immortal, Invisible, the only wise God, be Honour and Glory, for ever and ever. Amen.*





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## S E R M O N X.

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M A T T. VI. 10.

*Thy Kingdom come.* —

The Fourth Sermon on this Text.

**T**HE Petitions of this excellent Prayer are short, but exceeding comprehensive. Of the three First, which have a more immediate Aspect upon God Almighty; The first directed us to aim at, and pray for his Honour and Glory, *Hallowed be thy Name.* This, as I take it, is put as the ultimate Design to which all the rest are to refer; and they are all to be governed, and regulated, and interpreted by it: As if we should say, *Thy Kingdom come*, i. e. Let the Kingdom of Grace and Glory be advanced as far, and as fast as is consistent with thy Honour and Glory, by Gospel Methods, not by the Ways of Persecution; by proper Means and Instruments, not by an irregular Employing of all Hands, and bringing the whole World into Confusion by it. And so *Thy Will be done*, i. e. Let thy holy Laws be obeyed with such a Readiness and Cheerfulness upon Earth, as may resemble the Obedience of the Angels in Heaven; but still so far as is consistent

with thy Honour and Glory. For I suppose it would be inconsistent with God's Honour to have Men taught Obedience to his Laws, by withdrawing any of the Liberties he has allowed Mankind; as for Example, if to teach them Temperance, there were an universal Prohibition of Flesh and strong Drink, and an Injunction to live on Bread and Herbs and Water. Or to teach them Chastity, they were all forced to be Eunuchs or Hermits. So *Give us this Day our daily Bread*, as far as consists with thy Honour and Glory, *i. e.* In a lawful regular Way; for it would be inconsistent with God's Honour, to provide the good Things of this World for Men, if they should agree to lay aside all Methods of Industry, and fold their Hands together, expecting that Meat would drop into their Mouths; or if neglecting their own Labour and Industry, they should pray to be supplied by Cheating or Robbing of others. And so *Forgive us our Trespases*, as far as consists with thy Honour; but it is inconsistent with God's Honour to pardon the Impenitent and Incurable; such Pardons would only encourage Men boldly to multiply Transgressions. So *Lead us not into Temptation*, as far as consists with thy Honour; For there may be dishonourable Ways of keeping Men from Temptations. *e. g.* If to guard us against the wandring Lust of the Eyes, he should cause Men to be born blind; or to keep their Tongue from lying and slandering, he should cause them to be born deaf and dumb.

I give these few Instances, only to shew how that first and principal Petition, *Hallowed be thy Name*, is to govern, limit, and regulate all the rest. And this I thought was a necessary Precaution

tion in the Explication of all the following Petitions of the Lord's Prayer. So now I come to the second Petition, which is that of my Text; *Thy Kingdom come.* But what a strange Sort of Petition may this seem? As if God did not sway the Scepter of the World as he pleases; as if Satan had got the better, and we prayed that God would take the Government of the World into his own Hand. In answer to this we are to consider that it is not God's Government of the World, which is doubted or called in Question, or prayed for; for (a) *His Throne is in Heaven, and his Kingdom ruleth over all.* The Kingdom here spoke of, is that gracious Method of bringing Men to Glory and Happiness by Christ. This in the *New Testament* is called the Kingdom of God, and the Kingdom of Christ, and the Kingdom of Heaven. And I doubt not this is the very Kingdom, which is meant in this Petition. But was not Christ already come; and were not the means of Grace now made use of, to gain in Profelytes to his Kingdom? All this is very true; but at the same time, there were all Endeavours used by the Devil and his Instruments to hinder the planting of Christ's Kingdom in the World; both outwardly, by obstructing the Propagation of the Gospel, and inwardly, by hindering its taking Effect in the Hearts of Men; till both which be done, the Church or Kingdom of Christ is but in a militant, unquiet State. And therefore we pray that Christ may obtain a final Victory over all his Enemies, and may bring all his Subjects to the

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(a) Pf. ciii. 19.

quiet Possession of the Kingdom of Heaven, by the Propagation of the Gospel, and the Grace of the holy Spirit, and other favourable Providences to his Church. It is this final Settlement of Christ's Kingdom, *viz.* The glorious triumphant State of the Church in Heaven, which we chiefly pray for in this Petition, that it may come; and in order to that, that God would please to follow all the Means of Grace with his Blessing, and Success.

This Petition then, though in few Words, we shall find to be very comprehensive: As praying for all those Things which with God's Honour may conduce to the final Salvation of Men by Jesus Christ and his Gospel. For our more distinct Apprehension of it, I shall mention the chief of those Particulars, which are comprehended in this Petition.

I. The first Thing I shall mention as meant in this Petition, is the Propagation of the Gospel among both *Jews* and *Gentiles*. The Gospel is called (a) *The Gospel of the Kingdom*. And the Design of it is to gain in Subjects to Jesus Christ. This Gospel we pray here, that (b) *it may have a free Course*; that God would prosper it, and remove the Impediments of it. More particularly there are these three Things which we pray for with Relation to the Propagation of the Gospel. (1.) That God would send forth faithful Labourers, able honest and diligent Ministers of the *New Testament*, well instructed in the Mind and Will of God; not perverting it by any dangerous

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(a) Matt. xxiv. 14.

(b) 2 Thes. iii. 1.



Error, wrong Byass, or sinister Design of their own. (2.) That he would dispose and prepare Mens Hearts, by removing their Prejudices, mortifying their Lusts, subduing their Passions, settling the Unseriousness and Volatileness of their Temper, and enclining them to give a fair Hearing and impartial Consideration to the Word of God. (3.) That he would either restrain or disappoint all Enemies that obstruct the Gospel, such as Hereticks, Schismatics, Persecutors, and carnal worldly minded Men, who set themselves to defeat and disappoint all the Methods, whereby the Truth may take Effect: Or that he would give a Spirit of Courage and Patience to his Ministers and Servants, that they may not be discouraged by any Opposition, but may go on stedfastly in doing their Duty, notwithstanding all the Difficulties they meet with in their Way.

II. As in this Petition we pray for Plenty of external Means, so for a large Measure of internal Grace, that when the Word is sowed in our Hearts, the Cares of the World and the Lusts of other Things entering in may not choak the Word, that it become unfruitful. Both *Jews* and *Gentiles* had many Things in their Education and Principles, which prompted them to an Opposition to the Gospel. Particularly the *Jews* were so prepossessed with the Belief and Expectation of the worldly Kingdom of their *Messias*, that without affording a due Consideration to our Saviour's and his Apostles Doctrine, or examining into the intrinsic Goodness of it, they rejected it on that sole Account, as bringing no worldly Wealth and Grandeur along with it. The *Gentiles* were so educated in the Principles of Polytheism, or the  
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Worship of many Gods, that the Christian Religion represented itself with an Air of Atheism to them, while it taught them to reduce all their Devotions, and confine all their religious Services to one Supreme Deity, and to one Mediator between God and Man. Then there were some of the Christian Doctrines so inconsistent, as they thought, with the Principles of natural Philosophy, particularly that of our Saviour's Resurrection, and of the Resurrection of the Dead in general, that they could not easily bring themselves to the Belief of them. And besides the Difficulty of reconciling the Doctrines to their carnal Reason and Principles, there were other stronger Prejudices to overcome from worldly Interest, which commonly make Men more fierce and keen in their Defence than bare Diversity of Doctrine. The *Scribes* and *Pharisees* and the whole Order of the Jewith Priesthood found, if the Christian Doctrine prevailed, that both their Gains and the high Esteem they were in with the People must cease. The Heathen Priests too, and all others who had any Benefit by the Service of their Temples, would be naturally prone, in their own Defence as it were, to oppose a Doctrine, which they quickly perceived would deprive them of their Gain and Livelihood. These Men, if they could not answer the Arguments for Christianity, were ready to flee to the carnal Weapon to oppose it; as we read of *Demetrius* and the other Craftsmen at *Ephesus*, who made Silver Shrines for *Diana*, what an uproar they made to oppose Christianity. In short, there were such insuperable Difficulties to be overcome, before the Gospel could take Place, and the Kings and Princes of  
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the World were so jealous of it, and set themselves so much to extirpate it, that it required a mighty Assistance of Gifts and Graces to carry it on. In this Petition we pray that all Men may receive the Truth in the Love of it; that they may not only afford it a fair Hearing, but a due Consideration suitable to the great Importance of it; and then that notwithstanding the contrary Temptations, we and others may sincerely use our best Endeavours to live up to it, that our Duty may prevail over all our Lusts and vicious Inclinations.

III. As in this Petition we pray for the outward Means of Grace, and the inward Assistance of the Holy Spirit, so we pray for the flourishing State of Christ's Church; not that it may flow in Wealth and worldly Splendour, so as to resemble a worldly Kingdom in outward Glory and Power; but that it may be supplied with all those Encouragements, which are necessary or requisite for the better carrying on the Work of the Gospel. Now this Branch of the Petition extends to a great many more Things than we are aware of: For whatever tends to the Furtherance of the Gospel, falls under it. I shall instance in some of the Particulars. (1.) Forasmuch then as the good Education of Children and Youth has a mighty Tendency to the Furtherance of the Gospel; (for out of them both able Preachers and judicious attentive Hearers are to be supplied;) we pray here that Parents, Schoolmasters, Tutors and Guardians may diligently and dextrously apply themselves to the Discharge of their great Trust, in instilling the Principles of an early Piety into those Children and Youth, who are committed to their Care; and that not only by good Precepts, but good Ex-  
ample,



ample, a Thing which takes with them far beyond the other: (2.) Forasmuch as to the right Qualifying of Men to officiate in the Ministry of the Gospel, it is necessary, now Miracles are ceased, that they have much Time and Leisure for the Study and Meditation of divine Things; and that they be furnished with good Helps of Books and other Materials for Study; and that they have their Minds disengaged from the Distraction of worldly Cares, that they may apply them so much more intently to those better Subjects, which are the peculiar Business of their Calling; in order to all these good Designs, it is to be wished and prayed for, that there be a sufficient Competency of worldly Encouragements provided for the Ministers of the Gospel; I say, a Competency, not to maintain them in Ease and Luxury, but that they may follow their sacred Employments without Distraction. Upon this Account likewise the favour of Princes and secular Magistrates is to be wished and prayed for, for the good of the Church, that Kings may be her nursing Fathers, and Queens her nursing Mothers. And for this likewise, as well as for other good Ends, good Princes and Magistrates are to be prayed for, *That we may lead quiet and peaceable Lives in all Godliness and Honesty.* (3.) Forasmuch as Peace and Quietness in the State, and a good Form and Administration of Civil Government has a good Influence on the Church, and the Advancement of true Religion, we are to pray for both these; knowing that Tyranny, Rebellion, or any other Convulsion in the State, doth mightily endanger not only the outward Policy and regular Frame of Religion, but likewise the Doctrine and Duties of it; for commonly at those



gaps Heresies and Schisms, and all manner of Immoralities break in. (4.) A good Government and Discipline in the Church falls under this Prayer for the coming of Christ's Kingdom. And therefore we are to pray here, both that the Discipline may be well established, and well executed by all Persons in their several Stations and Callings; that the Rulers of the Church may Rule with Prudence and Diligence; and the Ruled may honour and obey those who are over them in the Lord and admonish them, and have them in esteem for their Work's sake. For where there is not this mutual Harmony and Agreement between Teachers and Learners, between Governours and Governed, there is nothing but Confusion and every evil Work.

IV. In this Petition, *Thy Kingdom come*, we pray for the good Success of all these Means of Grace, and the other Assistances of Providence abovementioned; that is, we pray that the pure and sound Christian Doctrine may be believed, and generally prevail against Errors and Heresies; that God may be worshipped with a pure Worship, free from Superstition and Idolatry; that the Church may abound in Examples of true Piety and Virtue, that the true Fear of God may get the better and prevail over all our Lusts, Corruptions and evil Habits: And that Christ may rule and reign in our Hearts by his Grace and Holy Spirit, that we may be duly fitted and prepared for his Kingdom of Glory. It is this Kingdom of Glory we are chiefly to have our Eye upon, and to pray to God that we may pursue it with our most earnest Desires and Endeavours; and that we may take all the most proper Methods for attaining

taining it our selves, and for gaining as many others into it as we can.

So much for the Explication of this Petition; there are some Inferences I have to make with relation to Practice; and I shall quickly conclude.

1. My first Inference shall be from the Rank and Order this Petition holds in the Lord's-Prayer; it is put after that of, *Hallowed be thy Name*; and before all the rest. Something we may gather from both Parts of this Observation.

(1.) First, from its being put after that Petition by which we pray for the Honour and Glory of God, we may infer that we are to do nothing to the Dishonour of God, even for so noble an End as the Propagation of the Gospel, or the Advancement of God's Kingdom in the World. There is another Church indeed that thinks they are to stick at nothing for the Advancement of their Church, which they take to be the Kingdom of Christ. There are no Lies or Equivocations, or Calumnies or Murders so gross, that they do not dispense with for this End. They have in a solemn Council decreed that *Faith is not to be kept with Hereticks*. Where they have Power enough, they make noscruple to Rob, Imprison, send to the Gallies, cruelly whip and scourge; nay to put to Death, by burning Men for no higher Crime than the not being of their Church, or not joining in their Idolatrous Worship; as if we were not forbid *To do Evil that Good may come of it*; as if it were not a very great Dishonour to God to have his Kingdom propagated by such dishonourable base Means; or as if indeed it were any Honour or Service to Christ at all to have his Church filled with Hypocrites; for I suppose they do not think that  
 Dragooning

Dragooning and Burning can make any real Converts or Believers. But we have not so learned Christ. Let us be as zealous as we can, every one in our several Stations, for the Propagation of the Gospel; but remember still that it must be done by gospel Methods, the Methods of Instruction, Persuasion and, good Example, and not by Falshood and Cruelty.

(2.) From the other Part of the Observation concerning the Rank of this Petition, that it goes before all the other Petitions, except that one which sets God's Glory as the ultimate end; we may infer that the Seeking the Kingdom of God by all lawful Ways and Means, is an Endeavour duly subordinate to the Honour and Glory of God: Or that there is nothing in which we can better consult God's Honour, than in promoting the Gospel of his dear Son by all lawful Ways and Means. Let us then all of us seriously consider how we may most effectually, in our several Stations, promote the Knowledge and Practice of Christianity in our selves and others committed to our Care, and conclude with our selves that this is the very principal and best Method for promoting the Glory and Honour of God, infinitely beyond what the Heaping up Wealth, or the Apiring to Honour and Preferment, or any other Thing upon which Men commonly bestow their Labour, can pretend to.

The second and chief Inference I would make from this Doctrine is this. If we are obliged to pray for Christ's overcoming all his Enemies, and for his heavenly Kingdom, with all the gracious Means and Methods, whereby it is capable of being advanced; then we are obliged likewise to

back these our Prayers with our most vigorous Endeavours in our several Stations, for that End. This will open up to us a great Field of Duty, to which it will be proper to exhort you upon this Occasion. I shall but Name some of the chief Branches of this Duty.

(1.) If we can contribute no other Way towards the Propagation of the Gospel, but by giving a good Example to the Heathen our Neighbours, and to the Heathen our Slaves; and by breeding up the young Heathen born in our Families in the Knowledge of the *Creed, Lord's Prayer, and Ten Commandments*, and would encourage their coming to Church, that they may have an Opportunity of being better acquainted with the Spirit and Doctrine of Christianity, this might be one good Means of advancing the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ.

(2.) Is it a Branch of this Petition that God would send forth faithful Labourers into his Harvest? If we would help forward this Design by our best Endeavours, let us both give all due Encouragement to them by countenancing and attending their Ministry, and in our several Stations contribute what we can to encourage ingenious Youth to apply themselves to that sacred Study.

(3.) If we would promote the Kingdom of God, instead of countenancing and propagating the Objections of Atheists, Deists, and other Enemies of Religion, let us make it our Business to obviate Mens Prejudices, to clear all Objections, and to remove every Thing that may obstruct the Principles of Religion taking Place in their Hearts, and the Practice of it in their Lives and Conversations.

(4.) That



(4.) That we have no Hand in spreading of any Heresy, that is, any Error against the Fundamentals of Christianity; that we have a care likewise that for any small Matter we do not make a Schism or Rent in the Communion of the Church; and above all that we have no Hand in any Persecution for Religion, or any Thing else that may lay a stumbling Block in the Way of any of the Profelytes to it. And if we our selves happen to be persecuted for the Gospel, let us resolve with the Grace of God to honour our Profession by a patient cheerful Suffering, and bearing the Cross after our Master's Example.

(5.) As in this Petition we pray for the Assistance of God's Grace and Holy Spirit, let us take care to improve the Talent of Grace God has bestowed upon us already; that being the surest Way to obtain more. And let us take care to improve our Knowledge of divine Things by Consideration and Meditation: and especially that those good Seeds of the Christian Doctrine be not choaked with worldly Cares and the Lusts of other Things entering into our Hearts.

(6.) Besides the inward Assistance of God's Grace, does the Church and Kingdom of God receive great Assistance from many external Helps of good Education of Youth, Countenance of Magistrates, Means to Ministers, that they may study without Distraction, good Discipline and Government, Order and Decency? Then let us all in our several Stations, as we have Opportunity, lend an helping Hand to these, or whatever other Means may fall in our Way towards the Promotion of true Piety, Peace and Virtue.

(7.) Lastly, is this Kingdom of Grace and Glory one of the Chief Petitions we can make for God's Honour? Let us take Care then to assign it a principal Place in our Hearts, and to make it the chief Business of our Lives? Let us not look upon the Business of Religion as a Thing of small or trivial Concern; but as the great Business upon which the Honour of God and the Salvation of our Souls depends; all other Things are but Trifles to this. This is that Pearl of great price, to make sure of which we should be ready to part with all, and purchase it.

*Now God of his infinite Mercy shed abroad in our Hearts his Grace, that after a Life of Holiness here, we may attain to a Life of Happiness in the Kingdom of Heaven: through the Merits and Mediation of Jesus Christ. To whom, &c.*



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## S E R M O N XI.

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M A T T. VI. 10.

— *Thy Will be done in Earth as it is in Heaven.*

The Fifth Sermon on this Text.

**I**N the former Petition, *Thy Kingdom come*, we pray not only for the flourishing State of Christ's Church; that is, for the Propagation of the Gospel, with the Use of all the Means of Grace, and other favourable Providences and Encouragements for carrying on that good Work; but likewise for inward Grace and Assistance, by which the outward Means may be made successful. But because no Means have a physical, certain, co-active, but only a moral, persuasive Power; so that all the common Means may ordinarily be rendered ineffectual; therefore here follows a Petition for the actual good Success of the Means in bringing us to a cheerful Compliance with the Will of God: *Thy Will be done in Earth as it is in Heaven.* In which Words there are two Things may be signified, and they are both so good, that I am loath to exclude either of them, and shall therefore speak to them both.

*First* then, by these Words, *Thy Will be done*, may be meant an Acquiescence in God's Providence; *q. d.* Dispose me and all Mankind to a cheerful Contentment with all the Events of thy Providence, if they be ever so contrary to our own carnal Expectations.

*Secondly*, By these Words, *Thy Will be done*, may be meant a cheerful Obedience to all God's Precepts; *q. d.* Give thy Grace to me and all others, that we may so readily and cheerfully obey thy Commandments, that it may in some measure resemble the Obedience of the Angels in Heaven.

I. First, by these Words, *Thy Will be done*, is meant an Acquiescence in God's Providence. Now this Acquiescence may be either General, and implicit; or Particular and explicit.

1. It is General and implicit, when before the Events happen, and before we see through Matters, we quietly rest in God's Wisdom, Power, and Goodness, and are easy in our Minds, believing assuredly that he will wisely contrive all for the best. What is to be meant by this previous implicit Faith in God, may be explained and illustrated by the implicit Faith we have in Men, though deserving it infinitely less. Children, for example, do not trouble themselves with the Cares of the World, what they shall eat, or what they shall drink, or wherewithal they shall be cloathed; but depend entirely on the Care and Providence of their Parents. Patients, though they have no Skill of their own Diseases, yet under God acquiesce in the Skill of a good Physician. A Traveller, in an unknown Way and Country, though he has no particular Skill in the Ways and Roads,  
yet



yet trusting to a skilful Guide, is very easy, and goes cheerfully on in his Journey; and especially at Sea, where there is no Path to direct us, we commit our selves entirely to the Skill of a Master, and are very easy under it. Now if Children can thus trust their Parents, though often poor, and not able to relieve them; and Travellers can trust their Guides, though there may be difficult Passages to pass through, or ford, and it is not in the Power of the Guide to furnish Bridges or other Conveniencies; and Passengers can trust their Commander, though he cannot prevent Storms and other bad Accidents; what might they do if they had Almighty Fathers, unerring Guides, Pilots that the very Winds and Seas would obey? Might they, not then with a much more implicit Faith surrender their Understanding, and submit all their own Measures to his? And this is the true State of the Case with Almighty God.

All this may be said of future Events, which are entirely in God's Hand, and we know nothing at all of them, but in general depend on God's Wisdom, Power, and Goodness. But then there are some particular Events, for which we have something more to depend upon, than this general, implicit, but ignorant Faith; namely, where God has by Prediction, or Promise, or by a Train of Providences, or by some other manifest Opening of the Scene, discovered somewhat more clearly what he is about; then as his Will and Design opens up more and more, we have greater Encouragement to strike in with it, and to say, *Tby Will be done.* For though God's Designs in general are dark, and the Footsteps of his Providence hard to be perceived, like that of the Way of a Ship

in the Sea, which makes but a slender Impref-  
 sion, and which is soon worn out; yet when he  
 has long held on a steady Course, so that it is  
 plain what Port he steers for; as his Designs open  
 more and more, there is a great Beauty in them,  
 and his Providence should more explicitly be com-  
 plied with. Yet there is great Danger here in be-  
 ing too hasty in interpreting and applying of Pro-  
 vidences; it is much safer to wait till we see what  
 God aims at, and in the mean time to obey the  
 Will of his Precepts, than to venture rashly in the  
 Dark in a Way which we are not sure he is about;  
 and if he is, whether he designs it for Mercy or  
 Judgment. So much for future Events, which  
 are entirely in God's Hand, where *the Lot is cast  
 into the Lap, and the whole Disposal of it is of the  
 Lord*; but it does not yet appear unto us, what  
 particular Way he intends to order it.

2. But then secondly, this Acquiescence in  
 God's Will may be particular and explicite, when  
 God in his Providence has brought his Works to  
 pass, and it is very plain what Settlement he aims  
 at. It is our Duty then to admire the Beauty of  
 Providence, and expressly to acquiesce in it, though  
 those Events be ever so contrary to our Designs  
 and Expectations, saying, with our Saviour, *Not  
 my Will, but thy Will be done*. This Duty of ac-  
 quiescing contentedly in whatsoever Events God's  
 Providence brings about, is a great and compre-  
 hensive Duty, and has a mighty Tendency both  
 to our own Peace and Quiet, and the Ease and  
 Quiet of the World about us. But forasmuch as  
 this is a Duty of some Difficulty to apprehend it,  
 and of yet greater Difficulty to comply with it,  
 I shall say something both to clear up the Nature,  
 and

and to persuade to the Practice of it. As to the Nature of it, we are not to believe that it is a Duty incumbent upon us actively to comply with every Thing that seems to be favoured by Providence; for sometimes we are not to comply at all, but according to the Duty of our Place and Station, are by all lawful Ways to oppose prosperous Iniquity; and that which seems a Countenance of Providence, is often no such thing, but only God's making use of ill Men to be Scourges in his Hand for chastising others, sometimes as bad, but often a great deal better than themselves. We shall never be safe in our Duty of acquiescing in the divine Providence, except where we are sure that we have taken no sinful Steps to bring it about ourselves; and where it is brought about to our Hand, it is often not an Active, but a Passive Compliance, which God requires at our Hands. The Thing will be clearer by an Example. When the King of *Affyria* invaded *Judea*, it would have been great Treachery in any of the *Jews* to have sided with him. Yet afterwards when he had conquered them, and they were actually carried away Captives into *Babylon*, the Providence of God deciding the Matter so plainly, that they were his Subjects, they were obliged to perform the Duty of quiet and peaceable Subjects under him, and to say, *God's Will be done*. So in all other Cases, though never so afflicting, we are allowed to pray to God, and to use all other lawful Endeavours to remove the Cause of our Trouble and Affliction; as *David* fasted and prayed while the Child was sick; but as soon as the Child was dead, that being a clear Determination of the Case by God himself, he then applied

applied himself entirely to this Duty of acquiescing contentedly in God's Will and Pleasure. Nay further, suppose this Declaration of God's Pleasure should be brought about by some wicked Instrument and Means; even in that Case, tho' we are not obliged to submit to these wicked Instruments, yet, with respect to God, a Submission and Acquiescence is due; for tho' we deserved such a Punishment at the Hands of God, yet we deserved it not at their Hands, and it was a Sin in them to inflict it. The looking upon Things with this different Aspect, as they come from God, and as they come from Men, will put us in the right Way of our Duty on this difficult Subject. For tho' an Acquiescence is due to God, this does not in the least alter the Case as to Men, who being Strangers to his secret Will, ought to govern themselves by the Directions of Duty, as it is prescribed them by the Laws of God and Man.

But now this Point of Acquiescence, being really, on many afflicting Occasions, very difficult, I shall briefly offer a few Considerations to induce us to the Performance of it, and then proceed to the other Part of the Division, the Preceptive Part of God's Will.

(1.) What greater Motive can there be to Acquiescence, than to consider that every thing is subject to God's Wisdom and Contrivance, and that it is in the very Nature of this Duty, that we take it as from his Hand? Now supposing the Event to be never so afflicting, yet at the same time coming from God our heavenly Father, we must take it for granted, that it is designed for our Good; as our Saviour argued, *The Cup*



*Cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?*

(2.) Let us consider that all Things are good or bad, according as they are more or less subservient to the sanctifying of our Hearts, and the reforming of our Lives, and the fitting us for Heaven and Happiness. Now if we consider Afflictions with this Aspect, we shall find that they have a very great Tendency to these noble Ends, and therefore that we ought chearfully to welcome them, and quietly to acquiesce in them.

(3.) Let us consider that this World, not being the Place of our Rest, but the Place of our Pilgrimage, it is not fit that we have all Things so convenient, and so to our Mind here, as to tempt us to forget our heavenly Country; and therefore whatever Accommodations we meet with, should be thankfully accepted, no Man expecting the same Conveniencies upon the Road, as he does at his own Home.

(4.) Let us consider the Example of our Lord Jesus Christ, who came to shew us the Way to Heaven. We know both what Hardships he met with, and with what a chearful contented Mind he bore them. And to his Example I might add that of all the other Martyrs, nay, all the Saints and Servants of God in all Ages, who *through much Tribulation, have entred into the Kingdom of Heaven.*

(5.) Lastly, let us consider that it is much the easier, as well as the better Way, to submit our Will chearfully to God's, than to fret, and murmur, and repine; for all Discontent encreases our Troubles; as a Bullock unaccustomed to the Yoke, and awkward at bearing of it, only frets  
and

and galls himself more, than if he set himself quietly to undergo it.

So much for this Petition, *Thy Will be done*, taken in the first Sense I mentioned, for a quiet Acquiescence in all Events of God's Providence.

II. The second Sense in which I told you this Petition is to be understood, is, that it is a Prayer that we, and all others, may yield a cheerful Obedience to all God's Precepts; that as he is readily obeyed in Heaven by Angels, so he may be readily obeyed upon Earth by us Men. In handling of this Point, I shall consider these two Things.

1. The Substance of the Blessing prayed for, that God's Laws may be obeyed here upon Earth.

2. The high Degree of Perfection in which this Blessing is to be prayed for, namely, that it should resemble the Obedience in Heaven.

1. First, I am to consider the Substance of the Blessing prayed for, that God's Laws may be obeyed here upon Earth. This follows excellently after the Petition that God's Kingdom might come. For most of our Saviour's Hearers at this Time, tho' they ardently wished for that new State of Things, which they meant by the Kingdom of God, or the Kingdom of the Messiah, yet were under two very gross Errors about it, which are both corrected in this Petition. One was, that they thought the Moral Law would, as to the greatest Part of it, be dispensed with as to the Subjects of the Messiah's Kingdom. For they thought of nothing but to kill and slay, and to invade their Neighbours Wealth and Possessions, and to gain to themselves great Estates by Rapine and Conquest, and to live luxurious sensual Lives, which

which it is not to be imagined how they could dream of any such thing, without disannulling, or at least dispensing with the whole second Table of the Moral Law; and therefore, as he had in the other Parts of this Sermon, taught them the Necessity of Obedience to the Moral Law, and that in a much higher and perfecter Sense, than ever they had been taught before from their strictest Doctors; so now, after he has taught them to pray for the coming of God's Kingdom, he immediately adds that they were to pray for a most perfect Obedience to his Precepts, such as was performed by the Angels of God in Heaven. The other Error they were under as to the Messiah's Kingdom, was, that it was to be confined to the narrow Bounds of the Land of *Judea*; but they had no Notion of its being extended to all the other Parts of the Earth; this our Saviour likewise corrects by teaching them to pray that God's Laws may be observed *upon Earth*, that is, all the World over, as they are in Heaven.

But now there is some Difficulty in accounting for this Petition, how it is distinct from the former: For if by the coming of God's Kingdom, be meant not only the furnishing the outward Means, but likewise the inward Assistance of God's Grace and Holy Spirit: What more do we desire in this Petition, that God's Will may be done? For the actual Obedience to his Laws, seems not so proper to beg of him any farther, than that he would be pleased to follow the outward Means with his Blessing and inward Grace; and that was begg'd before, in the Petition, *Thy Kingdom come*. For answer to this; tho' the inward Grace, as well as the outward Means, may be

be included in that Petition, *Thy Kingdome come*, yet it being certain that his Hearers at that Time thought they might be good enough Subjects of the Messiah's Kingdom, without obeying God's Precepts, therefore it was no superfluous Addition, if it was but as a necessary Explication of the other, to add, *Thy Will be done*: For by this Petition we pray that we may become Subjects of the right Stamp; and that by the prevailing Grace of God, we, and all Mankind, may yield Obedience to all his holy Laws.

More particularly, in the Substance of this Petition, we pray that all Men may be brought to the Knowledge of the Truth; and that knowing it, they may believe and profess it; and that professing it, they may live up to their Profession in all holy Practice and Obedience.

2. But because there are many Degrees of Obedience, and some Sorts of it which our Saviour had faulted in the preceding Parts of this Chapter, as falling much short of what he expected, let us consider next the high Degree of Perfection, to which we are to pray for this Obedience: *Thy Will be done in Earth as it is in Heaven*. Here God sets us a Pattern of Obedience, even that of the Angels; not that ours upon Earth can ever be so perfect, but the nearer it approaches to it, so much the perfecter it will be; and therefore it is good to propose to ourselves the noblest Patterns, such as that of God, and Christ, and Angels, and the best of Saints; but still above the Righteousness of the *Scribes and Pharisees*.

More particularly by praying that our Obedience on Earth may resemble that of the Angels  
in



in Heaven, these Properties of Obedience are prayed for.

(1.) That it be as perfect an Obedience as we can attain to in this Life. There is much Dark-ness in our Understanding, which hinders us from having a clear Perception and lively Sense of our Duty. There is a great Corruption in our Will, which obstructs our yielding an hearty Assent of Obedience to what we do know. And there is a great Impotence in our Faculties, that we cannot put in Execution all that we would gladly do ; for as *St Paul* says, *when we would do Good, Evil is present with us* ; and we groan under a Law in our Members, which rebels against the Law of our Mind, and leads us captive to the Law of Sin. And besides, there are many Things in which we want neither Knowledge of our Duty, nor Will and Power to execute it, which through Forgetfulness, or Inadvertency, or want of Care to keep our Minds in a good Temper, or through slackening of our Guard or Watch, we often neglect, and upon Account of that Negligence, fall into Sins of Omission or Commission ; in all these we have Reason to beg of God to help us to an higher and more perfect State of Obedience. And the same we pray for all the rest of Mankind.

(2 ) Angelical Obedience is a willing and chearful Obedience ; Angels are represented as indefatigable in God's Service, and always attentive to receive his Commands (a). *Bless the Lord ye his Angels, that excel in Strength, that do his Commandments, bearkening unto the Voice of his Word.*

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(a) Psal. ciii. 20.

So let our Obedience be not only an external Service, but let it proceed from an inward Principle of a fervent Love to God, and a Delight to do his Pleasure.

(3.) Angelical Obedience, is an unanimous harmonious Obedience; there are no discontented Mutineers in that heavenly Host, but with one Heart they are all ready to execute any Piece of Service they are sent about. What a sad thing is it to observe, that even among good People in this World, there is so much Jarring and Discord, as is enough, were there nothing else, to imbitter all their Comforts, and to make their Lives uneasy! Let us pray for, and endeavour after this Spirit of Love; Love to God, and Love to one another, that with one Heart, and one Mouth, we may glorify God.

The Sum of all is, we pray here that we, and all Men, may not only come to the Knowledge, Belief, and Profession, but to the sincere unanimous Practice of our Duty, in which we are to aim at higher and higher Measures of Perfection, in Imitation of that Angelical Obedience which is in Heaven.

So much for Explication of the Petition. There are two Inferences I shall make from this Doctrine, and then conclude.

*Inf.* 1. We may observe here, that besides the coming of God's Kingdom, which includes both the outward Means, and the inward Grace belonging to the general Propagation of the Gospel, we are taught to pray for ourselves, and others, for still larger Measures of Grace, till we arrive at the Perfection of Christian Obedience. From hence I would infer, that there are infinite Degrees

Degrees of Grace suited to all States and Conditions, with which we may provide ourselves out of those inexhaustible Storehouses in Heaven. It is a great Mistake to think that God bestows equal Measures of Grace upon all. I believe indeed he does enough of this kind to all, even the worst of Men, to make them inexcusable, that he can in no Sense be charged with their Sins; and all Men with that Measure of Grace which they have, might be a great deal better than they are. But I do not in the least doubt, that over and above this common Grace, which if it were rightly managed, might be a sufficient Stock to begin that which might be afterwards improved into the greatest Perfection of Holiness; besides this, I say, I do not doubt but that God gives larger Measures of Grace, especially upon the good Improvement of our first meaner Talents, than are barely sufficient to convert us to God. Nay, I am of opinion from this, and some other Texts, which I shall not now insist upon, that Grace may be improved to infinite Degrees, by asking, and using it, by Prayer and Endeavours; and that we may still make nearer Approaches to this blessed State of perfect angelical Obedience. And therefore,

2. My second *Inference* shall be, Since our Saviour has taught us to pray for such a perfect Holiness, as may resemble that of the Angels in Heaven; that we ought not to give out upon any low Attainments, but continue our fervent Prayers, and most vigorous Endeavours after it. If our Saviour had not known that Prayer was a very proper Means to attain it, he would never have taught us in this Model of Prayer, to have

made one of the six Petitions so directly for it.

And if we do not join our Endeavours to our Prayers, we contradict our selves, and counter-act what we pray for. Let us consider that this is the great End of all, to which all our Instructions, Exhortations, and Admonitions tend, even your Advancement in Holiness and Obedience; and without this, all Knowledge, all Professions, nay, all Believing, and Persuasions, and Convictions, will avail us nothing; so far from it, that they will prove only so many Aggravations of our Judgment and Condemnation. Let me then exhort you, as ye love your own Souls, to add to your Faith Virtue; and to the small Beginnings ye have made in Christian Virtue, that ye continue, and advance towards that evangelical Perfection, to which our Saviour, by all his Directions both of our Prayers and Practice, aims to bring us.

*Now to Him, with the Father, and the Holy Ghost, let us render, as is due, all Praise, Honour, and Glory, for ever and ever. Amen.*





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## S E R M O N XII.

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M A T T. VI. II.

*Give us this Day our daily Bread.*

The Sixth Sermon on this Text.

**H**A V I N G considered the three first Petitions of the *Lord's Prayer*, which relate chiefly to Almighty God, we proceed now to the three last, which relate more particularly to our selves and our Neighbours. The first of these is a Petition for the Necessaries of this Life, for which we are from time to time to depend on God, and to request a Supply from him; for this is the Meaning of this Petition in my Text, *Give us this Day our daily Bread.* For Explication of this Petition, there are these three Propositions contain'd in it, which will require a more particular Consideration.

I. That we are allowed to pray for Necessaries; for this, in the Scripture Style, is to be understood by *Bread.*

II. That we ought to be contented to depend on God from time to time for these Necessaries, and are not to expect to have them laid in all at once; for this we are to understand by the Word *daily*, or *day by day.*

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III. That

III. That we are not to rest in our own Acquisitions or Endeavours for what we stand in need of, of the good Things of this Life; but are to look up to God for his Blessing on our lawful Endeavours, saying unto him, *Give us this Day our daily Bread.*

I. The first Thing I observe, as contained in this Petition, is, that we are allowed to pray for Necessaries. This is understood by the Word *Bread*; it is a common Metonymie in the Holy Scripture, and in our vulgar Phrase, by *Bread*, to understand all the Necessaries of Life. When we say of any one, he has not *Bread*, the Meaning is, he is extreme Poor. So though *Abraham* said only, *Gen. xviii. 5. I will fetch a Morfel of Bread, and comfort your Hearts*: The Treat which he made them, went indeed by the Name of a *Morsel of Bread*, but we have an account of Milk, and Butter, and a Calf, that was kill'd and dress'd. So *Joseph*, when he was about to treat his Brethren, *Gen. xliii. 31.* commanded his Servants *to set on Bread*. But though *Bread* signifies all Necessaries, it is not so easy a Matter to define how much is meant by these Necessaries; only in general we may assert, 1. That it is not meant thereby that we should limit our Prayers, or Endeavours, to what will barely keep Body and Soul together, though with a great deal of Vexation and Trouble. It is certain that God doth not debar us from praying and endeavouring for a comfortable and decent Subsistence, that we may mind his Service without Distraction. Nay further, it is certain that we are encouraged to endeavour after, not only the Supply of our own Wants, but that we may have wherewithal

to supply the Wants of others. Now to both these, our decent Subsistence, and the helping of others, we are exhorted by *St Paul*, *1 Thef.* 4. 11, 12. where he recommends a Diligence in our Calling to that very End, *that we may walk decently toward them that are without, and may have Lack of nothing.* And *Eph.* iv. 28. the same Apostle advises to honest Labour, *that we may have to give to him that needeth.* And if these are recommended as Duties and Blessings, certainly we may pray for them. 2. This Subsistence is not in all Men alike, but differs according to the different Stations of Men, and according to the greater or lesser Charge of Children, and other Domesticks, and Relatives they have to provide for. For what would be a good Competency for a single Person in a private Station, would fall much short for a Man with a great Family, or in a publick Station. There is so great a Variety in this daily Bread, I mean in the several Competencies and Subsistences of Men, according to the several Stations which God approves in the World, that provided they keep within the Limits of what is not sinful, there is great Latitude to be allowed. But that we may know what Bounds God has set to this Matter, I shall sum it up in a few Words.

1. We are to take care that our Hearts be not principally set on the World, or on our worldly Subsistence; but we are *to seek first the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness*, and all other Things as Accessaries; that is, with a much inferiour Degree of Care.

2. We are to use no unlawful, indirect, unjust, cheating Ways of purchasing or gathering this Competency.

3. We are to limit our Desires to real, not to extend them to imaginary Wants.

4. We are not to be stingy or penurious, in the Use of our Estates, either for our own Occasions, or the Occasions of those who belong to us, or for the Relief of the Poor.

If we keep within these Bounds, all the rest of our worldly Wants and Occasions, will easily fall under this Compellation of Bread or Subsistence.

Now this Bread, (which I have shewed you will comprehend a comfortable Subsistence) we may lawfully pray for. There is none but will grant that it is lawful to pray for Necessaries; all the Question then, can be only as to the comfortable Subsistence; but there is a great deal of Reason why that may likewise be prayed for.

1. It tends to deliver the Mind more from anxious Cares and Fears, than straitned Circumstances.

2. It enlarges the Heart more in Thanksgiving to Almighty God.

3. It puts us in a Capacity to do more good in Works of Piety and Charity.

4. It helps better to carry on the publick Good, which often suffers egregiously for want of having wherewithal, and for want of a publick Spirit, which Want is occasioned by pinching Circumstances.

If then this comfortable Subsistence is a thing good in itself, and has so good Tendency, both as to this Life present, and that which is to come, why may we not both seek it of God in Prayer, and by all-lawful Means endeavour after it? But it may be objected perhaps, that under the



the Notion or Pretence of this comfortable Subsistence, worldly minded Men will enlarge their covetous Desires and Endeavours, and still pretend that they want whatever they have a mind to. But having already limited those Desires to real, not imaginary Wants, and subjected them to the Rules of Christianity, we must exclude from this Petition all superfluous Desires of the Things of this World. But how then, may we not pray for *Riches*? is not that a Blessing of God, which may be made good Use of, and therefore may be wished, and desired, and prayed for? I answer, that Riches being not to be reckoned amongst the Necessaries, but Superfluities of Life, we are not allowed, neither by this Petition of my Text, nor by any other Precept of holy Scripture, absolutely to pray for them. And the Reason is, we are only allowed to pray for good Things; but Riches are to be reckoned among the Things indifferent, which are sometimes good, sometimes bad, and therefore must be wished and prayed for only conditionally, in so far as God knows they will prove good for us.

II. So much for the first Thing I observed in the Words, that we are allowed to pray for Necessaries. The second Thing I observed, was, That we ought to be content to depend on God from time to time, for these Necessaries, and are not to expect to have them laid in all at once. In my Text it is said, *Give us this Day our daily Bread*; and in *St Luke*, *Day by Day our daily Bread*; and in the End of this Chapter, *Take no Thought for the Morrow*. In this Part of the Prayer, our Saviour guards us against a common Vice, or rather a common Pretext of Covetousness: For granting,

says the covetous Man in his Heart, that I am to be contented with a comfortable Subsistence, and not to seek after the Superfluities of Life, yet I hope I may lay in for this Subsistence not for one Day, or one Year, but for as long as I hope to live, nay for my Children and Relations after me; and because Life is subject to many cross Accidents, that there is no Fund so secure, but that it may fail, therefore it is good to have several Strings to one's Bow, and to have much Goods in several Funds laid up for many Years, that the Mind may be at rest from Fear of Want. And by this Means, under the Name of Necessaries, they allow themselves the Liberty of extending their Cares and Projects as far as ever their Ability will reach. But to obviate this Reasoning of the carnal Mind, our Saviour here directs us to pray only for *our daily Bread*, and that *for this Day, or Day by Day*: Which, though it doth not limit our Cares precisely to one Day, yet forbids our anticipating the unnecessary Cares of the future Time, and commands our constant Dependance on God's Providence, for the Supply of all our Wants. Now there are several good Reasons may be assigned for this Doctrine, why our Saviour has thus thought fit, not to give us all our Portion at once, and to instruct us not to pray for it all at once, but by Piece-meal, as from time to time we want it. I shall assign two or three of the chief of them.

1. It is very much for the good of our Souls, that we should have frequent Errands to the Throne of Grace; and even that our worldly Necessities should call us thither. Men in this corrupt State are so backward to Prayer, that it

is to be feared, if all their worldly Occasions were cut off, they would seldom draw near to God at all; and therefore the divine Providence has wisely contrived that we must have a necessary Dependence on God for our very Subsistence. If a Man has ever so good Land to work upon, unless God sends seasonable Weather, he can make no Crop. If a Man is ever so skilful a Tradesman, except it please God to give him Health and the Use of his Limbs, and to preserve him in his right Senses, what will all his Skill signify? Every Year produces the Year's Supply; and God has contrived it so, that the World shall not have much before-hand for many Years. Besides the Labour of Man, there must in every thing be a Concurrence of favourable Providences, and other Circumstances, to make their Labours effectual. Now is not all this highly reasonable, that we should have many Monitors, to put us in mind of our great and eternal Concerns, which we are so apt to forget? And that our worldly Affairs, to which we are too much addicted, should be so contrived, as to convince us of their own Vanity, and of the Necessity of minding better Things? (a) *When he slew them, says the Psalmist, then they sought him, and returned, and enquired early after God.* We may say the same of all worldly Wants, when we are sick, when we are in Want, when a Mortality comes among our Children, or Servants, or Cattle; when an Enemy lies hard upon us; when we are in any Straits and Difficulties, then we are sensible of our own Weakness, and flee to God. And Provi-

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(a) Pf, lxxviii. 34.



dence has likewise contrived that these our Wants shall be continual; every Day wants its daily Bread; Necessities in great Numbers are continually pressing upon us, and would soon confound our Skill and Abilities, if God did not continually relieve us. And the Tendency of all this is, to make us often look up to God for Supplies; whereas if we had our Portion of Goods at once, we should be apt with the Prodigal, both to squander it away in riotous Living, and to withdraw our Duty and Dependance from our heavenly Father.

2. Another Reason for this Dependance is, that we may not oppress our selves with an unnecessary Load of Cares and Troubles about the World. One of our Saviour's Reasons against Anxiety and troubling our selves with anticipating the Cares of the future, is that *sufficient unto the Day is the Evil thereof*. Every Time brings its own Cares and Troubles along with it; and therefore contenting our selves with what the present requires, let us put off the Cares of future uncertain Times, till those Times come. God has wisely proportioned our Work and Burden to our Strength; but if we will overload our selves, and do the Work of two or three Days in one, and burden our selves not only with the Cares of the present, but with the Cares of Futurity, the Consequence of it will be, that we shall oppress our selves with a Burden much too heavy for our Spirits, and shall bestow our Labour in vain, in striving to foresee and prevent, what by all our Providence and Forecast, we shall never be able so much as to jecture. Now every thing that employs the Thoughts, and diverts the Mind from its chief

Business,



Business, is so far pernicious, and proves an Impediment, instead of a Furtherance of our Voyage to Heaven. If a Master of a Ship should lay in three Years, instead of three Months Provision for a Voyage for *England*; and consequently instead of bringing in any Freight to the Owners, should bring them a great deal in Debt, what Thanks do ye think might he expect at the End of his Voyage? Just so it will be with all them, who, neglecting the main Business for which they were sent into the World, fill their Minds with impertinent Thoughts and Cares about the Provisions, more than they are allowed by the great Owner, and more than ever they will have occasion for in the Voyage.

3. A third Reason for limiting our Desires and Prayers, and Endeavours after earthly Things, to this present time, and against extending them to Futurity, is the continual Preparation we ought to be in for Death and Judgment. For the natural Tendency of these excessive Cares, is to make us believe that we have taken up our Residence here for good and all, that this is our Home and Country, and that we look for no other; whereas we are required to be always ready equipped for a March; nay, even for a March in the Night, with our Lamps lighted. So is our Saviour to be understood, *Luke xii. 35. Let your Loins be girded about, and your Lights burning, and ye your selves like unto Men that wait for their Lord, when he will return from the Wedding, that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately.*

III. The third Thing I observed in the Words, was, that we are not to rest in our own Acquisitions

sitions or Endeavours for what we stand in need of, of the good Things of this Life; but are to look up to God for his Blessing on our lawful Endeavours, saying unto him, *Give us this Day our daily Bread.* There are two Things contained in this Observation, which do both of them deserve our more serious Consideration.

1. That the good Things even of this Life, are in God's Gift.

2. That God will be frequently addressed to for them.

1. That the good Things even of this Life, are in God's gift; and therefore we are taught here to pray to him for them, saying to God, *Give us this Day our daily Bread.* Now it would not be so strange to hear, that the noble Gift of Grace is in God's Hands, and that we must incessantly ply to him for it; but that our *daily Bread*, and the other worthless Things of this World, which are commonly bestowed on wicked as well as good Men, should be the Gift of God, is not so plain or accountable by natural Reason; yet the holy Scripture is positive in it, and our Saviour here teaching us to ask our Bread of God, puts the Thing beyond all doubt. It is not only the Bread which God gives miraculously, without any human Industry or Labour, which is God's Gift, as he gave Manna to the *Israelites* in the Wilderness, but that Bread, to the Production whereof a great deal of human Labour does concur, that is the Gift of God. For clearing of this, we are to consider that all these Things are his Creatures; it was he who made the Earth, and all Things that are therein; it is he who endowed it with Fertility, which makes it

it capable of all those useful Productions; it is he who so adapts the Fruits of the Earth to our Bodies, that they are capable of yielding them Nourishment and Strength: It is he likewise who furnishes us with the Dexterity and Ability of both Body and Mind, to do our Part in those Productions. And as for their being bestowed promiscuously on Good and Bad, that doth not hinder them from being the Gifts of God; for he has many common Gifts of that Nature, which he thinks fit to bestow even upon the Evil and the Unthankful, as our Saviour tells us that *he makes his Sun to shine on the Evil and the Good, and his Rain to fall on the Just and the Unjust.* But then if these are such common Mercies that they are bestowed promiscuously upon all, what occasion is there to beg them of God? This leads me to the second Thing I took notice of in this Observation, namely,

2. That God will be frequently addressed to for these temporal Blessings: We are to beg them of God, and we are to beg them as a Gift or Boon, not as a Thing that is our Due, of which we demand Payment, but as a Bounty; and therefore we say, *Give us.* I shall speak to both these, why they are to be prayed for at all, and why as a Boon.

(1.) Why we are at all to address our selves to God for these Things by Prayer and Thanksgiving. I answer, that it is necessary on many Accounts. This distinguishes us from the brute Creatures, who though they partake of God's Bounty in feeding them, yet do not acknowledge God in it; for it is but in a Figure that the young Lions when they roar after their  
Prey,



*Prey, are said to seek their Meat from God, and that other brute Creatures are said to wait on God, that he may give them their Meat in due Season. This likewise distinguishes us from wicked Men, who sacrifice to their own Net, and impute all their Wealth to their own Pains and Industry, according to the Description we have of them, Deut. viii. 17. saying, My Power, and the Might of my Hand, hath gotten me this Wealth: Whereas good Men remember the Lord their God, for it is he that giveth them Power to get Wealth, as it there follows. There is nothing then more rational, than for good Men, who believe a Providence, and that God is the Author of every good Gift, to address to him, and to own him as the Giver of all the Necessaries and Conveniencies of Life, in Prayers and Thanksgivings.*

(2.) But then as we are thus to address ourselves to God for our daily Bread, we are to address ourselves for it humbly, as for a free Gift, not a Debt; and therefore our Addresses must be with all Humility, yet they may nevertheless be with an holy Confidence, as that of Children is, when they come to ask Necessaries of a Father; for this paternal Affection is not so great in any earthly Parent, as it is in God: *Can a Woman forget her sucking Child, that she should not have Compassion on the Son of her Womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee, saith the Lord, Isa. xlix. 15. And (a) if ye being Evil, know how to give good Gifts to your Children, how much more shall your Father which is in Heaven give*

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(a) Matt. vii. 11.



*good Things to them that ask him?* says our Saviour hereafter in this same Sermon.

As these Addresses to God are to be with Humility and Confidence, so they ought to be very frequent and consequently with an holy Importunity. The Necessaries of Life understood here by Bread, are so many, and our Wants of them recur so frequently, that this alone necessarily engages us in the frequent Practice and Exercise of Prayer. And besides, the Words, *this Day*, shew us that this Petition is designed to be renewed *every Day*; and therefore we should keep our selves in a constant good Disposition for drawing near to God.

I have now done with the Explication of the Text; I shall be very short in the Application of it.

I. First then, this Text shews us by the Word, *daily Bread*, how we ought to content our selves with the Necessaries and Conveniencies of Life; and how we should retrench the Superfluities of it. I might here run out into a copious Reproof of Luxury; and recommend the Virtues of Temperance, Sobriety, and Frugality, as being most suitable to this Part of our Saviour's Prayer. Particularly, I might run out against that beastly Vice of Drunkenness; I call it beastly, not that I know any Beasts that are guilty of it, but because it makes Men more brutish in their Actions, than the Beasts themselves, that they are not capable of being governed by any Impressions of Reason, Religion, Interest, or even common Shame; but run on in a mad career of drinking away their very Senses, and all the right Notions they ever were Masters of.

2. By

2. By our praying this Day for *our daily Bread*, I might here reprove the reigning Sin of Covetousness, which is never contented, no not *with much Goods laid up for many Years*. The Moderation of this Petition, should teach us to wean our Hearts from the World, and if God blesses us with Riches, *to be rich in good Works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate, laying up in Store for our selves a good Foundation against the time to come*.

3. By our being taught here to depend and wait on God for *our daily Bread*, we see how justly they stand condemned, who have all their Dependance on their Inheritances, Friends, Places, Callings, and their own Skill and Industry for their making their Fortunes in the World; but God is not in all their Thoughts, they put him out of their Schemes; they address not themselves to him for his Blessing, nor thankfully acknowledge his Bounty; they propose not to themselves his Glory or Service by any of their Purchases, nor ever expect to be accountable to him for the Uses they put their Estates to, but sacrificing entirely to their own Net, are puffed up in their vain Minds, and think their Wealth is their own. *Who is Lord over them?*

4. If we are thus to pray for *our daily Bread*, there is another great Duty consequent upon that; namely, forasmuch as we expect not that God should bestow it upon us by the way of Miracle, but by giving his Blessing to our own Endeavours; we must therefore take care to set about nothing towards the procuring of a Livelihood, but what we may beg his Blessing upon it, and therefore must carefully abstain from all knavish, dishonest

nest Courses, such as we cannot look up to God, and beg his Blessing to them; and must employ our selves diligently in the Duties of a lawful Calling, and not expect that this Prayer for *our daily Bread*, will be granted, if we either betake not our selves to honest Employments, or are lazy and slothful in the Management of them.

5. Since we have *our daily Bread* from God, this shews us with what Gratitude we ought to partake of his Benefits. It is strange how we can forget God, our daily and hourly Benefactor. *The Ox knoweth his Owner, and the Ass his Master's Crib*, Isa. 1. 3. And shall we be more unnatural, and more ungrateful than they?

I content myself to have thus briefly mentioned these Things in the End of a Sermon, leaving the further Improvement of them to your own Meditation, and God's Blessing, without which all our Labour is to no purpose.

*Now to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, our great Supporter and bountiful Benefactor, who fills our Hearts with Food and Gladness, be all Praise, Honour, and Glory, Might, Power, and Dominion, for ever and ever. Amen.*



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## S E R M O N XIII.

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M A T T. VI. 12.

*And forgive us our Debts, as we forgive our Debtors.*

The Seventh Sermon on the Lord's Prayer.

**W**E are now come to the fifth Petition of the Lord's Prayer, which is the second of those which relate more immediately to our selves and our Neighbours. The first was, *Give us this Day our daily Bread.* If any should wonder why the Petition for Temporals should go before the two other Petitions for Pardon of Sin, and Grace to resist Temptations, which are of much greater Dignity, there are these two Accounts I think may be given of it. First, that the natural Life being prior in Time, though not in Dignity, to the spiritual Life, is provided for, and wants to be provided for in the first Place, and therefore it is no way improper that the Petition for it should precede. Secondly, on the Account of Devotion it may be of use that the Petition for Temporals should first briefly be dispatched, that the Mind being cleared from those worldly Cares, may apply itself so much more  
intensely



intently to the greater Concerns of the Soul. As Divines, when they find a Man in Sickneſs, with his Mind diſtracted, and diverted from his main Buſineſs with worldly Cares, adviſe him to put all his worldly Buſineſs aſide, and to make his Will, that ſo he may have nothing to do, but to mind his Soul and ſpiritual Concerns. So much for the Order and Method of this Petition.

But now to come to the Petition itſelf, *And forgive us our Debts, as we forgive our Debtors.* In it I ſhall conſider theſe two Things.

I. The Bleſſings we are here taught to pray for; namely, the Pardon of Sin for our ſelves and others.

II. The Qualifications of the Perſons, who are to put up this Petition. Their charitable Affection towards others is expreſly taken Notice of, but there are other good Qualifications likewiſe very clearly implied. For it is implied here that the Perſon putting up this Prayer, is very ſenſible of his Sins, and the Demerit of them: That he believes too that God is to be prevailed with to pardon Sin: And thirdly, that it is fit to come to him in the quality of an humble Penitent confeſſing his Sins, and duly humbled for them: And fourthly, that though God is well diſpoſed to be reconciled to us in Chriſt, we are to ſue out this Pardon by inceſſant Prayer. All which will deſerve a more particular Conſideration.

I. I begin with the Bleſſing we are here taught to pray for, the Pardon of Sin: *Forgive us our Debts.* Here they are called *Debts*; and by and by at the 14th Verſe *Treſpaſſes*; and St *Luke* calls them *Sins*. They are all one and the ſame Thing, *viz.* both original and actual Sin;

both the Sins of our unregenerate and regenerate State. Wonder not that I reckon original Sin among our Debts; for as a Man who is Heir to his Father's Estate, takes upon him likewise the Burden of his Debts, so that his Father's Debts, being transmitted to him, become his Debts; so it is with original Sin; it is an heavy Debt transmitted to us from our Father *Adam*, which if we had not a Friend to help us out, and to discharge it for us, would utterly sink and ruin us. But if we had no other Debt but this of our Father's contracting, this original Sin, though we may be reduced to Misery thereby, yet we should be great Objects of Mercy, as we are all apt to pity a Gentleman who has his Estate ruined, not by his own, but his Father's Mismanagement. But alas! our Case is not so good, we have followed our Father's Steps, and have infinitely increased this Debt by our own bad Conduct, to that Degree, that if the Creditor will deal rigidly with us, we must be utterly miserable to all intents and purposes; and can never of our selves, or out of our own Estates raise wherewithal to defray this immense Debt. And therefore we are represented here as pleading *in forma pauperis*, and applying our selves to God's Mercy, not for a Composition, but a Pardon. *Forgive us our Debts.*

And indeed there is Mercy and Compassion enough in God to forgive this immense Debt, if it were not that there are insuperable Obstructions in the Way, that all the Skill of Mankind could never have removed. But it has pleased God out of his infinite Wisdom and Goodness to contrive a Way for it, as far beyond the reach of  
 Man's

Man's Invention, as the Mercy itself is beyond the Bowels of any human Mercy. Namely, that the only Son of God should assume our human Nature, but without Sin; and that in that Nature he should merit as much by his most perfect, both active and passive Obedience, as being by him applied to his Brethren of the sinful Race of *Adam*, should atone for not only that original Transgression of our first Parents, but the actual Transgressions and Demerits of all Mankind; to that Degree that it is put into his Hands to save us all upon what Terms and Conditions he himself thinks most just and reasonable. And accordingly he has directed us in this Petition, upon very gracious Terms to pray for, and expect pardon of Sins, both original and actual, of Almighty God. And this leads me to the second Thing I proposed to consider, Namely,

II. The Qualifications of the Persons who are allowed to put up this Petition. And I need not go out of the Text to find them, being all here either clearly implied or expressed. For 1. If we consider this Petition with the Context, we may easily discover *Faith in Christ*; for every where in the New Testament we find that our Priviledge to call God our Father, or to expect Forgiveness of Sins from him, is solely in and through Christ. *Rom. viii. 15.* it is ascribed to our Adoption that *We cry Abba Father.* And *Gal. iv. 5.* one of the Ends of sending Christ is said to be, *That we might receive the Adoption of Sons.* This Liberty then of addressing God as his adopted Children, and the Liberty of asking Forgiveness of our Sins, is owing to Faith in Christ.

2. We are taught here to come unto God as hum-



ble Supplicants confessing our Sins, and begging Pardon; so here is the Qualification of *Repentance*.

3. We are taught here that though God is now rendred propitious to Mankind in Christ, yet it is requisite that we continually sue out our Pardons by *incessant Prayer*. 4. We are put in mind here of the Necessity of Charity, particularly that highest kind of it, consisting in the forgiving our Enemies, by putting it expressly into our Prayers. *Forgive us our Debts, as we forgive our Debtors*. Now it will be fit that we consider these Qualifications somewhat more particularly.

1. First then, towards the putting up this Petition for pardon of Sin, *Faith* is necessary. We must look upon God as a reconciled Father in Christ, and address him as *Our Father* for the Pardon of our Sins. For without Christ it is impossible to consider him in this Capacity: He is *The beloved Son, in whom God is well pleased*. And we are accepted in the Beloved, Eph. i. 6. Let us not entertain such a Thought then, that it is for any Thing we have deserved, that we are allowed thus confidently to draw near to God, or to sue out our Pardon. It is *By Christ that we have Access by Faith*. Rom. v. 2. And Eph. iii. 12. *It is in him we have Boldness and Access with Confidence by the Faith of him. Where is boasting then? it is excluded. By what Law? of Works? nay, but by the Law of Faith*. O let us admire this wonderful Way of Mercy, how we that were exterminated by wicked Works, came to have Access to God again in Christ.

2. Towards the putting up this Petition for pardon of Sin, *Repentance* is as necessary as Faith; as by Faith we are to believe God propitious thro' Christ



Christ, so by Repentance we are to consider our selves as sinful and miserable Creatures, and are to address God as Delinquents, *Forgive us our Trespases.* We are not with the proud *Pharisee* to come unto God full of *Self-Conceit*, admiring our selves, and vilifying and depreciating others; but quite contrary, full of *Self-abasement* are to plead guilty, and to pray for Mercy in Christ Jesus. The Foundation of all our Requests must be thus laid in *Humility*.

3. *Incessant Prayer* is a third Qualification of him who is allowed to put up this Petition. For though God has promised Forgiveness of Sins in Christ, yet he will be sought to for this. And therefore our Saviour here has inserted it to be asked of God as duly as our daily Bread. But some perhaps may wonder that Justification being the pardon of our Sins, after that, there should still be more Occasion for the daily renewing of this Request. But in answer to this it is to be considered, that there is no Man or Woman though ever so well sanctified, renewed, and justified, who in this imperfect State is not apt to fall into Sin; not frequently great crying Sins indeed, but the Sins of daily Incurfion, which want to be wiped out by Repentance. Of these there are a great many both of Omission and Commission, which we ought carefully to observe, and repent of them as particularly as we can; though after we have done our best this way, there will be a great many left still, which have escaped our Observation; for which God's pardon in general ought to be begged.

4. The last Qualification of one who puts up this Suit for pardon of Sin is, that he be in Cha-

rity with all the World ; particularly that he be ready to forgive his Neighbour all the Trespaffes he has committed against him. And this is expressed in the Words: *Forgive us our Debts, as we forgive our Debtors.* But here there rises a very great Doubt and Difficulty. Are we obliged to forgive all Injuries without any the least Satisfaction ; nay, to remit our just Debts without Payment, and that upon no less Peril than the not being admitted to that Pardon of Sin purchased by Christ ? And if not these, what is to be understood by this Part of the Petition ? To this Objection and Question I shall endeavour to give a short Answer, first Negatively, then Positively.

Negatively. 1. By this Expression our Saviour did not intend to encourage the doing of Injuries to others, as it would certainly be a great Encouragement to all Manner of Injuries, if they were all to escape unpunished : Nor did he design that Injustices should be past by or connived at, and that innocent Persons should suffer. 2. Our Saviour did not design to interfere with the Magistrates Office, or to hinder their calling Offenders to Account, that tending very much to the Peace and quiet of the World, and the Good of human Society.

But then Positively. 1. All private Revenge is certainly forbidden, and it is left entirely to the Magistrate's Office, to do right between Man and Man. 2. All Rancour and Malice in the Heart are forbid ; and the Duty of Love and Charity enjoined, which is very consistent with the doing of right to all. 3. The Rigour of Justice, where it borders upon Cruelty, Exaction, or Severity, is condemned.

condemned. 4. Where there is Probability of reclaiming an Enemy by a seasonable Kindness, such as neither encourages Transgression in general, nor wrongs any third Person in particular, it is commendable to pass by a personal Injury, and to be the first in breaking off Contention; for the retaliating Injury with Injury is the Way to perpetuate Strife, and to encrease Animosities. 5. As to Debts and Injuries, where the Party offending has not Capacity or Ability to repair them, and shews no Malice in the Case, there the Christian Part is rather to forgive, than to use the Offender rigidly by corporal Punishments and Severities. It would be no hard Matter to prove these Rules and Observations from Scripture and Reason, but foreseeing there will be a further Occasion to treat of this Subject from some Words immediately following the Lord's Prayer, and designing some practical Observations from the Text, I choose to be so much the shorter on the explicatory Part.

1. First, from the Rank and Order which this Petition holds in this Prayer, we may conclude that it is a Petition of extraordinary great Consequence. It is the first of the spiritual Petitions for our selves or our Neighbours. And indeed if we enter upon the Consideration of the Matter of it, we may quickly be convinced of it. For what is it that separates between God and us but Sin? What is the Cause of all our present both internal and external Trouble but Sin? And what is the Cause of all our future Fears but Sin? If that were once pardoned, what an infinite deal of Peace of Conscience and both external and internal Tranquillity should we enjoy? Then as in  
this



this Prayer we pray for others as well as our selves, saying, forgive us our Trespaffes, we pray for the same Felicities to all Mankind. And the more common and general Felicity is, it encreases the Felicity of every individual Person; as a Man if he is in ever so good a Humour, cannot be so merry while all are melancholy round about him, as if they were all as cheerful as himself. If it were not for Sin, we should have Peace with God, Peace in our own Consciences, and Peace with all the World. And O! what a sweet World would it then be, when there would not be one jarring String in the whole Harmony of Mankind.

This then being one of the greatest Blessings, it behoves us to seek after it in the first Place, and to take all the most proper Methods for obtaining it. Particularly by Faith let us lay hold on that Act of Indemnity, which Christ has published for all Men to come in, and receive the Pardon of their Sins upon gracious easy Terms. Let us stir up our selves to the exercise of godly Sorrow for all our Sins past, and to sincere and hearty Resolutions against them for the time to come. And for this end let us be incessant Solicitors at the Throne of Grace, and be in Charity with all Men. Especially if there is any Person ye apprehend has injured you, do your utmost to forgive him, and to be reconciled to him, as ye expect Forgiveness at the Hands of Almighty God.

2. From the Rank and Quality which we our selves hold in this Petition, which is, that of poor Supplicants, we may learn what modest and humble Thoughts we ought to have of our selves and



all our Performances. There are several Errors maintained in the World quite contrary to this Notion of my Text, The Papists maintain the proud Doctrine of *Merit*, and the yet prouder of *Supererogation*. The Quakers proudly pretend to a *sinless Perfection*. Divers Hypocrites, as they cloak over their Sins to the World, so they hide them as much as possibly they can from themselves, and persuade themselves they are *Righteous*: all of us are naturally full of *Self-Flattery*, and take a great deal of Pains to keep our selves from a Sight and Sense of our Sins. And what is the Consequence of all this, but to lull us asleep with a pleasant Dream that we are better than others; and so to stifle the Thoughts of Repentance and Amendment, and the striving earnestly with God by Prayer for Mercy and Pardon in Christ Jesus? Ye remember what our Saviour said of the proud *Pharisee*, and the poor *Publican*, that *The Publican went down to his House justified rather than the other*. Let us, instead of any of these proud Opinions and Practices, follow all such Courses as may bring us to a Sight and Sense of our Sins; and may excite us earnestly to beg for Mercy and Pardon in Christ Jesus. This Doctrine should stir us up to a daily Self-Examination, Confession and Prayer to God, that our Sins may be blotted out. These are the proper Exercises of a good Christian, in which there is no Danger of exceeding. These will keep the Soul in a good Frame and Temper, and the more they abase us in our own Sight, so much the more will they exalt us in the Sight of God.

3. Thirdly, here is Comfort to all good People, whose continual Grief it is that they can never

ver entirely conquer their Lusts and Corruptions, but are daily discovering new Failings in themselves; here I say is Comfort to all such, that to our daily Failings our Saviour has prescribed a daily Remedy; that as often as we pray for our daily Bread, we should pray likewise for the forgiveness of our Sins. It were indeed earnestly to be wished that our Victory over Sin in this World were more compleat, and that we were delivered not only from those Works of the Flesh, those crying Sins which wicked Men commonly indulge themselves in, but likewise from all those lesser Faults which are incident to good People in this Life. But we are to consider that at best this is but an imperfect State, and that that entire Deliverance from all Manner of Sin belongs to the State of Heaven, which good People therefore earnestly long for. All we can do while we are here is, by a diligent Use of the Means of Grace, to study as great Perfection in Holiness as we can, and by Watchfulness before hand, and Self-Examination afterwards, with the constant Use of Prayer, and Resolutions, and Endeavours, to keep our selves as clear of all Sin both of Omission and Commission as possibly as we can. But yet forasmuch as *In many Things we offend all of us, and if we say we have no Sin, we deceive our selves, and the Truth is not in us*; our Patience must extend so far as to be easy and contented with our imperfect Circumstances, and by daily Prayer and Repentance to wipe off these Blemishes, till we arrive at that blessed State in Heaven, where there will be no need of this Petition. But at present we have great Encouragement to put up this Request. It  
is

is a Petition drawn by our Saviour himself; and he will back it with his own prevalent Mediation and Intercession. And God who knows our frail Nature and dangerous Circumstances in this World, will pity our Weakness, and pardon the Sins of this imperfect State. As the Psalmist describes this Mercy of God excellently, Pf. ciii. 13, 14. *Like as a Father pitieth his Children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him: For he knoweth our Frame, he remembereth that we are Dust.*

4. The last Thing I have to do from this Text is, to address myself to those rigid Exactors of Injuries, who notwithstanding this, and divers other plain Texts of Holy Scripture, will not pardon the least Transgression in their Neighbour, though they themselves have long Reckonings to account for to Almighty God. I have not time now to consider the several Cases, what sort of Injuries are to be pardoned, and what not; perhaps that may come in better hereafter, from those Words which our Saviour has subjoined to the Lord's Prayer, and which have a particular Aspect upon this Petition. *For if ye forgive Men their Trespases, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if ye forgive not Men their Trespases, neither will your Father forgive your Trespases.* All I shall say at present, is in general to recommend to you a merciful forgiving Temper, and to dissuade you from acting out of Principles of Malice or Repentment.

And if it is so dangerous a Thing to prosecute Revenge where we are provoked; what must it be without any Provocation at all, to contrive to aggrieve our Neighbour, and to be the first Aggressors in Injuries? I am very sensible that the  
false



false *Rules of Honour*, as they are called, are in this Point of Retaliation of Injuries directly contrary to the Law of Jesus Christ. The one makes it a noble Thing to Revenge, the other a noble Thing to pass by an Injury. But pray consider that in the great Day of Accounts, we shall be judged by the Laws of Christ, and not by Mens false Rules of Honour. And therefore to turn the Petition of my Text into a short Exhortation, I shall give it you in the Words of St *Luke, Chap. vi. 37.* and they are so few that I hope ye will easily carry them along with you; *Forgive, and ye shall be Forgiven.*

*Now God of his infinite Mercy bless us all with the Pardon of our Sins, and Grace to amend our Lives; that when this short Life is over, we may be admitted to that State of Glory and Happiness which we wait for in Heaven, through the Merits and Mediation of Christ Jesus. To whom, &c.*





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## S E R M O N XIV.

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M A T T. VI. 13.

*And lead us not into Temptation, but deliver us from Evil.*

The Eighth Sermon on the Lord's Prayer.

**I**N these Words we have the last Petition of the Lord's Prayer, which relates to the preserving us from being overcome by Temptations. Before I come to the Petition itself, it is very fit that we consider the Connexion. The spiritual Petitions relating directly to our selves, our Saviour parts into two: One, for the pardon of Sin already past, Forgive us our Debts, or Trespases; the other to guard us against Sin for the Time to come, which is that of my Text: *And lead us not into Temptation, but deliver us from Evil.* I shall first say something for the Explanation of the Words, and then consider the Meaning of the Petition.

To begin with the Word *Temptation*, I shall not here expatiate to enquire in how many Senses it is taken in the holy Scriptures, but restrain my Consideration of it to the Temptations here meant, namely, Temptations to Sin, such Suggestions of the Devil, the World, and the Flesh, as are apt to induce us to the Omission of Duty, or the Commission of Sin.

By

By the Word, *leading into Temptation*, as it is applied to God, must not be understood the en-  
snaring us in sinful Courses, as if he were the  
Author or Contriver of Sin, which is far from  
the Purity of his Nature; but only the permit-  
ting us to be tempted, or the withholding his  
Grace, whereby we might be enabled to resist  
Temptations, and for a just Punishment of our  
Sins, the leaving us to our selves to grapple with  
our spiritual Enemies upon our own very unequal  
Strength.

By *delivering us from Evil*, some mean the  
delivering us from the evil One, meaning the  
Devil; whether as the Principal or Head of the  
Temptation, or as the Tormentor, to whose Lot  
we shall fall, if the Temptation succeeds. Others  
mean in general the Evil of Sin, that God by  
his Grace and Providence would so fortify, de-  
fend, and extricate us, that we be not led into  
sinful Courses or Actions; or if we are, that we  
be quickly delivered by a thorough Repentance  
and Amendment. And I see no material Diffe-  
rence between these two Interpretations, both  
tending to one and the same thing, to invoke  
God's Help, both to stave off Temptations by  
his Providence, and to fortify us against them,  
and to help us out of them by the Grace of his  
holy Spirit.

The Words being thus explained, towards un-  
derstanding of the Petition contained in them, it  
will be necessary likewise briefly to clear up some  
Truths here presupposed, upon which this Peti-  
tion seems to be grounded, to direct us to the  
right Sense of it. The Truths I mean, are these  
following.

I: That

I. That in this corrupt State, we are exposed to manifold Temptations, which of our selves, or by any natural Strength of our own, we are not able to grapple with.

II. That though God is not the Author of Temptations, so as directly to bring them on, yet he exercises such a Power over both the Tempters, and the Tempted, that by his Grace and Providence he can either stave off the Temptation, or so restrain and govern us, that either we shall not be led into it, or quickly be extricated from it.

III. That it is our Duty earnestly to beg this Assistance of God by Prayer.

I. That in this corrupt State we are exposed to manifold Temptations, which of our selves, or by any natural Strength of our own, we are not able to grapple with. I shall not need to insist on this, because it requires only an Inspection into our own Hearts and Lives, to be convinced of the Truth of it; and therefore to speak of the innumerable Temptations with which we are assaulted, would be only to engage in an endless Labour to no purpose, but to prove what no body denies. I shall only from this Observation, take notice of the vast Extent of this Petition, for it is a Prayer to defend us against all Sorts of Sin, especially such as we are most exposed to, and most endangered by. And this teaches us what is to be chiefly in our Eye in all our Prayers and Endeavours, namely, to guard against Sin, particularly those Sins to which we are most apt to be tempted.

II. The second Thing here pre-supposed, is, that though God is not the Author of Temptations, so as directly to bring them on, yet he exercises such

a Power both over the Tempters, and the Tempted, that he can either stave off the Temptation, or so restrain and govern us, that we shall either not be led into it, or be quickly extricated from it. There are two Things to be cleared from this Observation.

1. First, that God is clear from being the Author of Temptations. This is so much the more necessary to be explained, because there are some who, by their unwary Expressions, have given to God a direct Causality in sinful Actions, and have founded their Opinion on this, and some other Texts of Holy Scripture. To preserve you against the Poison of this Doctrine, let it be considered first, that the Holy Scriptures are most express in giving us a quite other Notion of God, than that he is the Author or Approver of any sinful Action: *Thou art not a God that hath Pleasure in Wickedness; neither shall Evil dwell with thee,* says the Psalmist, Psal. v. 4: And Psal. xlv. 6. 7. *Thy Throne, O God, is for ever and ever; the Scepter of thy Kingdom, is a right Scepter; thou lovest Righteousness, and hatest Wickedness.* And Deut. xxxii. 4. *He is the Rock, his Work is perfect; for all his Ways are Judgment; a God of Truth, and without Iniquity, just and right is he.* The Apostle St Paul puts this Question, and rejects it with Abhorrence, Rom. ix. 14. *What shall we say then,* says he, *is there Unrighteousness with God? God forbid.* And St James is most express in this Point, James i. 13. *Let no Man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with Evil, neither tempteth he any Man: But every Man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his*  
own



*own Lust, and enticed.* And many other Passages of Holy Scripture might be cited in Confirmation of this Doctrine. Let us consider likewise that right Reason is most consonant to Scripture in this Point. For how could it agree with the Holy Nature of God, to be the Author of that which is so much abhorred by him? of that which he expressly forbids, and threatens with eternal Damnation.

2. The second Thing to be cleared from this Observation is, that though God is not the Author of Sin, yet he exercises such a Power both over the Tempters, and the Tempted, that he can either stave off the Temptation, or so restrain and govern us, that we shall either not be led into it, or be quickly extricated from it. First, as to the Tempter, it is plain from the History of *Job*, that *Job* was not left in the Power of Satan to tempt him as he pleased, or when he pleased; he had his Permission from God, before he could begin the Temptation, and was also limited by him how far it should go. (*a*) *Hast thou not made an Hedge about him, says Satan, and about his House, and about all that he hath on every Side?* Then when he had leave to tempt him, his own Person was excepted. I only conclude from hence, that if God thinks fit to interpose, he can either effectually restrain the Temptation, or limit it to what particular Part of our Concerns he thinks fit. Then as to the Tempted, he can by his Providence remove the Temptation, as he removed *Rabshekah's* Army from *Jerusalem*, by finding

(*a*) *Job*. i. 10.

them Work enough at home: Or if he thinks fit, for the Trial and Confirmation of our Faith, to let the Temptation come on, he can so fortify and arm us, that it shall lose its Force and Efficacy, and we shall not be led into it, or be under the Power and Force of it. Or, thirdly, if it prevail upon us, to humble us, and shew us our own Weakness, God can, when he pleases, extricate us out of it; and as to the Effects, disappoint Satan and all our spiritual Enemies, and make us come off with Honour and Advantage, by rendering us more humble, and penitent, and cautious, and watchful for the future.

III. The third Thing here pre-supposed, is, that it is our Duty earnestly to beg this Assistance of God by Prayer. God in his Providence has so wisely contrived Matters, that our spiritual Wants call upon us as incessantly to draw near to him, as our temporal ones. We have daily Experience of our own Weakness, and of the Strength and Vigilance of our Enemies, and of the Multitude of Trials and Temptations. Upon all which Accounts, we have no better Way than to add our fervent Prayers to our fervent Endeavours, saying, *Lead us not into Temptation, but deliver us from Evil.*

Having cleared both the Meaning of the Words, and the several Truths pre-supposed, I come now to a more direct Consideration of the Petition itself; in which I apprehend these three or four Things may be contained.

I. That we pray here for the staying off of such Temptations, as are disproportioned to our Measure of Strength and Grace.

II: That

II. That we pray for preventing Grace to keep our Minds in a good Frame and Temper, well fortified against all Temptations we may be encountered with.

III. That we pray that God would not desert us in the Hour of Temptation, but that his Grace may be sufficient for us, to bring us off victorious.

IV. That we pray that if we are ensnared by any Temptation, we may be quickly delivered from the Power of it, and rendered more humble, penitent, and watchful.

I. First, By these Words, *Lead us not into Temptation*, I conceive we are here taught to pray against all such Temptations, as are disproportioned to our Measure of Strength and Grace. And this I am induced to believe to be one Part of the Meaning, for these two or three Reasons. 1. As being very suitable to the literal Meaning of the Words, *q. d.* Lord thou knowest how easily I am overcome by Temptations to Sin, and therefore I humbly beseech thee, either to keep me out of the Way of Temptation, or to proportion my Temptations to my Strength, that *with the Temptation I may find a Way to escape*. 2. To keep out of the Way of Temptations, is a great Part of our Duty; and therefore I can see no Reason why we ought not to pray to God to enable us to comply with this Part of our Duty. Not that we are to decline any Trials, that God thinks fit to put us to; but certainly we are, both by our Prayers and Endeavours, to avoid the Temptations of the Devil, the World, and the Flesh. 3. We have Examples of the greatest Saints who have prayed against being led into Temptation;

how earnestly did our Saviour himself pray that (a) *the Cup of his Suffering might pass from him, tho' he immediately corrected it, But not my Will, but thy Will be done?* Our Saviour likewise prayed for St Peter, when he foresaw his Temptation, *that his Faith might not fail*; and therefore undoubtedly we may pray the same for our selves, and for one another.

II. By this Petition we are taught to pray for Preventing Grace, to keep our Minds in a good Frame and Temper, well fortified against all Temptations we may be encountered with. It ought to be one Part of our Prayer, that Temptations may never surprize us, or catch us at a Disadvantage. And for this End, two Things are necessary, that the Heart be well replenished with Grace, the Understanding and Memory with good Notions, the Will with good Resolutions, the Affections orderly, and the Conscience clear; then that we keep a good Watch and Look-out, being upon our guard against Temptations, waiting for them, and ready, by the Grace of God, to resist them. We must stand *armed with the whole Armour of God*, and strive to be expert at the use of every spiritual Weapon.

III. By this Petition we are taught to pray, that God would not leave us to our selves in the Hour of Temptation, but that his Grace may be sufficient for us to bring us off victorious. This is taught us in these Words, *but deliver us from Evil*; whether it be the evil One, the Devil,

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(a) Matt. xxvi. 39.



or the Evil of Sin, with all its evil Consequences. There is no Person any thing conversant in this Warfare, who, from his own Experience, doth not know a mighty Difference in his spiritual Strength, when Temptations assault him well fortified with the Grace of God, from what he finds when they assault him naked and unarmed, trusting only to his own Strength. In this latter Case, he is like *Sampson* with his Hair cut, and becomes an easy Prey to his Enemies; whereas, in the first Case, he is *strong in the Lord, and in the Power of his Might, and able to quench all the fiery Darts of the Devil.*

IV. Lastly, In this Petition we are taught to pray, that if we are ensnared by any Temptation, we may be quickly delivered from the Power of it, and rendered more humble, penitent, and watchful. For this is likewise a delivering from Evil, and is often a very good Effect of Temptations upon well disposed Souls. As *Peter's* fall wrought in him a godly Sorrow, and fetched Tears of Repentance, and contributed to the renewing his Zeal and good Resolutions, so it often fares with good Men, that their stumbling only occasions their looking more heedfully to their Ways, and their walking more cautiously in the Way of God's Commandments.

Thus much for Explication of the Petition in my Text. I shall conclude with an Exhortation or two, grounded on the Words, and what has been offered from them.

I. First then, Here we see the proper Remedy for what is the most troublesome Thing in a religious Life; I mean the infinite Number of Temptations, to which we are subject, Temptations

tions to Pride and Vanity, to Lust and Sensuality, to Covetousness and Ambition, to Gluttony and Drunkenness, to Anger and Revenge, to Presumption and Security, to Impatience and Melancholy, to Envy and Discontent; and a thousand other Temptations, to which we are continually exposed. What are we to do with them? Let us do by them as *Hezekiah* did by *Rabshekah's* blasphemous Letter, let us spread them all before the Lord in Prayer, and beg the Assistance of his Providence and his Grace; and this we shall find the surest Way to be relieved from them. (a) *Watch and pray*, says our Saviour, *that ye enter not into Temptation; the Spirit indeed is willing, but the Flesh is weak.* There is no Duty to which greater Promises are made, than to this of Prayer; but there is nothing in which we are greater Infidels. We are more willing to try any other Experiment, but without this they are all Physicians of no value. The most fixed Resolution, the most diligent Endeavour, unless followed with a constant Supply of Grace, which is promised to fervent Prayer, are but mere Cobwebs against Temptations, they'll make nothing of them. And on the other hand, there are no Temptations so strong, but what will give Way to Fasting and Prayer. Let us then take all Opportunities to address our selves to God, both by Mental and Vocal Prayer, and most importunately cast our selves at his Feet, until he have Mercy upon us. But ye will object perhaps, that to be instant in Prayer, requires a devout Temper of Mind; but that Dulness and Dryness in Devo-

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(a) Mark xiv, 38,

tion is one of your Temptations; ye are like the Disciples who when they went about Prayer, fell fast asleep, and found no Relish in that holy Exercise. But notwithstanding this Drowfiness, which is often incident to good People, our Saviour still called upon them to *Watch and Pray*, and so much the rather, because of this Infirmary of their Flesh. There is no better Way to shake off this spiritual Slumber, than to complain of it in Prayer to God, and to beg that he will rouse us out of it. This we may assure our selves, the more we frequent secret Devotion, the more pleasant and delightful it will become; and the less we frequent it, the more tedious and irksome it will prove.

2. But as we are thus to pray against Temptations, we must take care that our Actions and our Prayers be all of a piece; that is, that in our Actions we follow such Courses as may be most effectual for overcoming Temptations; otherwise we only draw near to God with our Lips, while our Hearts and Lives are far from him. There are many Ways whereby we transgress this Rule. (1.) Many Men become their own Tempters, by raising and cherishing in their Minds such Thoughts and Imaginations as pollute the Heart, and prove the Seeds of much Wickedness in the Life; Thoughts of Pride and Vanity, Thoughts of Lust and Uncleaness, Thoughts of Anger and Revenge. All such Practices by which we either raise or cherish Temptations, are directly contrary to this Prayer of my Text. (2.) Whosoever they are that lay Snares and Temptations for others, to engage them in any Sin of Drunkenness, Uncleaness, or the like; these Persons by their Practice contradict this Petition, *lead us not into Temptation.*



*Temptation.* (3.) They who put themselves in the Way of Temptations, by frequenting lewd Company, by reading Lascivious or Atheistical Books, by committing to their Memory profane Songs and Ballads, or by doing any other thing whereby they may probably be ensnared and led into Temptation, act directly contrary to this Part of the Lord's Prayer. (4) They who kindly entertain and hug a Temptation when presented, and do not flee from it, but flutter about it so long, till at last they burn their Wings with it, have themselves a hand in defeating this part of their Prayer. (5.) Lastly, If we would effectually answer the End of this part of the Lord's Prayer, we must take all the most effectual Methods we can think of, both to prevent, and to defeat Temptations; such as are the avoiding of Idleness, and keeping our selves employ'd in the Business of our lawful Calling; the keeping of the Mind in a good Temper, not ruffled with Anger, nor debauched with Lust, nor swelled with Pride and Vanity; the keeping a Conscience void of Offence, so that there be no ill Thing in our Hearts to obstruct our walking with God; the improving our Talent of Grace in a continual doing of Good according to our Abilities and Opportunities; a continual Watchfulness to foresee our Danger, especially against those Sins to which, by Experience of our own Temper, Constitution, and Circumstances, we know our selves to be most exposed; and by a frequent Self-Examination of our Heart and Ways, and renewing our good Purposes and Resolutions. If we go on diligently in such Endeavours, joined with our hearty Prayers, there is no doubt we shall



shall either be totally preserved from falling into Temptation, or by the Grace of God, shall quickly be renewed by Repentance, till in the End our Christian Warfare shall end in the Triumph of everlasting Peace and Rest, free from both Sin and Temptation.

*Which God of his infinite Mercy, in due time, bestow upon us all, through the Mediation of Jesus Christ, our blessed Saviour and Redeemer. To whom, &c.*



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## S E R M O N X V.

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M A T T. VI. 13.

*For thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory, for ever. Amen.*

The Ninth Sermon on the Lord's Prayer.

**O**F the three Parts into which we distributed the Lord's Prayer, namely, the *Invocation*, the *Petitions*, and the *Conclusion*, or *Doxology*; having spoke to the two first, the *Invocation* and *Petitions*, we come now to the last, the *Conclusion* or *Doxology*, being in these Words which I have read, *For thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory, for ever. Amen.*

I shall not trouble you with a Dispute which is among the Learned, whether these Words were put in by our Saviour himself, as a Part of this excellent Prayer; or whether being a common Conclusion of Prayers in Use in the *Jewish* Church, as such they were added to this Prayer by the Church. It is certain there are several eminent Fathers who leave out this *Doxology*, even where they expressly explain the Lord's Prayer, and others of them put it, in. St *Luke* leaves it out: Our Church sometimes puts it in, and sometimes

times leaves it out in the Common-Prayer. But since none will object to the Usefulness of it, and it has now for a long Time, ever since St *Cbrysoftom's* Days at least, been used in the *Greek Church*, I shall go on to the Explication of it with the rest.

The Words will very well bear to be interpreted here, so as to have an Aspect either to Praise and Thanksgiving, which is always very fit to be joined with Prayer; or to the Reason upon which the preceding Petitions are grounded; or to the Aim and Intent to which all our Devotions are to be directed. I shall consider them in all these Ways.

I. First, They may be considered as an additional Praise and Thanksgiving, which is always very fit to be joined with Prayer; *q. d.* We humbly hope for a Grant of these our Petitions, when we reflect and consider that *thine is the Kingdom*, and that thou hast hitherto defended it against all the Attempts of thine and our Enemies; and that thine is *the Power*, and that whenever thou hast been pleased to exert it, there is nothing too hard for thee; and that thine is *the Glory*, that is, that thou hast always hitherto gained Honour to thyself, by granting the Prayers of thy Servants, for that indeed the whole Honour of all they do is solely owing to thy Grace. And as it has been so in time past, it will be so for ever and ever, to all Eternity.

Before I leave this Notion of the Words as a *Doxology* or *Thanksgiving*, there are some Things I think may properly be observed from them. As

I. That it is very fit in our Devotions, to join Thanksgiving to Prayers and Petitions.

II. That

II. That the Consideration of former Mercies, is a great Encouragement in our Addresses to Almighty God.

III. That the many Examples we have had of God's asserting his Sovereignty, and of his exercising his Power, and of the close Conjunction of his Honour with the Happiness of his Creatures, do all furnish great Matter for Thanksgiving.

I. That it is very fit in our Devotions to join Thanksgiving to Prayers and Petitions. To do otherwise, would look like Ingratitude; and of all Things, there is no greater Obstructor of new Favours, than Ingratitude for the old. And besides, Thanksgiving is a more genuine Expression of Love, than Petition, and accordingly is a much more rare thing in the World; as our Saviour observed of the ten Lepers that were cleansed, only one of them returned to give Thanks, *Luke xvii. 17, 18. Were there not Ten cleansed, says he, but where are the nine? There are not found to give Glory to God, save this Stranger.* Now the joining Thanksgiving to Prayer, is much practiced by the best Patterns of Devotion we have in the holy Scriptures: Of *David's*, I shall quote only that excellent Prayer of his, when they offered freely towards building the Temple; *1 Chron. xxix. 10.* what abundance of it runs out in Thanksgiving and Praise, *Thine, O Lord, is the Greatness, and the Power, and the Glory, and the Victory, and the Majesty; for all that is in the Heaven, and in the Earth, is thine; thine is the Kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as Head above all. Both Riches and Honour come of thee, and thou reignest over all, and in thine Hand is Power and Might; and in thine Hand it is to*  
*make*



make great, and to give Strength unto all. And St Paul exhorts, that *Supplications, Prayers, Intercessions*, and giving of Thanks, be made for all Men, 1 Tim. ii. 1.

II. I observe from this Doxology, that the Consideration of former Mercies is a great Encouragement in our Addresses to Almighty God. The Observation how God has delivered his Church and Kingdom at all Times, and in all the greatest Dangers, is a mighty Encouragement to pray that his Kingdom may come in full Strength and Power. The Consideration of the many Proofs he has given us, both of his Power, and of his Willingness and Readiness to help us out of Dangers, is a most prevailing Motive cordially to address him. (a) *I was cast upon thee from the Womb*, says the Psalmist, *thou art my God from my Mother's Belly; be not far from me, for Trouble is near.*

III. I observe that the many Examples we have had of God's asserting his Sovereignty, and of his exercising his Power, and of the close Junction of his Honour with the Happiness of his Creatures, do all furnish great Matter for Thanksgiving.

(1.) First, his asserting of his Sovereignty, *Thine is the Kingdom.* What a mighty Comfort is this against all the Attempts of ill Men, who endeavour to set the World and the Church in a Combustion, to think that God is the Sovereign of the World, and that he will support his own

(a) Ps. xxii. 10, 11.

Kingdom: That good Men, when they encounter the Devil, the World, and the Flesh, fight under his Banner, and therefore may go on cheerfully, as being sure of Success? (a) *The Lord reigneth*, says the Psalmist, *let the Earth rejoice, let the Multitude of the Isles be glad thereof.*

(2) The exercising of his Power. If Rebels against God's Throne were stronger than he, it would be no wonder if we were fearful of the Event of any wicked Enterprizes against his Church and Kingdom; but when we know before hand that his Power is Almighty, and their's none but what he is pleased to permit, we may go on courageously, and fear no bad Success. The Psalmist has an excellent Meditation on this Subject, *Pf. lxxii. 9. Surely Men of low Degree, says he, are Vanity, and Men of high Degree are a Lie; to be laid in the Balance, they are altogether lighter than Vanity. Trust not in Oppression, and become not vain in Robbery; if Riches encrease, set not your Heart upon them. God hath spoken once, twice have I heard this, that Power belongeth unto God.*

(3.) The close Conjunction of his Honour with the Happiness of his Creatures. The Glory of all his Mercies, and Gifts and Graces, is his; and therefore his Honour, and our Interest, are in the same Bottom. It is for his Honour that a great deal of good be done, and it is by virtue of his Grace that it is done, and therefore in all Respects it tends to his Glory.

II. Having considered the Words as a *Doxology*, or *Thanksgiving*, let us next consider them

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(a) *Pf. xcvi. 1.*

as a Motive or Inducement to back our Petitions; as indeed the Particle *For* gives them this Aspect. Grant us such and such Blessings, *for thine is the Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory.* This brings in the Words of this Text, as the Reason why we address these Petitions to Almighty God, and as the Reason why he will grant them. Let us see then what Relation there is between the Petitions, and these Considerations upon which they are advanced.

*Hollowed be thy Name*; that is, let thy Honour be principally regarded in every Thing, for this is thy Due. Thou art the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords; thine is the Kingdom in Heaven, and Earth, and Hell, the Devils themselves being the Ministers of thy Wrath, the Executioners of thy Justice. And as the principal Honour is thy due, so thou hast Power enough to compass it; and to make use of thy Power for this End, will tend to thy Glory.

*Thy Kingdom come*; that is, let thy Gospel flourish and prosper, being the great Means whereby thy Throne may be established in the Hearts of Men. And is it not most just to request this of God, whose Right it is to rule in Mens Hearts, and who by his Grace and Providence, can make the Means successful; and who by so doing will gain Honour and Glory to himself?

*Thy Will be done in Earth, as it is in Heaven.* And why should it not, the Inhabitants of this Earth being thy Subjects, and owing thee Obedience, as well as the Inhabitants of Heaven? This is a Part of thy Kingdom, though too long revolted from thee, and such a Part, as thou hast

not, as yet, sentenced to everlasting Misery, like the fallen Angels; but a Part, which by thy Son, thou art using the most effectual Means to recover. And as they are a Part of thy Kingdom, so thou hast the Power in thy own Hand to recover them, by affording the external Means, and the internal Grace; and this will tend both to their Happiness, and to thy Honour and Glory.

*Give us this Day our daily Bread.* And who can poor starving Subjects apply themselves to more properly, than to their King; a King with whom there is an inexhaustible Store of all Blessings, and who has it in his Power to dispense them as liberally as he pleases? We are thy own Servants, of thy Household and Family, therefore take care that we want not Necessaries. This is the least Part of thy Power to procure, who hast the vast Plenty of Earth, and Sea, and Air, all at thy Command, and by thy heavenly Influences canst make all as fruitful as thou pleasest. This likewise will tend to thy Honour, to have all thy Creatures depend upon thee, and to have all that depend upon thee well supplied.

*And forgive us our Trespases;* as Mercy is one of thy Royal Properties, and thou hast it in thy Power to dispose us for thy Mercy, by working in us a true Repentance for all our Sins; and this likewise will be much more for thy Honour and Glory, than to leave us to perish in our Sins.

*And lead us not into Temptation, but deliver us from Evil.* Abandon us not so as the Tempter may have any Advantage over us, but by thy Grace deliver us from his Snares; he is seeking to withdraw us from thy Service, and to corrupt us in our Obedience to thee our rightful Lord and King;



King ; and therefore who can we flee to, to protect us against his Strength and Snares, but unto thee, to defend thy own Kingdom, as thou hast an Almighty Power to do it, and it will tend very much to thy Honour and Glory ?

Thus we see how naturally these Words may be used as an Argument, Motive, or Inducement, to back all our Petitions.

III. There is a third Aspect of the Words, as directing us to the ultimate Aim and End of all our Petitions, which is the Honour and Glory of God. For it ought to be a great Part of our Care in our Prayers, not only to ask Things that are materially good, but likewise to have God's Glory directly in our Eye, and to propose that as the Scope and Mark at which to level all our Petitions. I mean, that what we pray for should not only be good and convenient for us, but a Service to God ; and that not only by way of consequence, but that it should be mainly, and principally, and directly in our Intention.

From the Text under this Aspect, we are taught to purify our Intentions from all sinister Biass, that may either pervert, or so much as lessen the Dignity of our Petitions. And therefore first let us not presume to call upon God to bless us in any ill Design ; what is not for his Honour, we are not to expect that he will countenance. Secondly, let us not load our Devotions with Petitions about Things in their own Nature indifferent ; unless it be conditionally, in so far as God sees they may tend to his Honour and Glory. Thirdly, let not our Petitions rest in any inferiour Good, but let them be directed to an higher and more noble Purpose ; if we beg any valuable Ta-

lent of God, let us likewise beg the Grace to make a good Use of it, in his Service.

The Text being thus explained, there are some Inferences I would draw from it more immediately tending to good Life and holy Practice.

1. The first shall be, to recommend the Duty of Thanksgiving to Almighty God from this Doxology. (*a*) *In every Thing give Thanks* is one of St Paul's Rules; and particularly it is a noble Part of Devotion to observe and to return Thanks for all Mercies both publick and private, and to take notice of the remarkable Passages of God's Providence to our selves and others, according to that notable Advice of the Psalmist, *Psal. cvii. O that Men would praise the Lord for his Goodness, and for his wonderful Works to the Children of Men.* Much Good is to be learned by such Observations, as is said in that same Psalm, *Whoso is wise and will observe these Things, even they shall understand the loving Kindness of the Lord.*

2. The next Inference I shall make, shall be from this Doctrine of the Text, that the Kingdom is God's, that is, that the whole World is under his Government. From hence I would infer, that our Minds may rest quiet and contented from many Fears and Troubles, which might be apt to give us a great deal of Uneasiness. If God governs the World, then it shall be well with them that fear God; we may safely resign ourselves to him, and disburden all our Anxieties into his Bosom. We may rest confident of This, that all Things shall work together for the Good of them who love him. Not but that there are many dark and difficult Things in God's Providence, which we cannot comprehend; but that is often occasioned  
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(a) *Thef. v. 16.*

by our Ignorance, and observing the Work of Providence only by parts, without seeing through the main Plot and Design of it; and if at that time we should go about to form a Scheme of it, very probably it would be wildly wrong. *e. g.* If a Man taking notice of the Imperiousness and Cruelty of *Pharaoh*, and of all the oppressive Edicts he gave out and put in execution against the People of *Israel*, should at that time have reflected on Providence, he would have been apt to be tempted to very hard Thoughts of God, for permitting such Cruelty and Oppression in any of his Vicegerents. But if the same Person could have had patience till God delivered his People out of *Egypt*, and till he had got him Honour upon *Pharaoh* and all his Host by drowning them in the Red Sea, he would then have had cause to justify God's Providence in the Rescue of the Innocent and the Punishment of the Guilty. As then the Kingdom is God's, let us learn to have reverent and becoming Thoughts of his Government, and not dare so much as in our Thoughts to asperse it. And as we are thus to have honourable Conceptions of God and his Kingdom, let us likewise learn to behave ourselves as obedient Subjects to him, to have no commerce with any of his Enemies, but to be faithful to him to the Death, that we may obtain a Crown of Life. Is God the King of all the Earth? then in all our Grievances let us address ourselves to him, and depend upon him, that he will bring it to pass. And as earthly Courtiers are very ambitious of the Favour of their Prince, let us be extremely ambitious of God's Favour, which is not purchased by Flattery, or any of those base Arts so common among the



Courts of earthly Princes, but by downright Honesty and Sincerity.

3. My third Inference shall be fetched from God's Power; the Consideration of which should teach us to rest secure that no Force or Fraud of Men or Devils shall be able to wrest the Sceptre out of his Hand, or to do us the least Hurt but by his Permission, for his own wise Ends and Purposes. Feeble Governments are under continual Apprehensions from their more potent Neighbours; but as God's Authority is over all, his Power is commensurate with his Authority; no Weapon formed against his Kingdom shall prosper. This is a mighty Security to the Church, that all Attempts against her shall be but like the Building of the Tower of *Babel*, which those Giants designed should have reached unto Heaven; but God can easily confound and punish all such Devices; and the Earth may rejoice that it is under his Government.

4. The last Inference I shall make is, from this Observation of my Text, that the Glory of all the good Things we are directed to pray for, is God's likewise; which I take to be a Point of the greatest Comfort, that our Duty and Happiness do not draw one Way, and God's Honour another Way, but that one and the same Method answers both those noble Ends. Or indeed, to speak more properly, both these are one and the same Thing; we cannot consult God's Honour better than by promoting our own Salvation. This is a great Comfort, that his Ends and ours do not in the least interfere, but Holiness and Happiness and God's Honour are Things reciprocal. From hence too we may learn to whom all the Honour of our good Duties is due, even to Almighty  
God.



God. It is he that directs this way of Duty ; it is he that gave us the Faculties, wherewith we are made capable of going about it ; it is he that furnishes us the Means ; and it is he that supplies us with Grace to make the right Use of those Means, so that in all respects the Glory of all is due unto him.

There is one Circumstance added which crowns all the rest ; namely, the Circumstance of Time, or rather Eternity. For the Kingdom, the Power and Glory are his *for ever* ; which doth infinitely enhance the Price of them. We see the best settled Governments in this World are notwithstanding subject to changes and Revolutions. And the Servants and Favourites of any Prince, if they are not changed in his Time, as they commonly are, seldom stand in his Successor's. Or if Favourites were ever so sure of the Continuance of their Interest with their Prince, and that he were impregnable against all the Representations and Suggestions of their Enemies ; yet who can secure the Prince himself from human Casualties ? And if he falls, then there is a great Train of Ruins to all his Adherents and Dependants. But here is a Kingdom that can never be shaken ; here is a Power that can never be controuled ; here are Laurels that never fade ; and therefore here is a lasting Cause and Occasion for our making these our Addresses to our heavenly Father, and for our relying on him with all Confidence for the Grant of them.

We are now come to the last Word of this Prayer, the Word *Amen* ; which is so significant in the Original, that Interpreters not being able to find any Word in our modern Languages, where-

by to exprefs it, have left it uninterpreted. There are two Things here chiefly meant by it. *1st.* It is a general Affent to all that went before, a fresh renewing of all the Petitions, like that Response in our Liturgy: *We beseech thee to hear us good Lord*; it is a following of the Prayers with a winged Desire and hearty Affection, proceeding from the Warmth of Devotion, earnestly pressing what was before expressed. *2dly.* It is something more than this; namely, a Signification of our Faith and Hope to obtain what we have prayed for. Now these two Intimations of the Sense of the Word may briefly put us in mind of so many Parts of our Duty with relation to our Prayers. First, that we should endeavour with fresh elevated Affections to present our Requests unto God; not in such a dull lifeless Manner, as if we were indifferent whether they be granted or no. The Love of God from which our Devotions ought to proceed, and the vast Importance of the Blessings we pray for, and the Misery in which we shall be involved if they are not granted, should oblige us to follow them with ardent Affections, and to be very pressing and earnest for the Grant of them. Then the other Part of Duty we are here put in mind of, is to accompany our Prayers with Faith and Hope that they shall be granted. So that the Word *Amen* is, as if we would say, *so be it, and so I trust it will be.*

Having now finished my Explication of this excellent Prayer, what remains but that we daily improve in the Meditation and Exercise of it, whether as a perfect Form in itself, or as an excellent Pattern for all our other Devotions. Above all let us take care that we put up no Petitions contrary

trary to, or inconsistent with these; and that there be a perfect Harmony between our Prayers and our Actions, and between our Actions and Affections; and then we shall not need to doubt the granting of our Petitions put up in the Name of our blessed Mediator and Redeemer Christ Jesus.

*To him with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be all Praise, Honour, and Glory, Might, Power, and Dominion, for ever and ever. Amen.*



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## S E R M O N XVI.

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M A T T. VI. 14.

*For if ye forgive Men their Trespases, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.*

*Ver. 15. But if ye forgive not Men their Trespases, neither will your Father forgive your Trespases.*

The First Sermon on this Text.

**T**HE first Word *For* shews the Dependance of these Words on the preceding Petitions; and the subject Matter here handled, doth easily direct us to what Part of them they do refer: Namely, to that Petition, *Forgive us our Debts as we forgive our Debtors*. It was not to be expected that our Saviour would interrupt the Prayer so long, as to account for any Petition that might seem disagreeable to the prejudicate Opinions of his Hearers. But now the Prayer being ended, he thought fit to clear that Petition, or rather the Condition annexed to that Petition, which suspends the Forgiveness of our Sins upon our forgiving others who have trespassed against us; that being the only Thing, which seemed to want Explication in the whole Prayer.

And



And indeed it must be confessed to be *dignus vindice nodus*, to be a Difficulty worth the clearing, and that it was not fit to be left to Interpreters, but worthy of a Solution from our Saviour himself. For it was pretty obvious, not only for such uncharitable People as the *Scribes* and *Pbarisees*, whose moral Doctrine our Saviour was all this while correcting, but for others too to be offended at this Petition; as if God's infinite Bounty and Goodness and Mercy to us were to be measured out by our scanty Bounty, Goodness and Mercy to one another. This therefore might have looked like a loose and less accurate Expression; but our Lord thought fit deliberately to repeat the same again, and to assert that the Charity to forgive our Enemies is a necessary Disposition to qualify us for this Prayer, and a necessary Condition to the Grant of it: And the Particle *As*, which occasioned the chief Doubt, he explained better in these Words of my Text. *For if ye forgive Men their Trespases, &c. q. d.* Do not wonder that I annex this Condition to your asking Pardon of God, that ye should pardon one another; it is not that I expect or require such Mercy in you as is in God Almighty, but one of an inferiour Degree, at an infinite Distance, yet some way suited or proportioned to it.

In speaking to the Words, I shall

I. Explain the merciful Temper and Disposition which is required in us.

II. Consider the Promise of Reward annexed to it, that it shall be attended with a Pardon from God,

III. Consider

III. Consider the Threatning to the contrary Temper and Disposition, that without it no Pardon is to be obtained.

I. As to the First, the merciful Temper and Disposition required here in the Text, and in many other Places of the *New Testament*, with regard to those who have injured us; we are not to imagine that it is to be carried so far as if it left no Room for a just Reparation of Injuries. Some deluded Enthusiasts indeed have so far mistaken our Saviour's Doctrine, as to cut off the Office of Judges and Magistrates, and to prohibit or prevent all, both publick and private Reparation: Which would occasion all manner of Disorder and Confusion in the World. That I may then more distinctly consider this Matter, I shall both negatively and positively lay down what appears to me to be the true Scripture Notion of Forgiveness.

1. That it never was designed to encourage, but to prevent Injuries, appears both from the Reasonableness of the Thing, and from the Approbation of the Magistrate's Office in Holy Scripture: (a) For the Magistrate is described as a Person that is not to *bear the Sword in vain*; but is to be *the Minister of God, a Revenger to execute Wrath upon him that doth Evil*. And therefore what is here said, has no Relation at all to the Magistrate's Office, any further than to prohibit his making Use of his Power out of private Pique and Resentment.

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(a) Rom. xiii. 4.

2. For the same Reason this Doctrine of Forgiveness doth not restrain private Persons, when they are injured, from making Use of the Laws, Judges, and Magistrates, to do themselves Right, after they have first in vain tried what other pacificatory Methods are in their Power. There are indeed many Things with relation to Law-suits, in which this Christian Doctrine interposes, either to prevent them, or to make an End of them in an amicable Way; but if that cannot be done, the last Resort is still to the public Justice, not to private Revenge. To explain myself a little clearer on this Head; I shall instance in some things, in which this Christian Doctrine of Forgiveness regulates our Conduct as to our seeking Reparation by Law. (1) First then, there are many lesser Injuries, which it will teach us to wink at, without giving ourselves or our Neighbours the Trouble of a Law-suit about them. A Man is justly reckoned litigious, who for every Trifle that occurs, for every old Quarrel that had been formerly laid asleep, for every Neglect or Want of Civility and good Manners, presently gives Way to his Resentments, and drives Things to Extremities, which had better been connived at, and covered with a Cloak of Charity. There is no Man but will confess it had been much wiser, (for Example,) in *Haman* to have overlooked or despised *Mordecai's* Stiffness, who would not bow to him in the Gate, than to have drove it to that height of Resentment, which he did, against *Mordecai* and all his Countrymen. And our Saviour hath determined, that as to several small Injuries, we had better run the Hazard of a second Injury than revenge the first, for that is the true Meaning of his Precepts of turning



turning the other Cheek, and parting with the Cloak as well as the Coat, and going two Miles instead of one. (2.) This Doctrine of forgiving of Injuries, will teach us, if the Injury is ever so great, before we have recourse to Law and Magistrates, to try all other amicable Methods of Agreement, and Accommodation. Our Saviour lays down a Method in the 18th Chap. of this Gospel, which has in it divers amicable Steps towards Reconciliation, before he would permit Christians to implead one another before Heathen Magistrates. For first, he advises the discourging the Matter with the Party himself. *If thy Brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his Fault between thee and him alone: If he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy Brother.* How much better a Step is this, than the Way which is commonly taken, not of arguing civilly with him alone, but of exposing him to all others? The next Step our Saviour advises is a Conference with our Adversary in the presence of one or two Witnesses, who it is supposed may assist towards making up of the Difference. *But if he will not hear thee, says he, then take with thee one or two more, that in the Mouth of two or three Witnesses every Word may be established.* This is another excellent Step towards Peace, the Interposition of Friends, who are commonly more free from the Byass of Prejudice and Enmity, which is a great Obstruction to the Parties their discerning the Truth, or complying with it when it is discerned. A third step our Saviour prescribed before he allowed them to go to Law before the Magistrates, who at that time were Heathens, was *to tell it to the Church*, that is, as St Chrysostom interprets it,



to the Rulers of the Christian Assemblies; meaning, I suppose, that Christian Congregation to which they belong, thinking that probably these Persons would have greater Weight and Interest with the contending Parties, than any other whatsoever. But then lastly, if after all this the offending Party was obstinate; *If he neglect to hear the Church,* says our Saviour, *let him be unto thee as an Heathen Man and a Publican.* There is some Difference among Interpreters as to the Meaning of this last Direction. But I think their Opinion most probable and most agreeable to the Context, who interpret the Passage thus; If none of these above-mentioned Methods will do, then at last thou mayst implead him as thou wouldst do an Heathen before the Heathen Magistrate, and right thy self by Law there. Now to adapt this Method to the times of Christianity countenanced by the Magistrate, certainly this Doctrine of Forgiveness of Injuries in my Text, should so far restrain us from Litigiousness, that we should first try the Ways of Reconciliation both by personal Conferences, and the Interposition of Friends, before we go to Law with one another. (3.) This Doctrine of Forgiveness should teach us as to our Law-suits, so to manage them, as to retain no Malice in our Hearts against the Person of our Brother, with whom we have the Difference. We are by no means to aim at his Hurt or Prejudice in any sort; far less are we to set off our own Cause, or to blacken his by any sinister Arts, such as discouraging of true, or suborning false Witnesses, or advancing any manner of Untruths, or representing any Thing in a false Light to our own Advantage, or our Neighbour's Prejudice.

(3.) This Doctrine of the Forgiveness of Injuries doth not oblige us to a patient Suffering of all Injuries offered or intended us, without standing upon our own just Defence, or withdrawing our selves out of the way of Injury. As to withdrawing, our Saviour is very positive as to the Lawfulness of it. (a) *When they persecute you in one City, says he, flee to another.* The other of standing upon our Self-defence when injured; we find *St Paul's* Example for it, who both solicited the Assistance of the Magistrate, and accepted of a Guard of Soldiers to conduct him out of the Danger he had Intelligence of. And as to our Saviour's ordering *Peter* to put up his Sword when attacked, that makes nothing against this Doctrine; (b) for the Persons he drew his Sword against, were the Officers of the publick Magistrates, who came with their Orders to apprehend him. Now the using the Sword in this Case must be unjust both by the Laws of God and Man; for let the Cause be what it will, the Magistrate must have a Power to send out his Officers to call any Person that is accused before him; and those Officers in doing such a lawful Act are not to be resisted. But our Saviour's prohibiting the taking of the Sword, that is, the assuming it without Law or Authority, is not to be extended to a Prohibition of it in our lawful Defence, as against Thieves and Robbers, or any other who have no Right to assault us, or to take away our Life, or Liberty, or Property.

Having considered what is not prohibited by this Doctrine of forgiving Injuries, *viz.* Not the

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(a) Matt. x. 23.

(b) Matt. xxvi. 52.

Magistrate's Office of punishing Offenders; not the private Subject's repairing to the Magistrate to do him Right, if he cannot in a more friendly Way come at it; not our standing in our own Defence against an unjust Invader: Let us next enquire what is expressly required of us Christians by this Duty of forgiving Men their Trespases. Three Things are chiefly required.

1. That we actually forgive, and pass by many Trespases, without expecting any Reparation.

2. That we do not avenge our selves as to any Injuries that are done us.

3. That we entertain no Malice or Hatred in our Heart against our Adversary, but that we go by the Rules of Equity and good Conscience, whether in righting our selves or others.

1. This Duty of forgiving Men their Trespases, obliges us actually to pass by and forgive many Trespases, without expecting any Reparation: and these are chiefly, 1. All such Trespases, as have not proceeded out of Malice, but Ignorance, Mistake, or Misinformation. (2.) All such Trespases as are but small in their Nature or Consequences, such as human Nature is very liable to. (3.) All such Trespases wherein Men have not so much been the Principals themselves, but have been led away with a violent Torrent of Authority, Custom, or general Prejudice. (4.) All such Trespases as have not been particular to them who did the Injury, but common to them with a great many, and in which perhaps they have been obliged to execute the Orders of their Superiours, upon peril of their own utter Ruin; for we are to consider that every one has not the Courage to resist an ill Thing to Martyrdom, and not



many to the Loss of Places and Preferments, and the Hazard of their Estates and Expectations. (5.) All those Trespasses, which are not capable of Reparation any other Way than by Confession and Repentance, and begging Pardon, provided they were only Injuries to our selves, and that the Example of the Impunity of them is not prejudicial to others, it is much more generous to forgive. (6.) All those Trespasses which flow from Errors of Conscience, and mistaken Principles of Religion: Provided they have no further ill Effects, by raising Disturbance or Sedition in the State, are much better tolerated and forgiven, than punished, any other way than by prudent Discouragements, without Persecution. There may be some other Species of Trespasses, deserving Pardon, which I have not enumerated; and even these I have mentioned are subject to many Limitations and Exceptions: The Circumstances of the Case so varying, that often our Pardon without a new Crime can reach no farther than our own Hearts, and our own Abstinence from Revenge; though perhaps it is no way conducive to the Publick, that the injurious Person escape uncensured or unpunished. And this leads me to the

2. Second Thing I told you was included in this Duty of forgiving Men their Trespasses; namely, to abstain from all Avenging of our selves. Where Vengeance is necessary, God has put it into other Hands, the Hands of the Magistrate his own Vicegerent, and doth by no means leave it to the injured Person to right himself by his own Hand. We have nothing to do then but one of these two; when we think we are injured, either entirely to remit the Offence, which  
is



is the more generous Part of the two, where it has no bad Consequences on our Neighbours, or the Publick ; or else if it be not an Offence fit to be remitted, we must have our recourse to the Magistrates and the Law, both to judge of the Wrong and to order us due Reparation. There is a great deal of Reason for this Conduct, whether we consider the Authority of God, the Right of Magistrates, the Peace of Subjects, the Quiet of the Injured, or the Punishment of the Injurious ; for in all these Respects it is much fitter that the Avenging of Injuries be committed to the Magistrate, than left to the injured Person. (1.) As to the Authority of God, Vengeance or punitive Justice is a Prerogative which he preserves to himself and his Vicegerents, and strictly prohibits to all others. *Dearly beloved, avenge not your selves, saith St Paul, Rom. xii. 19. but rather give place unto Wrath : For it is written, Vengeance is mine, I will repay it, saith the Lord.* And therefore we find so many Prohibitions of private Revenge in the Holy Scriptures, which I shall not now spend your Time to repeat. (2.) Private Vengeance is an Invasion of the Magistrate's Office ; for the Magistrate is set up for this very Purpose, as appears from that fore-cited Place, *Rom. xiii. To be a Revenger to execute Wrath upon him that doth Evil.* Now what Occasion would there be for this Office, if every Man were to avenge himself? (3.) As to the Peace of Subjects, it is much better consulted this way, by taking Vengeance out of private, and putting it into publick Hands. It is plain if it were in private Hands, it would be liable to many more Inconveniencies, touching the Peace and good Government of the World, than

it is in the present Method in which God has put it. Sometimes the injured Person, by Reason of his Weakness of Body, and Want of Friends, would have no Reparation at all; and the Consequence of all this would be, that all the Strong and Rich of the World would be Oppressors, and all the Weak and Poor oppressed. Often the Injured having his Understanding blinded and his Judgment byassed with Resentment, would be apt to fancy Injuries where there are none; and to magnify and aggravate them where they are, and to punish and avenge them far beyond what they deserve. Upon which the Affront and Injury would then come to lie on the other side; and that other Party would think himself obliged to retaliate as smartly as he could; and thus the Saw of Contention would be continually a drawing; Adversaries and all their Friends would be engaged, and the whole World would for their mutual Support run into so many Clans, that right or wrong would espouse each others Quarrels, and be the Ministers and Instruments to execute one another's Revenge. (4.) As to the Quiet of the injured Persons, if Revenge were put into their Hands, they would have no Quiet at all, but their Minds would be continually agitated with those devilish Passions of Malice and Revenge, which would allow them no Quiet in their Consciences, or Peace in their Lives; whereas now they have nothing to do, but quietly to commit their Cause to God and his Vicegerents. (5.) Lastly, if we consider the Punishment of, or the doing of Justice on the injurious Person, it could never so surely, nor so justly overtake him, were it in private Hands, as now when it is left to the publick

lick Magistrate, who is both better armed with Power, and better balanced with Justice than could be expected from the private Adversary.

3. This Duty of forgiving Men their Trespases obliges us, in the righting of our selves, to take care that we be still in Charity with our Adversary; and that we harbour no Malice or Hatred in our Hearts against him. Under the former Head of not avenging our selves, the chief Thing aimed at was the regulating of our external Actions; but now this other Part of Forgiveness goes a great deal further, and secures the love of our Adversary, directing us purely to the doing of Justice, and the Reparation of Injuries, without any Thoughts of Hatred or Revenge against the Person of him who did us the Injury: So that though we are allowed to endeavour the righting of our selves, we are forbid all Manner of Revenge against him. And how to make this Distinction, and how to clear our Hearts of this Hatred, which commonly attends the seeking of Reparation, is what will require some farther Explication. And indeed the Thing is not so difficult but that a Distinction may very easily be made between doing of Right, and hating the Person who did the Wrong; for suppose that Person one of our own dearest Friends, if he has wronged another Man, would not we have him to make Reparation to him that he has injured, if it were but for the good of his own Soul? And why may we not in like manner love the Person and yet hate the Injustice, and endeavour a due Reparation of it? And as to the Sin and Injury, why we may not forgive it, and pray to God to forgive it; and continue to do all good Offices to him, as if he had never injured

us, is no hard Matter to conceive. It is this inward Love, cultivated by all good Offices, which we are to study, and to shew our selves free from all Resentment, if ever we have that Person in our Power, not retaliating his Injuries, or rendering Evil for Evil, but doing him all the Good we have an Opportunity of doing.

Thus now I have explained the Duty of forgiving Men their Trespases. It is a Duty which our Saviour failed not upon all Opportunities to inculcate; so that there is no Duty more recommended either by his Doctrine or Example. Particularly, it is very considerable that he made this Duty a part of that short Prayer which he taught his Disciples; and that now again, immediately after the Prayer, he comes and gives us the Reason of it, that our own Forgiveness depends upon it; and this likewise he doubly recommends, first by way of Promise, that *If we forgive Men their Trespases, our heavenly Father will also forgive us*: And then by way of Threatning, that *if we forgive not Men their Trespases, neither will our Father forgive our Trespases*. I have, I say, given you a Description of the Duty; but Time not serving to consider the Promise and Threatning annexed, I must refer them to another Opportunity.

God bless what we have heard, and give us a right Understanding in all Things.

*To him be all Praise, Honour, and Glory, Might, Power, and Dominion, for ever and ever. Amen.*



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## S E R M O N XVII.

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### M A T T. VI. 14.

*For if ye forgive Men their Trespases, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.*

*Ver. 15. But if ye forgive not Men their Trespases, neither will your Father forgive your Trespases.*

The Second Sermon on this Text.

**H**AVING, in a former Discourse on these Words, given you a Description of the merciful Temper and Disposition, required by our Saviour in this Duty of Forgiveness of Injuries; I proceed now to the Promise here made to them who perform the Duty, and the Threatning to them who refuse or neglect to comply with it.

The Promise is, that God will forgive them who are of this merciful forgiving Temper: *If ye forgive Men their Trespases, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.* And the Threatning is, that God will repay them in their own Coin, who are of a contrary Disposition; for as they are hard-hearted to those who have injured them in this World, and execute their Revenge to the ut-

most, they shall meet with the same Treatment from Almighty God in the World to come. *But if ye forgive not Men their Trespases, neither will your Father forgive your Trespases.*

Before I consider this Promise and Threatning apart, there is one general Observation I shall speak to, concerning the great Equity of God's Promises and Threatnings; I mean, how well adapted they are to the several Virtues and Vices to which they are annexed. It was an old Observation of the Psalmist, that God, both in the way of Rewards and Punishments, fitted all Sorts of People in their several kinds, *Psal. xviii. 25. With the Merciful, thou wilt shew thyself merciful; with an upright Man, thou wilt shew thyself upright; with the Pure, thou wilt shew thyself pure; and with the Froward, thou wilt shew thyself froward:* Meaning this very Thing, that all Men shall meet with Rewards and Punishments, exactly suited to their several Tempers and Actions in this World. So in the New Testament, particularly in this excellent Sermon on the Mount, we find a Kingdom promised to the Poor in Spirit, Comfort promised to the Mourners, quiet Possession of the World to the Meek, a sufficient Competency to the Just and Honest, Mercy to the Merciful, a Sight of God to the Pure in Heart, who are not carried away with inferiour Objects, an Adoption into the State of the Sons of God to the Peacemakers, and an Advancement to an high Reward in Glory, to them who suffer Persecution for Righteousness sake: In all which, if ye observe it, there is not only a great Reward promised to every Virtue, but that Reward is excellently suited and adapted to the Nature of the Virtue,  
and

and rises out of it. The rich Glutton met with such a Punishment, that he could not have a drop of Water to cool his Tongue; but poor *Lazarus* who had patiently born his Poverty and Diseases, was translated to Paradise, a Place full of all Comforts. *Remember*, says Father *Abraham*, *that thou in thy Life-time receivedst thy good Things, and likewise Lazarus evil Things; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.* Now this general Observation is remarkably verified in the Persons adorned with the Virtue of Mercifulness in forgiving of Injuries, or blackened with the Vice of Hard-heartedness in revenging them in my Text: For both these Persons shall be treated suitably to their own Temper and Actions; the one shall meet with a merciful God, ready to put the most equitable Construction on his Actions, and to pardon his Failings; and the other shall meet with the same angry and implacable Judge, or Avenger of Injuries, that he himself proved to Men when they offended him.

From this general Observation, let us now come to a particular Consideration of the Promise and Threatning in the Text, neither of which is without its Difficulty. For as to the Promise, is it not very strange, that God's Forgiveness, or Pardon, is annexed to this one Duty of our forgiving Men the Trespases they have committed against us, when, perhaps, we are guilty of a great many other ill Things unrepented of, and unreformed? And as to the Threatning, is it not as strange, that if a Man has ever so many good

Qualities, and is but tainted with this one bad one, that he is of an implacable malicious Temper, so as not to forgive an Affront or Injury; he shall be damned for this one bad Quality!

That I may account for both these Difficulties, it will be necessary that we consider the Excellency of this Temper of forgiving Enemies here spoke of, and the Wickedness of the contrary Disposition; for then it will appear how reasonable it is that Pardon of Sins is promised to the one, and denied to the other.

I. And first, as to the Excellency of this Temper of pardoning Trespasses, there are these few Things I would offer to your Consideration.

1. That this is a good Quality wherein we do most resemble God. If he were strict to punish all our Offences, and did not give us Time for Repentance, and patiently use Means to bring us to it, the World could not stand one Minute; and there is no Part of God's Attributes more recommended to our Imitation, than this of his Mercifulness, both in giving, and in forgiving: (a) *Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.*

2. That considering what we are our selves, I mean great Sinners, who have great need of Mercy at the Hands of Almighty God, there is no Virtue more becoming Men in our Circumstances, whether we be such as have already made our Peace with God, or whether we have it still to make. If we are of the first sort, that our Lord has pardoned that immense Debt, the Sins of our whole Life, we have little Reason to take our

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(a) Luke vi. 36.



Neighbour by the Throat, and to throw him into Prison till he has payed all that he owes us. What can be more unbecoming us, or more provoking to our heavenly Father, than such a Behaviour? It is very observable from the Parable, which we have in the 18th Chapter of this Gospel, how the King rates this unthankful Servant to some purpose, and withdraws his former Pardon: *(a) Serve nequam; O thou wicked Servant, I forgave thee all that Debt, because thou desiredst me; shouldst not thou have had Compassion on thy Fellow Servant, even as I had pity on thee? And his Lord was wroth, and delivered him to the Tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him: it follows, So likewise shall my heavenly Father do unto you, if ye from your Hearts forgive not every one his Brother their Trespases.*

And if we are such as have not yet made our Peace with God, it is dreadful to think what Way we shall go about to make it, having beforehand put such an effectual Bar and Obstruction to it.

3. That considering the frequent Changes and Revolutions this World is subject to, the Exercise of this Virtue is our greatest Prudence. Neither Riches, nor Honour, nor Power, are for ever; and in all Changes and Revolutions of Fortune, as there are no Men more kindly treated, than they who were moderate and merciful in the Time of their Power and Prosperity; so none are more despised, and fall less pitied, than the Cruel and Hard-hearted.

(a) Matt. xviii. 32.

4. Let it be considered, that this merciful Temper includes in it a great many of the very chief of the Christian Virtues, to which Heaven is promised. I shall briefly instance in several of them.

1. Humility is the Foundation of it. The merciful Man has a due Sense of his own Sins and Demerits, and of his own Errors and Mistakes; and that makes him so moderate and gentle to others that are in Error. Whereas the proud Man thinks his Judgment ought to be the Standard of Truth to all others, and consequently ought to be received with a superiour Degree of Veneration to that of all other Men. 2. This Virtue of mercifulness to those who have trespassed against us, includes in it that noble Grace of Self-denial. There is nothing more contrary to Flesh and Blood, than to pass by an Injury, when we have it in our Power to avenge it: The forgiving it then, from the Heart, proceeds from a better and higher Principle; and the Man who has learned thus much of Self-denial, to resist such a clamorous Passion as Revenge is, it is to be hoped is in a fair way, by the same Principle of Self-denial, to overcome all his other Corruptions; and this if duly followed, will put him in a Capacity of the Promise of my Text, of obtaining a general Pardon of Almighty God; especially if we consider, 3. That this Virtue of Mercifulness, is a certain sure Mark of the Love both of God and our Neighbour prevailing in our Hearts. First, Of the Love of God; for what better Proof can be given of that, than our complying with one of the difficultest of his Precepts, namely, the forgiving of Enemies? If it should be replied to this, that the forgiving of Trespasses may proceed from other  
other

other worse Principles, such as Cowardice, Laziness, or Hypocrisy: I answer briefly, that this Forgiveness from the Heart, as it is called in that forecited Parable, and which is the Forgiveness meant in my Text, cannot proceed from these, or any other wrong Principles, but from a true Love to God and Man. Hypocrisy doth not reach the Heart, and contents itself with an outward Shew and Ostentation; Cowardice, every one knows, is more inclined to Cruelty than true Courage is; and as for a Laziness of Temper, Revenge is commonly the shortest Way, whereas the recovering and gaining of an Adversary, is a Work of Time and Pains. And as Mercifulness is a Sign of the Love of God, it is no less a Sign of the Love of our Neighbour; at least it is the performing the most difficult Part of that Duty. It is an easy thing to love our Friends, or any other who have done us no Harm, but the great Difficulty is to love them who have injured us; if we can once get over this, there is no other Part of Duty to our Neighbour we shall need to fear the atchieving; especially if we consider, 4. That this Love and Charity in the Heart, prevents all the usual Occasions of Quarrel and Discord; it is apt to interpret all our Neighbour's Actions in the most candid and charitable Sense; it restrains the Tongue from provoking injurious Words, which are commonly the first Beginners of Differences; and occasions Peace and Quiet both in our own Consciences, and in Families, Neighbourhoods, and Governments, by withdrawing Fuel from the Fire of Contention, and so extinguishing it; whereas a malicious revengeful Temper, is composed



posed of quite contrary Ingredients, and has quite contrary Effects, as we shall see by and by.

But before I leave this first Part, I hope, by this Time, the Difficulty arising from this Promise is voided; it appearing from what has been said, that hearty Forgiveness of Injuries is not one single Virtue, but a Complication of all the most valuable and fundamental Graces and Virtues, such as Humility, Self-denial, Love of God and Man, good Government of the Tongue, Patience, Peaceableness, Prudence, and Friendship; and that the same Principles from which it proceeds, if duly prosecuted, will produce all other Christian Virtues, and make us perfect in all other Christian Duties whatsoever; and therefore we need no longer doubt the Truth of the first Assertion in my Text, that *if we forgive Men their Trespases, our heavenly Father will also forgive us.* So much for the Promise.

II. Let us next consider the Threatning, *But if ye forgive not Men their Trespases, neither will your Father forgive your Trespases.* I hope it will not be forgot here, what I explained in opening up of the Words, that it is not the publick Justice of the Magistrate, but private Resentment and Revenge, whether of the Magistrate, or of private Persons, which our Saviour is here guarding against. And this Notion we must carry along with us, that we may the better discover the Deformity of the Vice, and apprehend the Reason why God does so severely threaten it. In the Composition of it, there is a Concurrence of a great many ill Things, such as Pride, Anger, Cruelty, Hatred, and a Contempt of the Authority and Institution of Christ, together with a  
Spirit



Spirit of Unruliness, and Contempt of all good Order, Peace, and Discipline; and the Effects and Consequences of it are most terrible in producing an innumerable Multitude of great Mischiefs in the World. It will be fit that we consider it in both those Respects, that we may become sensible of the Reason of this severe Threatning here annexed to it.

To begin with the Ingredients in the Composition of it: 1. The first I shall reckon up is Pride, that we think it below us to take an Affront, or not to retaliate an Injury. And tho' for greater Injuries God has provided another Remedy, namely, the lawful Magistrate; our Pride makes every the smallest Injury look big in our Eyes, so that many Things which human Laws have taken no notice of, as knowing that it is impossible to live in the World, if Justice must be required for every trivial Matter; and which the Christian Religion too requires us to connive at; yet because we will be wiser than either our Spiritual or our Temporal Legislators, we think fit to take notice of every Peccadillo in our Neighbour, tho' we would be very angry if any one should pretend to take notice of such, or far greater Faults in ourselves. Now besides the manifest Injustice of this Conduct, there are several Things in our Circumstances, which make it particularly odious. Such as these; We ourselves are but poor Slaves, more in Debt to Almighty God, than ever we shall be able to acquit: We live purely upon his Mercy, and if he should treat us as we treat others, we should be utterly undone. Besides, such is our Make and Constitution in this corrupt State, that it is impossible to guard against innumerable

Errors,

Errors, and Follies, and Infirmities, which the best of Men are subject to; only Pride blinds us, that tho' we are very sharp-sighted to discern the smallest Breach of Duty in our Neighbours, we cannot discern the greatest in ourselves. 2. The second Ingredient I mentioned in this unrelenting revengeful Temper, is Anger. Such Persons have no Command of their Temper, but suffer their inward Resentment to boil so long, till it boils over in injurious Words or Actions. There are many Things which a Man of a meek and calm Spirit would take no notice of, which Men of angry passionate Tempers think themselves obliged to resent; so that Men often suffer, not for the ill Thing they have done, but because the Person to whom they did them, was peevish and angry, so that nothing could please or content him. Now in many of these Cases, Quarrels are unavoidable; for that sort of Men, tho' they are certainly displeas'd with whatever is done, neither they, nor any one else, can tell what would please in any Person, against whom they have taken up a Prejudice. 3. A third Ingredient in this Temper, is Cruelty, or a Delight in the Misery and Sufferings of others; the Byass of their Hearts leans to the severe, not to the merciful Side; and as to any one they think has injured them, their Revenge is limited only by their Want of Power: *You weigh the Violence of your Hands in the Earth,* says the Psalmist, *Psal. lviii. 2. i. e.* You consider how much Power you have to do Wickedness. For while they stretch their Power to the utmost to satisfy their Malice, they shew plain enough, that if they had more Power, their Malice would not want more Work, while it sets no other Bounds

to Revenge, but only Self-preservation, and sometimes not that; for they will venture their own Life, that they may have the wicked Satisfaction to destroy their Neighbour's. 4. A fourth Ingredient in this hard-hearted Temper, is the Hatred of our Neighbour. It is plain from the Conduct of such Men, that they pursue not the Methods which tend to the Amendment of the offending Brother, but such as may ensnare and exasperate him. There is this Difference between the Punishments of a Father, or Master, or upright Magistrate, and those of a blood-thirsty Avenger; the one punishes out of Love, and with a Design of Amendment; the other out of Hatred, and as delighting in the Punishment of the Offender. 5. The fifth Ingredient I shall mention in this wicked Temper, is a Contempt of the Laws of God and Christ, which in this Particular are so plain against Revenge, that no Christian can pretend Ignorance; and therefore it must be out of a plain Disregard to those Laws, and out of a deliberate Preference of more carnal Principles, that they act so positively against them, and govern themselves by those other Principles. 6. The last Ingredient I shall mention in this wicked Temper, is a Spirit of Unruliness, and Contempt of all good Order, Peace, and Discipline. The Consequence of private Revenge, is, that it is an Affront to publick Justice, and in those Places where it prevails, quite supersedes it; and what rare Justice that will be, that is directed by private Resentments, it is no hard Matter to conjecture.

Now let any one judge if a Complication of so many ill Things, expressly contrary to the Doctrine and Example of Christ, a Doctrine so plainly set



forth, that it wants no Commentary, does not deserve to be threatned with such a severe Threatning as this of my Text, that our heavenly Father will not forgive such Persons? From all which, it is to be concluded, that this Unmercifulness is in its own Nature a great and damning Sin, and without Repentance and Amendment, shall incur the Wrath and Curse of God. And we shall be the more convinced of this, if we consider

The dreadful Consequences usually attending the Exercise of this private Revenge, which are such that no Tongue can utter, nor Imagination conceive. For what is it that begins? What is it that propagates so many Divisions and Animofities in all Societies? What is it that makes Men so backward to Peace and Moderation, and prevents all healing Methods? What is the Cause of all the Schifms in the Church, and Factions in the State? From whence come Wars, Seditions and Rebellions, with the innumerable evil Consequences of them? Nay, from whence come all Discords and Jarrings in Families and Neighbourhoods? they come all from this violent implacable, immoderate Spirit, which serves only to enflame every Difference, but to heal and settle nothing. There is nothing more contrary to the Peace of Families, nothing more contrary to the Peace of Neighbourhoods, or indeed to the Peace and Quiet of whole Countries, or to the inward Peace of every Man's Soul and Conscience, than this implacable Temper; and therefore no wonder the Christian Religion sets itself so much to dissuade us from it, as by many other Arguments, so particularly by this most awakening one in my  
Text,



Text, that our own Pardon of Sins depends upon our pardoning others their Trespasses against us.

Now to conclude, it appears plainly from this Text, and what has been said upon it, that a moderate, healing, pardoning Temper, is, in the sight of God, one of the greatest Virtues; and that it is commonly in Conjunction with all such other Graces and Virtues, as are requisite to give us full Assurance of God's Favour both here and hereafter: And that, on the contrary, an implacable, immoderate, unrelenting Temper, as it is attended with innumerable ill Consequences in this World, so if it is not repented of, and amended, it shall infallibly obstruct our Pardon at the Hands of Almighty God, and give us over to the dreadful Effects of *Judgment without Mercy*, if we cannot be prevailed upon to shew Mercy to our far less offending Brethren.

But after all, it must be confess'd, this is a difficult Duty; and therefore in the first Place, it is adviseable, if possible, to live so peaceably and inoffensively with all, that we make no Enemies. And if we meet with Enemies for doing of our Duty, which was the usual Case of the primitive Christians, and is too commonly the Case of good Men in this World, let us take care not to retaliate Evil for Evil, or Railing for Railing, but contrariwise Blessing, knowing that we are thereunto called, that we may inherit a Blessing.

(a) *Put on therefore (as the Elect of God, holy and beloved) Bowels of Mercy, Kindness, Humble-*

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(a) Col. iii. 12.

*ness of Mind, Meekness, Long-suffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another; if any Man have a Quarrel against any, even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.*

To him, with the Father, and the Holy Ghost, be all Praise, Honour, and Glory, for ever and ever. *Amen.*



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## S E R M O N XVII.

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### M A T T. VI. 16.

*Moreover, when ye fast, be not as the Hypocrites, of a sad Countenance: for they disfigure their Faces, that they may appear unto Men to fast. Verily, I say unto you, they have their Reward.*

*Ver. 17. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine Head, and wash thy Face:*

*Ver. 18. That thou appear not unto Men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: And thy Father which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.*

**T**H E general Subject treated of by our Saviour from the 20th Verse of the last Chapter is, the discovering the Defects of the Righteousness of the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, and the exhorting of Christians to higher Degrees of Duty, than those Jewish Doctors either taught or exemplified. In pursuance of this Subject, the Method our Lord seems to have followed was, first, to take notice of such Corruptions as proceeded from their wrong Glosses and Interpretations of the Law; and this ends with the *fifth Chapter*. Then he goes on to some other Cor-

ruptions, which though they pretended no countenance to them from the Law, yet were great Blemishes in their Righteousness; and these were chiefly Pride, Covetousness, and Censoriousness, which they so intermixed with other commendable Duties, as utterly to mar the Grace of them. He begins with Pride, and traces it through their Righteousness in general, and three noble Duties, Alms-giving, Prayer, and Fasting, in particular, inserting all along several proper Instructions and Directions to his Disciples concerning the right Way of going about those Duties, so as to make them well pleasing to Almighty God.

And having finished his Remarks upon their Alms and Devotions, he proceeds now to the Pride of their Fasting; guarding against it in the same Manner and with the same Arguments, he had made use of on those other Subjects, and therefore I shall need to insist the less upon them. *Moreover when ye fast, be not as the Hypocrites, &c.* In which Words we have these three Things.

I. A commendable Duty observed by the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*; and which our Saviour supposes must be likewise observed by his Disciples; namely, the Duty of Fasting.

II. The Abuse of this Duty in those Doctors, to the Ends of Hypocrisy, Pride, and Vanity.

III. Our Saviour's Direction and Encouragement to the contrary Exercise of Humility, Secrecy, and Sincerity, in the Practice of this Duty.

I. We have here a commendable Duty observed by the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, which our Saviour supposes must be likewise observed by his Disciples;



ples ; namely, the Duty of Fasting, *which is either a total Abstinence from Food for a time, or at least the using it less delicately, or more sparingly, on some religious Account.* More especially, there are these three Accounts on which Fasting is useful ; the Mortifying of Lust, the Exercise of Repentance, and as an Help to Prayer, and Contemplation of divine Things. And as far as it is used for those Ends, it is a religious Duty.

1. First, I say, for the mortifying of Lust ; it is very useful to mortify the Sins of Uncleanness, by withdrawing Fewel from a pampered Body. St Paul tells us (a) *He kept his Body under, and brought it into Subjection : Lest that by any Means when he had preached the Gospel to others, he himself should be a Cast-away.* 2. Secondly, Fasting is proper as an Exercise of Repentance. Thus we find the King of *Niniveh* ordered a very solemn Fast as one Part of the general Repentance which was then gone about. 3. It is a great Help to Prayer and Contemplation of divine Things : And therefore we find generally these Two, Fasting and Prayer, joined together. *Peter* was fasting and praying when he had that heavenly Vision concerning preaching the Gospel to the *Gentiles*, *Act. x.* And *Cornelius* on the same Occasion was Fasting and Praying when he had the heavenly Vision concerning sending for St *Peter*, who was to preach the Gospel to him and his House. And in general indeed in all Cases of Importance and Difficulty, it has been the Practice of the Church to join Fasting to their Prayers in their

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(a) 1. Cor. ix. 27.

Addresses to Almighty God. As for to implore God's Direction in any Business; his Blessing on any Undertaking; the turning away of any Judgment either already inflicted or only threatned; and divers other such pious Uses and Occasions.

Before I leave this Description of religious Fasts and the Uses of them, it will be very proper I think to add something likewise concerning the Abuses which have crept into this part of Religion, on purpose that we may avoid them.

1. One great Abuse of them has been the separating from them the internal Devotion and Repentance, and so making them really no more than a little bodily Penance. And therefore that Exhortation in the Prophet is exceedingly necessary, (a) *Rent your Hearts and not your Garments.* There is no Fast more declaimed against by the sacred Writers than this. Hear what the Prophet *Isaiab* saith of it, *Isa.* lviii. 5. *Is it such a Fast that I have chosen? a Day for a Man to afflict his Soul? is it to bow down his Head as a Bullrush, and to spread Sackcloth and Ashes under him? wilt thou call this a Fast, and an acceptable Day to the Lord? Wherever a Fast is not joined with a real Sorrow for Sin, and a true Resolution of Amendment of Life, it is not that religious Fast which God requires: As it there follows. Is not this the Fast that I have chosen? to loose the Bands of Wickedness, to undo the heavy Burdens, and to let the Oppressed go free, and that ye break every Yoke? Is it not to deal thy Bread to the Hungry, and that thou bring the Poor that are cast out, to thy House?*

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(a) *Joel* ii. 13.

*when thou seest the Naked, that thou cover him, and that thou hide not thy self from thine own Flesh?*

Now from this Description we may learn that Fasting is not so much a Mortification of the Body, as of the Mind; and an Abstinence from Sin, as well as from Meat and Drink, and that when it is of the right Stamp, it is always joined with true Repentance. 2. Another great Abuse of Fasting is, the employing it to sinful Purposes; for we are not to believe that Fasting sanctifies the Cause; but that it is the Cause which sanctifies Fasting. (a) *Behold ye fast for Strife and Debate, and to smite with the Fist of Wickedness;* says the same Prophet; from whence we may learn that Fasting joined with Oppression, or Rebellion, or applied to support any other evil Course, is not a religious Fast. 3. Neither is that a right Fast, which is made use of out of Parsimony and Penuriousness. For one Part of the Description of the Fast which God has chosen is, *To deal our Bread to the Hungry, and that we bring the Poor that are cast out to our House; when we see the Naked, that we cover him, and that we hide not our selves from our own Flesh.* In short, what we save by Fasting we should lay out in Charity, over and above our usual Allowances that Way. 4. A most notorious Abuse of Fasting, and what has indeed totally changed the Nature and Design of it, is, instead of a total Abstinence, only changing the Diet, as they do in the Church of Rome, abstaining from Flesh, but on their fasting Days eating to the full of Fish, and all other sorts of

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(a) II. lviii. 4.



Rarities. But to do Justice to the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, there are several of these Abuses of this Duty of Fasting, which it seems they were not guilty of at that Time; for all that our Saviour faults in them with relation to their Fasting was; that they fasted out of Vanity and Ostentation. Which leads me to,

II. The second Thing I observed in the Words: Namely the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* their Abuse of the Duty of Fasting to the Ends of Hypocrisy, Pride and Vanity. *When ye Fast, be not as the Hypocrites, of a sad Countenance: For they disfigure their Faces, that they may appear unto Men to Fast. Verily, I say unto you, they have their Reward.*

In these Words we have both the Description and Condemnation of Hypocrisy.

The Description of it; it is an Ostentation of Religion; and the Condemnation of it is in Christ's Affeuration that they have their Reward, that is, that the popular Applause, and the other worldly Advantages of Hypocrisy, is all the Reward they shall have for their Pains; there is no Reward to be expected in the future State, for such Services as are performed not with an Eye to God, but Man. As to this Description of Hypocrisy, it will hold in all the Parts of Religion. Our Saviour has already cautioned us against it as to our Righteousness or Duty in general; as to Alms, Prayer, and now Fasting in particular. From all which we may gather both the Certainty of the Description, and the great Danger of this Ostentation in Religion, being so frequently cautioned against it. In the Vice here described there is



a great Mixture of ill Things; from the Consideration of which, it will be no hard Matter to see the Reason why our Lord does so frequently and so earnestly dissuade us from it. 1. There is a great deal of Disingenuity and Insincerity in it, that a Man should put on a Mask, and never appear in his own true Colours. 2. That in order to this Mask, he should not be afraid to make use of such a sacred Thing as Religion; certainly no Man that believes any Thing of Religion, would offer to pervert it to so bad a Use; and therefore in all Appearance the Hypocrite must not be far from an Atheist. 3. Another Ingredient in this Vice, is Pride and Vanity; the Affectation to be seen of Men, especially when Religion is in Vogue and Request; there being no better Way then, to procure and establish a Reputation in the World, than by being reckoned extremely zealous for extraordinary Piety. 4. Covetousness and divers other Vices may lurk under this Cloak of Hypocrisy. We are told elsewhere of (a) *Their making long Prayers that they might devour Widows Houses*; and it is plain under the same Cloak they might have the better Opportunity of compassing several other Designs of Ambition, Cruelty, secret Lust, or the like.

As to the Danger of this Vice, we learn it from our Saviour's Asseveration, *Verily, I say unto you, they have their Reward*; q. d. The worldly Ends they attain, are all the Reward they are like to have; as their Religion is only calculated for a present End, they shall so find it in the future

(a) Matt. xxiii. 14.

State, where all their Masks shall be pulled off, and Hypocrisy shall be detected and punished. This is the best Cure for Hypocrisy, the Consideration that it will never pass muster in the future State. Alas! what signifies a little Wealth, or a little Applause in this World? How short lived are they, and how little solid Satisfaction will they yield, when the Soul most wants Comfort?

III. So now I am come to the third and last Thing in the Words, namely, our Saviour's Direction and Encouragement to the contrary Exercise of Humility, Secrecy, and Sincerity in the Practice of the Duty of fasting: *But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine Head, and wash thy Face, that thou appear not unto Men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in Secret; and thy Father which seeth in Secret, shall reward thee openly.* Where first he directs the cutting off all the Ways and Methods of Hypocrisy; *Anoint thine Head, and wash thy Face, that thou appear not unto Men to fast.* When once we become acquainted with the Devices of Satan, the best way is to counter-mine him, and to keep out of the way of his Temptations. We would think, that know nothing of the Customs of the *Jews*, that our Saviour advises us here to keep so far from the Temptation, that we should rather run into the contrary Extreme; but when we consider that the *Jews* ordinarily anointed their Head, except on the Days of Mourning, then we must conclude that the Meaning of this Direction is no more, than that we should put on the same Looks and Habit on the Days of our private fasting as at other times. Let us avoid all Signs and Appearances of Ostentation of our religious Services; let

let us be so far from that, that Men shall not so much as know what we are about: And if possible let us have no more Eyes upon us but only God's, and he who is the secret Witness of our Devotion and other religious Exercises, will reward us openly. This Direction, as I take it, is much to the same Purpose, with that general Direction of avoiding all the Occasions of Sins; we are in all Actions that we go about, to consider as near as we can what it is that adds Fuel to our Lust, or our Pride, or Vanity, or Covetousness, or Passion and Resentment; and it is good Christian Prudence to cut off all those Occasions or Temptations to Sin; as in the Case before us, our good Works taking Air, and being made publick, is the Thing from whence our Pride is most like to receive its Nourishment; therefore the best way to obviate this Temptation is, to prevent if possible, their being made publick, by studying such a Modesty in the doing of them, that, as it was said on another Occasion, *our left Hand shall not know what our right Hand doth.* And to encourage us to this, we have a Doctrine here laid down, which, if we believed and considered it, would make us very careful to do all our good Actions with a single Eye to God, that is, that the less Encouragement we have to our good Actions from Men, we shall have so much the more from our heavenly Father. But two Things are required to be believed in order to this Doctrine, *viz.* That God now sees all that we do in secret, and that he will afterwards make a suitable and open Recompence. But I am persuaded most Sinners believe neither of these; for if they throughly believed either that they are under



der God's Eye for all their secretest Actions and closest Contrivances, or that ever there will be a Day of Retribution, they would certainly live quite other sort of Lives than they do. Had we half that Regard for God that Children have for their Parents, or Servants for their Masters, or Scholars for their Teachers, we should not have such Doings in the World as we have. Let us learn to have an Eye to that recompence of Reward, firmly to believe it in our Hearts, and to fix it in our Minds by frequent Meditation, and it will undoubtedly have a greater Influence on our Life and Actions.

Having thus spoke to the Particulars of the Text I shall add something briefly by way of Application.

I. And first, let us examine whether in this Particular of Fasting, our Righteousness exceeds that of the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*. The *Pharisees* were a strict Sect in this Matter of Fasting. *The Disciples of John and of the Pharisees fasted often* we are told, and the *Pharisee* made his boast that *he fasted twice in the Week*. Now we do not find that our Saviour ever faulted this Practice of theirs, except for their boasting of it. And even here in my Text, though for several good Reasons he would not prescribe when or how often we should fast, Health and other Things being to be consulted for the deciding of that Question; yet he supposed we would comply with it as a Duty; only he commanded us when we fast, to avoid Hypocrisy. But alas! we have found out a new Way of avoiding the Hypocrisy which was then incident to this Duty, by leaving the Duty wholly undone; in which I think there



think there is no manner of Question but that the Righteousness of the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* exceeds ours: As indeed I am afraid it does in the two other Particulars of Alms and Prayer too. And here now I find my self obliged to confute a lazy Opinion of some, as if Fasting were now altogether out of Doors among Christians. It is true indeed the Christian Religion lays no such stress upon it as the *Pharisees* did; for our Saviour did not think fit to burden his Weak Disciples at first with this Piece of Austerity; he did not design they should fast (a) *While he the Bridegroom was with them*: But at the same time he foretold, *When the Bridegroom should be taken from them, then they should fast in those Days*. It is true likewise that the Christian Religion places no Duty in eating or not eating. (b) *For neither if we eat are we the better, nor if we eat not are we the worse*. The whole Business of eating or not eating is to be measured by the Tendency which it has to make us good or bad, better or worse. So that every one is to examine his own State and Circumstances, in order to the finding out whether a total Abstinence proves more conducive to his mortifying his Lusts, and a readier Help to Prayer and Repentance, than a continual sober and moderate Diet, and direct his Practice accordingly. Yet that our Religion speaks most honourably of fasting as a good Instrument of Mortification, seems evident from the following Particulars.

1. That it is a Part of natural Religion, not being enjoined by God in the moral Law, and yet

(a) Matt. ix. 15.

(b) 1 Cor. viii. 8.

frequently in use upon all great Occasions above-mentioned; upon occasion of God's Judgments upon the Land, *Joel* i. 14. they are called upon *To sanctify a Fast; and to call a solemn Assembly.* Thus the *Jews* fasted three Days when they were decreed to be cut off by the Contrivance of *Haman*, *Esth.* iv. so likewise they fasted to beg Pardon for their Sins and reform them, *1 Sam.* vii. 5, 6. where they repent of their Idolatry. So they fasted to beg special Mercies of God; thus *Ezra* and his Company fasted to seek of God a right Way. *Ezra* viii. 21. These Fasts when rightly gone about are called *The Fasts which God hath chosen*, *II.* lviii. 5. and *an acceptable Day unto the Lord.* These are Examples of publick Fasts, observed with good Success. We find likewise that voluntary private Fasts were in use with good People as their occasions required. *David wept, and humbled his Soul with Fasting.* *Pf.* lxix. 10. *Nebemiah* fasted when he heard of the Affliction of the People at *Jerusalem*, *Neb.* i. 4. and *Daniel* ix. 3. And divers Instances we have of this godly Practice in the New Testament. *Anna* the Prophetess fasted and prayed Night and Day. Our Saviour in my Text teaches the right Way of fasting, and promises God's Reward to it. And *Matt.* xvii. 21. he tells his Disciples of some Devils *That could not be cast out but by Prayer and Fasting.* And that our Saviour's Apostles and Disciples had the same good Opinion of the Efficacy of Fasting, as a special Means to obtain God's Blessing, appears from their Practice. It was usually joined with their Ordinations, as we may see *Acts* xiv. 23. And with  
their

their extraordinary Missions. *Acts* xiii. 2, 3. St Paul tells us that he was *in Fastings often*, *2 Cor.* xi. 27. and among the other Hardships he had voluntarily underwent, Afflictions, Necessities, Distresses, Stripes, Imprisonments, Tumults, Labours, Watchings, he reckons up Fastings too, as so many Proofs of his Diligence in his ministerial Office. From all which and a great deal more which might be quoted, it appears that Fasting was always in high esteem among Christians: And therefore there is great Occasion to exhort you to revive the Practice of it.

2. But if every one cannot bear the Rigour of Fasting, and therefore if it is a Duty much left to Discretion, there is another Duty of great Affinity with it, which our Saviour enjoins strictly to all Persons and at all Times; namely, Temperance in eating and drinking. *Take heed to your selves*, says he, *Luke* xxi. 34. *lest at any Time your Hearts be overcharged with Surfeiting and Drunkenness, and Cares of this Life, and so that Day come upon you unawares.* It is so much the more necessary to put you in mind of this Caution of our Saviour's, because the contrary Vices of Luxury, Intemperance and Drunkenness prevail too much in the World, and have too great an Influence upon us, to hinder that Seriousness and Consideration which is necessary to make Religion sink down into our Hearts, and fructify in our Lives; and likewise prompt us to many rash Resolutions, Words and Actions, and drive us upon many Temptations, which by Temperance and Sobriety we might easily avoid.

*Now God give us all Grace, that denying Ungodliness and worldly Lusts, we may live soberly, as well as righteously and godly in this present World: Looking for that blessed Hope, and the glorious Appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.*

To him with the Father and the Holy Ghost  
be all Praise.





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## S E R M O N   X I X .

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### M A T T . VI . 19 .

*Lay not up for your selves Treasures upon Earth, where Moth and Rust doth corrupt, and where Thieves break through and steal.*

Ver. 20. *But lay up for your selves Treasures in Heaven, where neither Moth nor Rust doth corrupt, and where Thieves do not break through nor steal.*

Ver. 21. *For where your Treasure is, there will your Heart be also.*

Ver. 22. *The Light of the Body is the Eye; if therefore thine Eye be single, thy whole Body shall be full of Light.*

Ver. 23. *But if thine Eye be evil, thy whole Body shall be full of Darknes; if therefore the Light that is in thee be Darknes, how great is that Darknes!*

Ver. 24. *No Man can serve two Masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other: Ye cannot serve God and Mammon.*

Ver. 25. *Therefore I say unto you, take no Thought for your Life, what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your Body, what ye shall*

*put on ; is not the Life more than Meat, and the Body than Raiment ?*

Ver. 26. *Behold the Fowls of the Air, for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into Barns, yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they ?*

Ver. 27. *Which of you by taking Thought, can add one Cubit to his Stature ?*

Ver. 28. *And why take ye Thought for Raiment ? Consider the Lillies of the Field how they grow ; they toil not, neither do they spin.*

Ver. 29. *And yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his Glory, was not arrayed like one of these.*

Ver. 30. *Wherefore if God so cloath the Grass of the Field, which to Day is, and to Morrow is cast into the Oven ; shall he not much more cloath you ? O ye of little Faith.*

Ver. 31. *Therefore take no Thought, saying, what shall we eat ? or what shall we drink ? or wherewithall shall we be cloathed.*

Ver. 32. *(For after all these Things do the Gentiles seek) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these Things.*

Ver. 33. *But seek ye first the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness, and all these Things shall be added unto you.*

Ver. 34. *Take therefore no Thought for the Morrow ; for the Morrow shall take Thought for the Things of itself : sufficient unto the Day is the Evil thereof.*

The First Sermon on this Text.

OUR blessed Saviour goes on here in the Prosecution of the same Design, training up his Disciples to higher Degrees of Virtue, than had

had been taught by the *Jewish* Doctors. In the former Part of this Chapter, he had guarded them against the Sin of Pride and Ostentation in all religious Duties; and now from hence, to the End of the Chapter, he guards them likewise against Covetousness, which was another close Vice of the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, which it seems in many Things they approved of, at least neglected to principle their Disciples against it. Our Saviour handles this Subject at large, for sixteen Verses together, giving us many Characters of the *covetous* Man, with several Arguments to dissuade us from *Covetousness*, and the inordinate Cares of the World. And it is no wonder he has taken all this Pains to principle us well against a Vice, which though it is as pernicious as any other whatsoever, yet is often disguised under the specious Shew of Temperance, Sobriety, Diligence, Frugality, Providence, and Care of Wife and Children, and several other very laudable Practices; by virtue of which, it insinuates itself with greater Advantage than most other Vices, and is much harder to be discovered and guarded against. I thought once to have considered all our Saviour's Characters and Descriptions of this Vice by themselves, before I had come to his Arguments and Dissuasives against it. But since he intersperses the one with the other, I think it is my Part not to alter his Method, but to speak to the Words as they lye before us: by clearing up the Descriptions of that Vice, and opening the Arguments made use of to dehort us from it, in the same Method in which they are here proposed.

To begin then, in the Words which I have read, ver. 19, 20, 21. we may observe these three Things.

I. A Character of the covetous Man; which is, that he *lays up for himself Treasures upon Earth, and not in Heaven.*

II. Our Saviour's Diffuasive from this Practice; *Lay not up for your selves Treasures upon Earth, but lay up for your selves Treasures in Heaven.*

III. The Reasons of this Exhortation; which are three, *viz.* 1. That it is but an earthly Treasure. And 2. liable to perishing by diverse Accidents, such as Moth and Rust, which corrupt it; and Thieves that break through and steal it; whereas the heavenly Treasure is secure, and out of the Reach of these, and all other Accidents whatsoever. And 3. That if our Treasures are upon Earth, they will draw our Hearts after them, and make them earthly too.

I. I begin with the Character of the *covetous Man*, which is, that he *lays up for himself Treasures upon Earth, and not in Heaven.* For understanding of which Way of speaking, I must acquaint you with an usual Hebraism, very common in the Holy Scripture-Style; the Consideration of which is of great Use towards the understanding of this, and divers other Texts, which would be apt to puzzle an ordinary Reader. For it is a common Thing in Hebrew, of two Things which they mean only to compare together, and to prefer the one to the other, instead of that to bring them in by way of Antithesis, and to reject and prohibit the one, and chuse the other. As in that Expression, *Hos. vi. 6. I desire Mercy and not Sacrifice:* The Design was not absolutely to condemn Sacrifices, (for God had commanded them) but only to prefer Mercy before them. So *Gen. xlv. 8. Joseph* says to his Brethren, *It was not you*



*you that sent me hither, but God.* And *Exod xvi. 8.* *Moses tells the People, Your Murmurings are not against us, but against the Lord.* So *Prov. viii. 10.* *Receive my Instruction, and not Silver,* is to be interpreted in a comparative Sense, as it follows immediately, *and Knowledge rather than choice Gold.* In the same Sense it is said, *Joel ii. 13.* *Rent your Heart and not your Garments.* Now this same Stile is continued in the New Testament, as *John vi. 27.* *Labour not for the Meat which perisheth, but for that Meat which endureth unto everlasting Life:* The Meaning is only that we should not labour so much for Things temporal, as for Things eternal. So *Luke xii. 4.* *Be not afraid of them that kill the Body, but fear him who after he hath killed, hath Power to cast into Hell;* where the Meaning is only, that God is much more to be feared than Men. So *Col. iii. 2.* *Set your Affection on Things above, not on Things on the Earth;* meaning only that we should much more set our Affections on Things above, than on Things on Earth. So when our Saviour says, *John vii. 16.* *My Doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me;* it is not designed for an absolute Denial that the Doctrine was his, but only that the Honour of it is more owing to God. Now according to this Stile, and Manner of speaking, the Words of my Text are to be understood, not for a total Prohibition of laying up any Treasure upon Earth, but only that we should be infinitely more careful to lay up Treasures in Heaven than upon Earth.

The Words being thus explained, let us consider more particularly what it is that is here faulted

by laying up our Treasures on Earth, not in Heaven. To this I shall answer as distinctly as I can.

First, Negatively, It is not every laying up of an Estate for our future Occasions, that is here prohibited; there being many honest just Causes for so doing; such as the laying in, in Crop-time and Harvest, the Fruits of the Ground, upon which we must subsist all the Year following. And if in a Year of Plenty, we should lay up for a Year of Scarcity, this would be no unlawful or discommendable Action. Or if Parents should lay up something in reason for their Children, or Husbands for their Wives; or if Husbandmen, Merchants, or any others, whose useful Callings cannot be well managed without a considerable Stock, should accordingly lay in such a Stock, I do not apprehend that there is any Thing in our Saviour's Doctrine to prohibit such Provisions, if the Persons Circumstances will bear them, without neglecting any Duty of Justice or Charity in the mean time, and without setting their Hearts too much on these their worldly Callings or Projections. Nay further, we are commanded to lay up something, not only for a decent Supply of our Wants, but likewise for the Relief of others.

1 *Thes.* iv. 11, 12. We are exhorted to a diligence in our Callings, that *We may walk decently toward them that are without, and may have lack of nothing.* And *Eph.* iv. 28. We are exhorted to the same Diligence, *That we may have to give to him that needeth.* For though it seems to be here positively forbidden, that we should *lay up for our selves Treasures upon Earth*, yet according to the Way of interpreting such like Expressions, as ye have heard, it is no absolute Prohibition of the

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the one, tho' it is a more earnest commanding of the other. So much for what is not prohibited by this Expression.

Secondly, But now let us next enquire affirmatively, what is here prohibited: And briefly there are these two Things which seem to me to be here condemned.

1. The heaping up an unreasonable Quantity of worldly Wealth.

2. The setting of our Heart and Affection too much upon our worldly Estate or Treasure.

1. The heaping up an unreasonable Quantity of worldly Wealth. For tho' the precise Quantity of worldly Estate, which Men may purchase, or lay up, is not determined, or indeed can be, their Occasions and Circumstances being so vastly different; yet there are many good general Rules set down, which, if duly observed, would keep our Estates, and Stocks, and Treasures in this World within due bounds; any one of which good Rules being transgressed, we fall within the Prohibition of my Text, of sinful or unreasonable laying up of Treasure upon Earth. The chief of these Rules I shall briefly mention, without staying to prove and demonstrate them, especially where they are (as I think most of them are) pretty self evident.

(1.) The first Rule I shall mention to this Purpose, shall be this; That what we get, we acquire it by fair, just, and equitable Ways and Means, without Fraud, Oppression, Exaction, or any other indirect Way, dishonest in itself, or injurious to our Neighbour. This is a Rule which demonstrates itself, being founded on the first common Principles of Justice and Honesty.

(2.) The



(2.) The second Rule I shall mention, is, that as to the use of our Wealth, we be not of a narrow, pinching, and penurious Temper, but that *our Conversation be without Covetousness*; that we live decently, bestowing the Necessaries and Conveniences of Life upon ourselves, and Friends, and Families, with such a Generosity and Hospitality as is suitable to our Estate and Circumstances. As the other Rule was founded on a Principle of Justice, so this is founded on a Principle of Honour and Decency.

(3.) The third Rule shall be, that we gather not so great Estates, as in the Management of them, require our Hearts and Minds to be so entangled with the Cares of the World, as to be thereby too much diverted from minding the Concerns of our Souls, and a better Life. This is a Rule, the Reasonableness of which will not be doubted by any who believe any thing of Religion or a future State. Our better Part ought to be chiefly minded, and Eternity is much to be preferred to this short Life.

(4.) A fourth Rule is, that we be always willing and ready, according to our Ability, and the Opportunities God puts into our Hands, to do good in Works of Piety and Charity, and in promoting the publick Good of the World, especially that Part of it where God casts our Lot. This is likewise so rational a Rule, that Willingness should attend the Ability in doing good, and in proportion to it; that in Morals it is as good as a Demonstration.

(5.) A fifth Rule to moderate our Desires after, and Acquisitions of the World, is, that we study a Contentment with our own Lot and Circumstances,



stances, and learn to be easy in a low Fortune ; which will cure us of that Covetousness and Ambition, which continually push us on to an insatiable Thirst after more.

(6.) The last Rule shall be, that having sufficient wherewithal to answer our just Occasions, we set some Bounds to our laying up of earthly Treasure, and to the encreasing of our Purchases, and devise liberally how to do good with the Overplus. This Rule I have from *St Paul*, for he *(a)* charges them who are rich in this World, to be rich in good Works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate, laying up in Store for themselves a good Foundation against the Time to come, that they may lay hold of eternal Life.

These are short and plain Rules for regulating our worldly Purchases and Estates ; for certainly he minds, and lays up Treasures upon Earth too much, who either gets it by unfair and indirect Means ; or has not the Heart to lay it out to supply his own Occasions, and the Occasions of those whom he ought to provide for ; or who has his Thoughts and Time too much employed in the Cares of the World, to the Neglect of better Things ; or is backward and averse from Works of Piety, Charity, and the publick Good ; or who is discontented with his own Circumstances and envious of his Neighbour's ; or lastly, who flowing in Wealth already, thinks he is never to stop ; but instead of contriving liberal Things for the Good of his Neighbours, and the World, thinks only of *joining House to House, and Field*

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(a) 1 Tim. vi. 17, 18, 19.

to Field, till he has shov'd out all his Neighbours from about him, and is left alone in the midst of the Land. So much for the first Thing here faulted and prohibited, namely, the heaping up an unreasonable Quantity of worldly Wealth.

2. The other Thing we faulted, is the setting of our Heart and Affection too much on our worldly Estate and Treasure. It is not only, nor so much indeed the Quantity of the Treasure, as the immoderate Degree of Affection we set upon it, which our Saviour here taxes, as appears from what he says at *ver. 21.* *For where your Treasure is, there will your Heart be also.* If our Hearts then are chiefly set upon our earthly Treasures, it is the surest Sign we are guilty of what our Saviour here prohibits. But now because a little Self-Flattery, of which all Men have good Store, is able to hide, and palliate all the Vices of the Heart; in order to the Trial and Examination of our own Hearts in this Matter, it will be necessary that we take help from a few Rules, whereby we may discover whether our Hearts are immoderately set on the World, or no. I shall but just mention them, leaving the Trial and Experiment to yourselves.

(1.) First then, our Hearts are too much set on the World, if we are strongly bent and resolved to be rich; if in our Hearts we earnestly grasp the World, and eagerly wish and desire it: *They that will be rich, saith St Paul, 1 Tim. vi. 9. fall into Temptation and a Snare, and into many foolish and hurtful Lusts; which drown Men in Destruction and Perdition.* As to Riches, we should endeavour to keep our Minds in an even well poised Temper, ready and prepared for whatsoever out-ward

ward State and Condition it shall please God to carve out for us, and to have our Hearts disentangled from the Love of the World, which, as I formerly explained, is the Meaning of the first *Beatitude*, *Poverty in Spirit*: So that if we are literally *poor*, we be contented; and if *rich*, that our Hearts do not cleave to our Riches; but that we be ready to part with them when God calls, or to employ them in doing Good.

(2.) Our Hearts are too much set on the World, if we make too much haste to be rich. *He that maketh haste to be rich, shall not be innocent*, saith Solomon, *Prov. xxviii. 20.* So that a Discontent with low Circumstances, and an Impatience to grow rich, is a certain Sign of an Heart cleaving to the World.

(3.) It is a Sign that our Hearts are too much set on the World, if we look on our Neighbour's Thriving and Prosperity with Envy and Discontent.

(4.) It is a Sign of an Heart too much set on the World, when we contemplate our own Wealth and flourishing Circumstances with too much Complacency and Delight. Good Men delight themselves in God, but worldly Men have Gladness in their Hearts, chiefly when their Corn, and Wine, and Oil, their Stocks, and Crops, and all worldly Things are increased.

(5.) It is a great Sign of an Heart too much set on the World, when we come to put our Trust and Confidence in our Wealth; like the rich Man in the Gospel, who trusted more in his full Barns than in God.

(6.) It is a certain Sign that our Hearts are too much set on the World, when our Time, Thoughts, Projects,



Projects, and Contrivances, are spent chiefly on worldly Things, to the Neglect of our Souls, and the Concerns of a better Life.

(7.) It is a Sign our Hearts are too much set on the World, when upon any great Losses, or even Poverty itself coming upon us, we grow angry, peevish and discontented. For if the World were not too deeply rooted in our Hearts, we could easily part with it at God's Pleasure: We could say with holy *Job*, (a) *The Lord has given, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the Name of the Lord.* Or with *St Paul*, (b) *I have learned in whatsoever State I am, therewith to be content; I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where, and in all Things, I am instructed both to be full, and to be hungry, both to abound, and to suffer Need.*

(8.) Lastly, It is a most certain Sign that our Hearts are too much set on the World, whenever, to save or increase our Wealth, or outward Estate, we betray our Duty and Conscience. As *St Paul* observes, 1 *Tim. vi. 10.* *The Love of Money, says he, is the Root of all Evil; which while some coveted after, they have erred; or (as it is in the Margin of our Bibles) have been seduced from the Faith, and pierced themselves through with many Sorrows.* An Example of which Defection, on account of this inordinate Love of the World, he gives him elsewhere in *Demas*, 2 *Tim. iv. 10.* *Demas hath forsaken me, saith he, having loved this present World.*

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(a) *Job i. 21.*

(b) *Phil. iv. 11.*



What has been said, may suffice, as to that Part of the Covetous Man's Character, that he lays up for himself Treasures upon Earth. It will be requisite likewise to add a little for understanding the other Part of his Character, *that he lays not up for himself Treasures in Heaven.* Now in order to this, we must first consider what is meant by *laying up for ourselves Treasures in Heaven*; then we shall easily see how negligent the covetous Man is in this Matter.

Treasures in Heaven, are such Treasures as will turn to account there; and we are then said to lay up our Treasures in Heaven, when we lay out our Wealth or other Talents so, as that we may have the Benefit of them in that blessed Life to come. To give an Example in Wealth; what a Man lays out in Husbandry or Merchandize, or puts into any Bank from whence he expects a worldly Profit, all that is in order to increase his earthly Store or Treasure; but what a Man lays out in Works of Piety and Charity, without any Design of Worldly Advantage to himself, but purely out of Love to God and his Neighbour, with an Eye to God's Promises of future Reward, all this is Treasure laid up in Heaven; a Bank of all other the richest, and securest, and which turns to the best account. The same may be said of all our other Talents; for according to the several Uses we put them to, and the different Aims and Designs we have by them, we lay them up either in the earthly, or the heavenly Treasure. So that towards *laying up of Treasures in Heaven*, there seem to be only these two Things requisite; first, That we have a firm Perswasion and Belief of the Goodness of this *heavenly Treasure*; that is, that  
it

it is secure, and that what is put into it, will turn to the best account. And then, that upon this Perswasion we do all the good we can, from no other Prospect, but of a Reward in Heaven. For if we do good only, or chiefly for worldly Ends, this is a laying up in the earthly, not in the heavenly Treasure.

Now it is plain the covetous Man fails in both these Respects; he has no Esteem of the heavenly Security, at least little minds or considers it. And he is so bent upon encreasing his earthly Store, that he ventures little or nothing into the heavenly.

Thus now I have considered the first Thing I proposed from the Words, namely, the Character here given of the *covetous Man*, that he lays up for himself Treasures upon Earth, and not in Heaven. Time will not allow my handling the other Particulars, which I shall therefore refer to another Opportunity. Only upon occasion of what has been now said, let me seriously exhort you all to take care so to employ your Wealth, and all your other Talents, to such Purposes, and in such a Manner, that they may turn to good account in Heaven. For though, as the Words have been explained, I must not discourage you from laying up of this World's Goods, as far as your own, or your Families just Occasions do require; yet I am obliged to put you frequently in mind of what is of infinitely greater Consequence, the laying up for yourselves Treasures in Heaven, by employing your Wealth, your Honour, your Power, your Interest, your Learning, Wit, Industry, and all your Talents, for doing good; for that will turn to your everlasting Benefit. Ye know the Account we have of the Proceedings in the great Day of Judgment,

XIX.] *Treasures in Heaven.* MATT. VI. 19. 273  
Judgment, in the 25th Chapter of this Gospel, and the noble Rewards there assigned to them who shall be found to have shewn Acts of Charity to Christ's poor Members. What we add to our Estate upon Earth, can turn but to little account, because at best we are to have the Use of it but for a short Time, the Time of this present Life: But what we lay up in Heaven by our Works of Faith, and Labours of Love and Charity, and Patience of Hope, and Fervency of Prayer, and Diligence in all Manner of Christian Duty; every good Action we do with an Eye to Heaven, howsoever worthless in itself, yet through the Merits of Christ, and the Mercy of God graciously accepting it, shall be richly rewarded in Heaven with Joys eternal, unspeakable, and full of Glory. God give us all Grace to believe this, and to practice according to this Belief, and to persevere in this holy Practice to the End; till at last we are made Partakers of this blessed State, for Jesus Christ's Sake.

*To whom, &c.*



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## S E R M O N XX.

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### M A T T. VI. 19.

*Lay not up for your selves Treasures upon Earth, where Moth and Rust doth corrupt, and where Thieves break through and steal.*

*Ver. 20. But lay up for your selves Treasures in Heaven, where neither Moth nor Rust doth corrupt, and where Thieves do not break through nor steal.*

*Ver. 21. For where your Treasure is, there will your Heart be also.*

The Second Sermon on this Text.

**A**T the last Occasion I explained the Meaning of these Words, and then observed in them these three Things.

I. A Character of a worldly or covetous Man, which is, that he lays up for himself Treasures upon Earth, and not in Heaven.

II. Our Saviour's Dissuasive from this Practice: *Lay not up for your selves Treasures upon Earth, but lay up for your selves Treasures in Heaven.*

III. The Reasons of this Exhortation, which are three. *Viz.* (1.) That the one is an earthly, the other an heavenly Treasure. (2.) That the one



one is liable to perishing by diverse Accidents, such as Moth and Rust which corrupt it, and Thieves that break through and steal it; whereas the other is secure, out of the reach of these and all other Accidents whatsoever. (3.) That if our Treasures are upon Earth, they will draw our Hearts after them, and make them earthly too.

As to the first of these, the Character of the covetous Man, that he lays up Treasures for himself upon Earth and not in Heaven, having considered it at the last Occasion, I shall not spend Time about it, but proceed directly to the second and third.

II. The second Thing in the Words is our Saviour's Dissuasive from this Practice of the covetous Man. *Lay not up for your selves Treasures upon Earth; but lay up for your selves Treasures in Heaven.* Now having formerly explained what is to be meant by *Laying up our Treasures upon Earth*, and what by *Laying them up in Heaven*, that which is properly incumbent upon us on this Head is, to shew you how it is the particular Duty of Christians not to lay out their Time and Talents on *earthly*, but on *heavenly Treasures*. Alas! to what purpose was it, that ever Heaven was discovered? Was it to be read and talked of like a Romance, only to divert and amuse us a little, and to have no Influence on our Lives and Conversations? If we believe it not, then let us not pretend to be Christians. We are then of no higher a Dispensation than those *Jews*, to whom our Saviour was now preaching, who expected a Messiah that would be a great earthly Prince, and would make all his Followers great and rich; instead of a Christ that would teach them to wean

their Hearts from the World, and prepare them for Heaven. This we are to look upon as one of the principal Characters of a good Christian, that he truly believes and acts upon the Belief of a future State of Happiness in Heaven: That every Step of his Life is in order to that blessed End of his Journey, and that all his Talents are laid out so, as to turn to good Account in Heaven. It is plain that both our Saviour and his Apostles being sensible how much we were byassed to the other Extream, did all that could be done both by their Doctrine and Example to wean our Hearts from the World, and to fix them on Heaven; as by an attentive reading of their Writings will every where appear. But I shall confine myself to the Text, and proceed to

III. The third Thing I observed in the Words, namely, the Reasons of this Exhortation, which are three.

1. That the one is an *earthly*, the other an *heavenly Treasure*.

2. That the one is liable to perishing by divers Accidents, such as *Moth and Rust which corrupt it*, and *Thieves that break through and steal it*; whereas the other is secure, out of the reach of these, and all other Accidents.

3. That if our Treasures are upon Earth, they will draw our Hearts after them, and make them earthly too.

First, The one is an *earthly*, the other an *heavenly Treasure*. This Notion suggests several Things to our Consideration, tending to dissuade us from this Practice. Particularly, 1. The gross earthly Nature of these Blessings. Were we only sensual Creatures, and if the chief Part of our  
Duration

Duration were to be in this Life, then these worldly Things would be an adequate Good for the Soul of Man: But since neither in their Nature will they suit the Soul, which is created for better Things, nor in their Duration will they answer but to a small Part of our Time, they can by no means deserve much of our Time and Labour to be bestowed upon them. A little of them will answer all our Occasions, and much better indeed than a great deal, and therefore we ought not to choose our Treasure of them. But these Things will require a little farther Explication. We are to consider then, that the Happiness of any Creature results from the Suitableness of the Object to the Faculty. Some Things which extremely delight some Creatures, would be a mighty Pain to others, nay would quite kill them. It is necessary then, in order to Happiness, that there be a Suitableness between the Creature and the Object which it pursues, to make it happy in the Enjoyment of such an Object. Man's Happiness must consist in these earthly Things, to make them suitable to him; for if he is a Creature capable of an higher Felicity than this World can afford, then that is what he ought chiefly to aim at, and seek after. We may as well think to make Fish feed upon Grass and Corn, and Oxen live upon Water and Mud like Fish, as to make Man happy only with worldly Things. 2. But suppose they were ever so well fitted to make us happy during our Stay in this World; suppose they could cure all the Diseases of the Mind, and supply all the Wants and Necessities of the Body; yet Man being made for an eternal, immortal Duration, how small a Part of that is included in this present Life? He



is the only wise and provident Man who is wise and provident for Eternity. Should we not deservedly think him a great Fool, who to have his Belly full of all the most delicious Fare that Nature and Art could furnish for one Day, would sell himself into an hard Servitude, in which he should be miserably pinched with Hunger all the rest of his Life? As foolish as this Bargain seems, it is a much more foolish Bargain they make, who take care only for this short Part of our Time which we live in this World, and are to be miserable to all Eternity. For one Day bears a greater Proportion to the rest of our Life in this World, than this Life does to Eternity, which we are to provide for in the World to come. An earthly Treasure then at best being but temporal, can never deserve to have all our Care laid out upon it, or indeed the greater Part of our Care, when it is but a mere Trifle, if put in the Scales against eternal Life. This may perhaps seem strange Reasoning to us, who have so great a Sense of this present Life, and so little Sense of that which is to come; but our Saviour who knew the true Worth of Things, had a much greater Sense of the future State, and sets a much greater Value upon it.

So much for our Saviour's first Reason concerning the Treasure we ought to lay up; not an earthly one, as not being fitted in Nature, or Duration to an heavenly Mind, or a Being fitted for Immortality.

Secondly, His next Reason is, that the earthly Treasure is liable to perishing by divers Accidents; some native, breeding in itself, such as *Moth* and *Rust* which corrupt it; some foreign, as *Thieves* that break through and steal it. The Word here translated



translated *Rust*, is by others translated *Smur* ; but it is used in the Original in a much wider Sense than either of these Words will reach ; namely, for every Thing that destroys and consumes the Grain, as the Weavel, Worms, and the like. Now for understanding this Part of our Saviour's Argument, it is well observed by some Interpreters, that he touches here the several sorts of Treasures which they used to lay up, with the several Plagues that attended them. Their Treasures were of three sorts ; *Cloaths*, with which they had their Wardrobes well replenished ; *Grain*, which they laid up in their Barns and Granaries ; and *Gold*, and Money and precious Stones, which they laid up in their Chests and Cabinets. Now all these were subject to divers Misfortunes which attended them. The Wardrobe was plagued with the *Moth*, which destroyed their fine Cloathes ; the Granary with the Weavel and Rats and Mice which eat and destroyed the Grain ; and the Hoard of *Gold* and Money was a Temptation to *Thieves* to rob and steal it. These are but Examples of the Accidents which happen to earthly Stores and Treasures, and not designed for a full Enumeration of them : For indeed there are innumerable Accidents which destroy what Men set their Hearts on in this World : Fire, and Water, and the Sword of the Enemy ; the Carelesness and Deceitfulness of Servants, Storms, and Earthquakes, Oppressions, and Injustices, and a thousand other Things more than I can enumerate. Yet our Saviour in the Instances which he brings, points at the chief of those Plagues, to which most of the rest may be reduced ; for in *Moth* and *Rust* or *Smur* we have an Example of those *Inward* Corruptions

which breed in the Things themselves; and of these there is an infinite Number. Then in *Thieves* we have an Example of the many external Enemies that assault our worldly Goods, whether by the way of Force and Violence, or by the way of Fraud and Knavery, or by the way of Exaction and Oppression. In general, all things in this World are either so perishable in their own Nature, or so subject to Casualties from without, that we can promise ourselves no sure Possession or Enjoyment of them.

Now the contrary of all this is true of those Treasures which we lay up in Heaven; for there, as our Saviour says, *Neither Moth nor Rust doth corrupt, nor do Thieves break through and steal.* Let us enquire a little into the Particulars.

(1.) *Heavenly Treasures* are fitted for our Heaven-born Souls, they are suited to our Capacities, which find a true Pleasure and Satisfaction in them. As the Needle touched with the Loadstone is unquiet and restless till it turns to the North Pole, so the Soul of Man is restless and unquiet till it turns to God, and rests upon him. And the Source of all its Unquietness is, because it is often drawn away from him, and bewitched with other Things, which are never able to satisfy its capacious Desires. But so soon as it fixes in the Love of God, it finds sufficient to answer all its utmost Desires. As it was said of *Adam*, when all the Creatures were presented to him, (a) *That there was not found a Help meet for him*: So we may say of all this World's Goods, that there is not to be found a good Meet for Man. Give

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(a) Gen. ii. 20.

him the whole World, and he will want and long for something beyond it.

(2.) *Heavenly Treasures* last for ever. They are not calculated for a small Part of our Time, but we shall enjoy them for ever and ever. This one Consideration is what adds infinite Worth and Weight to these heavenly Treasures beyond our earthly ones, that they will never fail us; and this we shall know, that they will never fail, and so shall be under no Fear or Apprehension of it. This is too high a Subject for any Mortal to undertake the Description of; but so much we may easily apprehend, that there is no Comparison between Treasures upon Earth, which at best we shall enjoy only during this short Life, and Treasures in Heaven, which we shall enjoy for ever.

(3.) *Treasures in Heaven* are subject to no Accidents, neither of inward Corruption, nor of external Violence. There is neither *Moth* to corrupt, nor *Thief* to steal. First, no inward Corruption. There are some Countries where several noxious and filthy Creatures cannot live. But this is the only Place, free from all Corruption whatsoever. Here in this World we have hardly any sincere Happiness, without a great Mixture of Trouble and Sorrow. All the good Things in this World have their own Inconveniences annexed, and most of them such as rise out of the good Things themselves; as naturally as *Moths* do in Cloath, and Weavels in Grain. And this is God's wise Contrivance to lessen our Affection to them, while we know that we must both have a great deal of Uneasiness in the Possession of them, and must quickly part with them, as having the Seeds of Corruption in themselves.



elves. But because God would have us pursue the heavenly Treasure with the most enlarged Affections, he gives us those Blessings without a Worm to corrupt them, and without Sorrow to allay them. Secondly, As there is no inward Corruption in the heavenly Treasures; so they are not capable of being taken from us by Fraud or Violence. The Malice of the Devil and wicked Men has no Power there, they cannot enter to disturb it; and if they could, the Inhabitants of that blessed Place are temptation Proof; that there is not the least fear their Treasure can be taken from them.

Thirdly, So now I am come to the third Reason our Saviour gives, to dissuade us from laying up our Treasures upon Earth, and to persuade us to lay them up in Heaven; namely, that that has an Influence on the whole Man to give him an earthly, or an heavenly Tincture. *For where your Treasure is, there will your Heart be also.* For apprehending the Force of this Argument, we are to consider

I. The Influence our Treasure has upon our Hearts, to draw them after it.

II. The Influence the Heart has on the whole Man to govern all our Thoughts, Words and Actions.

III. The Conclusion then, that the laying up our Treasure on Earth makes us worldly, and forgetful of Heaven; and that the laying up our Treasure in Heaven makes us of an heavenly Temper, and reforms the whole Heart and Life.

(I.) Let us consider the Influence our Treasure has upon our Hearts, to draw them after it. The Heart runs out naturally after that which it loves best;



best; the *Ambitious Man's* Heart runs upon his Honours; the *Voluptuous Man's* upon his Pleasures; the *Miser's* upon his Bags; the *Scholar's* upon his Notions; and so every Man's to his particular Inclination. And what a Man amasses a great deal of, and hoards it up not with a Design to part with it, but to have his Satisfaction in the secret Contemplation of it, that infallibly draws his Heart and Thoughts after it. It is therefore a much more dangerous thing than we are aware of, to hoard up Treasures in this World; for could that be done without the Mind's being carried after it, without its being disturbed with Cares and Fears, and anxious Thoughts and Concerns, without putting that Hope and Trust in it, all which follow the chief Bent and Inclination of the Heart, then indeed it might be a much more innocent Thing to lay up Treasures upon Earth; but when the Doing of this is so apt to draw the Heart after it, there's the Danger that these our earthly Treasures will draw away our Heart from God.

(2.) Especially when we consider what Influence the Heart has on the whole Man, to govern all his Thoughts, Words and Actions. By the Heart we mean that main Propension and Inclination which, like the main Spring in a Watch or Clock, governs all the lesser Movements and sets them a going. As this main Spring of the Heart goes, the Man thinks, contrives, speaks and acts. This is like the determining what Port we will sail to, which has the chief Consideration in shaping the whole Course.

(3.) From whence the Conclusion follows very naturally, that the laying up our Treasure on Earth makes us worldly, and forgetful of Heaven; and

and that on the contrary the laying up of our Treasure in Heaven makes us of an heavenly Temper, and is the main Engine to reform the whole Heart and Life. The Purport of all this is, that the more we lay in for this World, the more our Hearts and Thoughts will be carried after it, and the more worldly and covetous shall we prove, and consequently the more shall we endanger our Souls; and the more good we do with an Eye to Heaven, the more heavenly minded shall we prove, and the more directly shall we steer our Course to Heaven.

Thus now I have explained the several Notions of the Text. The Duty which our Saviour here urges is of the greatest Importance of any I know in Christian Morals: For upon it depends the whole shaping of our Christian Course. The main Question which is to be first resolved is, what Port we are bound for? For if we are bound for Heaven, and intend to make the best of our Way thither, we must have a special Care that the World deceive us not with its false Allurements. If you alledge the Difficulty of observing just Bounds between God and the World, I shall only put you in Mind of these two Things. First, that at the last Occasion I circumscribed your Duty in this Matter with a great many particular Rules, which it would be too tedious now to repeat. Secondly, that the frequent Consideration of your main End and Design will so regulate all your other Movements, that ye cannot easily miss of the Mark. For if ye are bound for Heaven, ye will, so to speak, remit your Effects thither as fast as ye can; ye will so dispose of all your Concerns here, as they may turn to the best Account in the future State.

State. And though ye know not the precise Quantity fit to be bestowed into the heavenly Treasure, this very Aim will teach you not to be niggardly that Way, since of all our Estate it is that which will turn to the best Account. There are many other Duties, which God has not thought fit precisely to determine, but only to direct by general Rules; as in Eating, Drinking, Apparel, Furniture and the like, he has contented himself to give us general Rules of Temperance, Sobriety, Humility and Frugality; and to forbid Gluttony, Drunkenness, Vanity, and Prodigality, all which we can comply with, tho' it is not determined just how much we shall eat, and drink, and wear. So in the Matter of *Good Works*, the more we sow, the more we shall reap; the more we put into the Bank of Heaven, the more we shall take out with multiplied Interest. This is by much the securest Part of our Estate or Treasure, not subject to divers Accidents, as our worldly Estates are, but as the Apostle calls it, *a good Foundation against the Time to come.*

I shall conclude after I have acquainted you, that it is not only Charities or Alms-deeds, which go into the heavenly Treasure, but the Acts and Habits of all other Christian Virtues whatsoever. Our Works of Faith, and Patience, and Peaceableness: Our Improvements of the several Talents God has entrusted us with. There is nothing we do with an Eye to his Service, that shall be past by or forgotten by him; nay, the very Will and Desire to do Good, where we want the Ability, shall be put to our Account: So that we have all the

the Encouragements in the World to be good, and to do Good.

*Now God of his infinite Mercy give us all Grace to be fruitful in every good Work, to his Glory and our own eternal Happiness, through the Mediation of Jesus Christ.*

To whom, &c.





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## S E R M O N XXI.

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MATT. VI. 22.

*The Light of the Body is the Eye ; if therefore thine Eye be single, thy whole Body shall be full of Light.*

Ver. 23. *But if thine Eye be evil, thy whole Body shall be full of Darknes. If therefore the Light that is in thee be Darknes, how great is that Darknes?*

The Third Sermon on this Text.

**T**HES E Words, if I apprehend them right, are a further Continuation and Improvement of that Argument against Covetousness, which our Saviour made use of in the Words immediately preceding; which were these, *For where your Treasure is, there will your Heart be also.* He comes now to shew the Danger of a worldly Heart and Mind; for illustrating of which he borrows a Similitude from the Eye of the Body, which he calls *the Light of the Body*, directing it in all its Steps and Actions. Now, says he, if the Eye be single, that is, pure from all noxious Humours, which obstruct the Sight of it, then the whole Body shall be full of Light; that  
is,

is, the Body will have a fair clear Light to direct it in all its Motions and Actions: but if the Eye be blinded with Rheum, the whole Body suffers, as wanting a Light to direct it in its several Motions and Actions. So it is with the Heart, and Mind, or Conscience, that inward Light, if it be kept pure from all noxious Humours of vitious or worldly Affections, it will be a good Light to guide the whole Man in all his Walk and Behaviour. But if that inward Light of the Mind is darkened through any corrupt Affection whatsoever, more especially through this of *Covetousness and Worldly-mindedness*, it is impossible to reckon up the innumerable wrong Steps, which that Darkness in the Mind will occasion in the whole Life and Conversation: *If the Light that is in thee be Darkness, how great is that Darkness!* This I take to be the true Sense; but because the Words, especially as they sound in our Language, are really difficult; it will not be amiss, by considering the Parts of the Comparison, to make the Meaning as plain as may be, to every intelligent Hearer.

1. First then, As to the Eye's being the Light of the Body; this is plain enough, that it is the Eye, and no other Member, which serves for a Light, or Candle, to direct the whole Body in its several Motions and Actions. 2. It is here said, that *when the Eye is single, the whole Body is full of Light*. As to the Expression, *full of Light*, in the Original it is only φωτεινόν, that is, *light-some*; but for the Singleness of the Eye, that seems to be the most obscure Expression, which indeed has cast a Mist upon the whole Comparison. For clearing of it, we are to consider that the Original Word, ἀπλῆς, though it chiefly signifies

nifies *single*, or *simple*, yet it often signifies likewise *pure*, *sincere*, or *perfect*; when a thing is so incorrupt, that it is not adulterated with any vitious Mixture; and from hence the Word came to be used for any thing that is good and perfect, and without Blemish in its kind. And I believe it is to be understood in this Place, for a *good Eye* that has no Blemish or Defect, as appears by its being set in Opposition to the *evil Eye*, which makes the Body dark, in the next Verse. 3. Now for the Application of the Similitude, the outward Light is compared with the inward; and particularly the bad Eye, and the Darkness occasioned by it, is compared to the inward Eye of the Understanding, Mind, and Conscience, vitiated by Covetousness, or any other bad Affection, and the prodigious Errors in Life consequent thereon.

The Words being thus explained, there are several useful Truths, which from them present themselves to our Consideration; which I shall a little further recommend to your Thoughts and Practice, particularly these four or five.

I. That there is an inward Light of the Mind and Conscience, which is to direct the moral Part of our Actions, as the Eye directs the external Motions and Actions of the Body.

II. That every evil Affection to any Sin, among other evil Effects of it, obscures this inward Light, that it cannot so well perform its Duty, but is apt to mislead us into sinful Courses.

III. That this is particularly verified in the evil Affection of Covetousness, or Worldly-mindedness, that it blinds this inward Light, so as to

make it apt to misgovern us in our Opinions and Actions.

IV. That when the inward Light of the Mind and Conscience is darkned, this occasions a vast Number of other Errors and Follies in the Life and Conversation.

V. That it is therefore our Duty to use our utmost Endeavours, both to keep that inward Light free from all Clouds of evil Affections and Inclinations, that it may give us clear Direction in all Duty; and to follow those good Directions in our Life and Conversation.

I. The first Thing I observe in the Words, is, that there is an inward Light of the Mind and Conscience, which is to direct the moral Part of our Actions, as the Eye directs the external Motions and Actions of the Body. In my Text it is called *the Light that is in thee*. Whether we call it the Light of Reason, or the Law of Nature, or the Law of the Mind, or an enlightened Understanding, or the Conscience, or the Light within; it is very certain, if we would look inwards, we should find some Principle, which both directs us in our Duty, and approves or re-proves, according as we observe or neglect it. This Principle is much weakned by natural Corruption, and yet more by erroneous Doctrines and wicked Practices, and strong Prejudices of Education. And again, it is much improved by good Doctrine, and an holy Life, and especially by the Grace of God illuminating our Minds in the practical Knowledge of Divine Truths.

Now what the Eye is to the Body, that is this internal Light to the Mind; it discovers between the right and the wrong Way; it is given us by  
God



God as a Guide of our Actions, with all the Improvements of external Revelation and internal Grace. And one of the most fundamental Errors we are guilty of, is, instead of adverting to this inward Light, to be guided by what is gratifying to the outward Senses, or to be led away by Custom, Prejudice, or Example, without applying our selves to this inward Director, to find out the Truth or Falshood, the Conveniency or Inconveniency of Things to our present Circumstances. This is as if in our walking we should shut our Eyes, and choose to go in the Dark, or to be led by a Guide blindfold, making no more use of the Eye of the Mind, than if we had no such Faculty.

II. The second Thing I observed in the Words, was, that every evil Affection to any Sin whatsoever, and much more every evil Habit, among other bad Effects of it, obscures this inward Light, that it cannot so well perform its Duty, but is apt to mislead us into sinful Courses. This we may gather from the same Comparison in the Text, where the Eye vitiated with Rheum, is compared with the Light in us obscured with any noxious Humour; that is, any sinful Inclination or Habit. Besides, it is the very Scope and Purport of this Part of our Saviour's Discourse, to guard us against the Sin of Covetousness, from this very Consideration, that it blinds the Eye of our Mind and Understanding, and by darkening it, is the Occasion of innumerable Errors in the Life and Conversation. But in order to the fixing of this Blot on Covetousness or Worldly-mindedness, our Saviour here lays it down as a general evil Consequence of all Vice, that it has this bad Effect on the Eye of the Mind, that it turns the Light

which is in us into Darkneſs. Now how this corrupt Inclination doth thus blind the Underſtanding, is worth the Enquiry, that ſo we may the better perceive the Force of our Saviour's Argument. I ſhall mention ſome of the chief of thoſe Ways, how Vice vitiates the Underſtanding.

1. All Vice by tetharing the Mind down to ſome carnal Object, doth by ſo doing divert it from the Contemplation and Search of Truth. Vice is a Clog upon a Man, which retards all his Diligence in the Study of good Things.

2. All Vice vitiates the Faculty of the Underſtanding, that it ſees Things through a falſe Glaſs, and in a wrong Light; as a Man that has the Jaundice ſees not Things in their true Colours, but as they are tinged with that yellowiſh Diſeaſe which is in himſelf; ſo the vitious Man infuſes a ſtrong Tincture of his own Conceits into all Truth, that he cannot ſee Things in their native Beauty.

3. As vitious Habits turn to a ſecond Nature, the Man who is infected with them, has no right Reliſh of any thing, which is not of Affinity with his own Conceptions; he wants the right diſcerning Faculties, as having his Palate vitiated by a long feeding upon Traſh. What is ſaid of the natural Man, *1 Cor. ii. 14. That he receiveth not the Things of the Spirit of God, nor can he know them, becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcerned,* may, *a fortiori,* be ſaid of the vitious Man, in whom the Corruption of Nature is much increaſed by vitious Habits.

4. If what has been ſaid in general of the vitious Man, ſhould be applied to particular Vices, it will make it ſtill plainer, that every Vice contributes

tributes to the darkening of the Understanding, which ought to direct the Man in his Course of Life. Drunkenness, it will be owned, besots the Mind, and unqualifies it both for sacred and secular Knowledge. Lust makes the Mind so carnal, that it can have no Taste or Relish for spiritual Truths. Malice, and Envy, and Hatred, and Enmity, do so blind the Mind, that it can discern no good Quality in the hated Person, nor any Truth and Right (though there be ever so much) in his Causes. There is nothing more contrary to all Vice, than Humility, Prayer, Meditation of divine Things, an earnest Study of the Word of God, and all the other sacred Arts, whereby the Mind is improved in the Knowledge of divine Truths, the keeping of a good Conscience being one of them. But of all Vices, none unfits us more for the Knowledge of our Duty, by blinding our Understanding, than Covetousness, and the inordinate Cares of the World; which because I believe it was chiefly designed by our Saviour in these Words, I shall therefore more particularly insist upon.

III. This is the third Thing I proposed to consider from the Words, that Covetousness, or Worldly-mindedness, doth exceedingly obscure this inward Light, so as to make it apt to misgovern us in our Opinions and Actions. Whenever any Duty interferes with our worldly Interest, the inward Light of the covetous Man is so blinded, that he cannot perceive his Duty upon those Occasions, but is under vast Temptation to be deceived in his Judgment, and consequently in his Life and Practice. In many Cases, for Example, where God requires a Bounty and Liberality



to the Poor, this worldly Temper either persuades us that the Person proposed to be relieved, is no such Object of Charity, or that we ourselves are not in a Condition to afford the Relief; or that we have many other more pressing Occasions, or that there are many others more capable of affording Relief than we are; or lastly, if the Occasion is a little more than ordinary clamorous, that he is induced to supply it, his Covetousness is legible in his very Charities, for he parts with them like so much Blood; they are so scanty as to the Quantity, so stingy as to the Manner, that as the Apostle says, it is not like (a) *a Business of Bounty*, but of *Covetousness*. But then as to Acts of Gratitude and Generosity, these are Things so foreign to the covetous Man's Temper, that he has no Sense of them at all. Nay, there are a thousand Things of common Justice and Honesty, of Courteousness and Civility, and even of Interest and Self-preservation, in which Men, blinded by Covetousness, forget themselves, and do Things very unjust, very unbecoming, and often dangerous to their own Safety and Interest. I will give you an Instance of this in the known Story of *David* and *Nabal*; (b) *Nabal* was a Man whose Heart was very much set on the World; in which he had acquired a very great Estate, and was become exceeding rich. Now observe what Influence this wrong Turn of his Mind had upon him, in misleading him in the Conduct of himself and his Actions. First, this

(a) 2 Cor. ix. 5.

(b) 1 Sam. xxv. 4, &amp;c.



selfish Temper did so contract all his Thoughts to himself, that he had no Consideration or Regard at all for other People; he lived in Plenty, but had no Bowels towards his poor Neighbours particularly *David* and his Men, who were in very straitned Circumstances in his Neighbourhood. Then it made him utterly unmindful and regardless of Favours received, and insensible of the Duty of Gratitude for them; for though *David* and his Men had treated him and his very civilly, in not only forbearing to meddle with his great Flocks and Herds themselves, while they encamped in his Neighbourhood; (a very extraordinary Favour from an indigent Army) but likewise in protecting him and them from all Thieves and Robbers, and other Enemies, that they had not suffered the least Damage, while *David* lay so near them: Yet *Nabal*, we find, had not the least Sense of this Favour, being utterly void of Gratitude and Generosity, Virtues as opposite to a covetous Mind, as Light is to Darknes. When *David's* Straits at last were urgent, he sent a civil Request to *Nabal* for a little Supply, without any Anger or Threatning, only calmly putting him in mind that they had been very kind and serviceable to his People; that they had not only abstained from his Flocks themselves, but had defended them from the Injuries of all others; and that being in Want of Provisions, and coming in a good Day, when, according to Custom, he made a great Feast at his Sheep-shearing, they prayed some little Supply for their Necessity, not determining what, or how much, but leaving it entirely to his own Courtesy and Generosity: But, alas! they were

mistaken in their Man ; Arguments from Gratitude and Generosity were of no Consideration with one of his churlish and covetous Temper : It had been much easier to have wrought on his Fear than his Gratitude. On the one hand he was puffed up with an high Conceit of himself, and his great Fortune ; on the other hand, he despised *David* and his Men as a Company of poor indigent Fellows, than which Crime of Poverty, nothing could have made them look less in his Eye, considering what Place the World had in his Heart. His Wealth, and Pride, and Self-conceit occasioned thereby, and their Poverty, and Submissiveness, merely blinded him, that he could not see, on this Occasion, even his own Interest ; far less the Rules of Justice, Charity, Gratitude, Generosity, Liberality, or even common Civility, which any other Man who would have considered this Case, not blinded by a selfish and covetous Temper, in the midst of so plentiful Circumstances, might easily have seen. And therefore instead of a kind Reception of them and their Message, he was so overseen as to give them a surly and provoking Answer, which had like to have cost him both his Life and Estate, if better and more generous Measures had not been afterwards taken, than his Covetousness and Churlishness suggested. This is one plain Instance, how a covetous Heart set on the World, blinds a Man that he cannot easily see and find out his Duty. And so it is in most of the other Circumstances of Life. If such a Man is a Master, he is so penurious that he will think it no Crime to get an Estate, if he can, out of the very Backs and Bellies of his Servants. If he is an Husband, or  
Father,

Father, he will be apt to begrudge the decent, if not the necessary Supplies of Maintenance and good Education. If he is employ'd as a Judge, whatever Case comes before him, that interferes with his own private Gain, he is apt to give his Opinion according to his worldly Interest, rather than according to Equity and good Conscience. If he is employed in the honourable Station of a Counsellor and Legislator, he will be apt to hazard the publick Ruin of his Country, for want of a liberal and publick Spirit, to procure the Good of it at any moderate Charge or Expence. If he is entrusted as Tutor or Guardian to any Orphan, his chief Endeavour is, not to contrive Things for the Orphan's Benefit, but for his own. If he is employ'd as a Factor, Artist, Tradesman, or Overseer, he contrives his Work not in the best Way of Justice and Honesty to his Employer, but so as to yield most Profit to himself. In short, whatever he goes about, Covetousness mingles in with it, and marrs it. Even in Matters of Religion, such Opinions and Practices are most likely to be espoused by him, as are most suited to his saving and worldly Principles, without Consideration of the Truth or Falshood, the Advantages or Disadvantages of them, towards promoting the great Ends of Religion, Holiness and Virtue: An Example of which we have in *Demetrius*, and the other Tradesmen, who made Silver Shrines for the Temple of *Diana*, *Acts* xix. So that the covetous Man sees every thing through a false Glass, and judges wrong of it, and practices wrong upon it. And this leads me to

IV. The fourth Thing I proposed to consider, namely, That when the inward Light of the  
Mind

Mind and Conscience is darkned, this occasions a vast Number of other Errors and Follies in the Life, and Conversation. *If therefore the Light that is in thee be Darkness, how great is that Darkness!* In these Words our Saviour intimates the terrible Consequences of a Mind once darkned with any Vice. To pretend to give you the Detail of this Truth, I might as well pretend to reckon up how many wrong Steps a blind Man without a Guide would make; how he would fall sometimes into the Mire, sometimes over a great Stumbling Block, sometimes down a Precipice, sometimes into a Ditch, and sometimes into the Briers; and when he is there, how every Step he fetches to extricate himself, entangles him more and more. To give you an Example in a Mind tinctured with Malice or Hatred; It is natural for such chearfully to hearken to, and readily to suck in and believe all ill Stories of the Persons they hate; and as the Venom thereof spreads, to improve them by Jealousy and Invention. In order to this, it is natural to encourage Tattlers and Talebearers; and from private Calumnies, it is as natural for that wicked Temper to proceed to publick Affronts and Injuries; and then for the Justification of them, to Forgery, and Misrepresentation. Thus if Satan can once possess the Mind with one black Vice, as Malice, Lust, or Covetousness, it is an easy Thing afterwards to lead such a Person in a String, from one wrong Step to another, till it is really incredible to what Degrees of Wickedness we shall be hurried at last, only in Consequence of a little Ambition, or Covetousness, or Resentment, or Jealousy, or Hatred, or Envy, against such as stand in the Way  
of



of our Designs or Passions. Nay most of the Errors and Heresies that are in the World, are owing to this Cause, of the Mind's being blinded with Vice. And it is most probable this is the truest Account of Atheism, that since Men do not live up to their Principles, they bring their Principles down to their Vices. But it is high time to hasten to

V. The fifth and last Thing proposed, and which follows naturally as a Consequence from all the rest, that it is therefore our Duty to use our utmost Endeavours both to keep this inward Light free from all Clouds of Vice, that it may afford us clear Direction in our Duty, and to follow those good Directions in our Life and Conversation. Our Duty here is twofold.

1. To have an unbyassed good Guide of our own Minds and Consciences, that the Light in us be not Darkness.

2. Then to take care that we follow the Directions of that inward Guide.

I have not Time now to dwell upon them, but they are both difficult Tasks: first to keep the Mind and Conscience so clear and unbyassed, that it be no way clouded with Prejudice, or Passion; Jealousy, or Suspicion; Malice, Hatred, or Self-Interest; Addictedness to Party or Faction, Favour or Partiality; but that we keep ourselves equally well poised to those that differ in Opinion from us, as to those that are of our Mind and Sentiment; to those that are our Foes, as well as to those that are our Friends; to those that thwart our worldly and carnal Interests, as well as to those that do not stand in the way of them. Let us study to discern and love Truth  
and

and Virtue, wherever they are, and carefully to guard against all Prejudices and finister Byasses, that may vitiate or deprave our discerning Faculty.

Then when we clearly see the Truth, let no natural or acquired Corruption of our own Hearts, let no Temptation or ill Advice of others, let no Misrepresentations of malicious Instruments, let no Conveniency or Self-Interest of our own, or any others whom we may affect, tempt us to act contrary to the Dictates of our own well informed Minds and Consciences, as we expect either Peace here, or eternal Felicity hereafter. Both which, God of his infinite Mercy bestow upon us all, for Jesus Christ's sake. *To whom, &c.*



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## S E R M O N XXII.

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MATT, VI. 24.

*No Man can serve two Masters : for either he will hate the one, and love the other ; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and Mammon.*

The Fourth Sermon on this Text.

**I**N these Words we have another Argument against Covetousness, taken from the Inconsistency of it with the Service of God : In order to which our Saviour first repeats a common Maxim, that *No Man can serve two Masters* ; meaning Masters of contrary Humours and Interests, for that both he will secretly settle his Affection on the one, and be alienated from the other ; and openly, whenever their Interests interfere, he will cleave to the one, and forsake the other. Then he applies this particularly to the Service of the World, and asserts the Inconsistency of it with the Service of God. *Ye cannot serve God and Mammon.* In the Words we have these three Things.

I. The Maxim in general ; that *no Man can serve two Masters.*

II. The Reasons of that Assertion ; that both his inward Affection, and his external Service will be drawn two different and contrary ways.

III. The

III. The Application of this Maxim, with the Reasons of it, to the Service of God and the World; *Ye cannot serve God and Mammon.* All which I shall consider as they lie in order.

1. First, we have the Maxim in General; that *no Man can serve two Masters.* For understanding of which, something is to be considered of ourselves, Men, something of Masters, and something of the Service here spoke of.

1. As to ourselves, Men; it is certain we are never without a Master; we find we are far from being able to subsist of ourselves, we must lean to something without us for our Support. As the Vine clings to the Oak, and by Virtue thereof creeps up, which, if left alone by itself, could only crawl along the Ground; so Man, for all his Pride and Vanity, is a poor weak Thing of himself, and must take to some outward Supports. It is true all the Supports we betake ourselves to, except God, are rotten and deceitful; all our other Masters break and leave us in the lurch, but we are often deceived with them first, and take them to be very substantial, tho' they prove but Vanity.

As we have all some Master or other, so we have but one at a time, that is, one that carries away our Heart in chief, though our Hearts and Affections may happen to be parted, and to have divers inferiour Inclinations to other Things. But there is always one Thing uppermost in our Affections, and that is it to which we are properly Servants.

2. By *Masters* here is to be understood Masters in chief, of which one is not subordinate to the other: For where they are subordinate, a Man  
may



XXII.] *their Service inconsistent.* Matt. vi. 24. 303  
may easily obey two or more Masters, who use their several Authorities to carry on one and the same Service and Design. But by two Masters here are meant two, whose Designs, Humours, Interests and Commands are quite contrary to one another.

3. By Service is meant a State of Servitude ; not any one Act of Service. Now by being a Servant in this Sense is meant the being entirely at his Master's Beck and Command, both in Heart and Affection, and in Deed and Performance. So that the Meaning of the whole is this: That a Man cannot at the same time be a ready Slave to two Masters that have both the supreme Command, and are of different or contrary Humours and Tempers, and have different Interests to carry on, one from the other.

II. I come next to the Reasons of this Assertion, that *no Man can serve two Masters.* For either he will hate the one, and love the other ; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. The Meaning of which I take to be, that neither the inward Affection, nor the outward Attendance can be so divided as to please both. By his speaking of the inward Affection, Love and Hatred, it is an Argument that he had an Eye to such Masters as would not be put off with the bare bodily Labour and Attendance without the Heart ; as indeed such Masters are both God and the World. It is well known that both those Services require great Care and Application, abundance of Thoughts and Contrivance, abundance of Attention and Heedfulness, for a Man to devote himself to them, so as to be a Servant to either.

And

And accordingly this inward Affection of the Heart will shew itself in the outward Behaviour, by cleaving to one Master, and slighting the other. There is a small Difficulty appears to some in the wording this Part of the Sentence, because instead of repeating the Words, *loving* and *hating*, the Words *cleaving to* and *despising* or *slighting*, are made use of; but while they are Words of the same Sense, there is rather a Beauty in avoiding the Tautology of Repetition; and further it is an Explication of the Love and Hatred, as extending to the outward Behaviour as well as the inward Affection. *q. d.* No Man can serve two Masters; for either he will hate and slight the first, and love and cleave to the second; or else he will love and cleave to the first, and hate and slight the second. It appears by the whole Drift of this Discourse, that the two Masters are to be understood of two Masters disagreeing in their Sentiments, and requiring quite contrary Services. For if they were unanimous, and always commanded the same Thing, it would be an easy Thing to serve them both. It is worth observing, that in the Description our Saviour gives here of *the Service* of the two Masters, he confines it to these two, first, the inward Love and Hatred; and then the external adhering to the one, and slighting of the other. They are both necessary; for to trust to the Heart and Affection without the other would be to deceive our selves; there being no way to know the Heart, but by the Regularity or Irregularity of the Actions. And the Actions without the Heart, might likewise easily deceive us, the same Things being often done out of

-Hypocrisy

Hypocrisy and By-ends ; but when both are in conjunction, the inward Love of God, and the adhering to him, that is, to our Duty in a time of Trial and Temptation, these two together, I say, make up the full Description of the Servant of God. We are not then to judge of our Sincerity in God's Service by other wrong Marks or Descriptions, as a great many do ; not from any Measure or Degree of Knowledge of God, or any such Perfection of the intellectual Faculty, or any Rectitude of Judgment about God ; there being few so depraved in their Judgments, but that they will acknowledge God to be much preferable to the World ; though they neither have a prevalent Love to him in their Hearts, nor observe his Laws in their Lives and Conversations. And from this Description likewise we may learn, that as we are not to judge of our Estate by our Intellectuals, so neither are we to judge of it by the external Zeal of a Profession. Many say *Lord, Lord*, whom Christ will never own. The surest Mark of our being his Servants is, when there is an inward Love in the Heart, joined with an adhering to him in all Temptations, and an actual preferring of his Service to that of the Devil, the World and the Flesh. So much for the Reasons of the Assertion, that *no Man can serve two Masters.*

III. The third Thing I observed in the Words is, our Saviour's Application of this Maxim, with the Reasons of it, to the Service of God and the World. *Ye cannot serve God and Mammon.* The Word *Mammon* is a Syriack Word signifying Riches ; and *Tertullian* says it was the God of Riches that went by this Name, for which Reason perhaps the



Name is retained here in the *Greek*. It is to be observed here, that there is a great Distinction to be made between *having of Riches*, and *serv'ing Riches*. It is very possible that a Man may have Riches, and not serve them, or be a Slave to them. It is only this last which is here said to be inconsistent with the Service of God. *Ye cannot serve God and Mammon*. That a Man may lawfully possess Riches, so that they be not his Master, but that he employ them for those good Uses for which God designed them, there is no Manner of Doubt; for this gives a Man an Opportunity to exercise many excellent Virtues, of Piety, Charity, and Hospitality; besides that in some Degree they are necessary for defraying the many Necessities and Conveniencies of Life. But for a Man to be a Slave to them, there is not any more dangerous Temptation, or more fruitful of Sin and Vice. In speaking to it I shall do these two Things.

1. Consider what it is to *serve Mammon*.

2. Shew how inconsistent it is with the Service of God.

1. To *serve Mammon* is in general, to subject ourselves to all the Pains and Drudgery of getting and keeping Wealth, without the comfort of using and spending it for the several Necessities and Conveniencies of Life, and other charitable and pious Uses upon which God has Commanded us to bestow it. There is a great Difference between the getting of Wealth, with a further Prospect to those good Ends and Uses, for which God has appointed it, (for this is only to make it an Instrument for doing Good;) and the getting it with a Design only to be rich, and to hug ourselves



selves in the Possession of an Estate, as if our chief Happiness consisted in that Possession, without further Use. The first of these has chiefly in view the Service of God, the pleasing of him, and in order to that the Doing a great deal of Good; the other is the setting up, as it were, another God, in whose Service we take our chief Complacency and Delight. For that which is uppermost in our Heart and Thoughts, that which is sought after for itself, that in which we place our chief Happiness and Delight, that may be called our God, and the Service we bestow upon it otherwise than to the true God, may justly be called *Idolatry*; not that the covetous Man believes in Riches as a God, but that he sets it up for his supreme Good, and serves it with that unlimited Affection and Diligence, which is due only to God. And in this Sense *St Paul* calls *Covetousness Idolatry*, Col. iii. 5. for it steals away the Heart from God, and fixes it on the World.

2. Now that such a Servitude to Wealth is utterly incompatible and inconsistent with the Service of God, is what I am to shew in the next Place. And in order to it, I briefly offer the following Considerations.

(1.) Let us consider that the Points, to which the good Christian, and the covetous Man direct their Course of Life, are totally different. The covetous Man has chiefly in his Eye to become Great and Rich in this World; and the good Christian has it chiefly in his Eye to secure himself of a State of Happiness in the World to come. The having such different Views and Aims obliges them to steer quite different Courses.

He that is bound to Heaven has his Thoughts taken up with the Contemplation of the heavenly Felicity; and having a Notion of that as something far above these earthly Enjoyments, as consisting chiefly in the Love and Enjoyment of God, and in the blessed Society of Saints and Angels, he endeavours to fit himself for it, by acquainting himself with God, and drawing near to him in the Duties of Devotion, as much as he can in this imperfect State. And in order to this he endeavours to disentangle himself from all superfluous Cares about the Things of this World, that his Heart may addict itself so much more entirely to the Concerns of another Life. As the Hope of enjoying God stirs him up to all the Exercises of his Love, so the Hope of enjoying the blessed Society of Saints and Angels puts him upon the Study of all those loving and Friendly Virtues, which may fit him for that Enjoyment. So that Love to God and Man are the two chief Things, in such a Man's Study and Endeavour; and Self-Love and the Love of the World, as leading a Course quite contrary to these, are by him the most avoided. But now it is quite otherwise with the covetous Man, for his Aim being chiefly to be great and rich in this World, his Affections, Projects and Contrivances are all worldly. Self-love and the Love of the World, are the two chief Principles he is governed by: So that he steers a quite different Course from that of a good Christian. His Hopes and Desires are all earthly, and consequently the Methods he takes to compass them, are as different from those of the heavenly minded Man as any Thing can be: as we shall see by and by.

(2.) Let

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(2.) Let us consider that Covetousness involving a Man in abundance of impertinent Cares, which take up his Time and Thoughts, in so far is a great Hindrance of his main Business. If there were no other harm in Covetousness but this, that it encumbers the Mind with a great many superfluous Cares, which occasion a Forgetfulness of the main Concern, this would make it sufficiently inconsistent with the Service of God. If *Martha* had a Reprimand for cumbering herself (*a*) with many Things, while there was but one Thing necessary, *Martha* I say, who for aught appears, was a very good Woman, and was not generally cumbered, but only on that particular Occasion; what shall we say of them who are in a perpetual Hurry about the World, all their Life long: That Life which ought to be spent in Preparation for Heaven? What would we say of a Master of a Ship, who when he should get ready to put to Sea, spends his Time in Drinking and Gaming, and loses several Opportunities of good Winds, and so makes nothing of his Voyage? Certainly such a Man, though he is not quite so bad, is very little better than a Master that plays the Knave, and runs away with the Ship and Cargo. But,

(3.) This is not the worst of the covetous Man's Practice: For Covetousness engages him in a great many Courses which are directly sinful in themselves, as by several Examples, which I shall instance in, may appear.

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(*a*) Luke x. 41.



Covetousness makes a Man uneasy and discontented with his Circumstances, unthankful to God for what he has; and envious of his Neighbour's Prosperity.

Covetousness puts a Man upon many dishonest and unjust Ways of getting, such as, Lying, Equivocating, Perjury, Pilfering, Stealing, Oppression, Exaction, Bribery, false Accounts, false Weights and Measures, deceitful Making and Packing and even Counterfeiting of Commodities, slight and untrue Working, Shuffling off the Payment of Debts, and all the other innumerable base and dishonourable Ways of imposing upon the Ignorance and Credulity of our Neighbours: Whereas the Laws of our holy Religion require not only that we transact all our Matters with Justice and Honesty, but with Honour and Decency, choosing rather to take wrong, than to do it.

Covetousness likewise puts Men upon many unjust Ways of saving; it makes them of a narrow, pinching and penurious Temper, and causes them to begrudge to themselves, their Wives and Children, Friends, Relations, and Servants, the Necessaries and Comforts of Life, suitable to their Duty and Circumstances. And if it makes Men so hard-hearted to those of their own House and Family, what does it do to Strangers, let their Circumstances be ever so craving? In that Case the covetous Man will be apt to think, as *Nabal* answered *David's* Messengers, *Shall I take my Bread and my Drink, and my Flesh that I have provided for my own Use and my Family's, and give to Men that I know not whence they be?* Whereas the Spirit of Christianity will teach us to be ready to distribute, and willing to communicate



XXII.] *their Service inconsistent.* Matt. vi. 24. 311  
*communicate, laying up for ourselves a good Treasure in Heaven.*

Covetousness is apt to make us fearful and cowardly in doing of our Duty, whenever we run any Hazard of incurring any Loss thereby. Instead of discharging our Conscience with an honest Freedom, it will dictate to us the Worldly Prudence of sleeping in a sound Skin. There would be no Confessors or Martyrs, if it were listened to; but for the Sake of our Estates we should say and unsay, sign and unsign, swear and forswear; nay, betray our dearest Friend for a little filthy Lucre; whereas by the Laws of Religion we should be ready to forsake all, and follow Christ.

And to Name no more, Covetousness is apt to make us rely upon and trust to our Estates, instead of trusting to, and depending on God's Providence; whereas the Christian Religion teaches us, *if Riches encrease, not to set our Hearts upon them: Not to be high minded, nor to trust in uncertain Riches, but in the living God who giveth us richly all Things to enjoy.* How faint-hearted doth this Trust make us in the Day of Adversity? how fast does it glew our Hearts to the World, and how unwilling does it make us to leave it? Whereas the true Christian is in his Heart disentangled from all Impediments, (a) *with his Loins girded about, and his Lights burning, waiting for the coming of his Lord.* But Time would fail me to reckon up all the Inconsistencies and Contrarieties between the Spirit of Covetousness and the Spirit of Christianity. I scarce know any Part of Christian Duty, but what it contradicts. It is con-

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(a) Luke xii. 35.

trary to the Love of God with all our Heart ; it is contrary to the Love of our Neighbour, for it makes a Prey of him ; it is contrary to inward Tranquillity, Self-denial and Contentedness, for it is continually thirsting after more of the World ; it is contrary to brotherly Love and Peace, and heavenly mindedness. In short, if any is resolved to be covetous, he may even with the young Man in the Gospel, *go away sorrowful*, for he cannot be Christ's Disciple. *Ye cannot serve God and Mammon.*

Having now spoke to the three Heads of Discourse I proposed from the Text, there are two or three Corollaries or Inferences I shall make from it, and recommend to your Consideration and Practice.

I. The first is with relation to that general Maxim laid down in the Text, *that no Man can serve two Masters*. And it is this ; that though our Saviour applies this Maxim here only to Covetousness, saying, *Ye cannot serve God and Mammon* ; yet it is really applicable to every other Vice that sets up for a Competition with God in the Possession of our Hearts. It is true of Ambition ; it is true of Lust ; it is true of Malice and Revenge, and of every other predominant sinful Affection ; that we cannot serve God and it. And the Reason is, they draw contrary Ways, and they propose contrary Ends, as might easily be shewed from the Particulars, if it would not be too great a Digression. And therefore, as our Saviour required us to call him only our Master, we must take great Care not to admit any Thing in Competition with him: For as here our Saviour teaches us the Incompatibleness of Covetousness with

with the Service of God; so elsewhere he teaches us the Inconsistency of other Vices with it: As of false Honour and Vanity. (a) *How can ye believe, says he, who receive Honour one of another, and seek not the Honour that cometh from God only?* For we are told that (b) *they loved the Praise of Men more than the Praise of God.* We are told the same of Lust; (c) *Ye Adulterers and Adulteresses, says St James, know ye not that the Friendship of this World is Enmity with God?* The same Inconsistency with God's Service, our Saviour takes Notice of in Malice and Hatred; (d) *Ye are of your Father the Devil, says he, and the Lusts of your Father ye will do: He was a Murderer from the Beginning, and abode not in the Truth.* The Argument then we have been pursuing concerning the Impossibility of *servng God and Mammon,* will hold likewise against every other prevailing Lust and Corruption.

2. A second Inference I make from the Words is, that it is not every Sin we are guilty of that puts us thus in a State of Damnation or Enmity with God; but only those Sins which have got the Mastery of us, *We cannot serve two Masters.* Now there is a great difference to be made between those Sins, which we fall into through the Strength or Suddenness of a Temptation, which through the Grace of God we struggle against, and get rid of; and some other habitual Sins to which we are perfect Slaves, and have given over our Endeavours to conquer and overcome them. The first sort are

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(a) Joh. v. 44. (b) John xii. 43. (c) Jam. iv. 4.  
 (d) Joh. viii. 44.



what every good Man is struggling against. But whoever they are that have given up themselves to any habitual Sin, they are at present the Devil's Slaves, *being led Captive by him at his Pleasure*. That Servitude must be broke off, before it is possible they can be in a State of Grace.

3. A third Inference which will follow from what has been said, is this; that *seeing we cannot serve God and Mammon*, it is a vain Thing to attempt to reconcile those two Services, as a great many do. How many are there who, because they are no Drunkards, no Cursers or Swearers, no Whoremongers or Adulterers, and abstain carefully from several other gross Vices; though they are extreme covetous, flatter themselves that they are in a very good Way, and do not doubt they are in a State of Grace. But if our Saviour's Doctrine in my Text is true, there is nothing more inconsistent with the Love and Service of God, than this Slavery to the World; nothing more contrary to the Spirit of Christianity than Covetousness, and the inordinate Cares of the World.

To conclude then, let us halt no more between God and the World: But setting our Hearts on Heaven, let us both inwardly in our Minds disburden ourselves of the superfluous Cares of the World, and *let our Conversation likewise be without Covetousness*; and according as God hath blessed us, let us be ready to extend our Bounty and Charity to Christ's poor Members; assuring our selves that of all our Estate, what is so bestowed, will turn to the best Account. Now to God the Father, &c.



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## S E R M O N XXIII.

M A T T. VI. 25, &c.

*Therefore I say unto you, take no thought for your Life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your Body, what ye shall put on.*

The Fifth Sermon on this Text.

*First Sermon against Anxiety, on Verse 25.*

**I** H A V E read to you these ten Verses, being all a Caution against Anxiety, or too great Sollicitude about the World, and an Enforcement thereof by several Arguments. The Caution we are to consider in the first Place, before we come to the Arguments, that we may know what it is our Saviour doth here require of us. And this likewise lies first in our Way to be considered from the Text; which begins thus, *Therefore I say unto you, take no Thought for your Life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your Body, what ye shall put on.* It is a Caution against a Vice which will require a good deal of Explication, as bordering so near upon some other good Qualities, that, without abundance of Care and Attention, we shall be apt to mistake the one for the other. To come then to a close Consideration  
of

of the Words, in them we have these Two Things.

I. The Connexion with what went before, *Therefore I say unto you.*

II. The Caution itself, *Take no Thought for your Life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your Body, what ye shall put on.*

I. I begin with the Connexion; for perhaps that may give us some Light into the Caution following. The Words immediately preceding, were, *Ye cannot serve God and Mammon; therefore I say unto you, take no Thought for your Life.* From this Connexion it seems plain, that this taking Thought here spoke of, is something of the Service of *Mammon*; q. d. Since ye cannot serve both God and *Mammon*; therefore take Care, that under pretence of a regular Care and Industry about the Necessaries of Life, Food and Raiment, and far less about the Superfluities of it, ye be not involved in the Service of the World, and have your Hearts engaged in the Love and Cares of these inferiour Things. And as for the Words, *I say unto you*; this is the usual Mark of an Improvement of our Saviour's, either by a new Precept, or a better Explication of an old one, than they had been taught before. Particularly the Doctrine of my Text seems to be a good Improvement of the Tenth Commandment: That forbidding only the coveting what is our Neighbours; but this moderating our own otherwise lawful Desires and Endeavours after the World. It is therefore a Doctrine more peculiar to Christ, and on that account should be so much the dearer to us Christians.

II. From

II. From the Connexion, I pass on to the Caution itself, *Take no Thought for your Life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your Body, what ye shall put on.* This is something further than he had said before, about not laying up Treasures on Earth; for it was obvious enough for them to think, though we may not spend our Thoughts and Time in amassing useless Treasures, yet we may lawfully provide Necessaries for Life, Food, and Raiment, not only for our present, but for our future Occasions; and not only for our selves, but for our Children, and all others under our Care. To obviate this Subterfuge for worldly Cares, our Saviour seems to allow of such Providence, so it be made with an easy Mind, without engaging us in immoderate Cares, without making the World our Master, and without minding it in the first and chief Place, so as to turn away our Hearts from better Things, God and our Duty. This I take to be the Purport of this Caution. But to give as great Light as I can into this Matter, I shall do these two Things: First, I will shew that it is not all Care about the World, but only an excessive distrustful Care, which is here forbidden. Then I shall more particularly describe that anxious Care, which we are here cautioned against.

I. First then, It is not all Care and Concern about the World which is here forbidden. The Words of the Text, indeed, in our Translation, *Take no Thought*, sound that way; and the Example of *the Fowls of the Air*, and *the Lillies of the Field*, with which the Caution is pressed, are by some thought to favour it; for that they with-

out



out any of their own Husbandry, are provided for. But all this is a Mistake, as I shall shew you both from the Text and Context, and from some other Passages of Scripture, and the Reason of the Thing.

And first, That there is no such Thing in the Text or Context, as that we are to take no Care about the World, I shall make it appear, by examining those Expressions in either, which seem to make for this Sense.

The first Expression here, which is apt to induce this Belief, is that of *taking no Thought for our Life, what we shall eat, or what we shall drink.* The Expression of *taking Thought*, in our Language, is equivalent to the *being anxious or solicitous*, or *laying a Thing much to Heart*; or *taking on*, as we call it, *for something that gives us great Trouble and Concern.* And so it is such a Trouble or Anxiety about the World, which is here forbid. The Original indeed doth much more clearly express this, *μη μεριμνάτε τῇ Ψυχῇ υμῶν*, for it signifies; be not anxious, or solicitous in your Soul; or do not vex and disquiet your selves. The *French* translate it well, *Ne vous mettez point en peine*; i. e. do not trouble, or disquiet yourselves. This Word *μεριμνάω* signifies, not barely to take Care, but the Height of Care: such a Care as is due to a Thing of the greatest Consequence and Concern; and therefore I observe, where this Word is joined to any worldly Thing, it is taken for a Vice; whereas being joined to any thing belonging to our Souls, or future State, or our Duty to God, or our Neighbour, it is a Virtue: As in the parable of the Sower, *Matt. xiii. 22. The Cares of this World, and the Deceitfulness of Riches,*  
are



are said to choak the Word. These Cares are by all the three Evangelists, St *Matthew*, St *Mark*, and St *Luke*, who mention that Parable, compared to *Thorns*, which springing up with the good Seed, choaked it, and hindered it to bring forth Fruit to Perfection. And *Luke* xxi. 34. there is a Caution given, in which the Word *μερίμνα* is used ; which I think gives great Light to this Caution in my Text. *Take heed to yourselves*, says our Saviour, *lest at any time your Hearts be overcharged with Surfeiting and Drunkenness, and the Cares of this Life, and so that Day come upon you unawares.* For as there it is not *Victuals* and *Drink*, but *Surfeiting* and *Drunkenness*, which is condemned; so neither here is it all worldly Cares that are condemned, but such an Excess of them, as clogs or overcharges the Heart, and eats out our Care of better Things. To illustrate what I say of the Use of the Word *μερίμνάω*, that applied to heavenly Things, or our Duty, it is taken in a good Sense, but to worldly Things in a bad Sense ; there is a notable Passage, *1 Cor. vii. 33.* where the Apostle, speaking of the Danger of the married State, lays it chiefly upon this, that it is apt to engage Men and Women so much the more in worldly Cares ; and gives the Advantage to the single State, chiefly because their Care was directed to better Things; he uses the very same Word with this in my Text: *He that is unmarried*, says he, *careth for the Things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord : But he that is married careth for the Things of the World, how he may please his Wife.* It is the same Word in both Places, and it teacheth us, I think, thus much, that there is a ponderous Care or Concern of the Mind

Mind, in my Text called *taking Thought*, which ought not to be applied to the inferiour Things of this World; but that a much inferiour Degree of Care may serve them, as it follows afterwards in this same Text, that *we should seek first the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness*, that is, in the chief or principal Place; whereas a lesser, secondary Care, will do for the Things of the World. The Word then here translated, *taking Thought*, signifies that weighty Care and Concern, which ought to be reserved for the greatest Things; and therefore it is allowed, and honourably spoke of, whenever it is applied to God and our Duty; the Care of the Churches, the Love of our Neighbour, the Kingdom of Heaven, and the Righteousness thereof; but condemned, when applied to the World and the Cares of this Life.

And as to *the Fowls of the Air*, and *the Lillies of the Field*, they are brought in to confirm this same Doctrine, that God can without our such weighty Care, find us Food and Raiment; for it is very observable, that the Comparison is brought with such Things, in which, in the Point of Care, we have much the Advantage; for we can sow, and reap, and gather into Barns, which the Fowls of the Air cannot do; and we can undergo both the Field Labour and the House Labour, about the Materials for Clothing, which the Lillies cannot do; and therefore the Conclusion is still drawn, *a fortiori*; *are not ye much better than they?* Which I take to relate in that Place, not so much to the superior Dignity of our Nature, (tho' that is likewise true) as to the better Circumstances we are in, to guard us against that ponderous Care or Anxiety, since *we can sow, and reap, and gather*

XXIII.] *Clothes forbidden.* MATT .VI. 25. 321  
gather into Barns, and labour, and spin, which  
they cannot do.

If from the Text, and Context, we go on to the Consideration of other Texts of Scripture, we shall quickly find that it is not all Care and Labour, but only Anxiety and Solitude about the World, which is forbidden: *Ye yourselves know,* says St Paul in his Speech to the Elders of Miletus, *Acts xx. 34. that these Hands have ministred unto my Necessities, and to them that were with me. I have shewed you all Things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the Weak, and to remember the Words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give, than to receive.* And wherever he hears of these Idlers, he fails not to reprove them, as *2 Theff. iii. 11. We hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busy Bodies: now them that are such, we command and exhort, by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with Quietness they work, and eat their own Bread.* And in the Words immediately preceding, he pronounces a severe Sentence against them: *When we were with you,* says he, *this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat.*

I need not insist on the Reason of the Thing, our Industry as to the World being so necessary for supplying our own Wants, and to enable us to provide for our Families, and to extend our Charity to the Poor.

Ye may wonder, perhaps, why I should any way labour this Point; it is only that ye may not mistake our Saviour's Doctrine in a Business of this Consequence, as some have done; as if in forbidding Anxiety here, he forbad all Care and Diligence



about our ordinary Callings; all Forethought and Contrivance, Industry and Frugality, and as if we should take no Thought at all about any Thing, but let all Things run into as great Disorder as Carelessness and Negligence will drive them.

Secondly, But now having shewed you that Labour and Industry about our lawful Callings, is not forbidden, but commanded; my next Business must be to shew you what is forbidden here by these Words, *Therefore I say unto you, take no thought for your Life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your Body, what ye shall put on.* Here lies the Difficulty; I shall not go to clear it without Book, but from Observations I have made from the Text itself. In answer to this Enquiry then, I observe,

(1.) The original Word in my Text, *μεριμνάω*, signifies a very great excessive Care; a Care that fills the Mind, not only giving it a full Employ, but even such as to make it labour under the Weight of that Load. Now this Excess of Care about any worldly Thing, is very dangerous. For

1. It is a Demonstration that we ourselves are worldly, and do very little mind a better Life.

2. It is a great Means to make us worldly, and to involve us so in worldly Things, that we shall grow really incapable of minding better Things.

3. It is an unnecessary burdening of our own Spirits.

4. It is a Diversion of our Hearts from those important Concerns of Eternity, and the Way that leads to it, that we have neither Time, nor Disposition for them.

First, This excessive minding of the World, is a shrewd Sign that we ourselves are worldly; and that



that Heaven, and the Way thither, are little in all our Thoughts ; for whatever a Man sets his Mind most upon, that will be uppermost in his Care and Thoughts. If we observe any Man or Woman, *e. g.* to bestow most of their Time at Game, we need no other Proof that they are unmindful of their proper Calling and Business : And therefore tho' a little Diversion at Game is excusable, the making it excessive and habitual is certainly to be condemned, as being a clear Proof that a Man minds nothing that is serious, or any Thing to the purpose of Life. So it is with this excessive Care of the World ; it argues that a Man's Heart is enslaved to it, and consequently that he is forgetful of better Things. For our Saviour had laid it down before as a Maxim, that *we cannot serve God and Mammon* ; from which it follows excellently, *Therefore I say unto you, take no Thought for your Life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink ; nor yet for your Body, what ye shall put on* : For certainly the one Care, where it is in Excess, will eat out the other. And it is but reasonable that the greater Concern should have most of our Time and Thoughts and Care.

Secondly, As this excessive Care of the World is a shrewd Sign that we are too worldly already, so it is a sure Way to make us more and more so ; for the Repetition of Acts grows up into Habits ; and every Habit, the more it is continued in, the stronger it grows, and the leaving it off becomes more and more difficult. The Cares of the World too find such constant Employment for the Soul, that there is no room for better Thoughts. The Mind of the worldly Man, is like a full Vessel, which unless it be in some Degree emptied, can

receive no other Liquor. If such a Man sets about any of the Duties of Religion, he cannot mind what he is about ; but his Heart is running after his Covetousness, or some of his worldly Projects, that there is scarce any Possibility of good Things making an Impression upon him.

Thirdly, This excessive Care about the World, is an unnecessary burdening of our own Spirits. We are poor weak Creatures, not able to cope with the usual and unavoidable Troubles of Life ; and therefore to multiply those Troubles to ourselves, to put our Minds upon the Rack about many Cases of Want, which perhaps will never happen, and to strain our utmost to lay up Wealth for many Years to come, is certainly to overburden our Spirits, and indeed to disturb and distract our Minds, which is the proper Importance of this Word, when applied to the World, which we translate *taking Thought*, in the Text. But

Fourthly, One of the worst Effects of this excessive Care of the World, is, that it certainly diverts us from the important Concerns of Eternity, and the Way that leads to it, so that we have neither Time nor Disposition for better Things. For he who has his Heart so distracted with worldly Cares, is in a continual Hurry of Thoughts and Business, which take him up from Morning till Night, that though *he rises early, and goes to Bed late, and eats the Bread of Sorrows all Day long* ; either he has no time to seek God in Prayer, and to meditate on his holy Word ; or during that Time, he is assaulted with so many Thoughts from the World interrupting his Devotions, that he cannot possibly attend them without Distraction, and so can have no Pleasure or Relish in them ; and his  
Heart

Heart being fast tied and fettered to this World, his Affections cannot mount up to God, and another World. A most dismal State, especially where there is so little Hopes of getting out of it.

2. As this Word, *μεριμνάω*, which we translate *taking Thought*, when applied to the Things of the World, signifies an excessive Care; it signifies likewise a distrustful, or anxious Care; not waiting on God, but exceeding doubtful and diffident of the Event, directly opposite to that Advice of St Peter (a), of *casting all our Care upon him, for he careth for us*. For the anxious Man, when he has done all that is incumbent and proper for him to do, is not at an End of his Trouble, but is solicitous about the Event, which is not a Thing in his Power. And being it is not in our Power, what can we do better than cheerfully to depend on God for it? This is what gives a vast deal of Ease, and Hope, and Courage, to a good Man's Mind, and makes him hearty in all his Affairs, as the Apostle tells us, *Phil. iv. 6. Be careful for nothing; or be anxious for nothing, (it is the same Word with that in my Text) but in every thing, by Prayer and Supplication, with Thanksgiving, let your Requests be made known unto God: And the Peace of God, which passeth all Understanding, shall keep your Hearts and Minds through Christ Jesus*. The anxious Man is so troubled with these distrustful Cares, that he is ready to betake himself to any unlawful Means to get rid of his Fears about these Things.

(a) 1 Pet. v. 7.

3. In this Caution of taking no Thought, we are dissuaded from that melancholy Concern, Discontent and Impatience, which is upon the Spirits of worldly Men, when they either meet with, or fear to meet with any worldly Loss. An undisturbed and chearful Dependence on Providence, is recommended to us in opposition to this Temper; and for that Reason the Example of *the Fowls of the Air* is proposed, as of a Creature of a light and merry Heart, though it lives from Hand to Mouth; and not, as some have thought, as an Example of an idle Creature, that does nothing towards its own Subsistence.

4. This excessive, vexatious, distrustful, and melancholy impatient Care, has another devilish ingredient in it, namely, that it lays aside the Thoughts of God out of the Scheme, and depends solely upon second Causes. Our Saviour in some Part of this Discourse, charges it with a Want of Faith, and a Forgetfulness of God, who feeds the Birds, and clothes the Lillies; *Shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little Faith?* And in some other Part of it, he represents it as a Practice of them who were Strangers to the true Religion, nay of them who knew not God: *After all these Things do the Gentiles seek, and your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these Things.* So that there is a dormant Atheism in all this Practice; either a denying or misbelieving the Being or Providence of God; or at least a stupid Inconsideration as to both. And therefore the best Cure of this Distemper, is a firm Belief of the Providence of God, and a chearful casting our selves upon it, in the doing of our Duty.



As all these Errors relate to the Act of taking Thought, there are two more relating to the Object, this present Life.

5. One is, that what we are allowed to pursue and mind only with a secondary Care, we pursue with a principal and highest Degree of Care. The Necessaries and Conveniencies of Life we are allowed to take care for, but with a subordinate moderate Care; whereas the Business of another Life, *the one Thing needful*, we are required to mind with the greatest Concern and Diligence. But we invert this wise Order, *the main Thing* we scarce mind at all, but on the other less necessary Things we bestow our utmost Thoughts and Pains. We place Servants above Princes; *(a) We set Servants upon Horses, and make Princes like Servants, walk a-Foot.* It is not to be imagined what infinite Disorders this engages us in, and how preposterous it makes all our Care and Concern. I have great reason to believe our Saviour had an Eye to this, because in the Antithesis of this Caution, which follows, he expressly distinguishes what was to be sought *after in the first*, and what *in the last Place: But seek ye FIRST*, says he, *the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness, and all these Things* (meaning worldly Necessaries) *shall be added unto you.*

6. The other Thing relating to the Object, is, that granting we are allowed to take Thought, that is, to apply our selves with some Concern to the Supply of our worldly Necessities, as much as

(a) Eccl. x. 7.

we have occasion for the present, yet we are by no Means allowed to extend those Cares to any long time to come. This our Lord had in his Eye, in the last Part of the Antithesis: *Take therefore no Thought for the Morrow, for the Morrow shall take thought for the Things of itself. sufficient unto the Day is the Evil thereof.* But what is precisely meant by the Words *to Day* and *to Morrow*, is somewhat difficult to determine, only in general that those Cares which are more proper hereafter than at present, we ought not to load the present with them. And that Trouble of the future Time must not be anticipated, for two Reasons: First, because the Time present has Trouble enough of its own; and then, because the Time to come, when it comes, will be more proper to struggle with the Difficulties of that Time, than this present Time is. We are therefore wisely to consider, what Intention of Care the present requires, and what may more safely be put off to the Time to come, and order our Care accordingly; as to the Success of both, cheerfully depending on God's Providence.

Thus now I have given you a Description of this inordinate Care and Solitude, by six Characters of it, all taken from the Text itself; namely, that the Care about earthly Things here condemned is excessive, distrustful of Providence, full of Perturbation of Mind, atheistical, preposterous, and anticipated in Point of Time. There follow here many Reasons to enforce this Caution against inordinate Cares, which I must leave to another Opportunity.

The Sum of what I have said in the Explication of this Caution, is, That we are not prohibited

bited a regular Care, Labour, Industry, or Frugality, in the Management of our worldly Affairs, provided that Care be restrained within due Bounds. And the due Bounds are, *First*, That these our worldly Cares be not excessive, taking up more of our Thoughts and Time than is due to such worthless Enjoyments; *Secondly*, That when we have done our Part, we chearfully commit the Success to God's Providence. *Thirdly*, That we preserve a light merry Heart, not impatient, not discontented, or dejected, when we fall into any Straits or Disappointments from the World. *Fourthly*, That we be sure to join with our worldly Cares and Projects, a diligent looking up to God for his Blessing, and a quiet Submission to his Disposals. *Fifthly*, That we set our Hearts and Affections on the Kingdom of Heaven, and seek for that in *the first and chief Place*, and other Things in a subordinate manner, not so as to interfere with that main Pursuit, but so as to be subservient to it. 6. *Lastly*, That having a Competency at present, we do not load our selves with unnecessary Fears or Cares about the future, but cast all our Cares of our selves, Children, and Families upon God, without anticipating the Cares of the future uncertain Time.

There is one Thing will follow as a Corollary from what has been said; That if we are so much cautioned against inordinate Care about the Necessaries of Life, what we shall eat, and drink, and wear, there is a great deal more Reason that we lay aside all carking Care about the Unnecessaries and Superfluities of it. *Let us put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no Provision for the Flesh to fulfill the Lusts thereof.* O that we were  
more

more mindful of *the one Thing needful!* Had we our Eye intent upon that Mark, we should be quickly cured of all our rambling and wandering Pursuits of the Vanities of this World. Let us address our selves to God for his Grace to enable us so to do, saying with the Psalmist, (a) *Incline mine Heart to thy Testimonies, and not to Covetousness. Turn away mine Eyes from beholding Vanity, and quicken thou me in thy Way.* Which God of his infinite Mercy grant, for Jesus Christ's sake.

*To whom, &c.*

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(a) Psal. cxix. 36, 37.





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## SERMON XXIV.

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MATT. VI. 25.

— *Is not the Life more than Meat, and the Body than Raiment?*

Ver. 26. *Behold the Fowls of the Air: For they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into Barns, yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?*

The Sixth Sermon on this Text.

**A**T the last Occasion I explained to you a Caution of our Saviour's against Anxiety, and the inordinate Cares of the World; from these Words, *Therefore I say unto you, Take no Thought for your Life, what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink, nor yet for your Body what ye shall put on.* This Caution is enforced with a great many good Arguments, which I intend to consider as they lie in order.

The first Argument against Anxiety, (which in the Nature of it implies a Diffidence of Providence) is, the Consideration of God's Wisdom, Power and Goodness, in creating our Bodies, and in infusing Life into them, without any of our anxious Care or Sollicitude. And why should we think the same divine Wisdom, Power and Goodness.

ness will be wanting in supplying us with the necessary Means for the Preservation and Sustenance of those Lives and Bodies? *Is not the Life more than Meat, and the Body than Raiment?* For understanding the Force of this Argument, let us consider that there are two Things our Saviour here reprehends.

I. That we are diffident of God's Care as to the Necessaries of Life.

II. That we assume that Care to our selves, which is to be ascribed to him.

Now the Argument is fitted for both these Defects.

For, 1. It is argued that God who hath given us Life and Bodies, without any of our Sollicitude, will not let his own Work perish for want of a little Means of Subsistence.

2. It is insinuated that we do so little towards that Subsistence, to what God does, that it is our best way to depend more on him, and less on ourselves.

I. It is a great Part of Anxiety, that we are diffident of God's Care as to the Necessaries of Life; and look upon Things, and judge of them no otherwise than according to the Probabilities of second Causes. God is not considered in all the Contrivances of the covetous anxious Man; and unless he can see through the whole Train of Providences, what way he and his shall be provided for in all their future, as well as present Wants, he is uneasy, and vexes himself; and this occasions that load of Cares and Fears, which our Saviour is here arguing against.

Now to obviate the Objections, which this distrustful Temper would make, our Lord desires them

them here to consider who it was that reared this curious Frame of our Body, and who infused Life into it, and who subjected it to all these Wants and Necessities; and by whose Care it is that it is supported in its Frame and Constitution; whether it seems probable that he, who did all this, would abandon such a noble Piece of his Workmanship, to perish for want of a little Victuals and Clothes? So that the Strength of this Argument, as I apprehend it, is founded on these following Propositions.

1. That God made our Bodies, and gave us living Souls to animate them, without any of our own Care, much more without any Anxiety of ours.

2. That God created these Bodies of ours so weak and indigent, that they cannot subsist of themselves without the Supplies of Food and Raiment, and divers other Necessaries: And that it is an Imputation on the Wisdom and Goodness of God, to think that he would make a Creature subject to so many Wants and Necessities, and take no manner of Care how to supply them.

3. That it is but a small Part of this Supply which he has left to us, and therefore that we ought not to assume the whole; and if we do, we shall only fret and vex our selves in vain, for that this Vexation of ours will not answer the End of supplying those Wants, and that all the Part he has assigned us in it, may be performed with Cheerfulness; and therefore that Sollicitude and Vexation of Mind is altogether superfluous, and to no manner of Purpose.

These are Subjects worthy of our more particular Consideration.

1. First then, we are to consider that God made our Bodies, and gave us living Souls to animate them, without any of our own Care, much more without any Anxiety of ours. Had our Bodies been Machines of our own inventing, there might have been some Reason for our puzzling our Brains how to improve the Invention and how to perpetuate, or at least to lengthen the Motion of them. But when it is an Invention of a wonderful Artificer to our hand, and so curious a one, that to this Day after so many Ages we cannot so much as discover the vast Variety of Parts, Motions and Intentions that belong to it; when he that made it, gave it a certain Degree of Motion, such as he himself thought good; and committed it to our Care not to tamper with it, and alter the Contrivance, but as a Clock is committed to the Care of an unskilful Man, only at certain times to wind it up, and to preserve it as clean as he can from Dust, but as to the main Care of it, to depend upon the Clock-maker, and to meddle no further with it but according to his Directions. Now would it not be a strange piece of Folly in this ignorant Man, to go and vex himself with the Thoughts what he shall do, when this Machine is out of order, how he shall take it to pieces, and find out and mend what is amiss, and set it all a going again; or yet further, if a Fancy should come in his Head, that he could change and better the Fashion of it, and from its going 24 Hours, bring it to go a Week, and from that to a Month, and from that to a Year, and so on, till at last he should fall upon the Notion of a perpetual Mover? This self-conceited fanciful Man might give himself abundance of Uneasiness with a vain Conceit of his Skill,



Skill, and yet be never the nearer; whereas the Man who confines his Care to such a Proportion and Degree as the Clockmaker prescribed, but in all extraordinary Cases depends upon the Maker himself, eases himself of all this needless Trouble. Just so it is with these living Machines of ours; the best way to be easy with them, is to trouble our selves no further about them than the great Maker of them has directed, that is, by a regular Care in administering those Materials which he furnishes us. But if we exceed that, and will meddle with his Part, we shall only create abundance of Uneasiness to our selves, but shall be never the nearer as to our Life and Health; but farther off as to both.

2. Let us consider that God made these Bodies of ours so frail and weak, and subject to so many Necessities, that he knew very well they could not subsist of themselves, without constant Supplies of Food and Raiment, and divers other Things; and therefore may well be supposed to have provided accordingly for them, with our own regular, and without our anxious and solicitous Care. They must have a very mean Opinion of God's Wisdom and Providence, who can believe that God formed this Creature, *Man*, so curiously and under so many Necessities, without so much as a Fore-thought how these Necessities should be supplied. This would be like that barbarous Practice of some Nations, where they exposed their Young as soon as they were born. The very Reflection then on the Wisdom and Goodness of the great Creator is enough to convince us, that the Preservation and Sustenance of his Workmanship fall as much under his Care as the making of it.

3. Let

3. Let us consider that it is but a small Part of this Supply which God has left to us, to what he has immediately reserved in his own Hand; and that it is our Part to content our selves with our own Share, which if we do, we shall be far from Anxiety. To give an Example of this as to the supplying us with Bread, let us consider a little what little hand we have in it, and how entirely it depends on what God reserves to himself, without which all our Labour would be in vain. Suppose then God had left us to our own Shifts, and had not endowed the Earth with Fertility, that it had either been hard like a Rock not capable of Cultivation, or being cultivated that it had been so barren that it would scarce have produced our Seed again. Suppose again, if the Earth had been ever so Fertile, that God had not sent seasonable Weather, but either such a Drought as to wither, or such excessive Rains as to drown, or such cold Frosts as to nip and kill the Fruits of the Ground, or such high Winds and Hurricans, as to beat all our Labour to pieces, what would our poor Husbandry signify in such a Case? Or suppose, let the Earth and Seasons be ever so good, God had made no such Creatures, as the several Grains, Roots and Herbs, Grass, and Corn, which now yield us our Food; what would our poor Labour have signified? A Baker that bakes the Bread, and a Cook that dresses the Victuals might as well pretend to the Care and Honour of providing the Family, when the Meal and Meat are laid into their Hands, as we can, when God furnishes so many Things towards it, and we so little. What signifies a little Sowing, and Reaping, and Gathering into Barns, in comparison of  
creating

creating the Grain, furnishing a Fertility to the Earth, a Seasonableness to the Weather, Heads to contrive, and Hands to Work, and Beasts and Tools to work withal? It is a strange Thing that Man who does the least Part, should assume to himself all the Care and Honour: And as if he were the chief Architect, should burden himself with the whole Contrivance, when he is no better than the forriest Barrowman about the Building. And this is

II. The second Defect which this Reasoning is designed to remedy, namely, that we assume that to our selves by this Sin of Anxiety, which is due to God. We assume the providing our selves with all Necessaries, and are anxious if we do not compass them for a great Time to come, whereas all this is really God's Part, and none of ours: And should therefore be answered by taking less of the Load upon our own Spirits, and disburdening all our Cares upon God. Now in order to this, I know nothing more proper to recommend to your Consideration, than that God who made us subject to all these Necessities, doth likewise take care to answer them, and provide for them. But I shall press the Consideration of this no farther than from the Argument in the Text, that he who has contrived to give us Life and Bodies out of his infinite Wisdom and Goodness, will certainly likewise contrive to give us what he has made necessary for the Preservation and Support of that Life and those Bodies; and therefore that we need not trouble our selves with any anxious Cares about those Things, but are to content our selves with doing our Duty, and to trust to him for the rest. To illustrate this by a familiar Comparison: If



a wife and powerful Prince should raise an Army, and transport them into a foreign Country, where he has occasion to make use of their Service in War; would this Army need to fear that this wife and powerful Prince, who employs their Time in his military Service, would abandon them to starve in that strange Country, and would not take care to subsist them with all Things necessary for the Service? And would it not be a very foolish Thing for the Soldiers in such an Army, instead of applying themselves to the military Service, which is enjoined them, to spend their Time in prying and contriving how to provide Ammunition Bread, the Care of which is none of their Province? So God Almighty, who sent us into this World upon his Service, commands us cheerfully to mind that Service, and assures us we need not trouble our selves about our Subsistence, but that we are to commit all that Care to him, and quietly to depend upon him for it. By the Help of this Similitude, we may perceive three or four very gross Errors in this one Sin of Anxiety; namely, 1. A Distrust of God's Care and Providence. 2. An unreasonable proud Opinion of our own Skill and Conduct. 3. A Neglect of the main Service we should be attending in the mean Time, while we are thus unprofitably employ'd about other Things. 4. A vexing our selves about such Things as fall not within our Power and Skill; and by the bad Example of our Discontent, provoking the Discontents of others, and so contributing what lies in us to stir up a Spirit of Murmuring and Mutiny in the whole Army. These Things are so plain, that I shall not need to insist farther

on



on them : but proceed to what is added for Illustration of this Argument.

*Bekold the Fowls of the Air : For they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into Barns ; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they ?* This I take to be a Prosecution of the same Argument against Anxiety, that God takes Care of the Preservation of his own Workmanship ; for here an Instance is brought of a Creature, that is the least furnished with Ability to provide for its own Living ; and wants all those Arts of Providence, which Man is furnished with, such as *Sowing, Reaping, and Gathering into Barns and Granaries ; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them* : They live cheerful Lives, though they have nothing laid up for their future Subsistence, but live, as we say, from hand to mouth. Then follows the Application of the Simile, *Are not ye much better than they ?* The original Word  $\delta\iota\alpha\phi\acute{\epsilon}\rho\omega$  signifies to excell ; *do not ye much excell them ?* And this I think has an Aspect to two Things ; first, that we excell them or have the better of them, as being better in Circumstances to provide for our selves than they are in to provide for themselves ; we being capable of many Improvements in Husbandry and Frugality beyond them ; for we can sow and reap, and gather into Barns, or Granaries, which they cannot do : And therefore we have the less Reason to be anxious or solicitous. And this Sense I think is not to be neglected, as offering itself very clearly from the Words, and being exceeding pertinent to the Point in hand. The other Thing to which these Words have an Aspect, is that which our Interpreters have followed ; namely, the superiour

Dignity of our Nature; *Are ye not much better than they?* i. e. are not ye a Creature of more Worth than the Fowls of the Air, and consequently a Creature that need less to fear being abandoned by the divine Providence? Both these Senses of our having the better of the Fowls of the Air are so good, that I think they deserve both to be considered.

(1.) That we excell the Fowls of the Air, or have the better of them, in regard of the better Circumstances we are in to provide for our Wants than they: for that we can and are allowed to sow, and reap, and gather into Barns, which they cannot do. So that it is an Argument not from a Parity of Reason; but what we call an Argument *a fortiori*, that there is a great deal more Reason that we should not be anxious, than the Birds and Fowls of the Air, as being much better able to provide against a Time of Scarcity than they. The Thing then recommended to us, when we are commanded to behold the Fowls of the Air, is not to learn of them Idleness and Improvidence, but a Cheerfulness and Freedom from Anxiety, for which they are exemplary; though they are worse furnished with Means to stave off Want than we are. For we must never forget the main Instruction here recommended, for enforcing of which all these are but Arguments, not new Precepts. The not observing of this has driven some learned Men to give a very wrong Interpretation of this Text; as if after the Example of the Fowls of the Air and the Lilies of the Field, our Saviour had here forbid all worldly Labour to his Disciples; and because they were sensible this would have been a very unreasonable Precept, if  
meant

XXIV.] *Life more than Meat.* MATT. VI. 25. 341  
meant of Christians in general, they have without considering the Context, which is a general Argument against Covetousness and the inordinate Cares of the World, limited this Discourse to the twelve chosen Disciples, the Apostles; when in all probability there were no such Officers in Being at the Time of preaching this Sermon; and if there had, there was no such Thing as Idleness enjoined them, or else we should not have heard of their Necessities being so often supplied by their own handy Labour. Thus we see how one small Error is attended with a great many more, and of more dangerous Consequence. The taking these Words, *Behold the Fowls of the Air, &c.* not for an Argument to enforce the Caution against Anxiety going before, but for a new Precept, was attended with a wrong placing of the Simile; as if not a Freedom from Anxiety, but the not working at all had been enjoined. Then because this was a Doctrine so contrary to right Reason, and the plain Precepts of Christianity in other Passages of Holy Scripture, the same Authors found an absolute Necessity of limiting this their supposed new Precept to the Apostles, and to the particular Circumstances of the Church at that Time. But there is another terrible Consequence of this Notion, which I believe if these learned Authors had reflected on, they would never have broached this dangerous Doctrine; namely, that it furnishes all Men, except the Apostles, with an Handle to creep out of the Sermon of the Mount, as not being directed to common Christians, but to Men in that higher Station of Apostles; than which I know not any greater Wound could have been given to Christian Morals; and



which I am sure, if the Reverend Authors had reflected on, they would never have been guilty of, being some of them as zealous Assertors of the Purity of Christian Morals as any we have. For by the same Rule that they interpret away this Discourse against Covetousness and the inordinate Cares of the World from private Christians, and appropriate it to the Apostles, they may do the same by all the rest of that Sermon, it being all directed to one and the same Auditory. But having formerly very fully refuted this Notion, when I considered the proper Auditors of this Sermon on the Mount, *viz.* the Multitudes and the Disciples, proving that by *Disciples* were meant *all Christians*; I shall not now further enlarge upon it, though I judged it necessary not to pass it by, when I am upon the Text upon which they have built this their mistaken Notion. The Argument then our Saviour here brings from the *Fowls of the Air* I take to run thus. *q. d.* If such poor helpless Creatures as the *Fowls of the Air*, that can contribute so little towards their own Sustenance, either by making their own Grain, or by laying it up against a Time of Scarcity, after it is made, are yet provided for by God, and maintained both without Want, and without Melancholy, in a cheerful and satisfied Manner; how much more Reason have ye not to distrust God's Providence, but cheerfully to depend upon it, who are furnished far beyond them with many good Ways and Means and Opportunities, by lawful Callings, good Government, Art and Contrivance, to provide for your selves and for one another, and to lay up for Times of Want and Scarcity?

There



There is one Corollary or Inference will naturally rise from this Argument, which I wish were better considered; for it would be an excellent Remedy of all our inordinate Cares; it is this; that the more we are furnished with Helps and Means against Want, so much the more ought we to be delivered from Anxiety and Solitude. And an Observation it is highly agreeable with Reason, the more we are furnished and provided against Want, the less to fear it. Yet how strange is it to observe that the common Practice of Men, especially of covetous Men, is directly contrary? else, why should many rich Men who have Wealth enough laid up for many Years, be more troubled with anxious and vexatious Cares about the World, than several poor Men, who though they live from hand to mouth, yet live cheerfully and contentedly? Why should many Old-men, the greater Part of whose Life is already past, consequently provided for, be much more anxious and solicitous about the World, than Young-men whose Wants are far greater, and like to be much longer upon their Hands? Why are Men who profess that they believe a Providence, and know how to address themselves to God in the Name of Christ, and are furnished with all Capacities and Endowments of Body and Mind to make use of the Means, as anxious and distrustful as if there were neither a God to provide, nor any Means and Opportunities put into their Hand, to do any Thing towards the Staving off of Want? This is one of the best uses of Wealth, next to the doing good to others, of any I know; to moderate our own Cares: Not that Riches are to be trusted to for the Supply of our Wants, but that God who gave

them may be depended on for the continuing to us a competent Portion out of them, and that Experience as well as Religion and Reason doth then teach us to devolve all our Cares upon him who careth for us. So much for the first Consideration of the Words, that we excell the *Fowls of the Air*, as being in better Circumstances to provide for our selves than they, and therefore have less occasion to be anxious.

(2.) But secondly, these Words, *Are ye not much better than they?* do signify likewise the greater Dignity of Men above Fowls, and that upon that Account likewise they may expect to be more immediately taken Care of by God's Providence. Our Saviour pursues much such an Argument as this, *Matt. x. 29. Are not two Sparrows, says he, sold for a Farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the Ground without your Father; but the very Hairs of your Head are all numbred; fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many Sparrows.* I might illustrate this Observation of the Dignity of Man by several Observations taken from his Creation, Redemption, Preservation, and Provision: But it is Time to conclude this Argument. Natural Philosophy has many pretty Things to this purpose, shewing what wonderful care Nature, or rather the God of Nature has taken for the Maintenance of Individuals, and the Preservation of the Species; from which one that duly observes and considers, may easily learn that there is an infinite wise Providence which fits and directs us to our Duty and Business, and takes Care that in doing that cheerfully and contentedly, we shall want none of the Necessaries for our comfortable Subsistence.

To conclude then, Away with all distracting Fears and carking Cares about what we shall eat or drink, and wherewithal we shall be cloathed, in which so many Men bestow all their Thoughts and Time. (a) *The Lord is our Shepherd, we shall not want. O fear the Lord, ye his Saints: For there is no Want to them that fear him.* (b) *The young Lions do lack and suffer Hunger: but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good Thing.*

Now to this great and good God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, be all Praise, Honour, and Glory, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

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(a) Pf. xxiii. 1,

(b) Pf. xxiv. 9, 10.



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## S E R M O N XXV.

M A T T. VI. 27.

*Which of you by taking Thought can add one Cubit  
unto his Stature.*

The Seventh Sermon on this Text.

**O**UR Saviour goes on here with his Arguments against Anxiety and the inordinate Cares of the World. One of these I considered at the last Occasion; taken from the Wisdom and Goodness of God, that he who made the Body, and gave us our Life, and made us subject to so many Necessities, will likewise take Care to supply those Necessities. This Argument was illustrated with this Consideration, that Creatures of far less value than we, and far worse furnished with Abilities to provide for their own Subsistence, to wit, the Fowls of the Air, are provided for by God without Want and without Melancholy; and therefore we have no Reason to fear the being abandoned by God's Providence. There is another Argument to the same purpose, contained in the Words which I have now read, which I intend to consider as it follows here in order.

The Second Argument then against Anxiety here used by our Saviour, is taken from the Uselessness



lessness of this anxious superfluous Care to any of the real Comforts of Life. *Which of you by taking Thought can add one Cubit unto his Stature?* The Word *ἰλιχία* which we translate *Stature*, signifies likewise *Age*, and especially the most flourishing Time of one's Age, when we are in the Prime of our Youth and Strength. *Statura, ætas, vigor, adolescentia.* (*Græc. Lex.*) And it is this further Notion of the Word which for many Reasons I choose to prefer. For the bare adding a Cubit to the Stature seems uncouth, and a thing which the anxious Man would not desire; whereas the adding to both Personableness and Life, especially to the youthful and prosperous Time of it, is a Thing which most Men would desire; and a Thing which the Worldling proposes to himself by his Riches; after all his Care to live bravely, and to have wherewithal to support and comfort him in his Old Age; (a) like the rich Man in the Parable, who is represented as promising himself a great many happy Days from his plentiful Crops and full Barns: And hugging himself with the Fancy of the sweet Enjoyment of all; which scarce ever any worldly minded Man arrived at. Our Saviour here seems to me to appeal to their own Experience, whether ever they found that was the Effect of their worldly Cares, *q. d.* To what purpose is all your Anxiety? can it either lengthen out your Life? or doth it lengthen out your Youth and the more vigorous and flourishing Part of your Days? have any of you ever found it so by Experience? These are put by Way of

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(a) Luke xii. 19.

Interrogation, implying a strong Negation. But perhaps there is something more designed by these Questions than a bare Negation ; it seems to me to be an Elegant *μείωσις*, where less is expressed than is understood ; for here is insinuated that Anxiety is so far from making us more personable, vigorous or healthy, or our Lives longer and pleasanter, that it does the quite contrary ; it both shortens our Days, and by loading those Days with anxious Cares, makes them uneasy and unpleasant. To do right then to the Text in this, which I apprehend to be the true Sense of it, I shall endeavour to make out these two Things.

I. That Anxiety, as to the World, is needless, as neither adding to Life, nor to the comfortable Part of it, but is rather hurtful to both.

II. That a Cheerfulness and Resignation, which are the quite contrary to Anxiety, are of great use in all the Parts of Life.

I. That Anxiety, as to the World, is needless, as neither adding to Life, nor to the comfortable Part of it, but is rather hurtful to both. Our Saviour had before shewed the Inconsistency of Covetousness and Religion ; *Ye cannot serve God and Mammon*. Now he comes to shew the unfitness of worldly Anxiety, as to all the Comforts even of this Life ; for it neither adds to the Length of our Lives, nor protracts the cheerful and prosperous Part of them. First, Anxiety does not add to the Length of our Lives. For though the worldly Man forgets the shortness of Life, and takes pains, and toils, as if he were to live here for ever, yet his Death is not put off one Hour the longer ; it only comes upon him with so much greater Surprise ; the Effect of which is, that he

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is so much more unwilling to leave the World, and so much the more unprepared for it, but yet must leave it notwithstanding, as soon as if he had not been so loaded with worldly Cares. Nay, it is more than probable, that Anxiety by involving Men in endless Cares and Troubles, shortens their Days, and brings them to the Grave before their Time; I mean before the Time to which they might have lived, if they had lived more chearful Lives, with Minds disburdened and disentangled from worldly Cares: For immoderate Care and Anxiety brings on Melancholy and Trouble; and as the Body and Mind have a mutual Influence on each other, Trouble of Mind often causes Diseases of the Body, which shorten a Man's Days. It has been often seen, that a very covetous Man, meeting with any considerable, nay inconsiderable Loss and Disappointment, or even but a great Fright of Loss, has so laid it to Heart, that he has sickned and died upon it. We have an Example of this in *Nabal*, 1 *Sam.* xxv. 37. When his Wife told him the Danger he had incurred through his Covetousness, provoking *David* to such a Degree, that he and his Men had been upon the March to destroy him and his, but that she prevented it by a timely Present; he was so struck with Fear and Apprehension of the Danger he had been in, that he was immediately seized with a deep Melancholy; it is said *his Heart died within him, and he became as a Stone.* And ten Days after he died in good earnest. Many a covetous Man has thus broken his Heart upon worldly Losses and Disappointments; and though they do not all so immediately die, yet no doubt by Degrees worldly Cares will break  
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the Constitution, especially where they meet with great Losses, Frights, and Disappointments, as the World is full of such.

And as Anxiety doth not lengthen, but is very apt to shorten Mens Lives, let us consider in the next Place, whether it is apt to make their Lives easy, flourishing and prosperous; for so the Word *ἡλικία* likewise signifies Youth, or the flourishing vigorous Part of Life. Now it is well known, that Anxiety about the World is so far from contributing to the Mirth and Verdure of Life, that there is nothing sooner hastens Sorrows and grey Hairs; nothing is a greater Enemy to Mirth and Good-humour, nothing sooner alters the Constitution of both Body and Mind, involving a Man in endless Troubles and Cares, that if he enjoys Life, he enjoys but few of the Comforts and Conveniencies of it. And therefore *Solomon* very often exhorts to a chearful Use of the World while we have it, as the Comfort and Portion a Man has from all his Labour; and guards us against the Humour of scraping and gathering for those that come after.

II. As Anxiety doth both shorten our Days, and make them more uneasy, so, as I told you was elegantly insinuated in the Question, Chearfulness, Resignation, and Freedom from Anxiety, contribute exceedingly both to the Length and Felicity of our Lives in this World. (a) *A merry Heart, says Solomon, doth good like a Medicine, but a broken Spirit drieth the Bones.* Now that this inward Joy, this Freedom from troublesome anxious Thoughts,

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(a) Prov. xvii. 22.



is a sovereign Remedy against all the Disasters of Life, is what I shall here endeavour to evince, and on that Account to recommend it to your Study and Practice.

First in general, it will be granted that whatsoever Troubles do beset us, they are either Things within our own Power to remedy, or not. If they are within our own Power to remedy, there is no Temper of Mind so fit to apply those Remedies, as the chearful resigned Temper; for instead of sitting down with a lazy or melancholy folding of the Hands together, instead of giving all up with a dejected Despondency, one of that Temper tries the utmost that can be done either by Prayers or Endeavours, and does not only patiently, but pleasantly and contentedly wade through the Difficulties of it. But that it may more distinctly be apprehended what Advantage this chearful resigned Temper has above the sollicitous and anxious one, to wrestle with the Difficulties of Life, I shall instance in some Particulars, which unfit the anxious Man for going chearfully through the Business of Life, but are easily overcome by the chearful Man, who puts his Trust in God's Providence.

(1.) Then, it must be confessed, that he who believes a Concurrence of Divine Providence with his own Endeavours, acts with another Sort of Life and Vigour, than the Man that goes only upon his own Skill and Strength. As a General, who has a gallant Army to back him, marches on with anotherguess Courage than he who has but a small Handful of Men, or perhaps is surprized all alone. The same may be said of him who not confiding in God's Aid, torments himself to struggle with the Difficulties of Life, purely upon his own Skill  
and

and Strength; it is no wonder if he is confounded in his Judgment, and cowardly in his Attempts, and fearful of the Event, to what a good chearful Man, is, who puts his Trust in God's Providence. It is wonderful to observe what an Alacrity and Courage this Belief inspires into Men, when they go upon Dangers. This was what animated *David* when he went against *Goliath*; *Thou comest to me, says he, with a Sword, and with a Spear, and with a Shield; but I come unto thee in the Name of the Lord of Hosts, the God of the Armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied (a).*

(2.) As the chearful Man, who is free from Anxiety, goes upon his Business with more Courage, so he takes much more Pleasure and Satisfaction in it; he sucks Honey even out of the bitterness of Herbs; whereas the anxious Man is continually uneasy; either he knows not what Means to apply, or he is always diffident of the Event, and never perfectly quiet and easy within himself. What is said of wicked Men in general, is true of him in particular; *(b) The Wicked are like the troubled Sea when it cannot rest, whose Waters cast up Mire and Dirt: there is no Peace, saith my God, to the Wicked.*

(3.) If Difficulties and Troubles occur in Business, as indeed the World is full of them, the anxious Man, instead of bearing them with Patience, magnifies and multiplies them in his own Mind, by his disturbed Imagination and ill-boding Fears, and other vexatious Thoughts; whereas the chearful Man, who is clear from Anxiety, has a great

(a) 1 Sam. xvii. 45.

(b) Isaiah lvii. 20.

deal of Reason still to hope for the best; and though he cannot see through all the Intricacy and Difficulty he may meet with in his Affairs, yet being conscious to himself of the Honesty and Goodness of his Designs, and having a firm implicit Faith in God, he is not disordered or discomposed in his Thoughts, knowing that God, if he sees it best for him, will bring it to pass whatever he is about; or if he sees it will prove to his Hurt, will disappoint him in that Particular, but will answer his Expectation in general, and make all Things co-operate for his good. *Commit thy Way unto the Lord*, says the Psalmist, *trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass. Trust in the Lord, and do good, so shalt thou dwell in the Land, and verily thou shalt be fed. The Steps of a good Man are ordered by the Lord, and he delighteth in his Way.* And to the same purpose Solomon advises, *Prov. xvi. 3. Commit thy Works unto the Lord, and thy Thoughts shall be established.* So that the Man who is free from Anxiety, has an easy way of disburdening his Spirits of all Trouble, by devolving all his Cares and Concerns upon God, and quietly waiting his Determination, which he is assured will be better than his own Choice.

From what has been said, it will, I hope, appear, that in all those Troubles, to the Removal of which our own Endeavours can contribute any thing, the Man who is free from Anxiety, has much the Advantage as to the true Pleasures and Satisfaction of Life, that he has Ease in his own Mind, and that thereby he lengthens out the Tranquillity of his Life, and by that Means perhaps Life itself; whereas the anxious worldly Man takes the readiest way, by his fretting and vexing,



his carking and caring, to disquiet his own Mind and Life, and either to shorten his Days, or to shorten the Mirth and Prosperity of them, or both. So much for those Troubles of Life, which are within our own Power to remedy. But then,

*Secondly*, There are a great many other Troubles which are altogether out of our reach, and which we can no way think of removing, and must therefore be patiently endured, if we intend any Peace and Quiet with respect to them. Now as to all these, the chearful Man, who is free from anxious and solicitous Thoughts, has much the Advantage from the Temper of his Mind, to live easy and quiet under them; for the Virtue of Contentment, which exercises itself chiefly in a quiet and chearful bearing such Misfortunes as we cannot help, as it goes much against the Grain with the anxious Man, so it is exceeding easy to a Man of a chearful resigned Temper. Now Life is full of such Disasters, Misfortunes, and Calamities, for which there is really no other Remedy but Chearfulness and Contentment. I cannot pretend to enumerate them, but shall give you some Instances, that from them ye may guess how the anxious Man would manage them; whereas, without Anxiety, they are all easy to be managed with Patience, Contentment, and Chearfulness, which are the Reverse of this Anxiety. Of this Sort then are the Disproportion of Features, the Disagreeableness of Complexion, the Loss or Weakening of any of the Senses, the excessive either Tallness or Shortness of Stature, the Meanness of ones Birth, the Miscarriage or Misfortune of ones Relations, the Sickliness of our Constitution,



tution, the Weakness or Dulness of our Understanding, the Shortness of our Memory, the Defects of our Education, the Death of our Friends, the being unequally yoked, Losses and Disappointments by Weather, Sea, bad Debtors, false Friends, and malicious Enemies ; the Inconveniencies of bad Climates, the Defects of Governments and Governors, the Oppressions and Injustices of the Great, the Groans and Miseries of the Poor, the Sicknesses, Plagues, and Distempers that rage in the World ; and in many Cases Poverty, bad Neighbours, and the Frowns of Government, and a great many other Things which attend our Circumstances in this Life, which it is not in the Power of Men, far less of any one Man, with all his Anxiety or Solitude, to remedy or prevent : And therefore the Way to be happy under them, is by Patience, Resignation, and Contentment, to make ourselves as easy as we can, with an implicit Faith in the Goodness of God, that he will lay no more upon us, than he will give us Strength to bear ; and especially to support our Spirits with the Hopes of a better Life ; and not by Vexation and Anxiety, to struggle, to no purpose, with a Load much too heavy for us.

As I have made this out in general, that a Freedom from Anxiety contributes most both to the lengthening and to the sweetning of our Days, I might bring many particular Proofs of the same Truth ; I might shew how necessary Chearfulness is to make the Chariot Wheels of Action go glib, whereas with Trouble and Anxiety they draw very heavily, and soon tire our Spirits. I might shew that Melancholy and Anxiety embitters all the Comforts of Life, but a chearful Mind makes

every thing pleasant: (a) *All the Days of the Afflicted are evil*, says Solomon, but he that is of a merry Heart hath a continual Feast. I might shew how impossible it is to bear up against the several Calamities of Life, without a Belief of Providence. I might shew you how Anxiety, as it embitters our Comforts, so it aggravates all our Troubles. But having offered what is sufficient to make out the Doctrine of the Text, I shall rather chuse to conclude by making some good Use of it, for our further Edification.

*Use I.* The first Use I shall make of this Doctrine, is to observe from our Saviour's using this Argument taken from the Length and Prosperity of Life, how desirous he is that we should make our Lives as easy as we can with a good Conscience. As there are three sorts of Troubles, *External*, *Internal*, and *Eternal*; to keep us from *External* ones, is the Design of those many excellent Precepts of the Gospel, which he has taught us; and to keep us from *Internal* Troubles by Sins and worldly Cares, he has likewise adapted a great many particular Precepts, as, namely, this against Anxiety; from which he disswades, not only on account of its being dangerous to our Souls, but likewise as destroying the Comforts of this Life. And as for *Eternal* Troubles, tho' we are always taught to chuse Suffering before Sin, yet if we can avoid it without Sin, I do not see but that our Saviour advises us so to do: (b) *When they persecute you in one City, says he, flee to another.* Now there are two Sorts of Troubles our Saviour encourages us here to avoid; the inward

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(a) Prov. xv. 15.

(b) Matt. x. 23.

Trouble of our own Minds, occasioned by Anxiety and carking Care; and the external Trouble which that excessive Care occasions; which, by the Argument in my Text, destroys all the Comfort of Life. As to the external Care, it ought to be moderate; and for the internal, we should not discompose ourselves about these outward Things. (a) *I would have you without Carefulness*, says St Paul; *without Carefulness*, though not *without Care*; without a vexatious Care, though not without an industrious Care.

*Use II.* From this Doctrine we may observe what a wrong Way the World takes to make themselves easy and happy; they fancying that all Happiness consists in Riches, take an infinite deal of Pains to acquire them at any rate. But they are in this under a double Error: *First*, That they endure a great deal of Misery in the mean time, by the unnecessary Care and Anxiety which they undergo. And *secondly*, That they are utterly deceived in the Happiness they expected from Riches; which, except they be joined with a liberal Heart to employ them to good Uses, are rather a Curse than a Blessing.

*Use III.* From this Doctrine we may learn the great Duty of Contentment, and a chearful Mind; which is to be acquired not by encreasing our Fortune, but by curbing and moderating our Desires. We see from all our Saviour says about Anxiety, that it is good for nothing; it is inconsistent with the Service of God; *we cannot serve God and Mammon*; it is inconsistent with the

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(a) 1 Cor. vii. 32.



Felicity of this Life, it both shortens our Life in general, and the prosperous flourishing Part of it in particular. We may well ask the Question then, as *Solomon* doth, *Eccles. ii. 22. What hath a Man of all his Labour, and of the Vexation of his Heart wherein he hath laboured under the Sun? For all his Days are Sorrows, and his Travel Grief, yea his Heart taketh not rest in the Night.* He answers there that *this also is Vanity*; and concludes that there is nothing better, as to this World's Felicity, than the contrary Practice, of not being a Drudge to the World, but both using it for the various Occasions of Life, and taking Pleasure in that Use, for that this is the Gift of God.

And it is no wonder that both in the Old and New Testament, we are so much cautioned against these excessive Cares of the World, and exhorted to a chearful Use of it, and a Moderation of our Desires after it, since it is found by constant Experience, that nothing is more pernicious either to the Care of our Souls, and the Concerns of a better Life, or to our Peace and Happiness in this World, than these anxious Cares, engaging the Mind in a perpetual Drudgery Day and Night, and leaving us neither Time nor Inclination for better Things; whereas, on the contrary, a Mind delivered from these Encumbrances, is a fit Soil for receiving the Seeds of all Virtue, and for bringing forth the due Fruits of it. (a) *In some thirty, in some sixty, and in some an hundred fold.* It will be but a poor Excuse to say, I take all this Pains

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(a) Matt. xiii. 8.



for my Heir, I shall leave it to him, and he may do more good with it than I have done, if he pleases. This is just the Description Solomon gives of the worldly Wretch, having immediately before given a quite contrary Character of a good Man. *Eccl. ii.* at the last Verse, *For God giveth to a Man that is good in his Sight, says he, Wisdom and Knowledge and Joy; but to the Sinner he giveth Travel, to gather and to heap up, that he may give to him that is good before God.* To conclude, Pray let us all remember that the Time is fast approaching, when the richest Miser shall in vain wish that he had not left the doing of good to his Heirs; but according as God had enabled him, that he had contrived to do good himself; *to be rich in good Works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate, laying up for himself a good Foundation against the Time to come, that he might have laid hold on eternal Life.* And O that all of us would consider in this our Day the Things that belong to our everlasting Peace, before the Time come that they be hid from our Eyes.

God of his infinite Mercy give us all Grace so to do; and to him be all Praise, Honour, and Glory, for ever. *Amen.*



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## SERMON XXVI.

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MATT. VI. 28.

*And why take ye Thought for Raiment: Consider the Lilies of the Field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin.*

Ver. 29. *And yet I say unto you, that even Solomon, in all his Glory, was not arrayed like one of these.*

Ver. 30. *Wherefore if God so clothe the Grass of the Field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the Oven, shall he not much more cloath you, O ye of little Faith!*

The Eighth Sermon on this Text.

**I**N these Words our Saviour continues the former Subject he was upon against Anxiety, and the inordinate Cares of the World; only as what went before had an Aspect to that Part of our necessary Subsistence, which consists in Eating and Drinking, this which I have now read relates chiefly to our Cloathing; and the Design of it is to shew us that God's Providence relates to our Cloathing as well as to our Victuals, which by a moderate Care and Industry, but without Anxiety and Solitude, with God's Blessing, we may easily provide for ourselves. In the Words we may observe these three Things.

I. A

I. A Reprehension of our Anxiety, and Distrust of Providence as to our Raiment: *And why take ye Thought for Raiment?*

II. An Argument to convince us of God's Care in cloathing his Creatures, taken from the glorious Apparel of the wild Lilies: *Consider the Lilies of the Field, how they grow.*

III. An Application of this Argument to the Case of anxious distrustful Men, *a fortiori*, in four Particulars.

(1.) That the Lilies can do nothing for themselves, towards their own Cloathing; we can. *They toil not, neither do they spin.* The Word which we render *Toil*, in the (a) Original signifying only Husbandry Labour, it is not taken in an ill Sense. *q. d.* They can go through none of the Labour necessary for making Cloth, neither the Field or Husbandry Labour, as for example, in sowing and gathering the Flax and Cotton; nor the House Labour, in working it up; both which we can do.

(2.) That they are Creatures of a much shorter Continuance, and of far less Use than we; and therefore we may much more expect to be taken Care for by God's Providence than they. *Wherefore if God so cloath the Grass of the Field, which to Day is, and to Morrow is cast into the Oven, shall he not much more cloath you?*

(3.) We may easily observe that God's Providence extends to Clothing, because this Clothing, which without their Industry he bestows on the wild Lilies, doth in Fineness and Splendour much

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(a) Κοπιᾶν.

exceed the richest Clothing invented by human Art. *I say unto you that even Solomon in all his Glory, was not arrayed like one of these.*

(4.) In this Application, our Dulness in not observing, and our Infidelity in not believing these Things, and our Diffidence in not trusting to them, is reprehended in these Words; *O ye of little Faith!* These are the several Parts of the Text, which I intend to explain and recommend to your Consideration at this Time, in the same Order in which I have propos'd them.

I. The first Thing I take notice of in the Words, is, a Reprehension of our Anxiety and Distrust of Providence, as to our Raiment. *And why take ye Thought for Raiment?* I say, in these Words are reprehended an Anxiety, and a Distrust of Providence; an Anxiety, in the original Word *μεριμνάω*, which as I told you before when applied to worldly Things signifies not a moderate, but an excessive vexatious Care, which we properly call Anxiety and Solitude. A Distrust of Providence is likewise implied in this Question, which will be plain if we consider how the Sentence ends, *O ye of little Faith!* Now that Man's Anxiety reaches to Raiment, as well as Victuals, is too plain almost in all sorts of Men. The Poor, though their Clothes are not costly, yet considering more their own narrow Circumstances than the Providence of God, are much concerned where to find new Clothes, when the old shall be worn out. And the richer Sort, though they have enough to buy Clothes for their Necessity, if that would content them, yet striving to vye with one another in the Richness and Costliness of Apparel, they are as often put to it to satisfy  
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the Demands of Luxury, as the Poor are to satisfy the Demands of Necessity: Especially if what is here said of Raiment, may be extended to all other Things that are requisite to guard us against the Injuries of Weather, such as Houses and Furniture, in which Luxury has run to such an Height, that it is really very difficult for a moderate Fortune to keep pace with the excessive Fashions, which are introduced. But that Anxiety in both these sorts of Persons deserves to be reprehended, may appear I think from a short Consideration of this Question; *And why take ye thought for Raiment?* For first, as to the Poor; I would desire them to remember and consider who has taken Care of them as to that Part of their Life which is past, when they were Young and could not take Care of themselves; how were they then provided in Clothes and all Necessaries? Perhaps they will say, by the Charity of good People, or by the Care and Industry of their Parents, who are now dead and gone. But is not God able to raise up from time to time more charitable and good People? Doth not he often find us new Friends, when the old are gone, so that we may say with the Psalmist, (a) *When my Father and my Mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up?* Or are we not perhaps abler now to do for our selves than we were then? Let us then with cheerful, not anxious Minds, go about our lawful Business; and never doubt but that we shall find Necessaries. (b) *Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the Land, and verily*

(a) Pf. xxvii. 10.

(b) Pf. xxxvii. 3.

*thou shalt be fed.* But then, as to those who are in better Circumstances, or whose Minds perhaps aim at living higher than their Fortune will allow; the proper Advice to them is, to bring their Mind to their Circumstances, which is the only Way to be happy, to cut their Coat according to their Cloth, and to supply themselves cheerfully with Necessaries suitable to their Ability and Circumstances. And therefore why should ye be anxious for Raiment? But I proceed to consider

II. *Secondly*, Our Saviour's own Argument in the Text, for trusting God's Providence in this Business of Raiment. *Consider the Lilies of the Field*, says he, *how they grow.* There are many wonderful Things might be learned from the Works of Creation, if we had Skill enough to understand their Excellencies, and were careful to make our Observations: for they bear the Marks and consequently the Proofs of God's Wisdom, and are far superiour for Shapeliness and Beauty to the finest Works of Art. As to this of Clothing, our Saviour might have instanced in several Creatures of greater Dignity, that God has furnished with very convenient Clothing, of Hair, Wool, Furrs or Feathers, and has endowed them with admirable Skill of providing their own Nests and Dens in the convenientest Manner for themselves and their Young; and to some of them the Sagacity to shift their Seats into a warmer or colder Climate according to the various Seasons of the Year, and the Constitution of their own Bodies, and those of their Brood; which are clear Proofs of an overruling Providence. But he chose rather to instance in a Creature of less Dignity than the animal Kind; namely, among the Vegetables,

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both to make the Argument the stronger; for if God takes Care of the smallest Things, the minutest Parts of the Creation, he will certainly take much more Care of the more worthy and noble Parts of it; and likewise to cast the greater Slur on the common Vanity of fine Clothes, instancing in such Parts of the Creation, as Man with all his Wealth and all his Vanity cannot equal for Fineness. *Consider*, says he, *the Lilies of the Field*; some think by the *Lilies*, he means the *Tulips*, which are many of them extraordinary glorious for Beauty of Colours, mixed with such Exactness and Variety, that no human Artist can come near them; or whether he means the common white or blue Lilies, or in general all fine Flowers; for they are all Proofs of a Glory and Neatness of Clothing beyond any that the most Sumptuous that way can reach. And if they appear so to our naked Eye, which cannot distinguish the several Excellencies of Things so well as by the Help of Microscopes, the Thing is much plainer by the Assistance of those Inventions; for by the Microscope it appears, that whatever is natural is adorned with all imaginable Elegance and Beauty. There are such inimitable Gildings and Embroideries about several of those Works of God, as no Man were able to conceive, without seeing of them: Whereas the most curious Works of Art, the sharpest finest Needle, for example, doth appear to them who have those Helps of the Sight, as a blunt rough Bar of Iron; the most accurate Engravings or Embroideries seem such rude, bungling, deformed Works, as if they had been done with a Mattock or a Trowel. So vast a Difference there



there is betwixt the Skill of Nature, and the Rudeness and Imperfection of Art.

III. The third Thing I observed in the Words, is, the Application of this Argument to the Case of anxious, distrustful Men, in four Particulars.

(I.) If the lower Creatures, who can do nothing towards their own Cloathing, are so gloriously clad; then there is little Reason for us to be anxious about Clothing, who are endowed with so much Skill and Dexterity to provide Cloathing for ourselves. They toil not, neither do they spin, says our Saviour; the Word, which we render *Toil*, signifies, as I told you, the Husbandry Labour in the Field, as the Spinning is brought as an Instance of the House Labour about spinning, weaving and dressing the Cloth. So that it is much such an Argument as he used a little before as to *the Fowls of the Air*, their being provided with Victuals; it was said, *They sow not, they reap not, they gather not into Barns, yet your heavenly Father feedeth them*; to shew what an Advantage we have of them, that we can contribute so much to our own Subsistence, *by sowing, reaping, and gathering into Barns or Granaries*, and therefore have the less Reason to fear Hunger. Not that sowing, reaping, and gathering into Barns were in the least designed to be discouraged; but only that it was a very proper Argument against Anxiety; that *the Fowls of the Air* are provided for without Want and without Melancholy, though they are acquainted with none of the Arts of Husbandry, which is so useful towards providing of Food, as we are. Now in the same Manner is this Argument made use of against Anxiety of cloathing  
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in the Text ; that the Lilies are so nobly clothed, though they are strangers to the whole Art of making Clothes, both the Field Labour about Flax, Hemp, Cotton, Mulberry-Trees for the Silk-worm, or whatever other Parts of it are to be dispatched by hard Labour ; and the nicer House-Part of spinning, and weaving, and dying, and dressing and making ; not that it is in the least designed that any Thing should be said to discourage those useful Trades of good Husbandry and good Huswifry : but only that since Men and Women can do so much towards their own Cloathing, they have less Reason for Anxiety than if it were a Thing wholly out of their Power.

(2.) Another Way that this Doctrine is applied *a fortiori* to anxious Men is this, that the Lilies are Creatures of far less worth, use or continuance than we ; and therefore we may much more expect to be taken Care of by God's Providence. *Wherefore if God so cloath the Grass of the Field, which to Day is, and to Morrow is cast into the Oven, shall he not much more cloath you, O ye of little Faith !* What is here called *the Grass*, may as well be rendered *Herbs* ; the Word comprehends all Manner of Plants, Flowers and Herbs ; now they are said to be cast into the Oven, because that in many Places, when they are dry, they heat the Ovens with them. But the Word signifies likewise *a Still*, so that perhaps the Meaning may be that they are put into the Still to be distilled, to extract a Spirit or an Oil from them. Both ways it answers our Saviour's Intent ; for still they are very short liv'd Creatures, and the Notion we have of God's Wisdom should teach us, that he will take most Care of that Creature which is most useful ;

ful; and besides these inferiour Creatures being made for the Use of Man, it is but reasonable to think, that Man should be much preferred to them, whose Servants they are. Here then is a Thing which ought to be a great Support to our Faith in God's Providence, that of that great Number of Creatures at first made by God, there is not one of the Species yet lost, and that the vast Number of Individuals is all taken Care of, and wonderfully supplied in their several Kinds; so that it must be a great Piece of Incogitancy or Infidelity in us, to think that God would abandon such a Piece of his own Workmanship as Man is, that he should not be cloathed, when there is not the meanest Part of the Creation, but what is.

(3.) A third Way that this Doctrine is applied against Anxiety in the Text is, with relation to the Fineness of the Cloathing. For the anxious Man may be apt to think, cheap and coarse Cloathing perhaps I may make a shift to compass; but how to get good decent fashionable Apparel and Furniture, suitable to my Quality and Station; that is what I fear I shall not be able to compass. But even this Objection is prevented in the Text. *I say unto you, says he, that even Solomon in all his Glory was not arrayed like one of these.* To shew you that God is no niggardly Provider, but that he bestows upon all his Creatures good, decent, convenient Cloathing, and upon some of them very rich and fine Cloathing, I give you an Instance here in the Vegetables, which the richest King in all his Splendour could not equal. But as this Consideration of the Richness of the Apparel is designed to obviate our Anxiety; so I doubt not but that it is designed likewise to cast  
a slur

a slur upon the Vanity of Apparel, since it is a Thing of so little Estimation in the Sight of God, that he bestows it in the highest Degree upon the meanest of his Creatures. For it is to be presumed had it been a Thing of any great worth in itself, instead of bestowing those admirable Varieties of Colours, Gilding and Embroideries upon Tulips, he would have bestowed them on Creatures of greater Dignity: Whereas on Mankind he has bestowed but very sparingly of these gaudy Colours and Features, a great Part of *them* being black, a great Part tauny, and a great Part of other wan and dusky Complexions; to shew that it is not the outward gaudy Beauty that he values, but the Ornaments of the Mind, Christian Graces and Virtues, which in his Sight are of great Price.

(4.) Fourthly, In this Application, our Dulness in not observing, our Infidelity in not believing these Things, and our Diffidence in not trusting God, without Anxiety, are reprehended in these Words; *O ye of little Faith!* There are many Things in our Actions which it is impossible to reconcile with our Principles; from which one might be apt to conclude that we have no Faith: For example, our Ignorance or Unbelief as to the Doctrine of Providence, our acting in many Things as if there were no God to mind us, or that would ever call us to Account for our Actions. But our Saviour here more justly imputes it to a Scantiness in the Degree, rather than to a total Deprivation of Faith: *O ye of little Faith!* It would be a very useful Study to observe the several Effects of a strong and weak Faith, that we may be guarded against the one, and encouraged to pursue after the other. But the Littleness of Faith



here spoke of, seems to me to be only the Want of a full Trust in God, which occasions this Anxiety; for if we have not a firm Trust in him, that we doing our Duty he will provide us in all Necessaries, and if our Faith as to that Matter depends upon the Probabilities or Improbabilities of second Causes, we shall be full of Wavering and Doubtfulness in our own Minds, and the Arguments to undeceive us, instead of making a full Impression will take but a slender hold, and consequently will be soon forgot, and the contrary Temptations to Anxiety and worldly Mindedness will be apt to prevail.

In order then to guard us against all Anxiety about the World, from the Consideration of the Arguments here managed by our Saviour, taken from *the Fowls of the Air, and the Lilies of the Field*, it will be necessary that we be rightly grounded in a firm Belief that the World and all the Creatures in it did not come by chance, but were made by God, and by him endowed with the several Virtues and Powers which they enjoy, and likewise are so preserved and governed by him, that they serve for those wise Ends and Purposes, ordinary and extraordinary, for which he has appointed them. It would be too tedious now in the end of a Sermon, to set about the particular Proof of these Things; yet because all this Doctrine of our Saviour's in my Text, depends on a particular Belief both of God's Creation and Providence, I shall therefore conclude, by refreshing your Memories with a brief Demonstration of this Doctrine.

The Scripture supposes the Being of God, and contents itself to tell us how the World and all Things



Things in it were created by him. That the several Beings in the World did not create themselves is very plain, because they are not able to preserve themselves in Being. And that senseless Matter should ever by chance run together into this regular Frame of the World, and should continue to act so regularly, must involve such an Heap of Contradictions, that it is a thousand Times easier to conceive, that the Earth, and Shells, and Trees, and Glass, and Iron, had a Consultation together to make themselves into Bricks and Lime and proper Scantlings, and Nails and Windows and Shingles, and each of them to take his proper Place, and so make this Church, without any other Artificer; than that all the Materials of this World could run together, to make this glorious Frame of Heaven and Earth and all the curious Inhabitants thereof. They must then have had a Maker, of infinite Wisdom, Power and Goodness, and that Maker is God.

As God made the World, he preserves and governs the same by his Providence. His Providence reaches to all, even the very minutest of his Creatures, preserving them in their Beings, and providing all Things necessary for their Subsistence, while he thinks fit to continue them in Being. Some of them he continues in Being from the beginning to the end of the World; as the Sun, Moon and Stars. To others he assigns but a short Time for their Duration here, but he gives them a Power of preserving their Species, by Propagation of other Individuals of the same kind, so that there is not one Species known to be lost from the Beginning of the World to this Day. Now that this Work of Preservation of the several

Creatures is God's, and that being in his Hands it will certainly be well performed, the Holy Scriptures give us sufficient Information. (a) *He gives to all Life and Breath and all Things: And in him we live, and move, and have our Being.* (b) *Thou even thou art Lord alone, says Nehemiah, thou hast made Heaven, and the Heaven of Heavens, with all their Hosts, the Earth, and all Things that are therein, the Seas, and all that is therein, and thou preservest them all.* (c) *Lord thou preservest Man and Beast,* says the Psalmist. And in another Place, (d) *He covereth the Heavens with Clouds, he prepareth Rain for the Earth, he maketh Grass to grow upon the Mountains; he giveth to the Beast his Food, and to the young Ravens which cry.* Ye have heard how he feedeth the *Fowls of the Air,* and clothes the *Lilies of the Field;* and how at the same Time it is argued that *ye are much better than they,* and that he will much more clothe you. In short, we are taught that (e) *The Eyes of all wait on him, and he gives them their Meat in due season: That he opens his Hand, and satisfies the Desire of every living Thing.* And that they are all employed in his Service, appears from the many Instances in Holy Scripture, and other Histories of his employing them for Mercy and Judgment in his Government of the World.

God then having such an immediate Inspection, and we being immediately under his Care, why cannot we rest secure, that *he being our Shep-*

(a) Act. xvii. xxv. v. 28. (b) Neh. ix. 6. (c) Pf. xxxvi. 6. (d) Pf. cxlvii. 8. (e) Pf. cxlv. 15.

*herd, we shall not want; we employing ourselves in his Service, he will supply us with Necessaries? let us then be easy, no longer faithless, but believing, no longer leaning to our own Understanding, but trusting in the Lord with all our Heart; no longer bowed down with worldly Cares and Fears, but casting all our Care upon him, for he careth for us.* It is not the Design of my Text, as I told you, to persuade you of the Needlefulness of your own Labour about Clothing, as if ye were to give up yourselves to Idleness, and expect that God will clothe you by Nature, as he does the Herbs and Flowers; but the Force of the Argument runs thus, that God in his Providence orders it so, that all his Creatures are provided in all Necessaries, they doing only what by Nature he has fitted them for, though that is far short of compassing the end alone, without the immediate Assistance of his Providence. And that therefore Man has less Reason to be distrustful of Providence than other Creatures, because God has enabled him to do much more towards his own Subsistence than most other Creatures can do; and therefore he need the less fear his want of that Subsistence. But it is in this excessive Care, and Fear, and Distrust of Providence, and not Men and Womens honest Labour, which by so many Arguments our Saviour dissuades from. It is not these inferiour Things, which he would have us so eagerly seek after; but he would have us go about our Business cheerfully, and let the main Care of our Hearts run upon better Things than those of this World. He has better Service for us than to employ us in looking after the Baggage. We have the main Battle to mind; we have the Devil,



the World, and the Flesh to encounter ; we have the Kingdom of Heaven to purchase, and must be sure that our chief Care be not diverted upon inferiour Things. Let our Hearts be set on Heaven, and on finding out the way that leads thither ; and for the Things of this World a moderate Care of our own, and a great trust in God will serve turn. This is the way to take off our Care from the World, which we must shortly leave behind us ; and to set it on Heaven, where we hope for a durable and truly comfortable Subsistence, that is worthy that we should exert our utmost Care and Endeavour in the Attainment of it ; and will richly recompence all our Labour.

*Which God of his infinite Mercy in due Time bestow upon us all, for Jesus Christ's Sake.*

To him with the Father, and the Holy Ghost,  
be all Praise.





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## S E R M O N XXVII.

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M A T T. VI. 31.

*Therefore take no Thought saying, what shall we eat? or what shall we drink? or wherewithal shall we be cloathed?*

Ver. 32. *(For after all these Things do the Gentiles seek) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these Things.*

The Ninth Sermon on this Text.

**I** Doubt not ye all observe, how much our blessed Lord insists on this Subject against Covetousness and the inordinate Cares of the World, heaping Precept upon Precept, and Argument upon Argument, endeavouring by all proper Ways and Means, that could be thought of, to raise our Hearts above the World, and to set them on Heaven, and the Study of the Way that leads thither. Doubtless he had many excellent Reasons for dwelling so long on this Subject. For as Covetousness was a Vice which the *Pharisees*, one of the strictest Sects among the *Jews*, were particularly addicted to; and is indeed the Vice which

borders most upon several Virtues, such as Sobriety, Temperance, Moderation in Apparel and Furniture, Frugality and Diligence in our several Callings; and is likewise the freest from Scandal, where it doth not run to great excess; for some of the worst of its evil Consequences are inward, in withdrawing the Heart from God, and fixing it on the World, and being inward are not easy to be discerned but by the Searcher of Hearts; so upon all these Accounts it is a Vice much more lurking and dangerous. To which if we add the Consideration of the most pernicious Consequences of it, in eating out all Care of Religion; it is no wonder our Saviour took so much Pains to persuade his Disciples and Followers to be of another Spirit and Temper. When I say his Disciples and Followers, I do not mean only the twelve chosen Disciples, but the whole Company of his Disciples, that is, all Christians in general; for it is to be observed, that of those many Arguments he makes use of to overthrow this Vice, not one of them is taken from the Consideration of the Apostolical or pastoral Office, but from such Things as are equally binding upon all Christians, and accordingly the Apostles give the same Precept against Anxiety to all Christians in several Parts of their Epistles.

In the Words which I have read, we have these two Things.

I. A Repetition of the same Precept against Anxiety, drawn by Way of Conclusion from the former Arguments. *Therefore, take no Thought, saying, what shall we eat? or what shall we drink? or wherewithal shall we be cloathed?*

II. A new Enforcement of the same by two more Reasons; namely, that this Practice was more suitable to the Principles of the Heathen, who believed nothing of a Providence. *After all these Things do the Gentiles seek.* And that their heavenly Father knew that they had need of all these Things; and therefore would take Care to provide them, with their own moderate, without their anxious Care. *For your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these Things.* I shall say something first to the Repetition of the Precept, then to the new Arguments.

I. As to the Precept, I shall consider it under two Notions; first, as a Precept repeated; secondly, as a Conclusion drawn from the former Arguments; for under both these Views I think it is here represented.

1. Let us consider it as a Precept repeated, as indeed it is plain that it is repeated, for at the 25th Verse we had the same. *Therefore I say unto you, take no thought for your Life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, nor yet for your Body, what ye shall put on.* And now again at the 31st Verse: *Therefore take no thought, saying, what shall we eat? or what shall we drink? or wherewithal shall we be clothed?* There are several Reasons may be offered to account for this Repetition. 1. This shews us the Importance of the Precept, that our Lord comes over it again and again; as *Pharaoh's* Dream was doubled, to shew the Certainty and Importance thereof. 2. This is well suited to our Dulness of Understanding, and Shortness of Memory, and Deadness of Affections, to have good Things frequently inculcated; and doth likewise put us in mind of our  
Duty



Duty, which is frequently to think and mediate upon them. 3. Especially, in such a long Discourse as this, in which many Arguments are brought, and some of these seemingly by way of Precept, as here, *Behold the Fowls of the Air, and consider the Lilies of the Field*, it is necessary to keep our Thoughts fixed on the main Scope and Design, which all these Arguments are brought to prove. It is true, there are other collateral Truths we may learn from these Arguments; as Mathematicians draw Corollaries, besides the main Thing which was to be proved; as here in these Arguments we are informed of a particular Providence, which takes Care of all, the very minutest of the Creatures; yet still the chief Conclusion for which Arguments are brought, is especially to be minded, if it were but to distinguish it from these Arguments, and in a long Discourse for that very Reason to be now and then repeated.

2. We are to consider these Words, *Therefore take no thought, saying, what shall we eat? or what shall we drink? or wherewithal shall we be clothed?* as a Conclusion drawn from the former Arguments, and this the Word *Therefore* intimates unto us. I intend not now to look back to these Arguments, and to observe to you the Conclusiveness of them; that has been sufficiently done already, when we were upon the Consideration of the particular Arguments. I shall only briefly observe two Things from the Text taken under this View. 1. That we are hereby encouraged not only to consider divine Truths in themselves, but likewise to draw Inferences and Conclusions from them, and to act  
upon



upon those Inferences. 2. That this must be a Precept of extraordinary Consequence, which our Saviour has not only again and again inculcated and repeated, but has likewise thought fit to confirm and back with so many Arguments; and surely we shall be so much the more inexcusable, if after all this Pains, we shall either forget, or negligently perform this important Duty, of extricating our selves from the anxious Cares and Solitude about the World. So much for the Repetition of the Precept, or the Conclusion drawn from the former Arguments, which was the first Thing I observed from the Words.

II. I come now in the next Place to the two new Arguments, for pressing the same Conclusion.

1. The first of them is in these Words; *for after all these Things do the Gentiles seek.* q. d. It is utterly inconsistent with the Knowledge of God and the Belief of his Providence, and the Duties of Religion, and the Hopes of a future State of Happiness to the good, and Misery to the wicked, to have your Hearts so much set on the World; it is more like ignorant *Heathens* than either *Jews* or *Christians*, to give up your selves to these Practices. In speaking to this Argument I shall do these two Things.

(1.) Shew how suitable this was to the Principles of the Heathen, to take a great deal of Pains for this World.

(2.) How disagreeable it is to the Principles of Christianity.

(1.) How suitable it is to the Principles of the Heathen, to bestow their Pains chiefly on this World. For 1. The Ignorance they were in, or the very slender Notions they had of a future  
Cares

State, was the Cause that their Thoughts and Cares were limited chiefly to this Life. It is true, some few of their learned Men had strong Conjectures of a future State; but as they were but Conjectures, they made but slender Impressions upon their Spirits, and furnished rather Matter for Dispute, than had any great Influence upon their Lives. 2. And if they knew little of a Life to come, they knew as little of Providence, more especially of a particular Providence, which inspects into all the Creatures, and provides for all their Wants. 3. They were likewise Strangers to those many Precepts of Charity, with which the Christian Religion abounds; and to the Doctrine that we are, like Stewards, to give an account of our Estates, as well as of our other Talents, to our great Master, who entrusted them with us. 4. Their Religion too, such as it was, rather encouraged them eagerly to pursue Riches; and to assist them in it, one of their Gods, *Plutus*, who was called the God of Riches, was assigned them to worship; so that they had very great Temptations and Encouragements to Covetousness and Worldly-mindedness, beyond what we Christians have. And this leads me to the second Thing I proposed to consider on this Head; namely,

(2.) How disagreeable these inordinate Cares are to the Principles of Christianity. For 1. If we may gather the Principles of Christianity, either from the Example or Precepts of the great Master and Institutor of it, it is plain to every one that has read the History of the Gospel; first, as to his Example, that he chose a Life of Poverty, much greater Poverty than he thought fit to enjoin

join his Disciples. It is plain that he avoided all such Employments as might entangle him in worldly Cares; he was accused indeed, by his Enemies, as if he had set up for the Kingdom of *Judea*; but it was a very groundless Calumny; for, as he told *Pilate*, his Kingdom was not of this World, so his Practice was suitable to that Profession; for when the People would have taken him by force, and made him a King, he prudently withdrew himself from them, and his whole Practice was exceeding peaceable and inoffensive. He had great Followings indeed of Multitudes, and this shewed what Interest he had to set up against the *Roman* Government, (not then well settled) if he had been so minded. But he never making use of those Multitudes to any Ends either of Insurrection or Covetousness, not so much as to give the least Disturbance to the Government, shews how far he was from any worldly Practices, or Designs upon them. Then as to his Doctrine, never was any Doctrine contrived better fitted to wean Mens Hearts from the World, than His was. There is scarce any other Vice he so much confuted by an elaborate Argument, as Covetousness, and the inordinate Cares of the World. And there are besides a great many other Branches of the Christian Doctrine utterly inconsistent therewith. For, 2. What is the meaning of that most intense Love to God, that we must (a) *Love him with all our Heart, and Soul, and Mind, and Strength?* Will not that take us off from the Love of the World, at least in any immoderate Degree? For

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(a) Mark xii. 30.



if the Current of the Affections is conveyed into another Channel, this must needs moderate them as to the World. And, 3. Has not the Discovery of the true Nature of the Messiah's Kingdom, that it is *an heavenly, not an earthly Kingdom*, the very same Effect? Let them who know nothing, or believe nothing of Heaven, employ their Endeavours chiefly about this World; but for Christians, whose Affections are directed to be set on the Things above, it is no way consistent with such a Faith and Hope as theirs is, to be immersed in worldly Cares. And, 4. This worldly Spirit is utterly inconsistent with those many Precepts of Charity, which are every where to be met with in the Doctrine of our Saviour and his Apostles; for as I had Occasion to shew you not long ago, tho' the precise Quantity to which our worldly Estates are to be limited, is not determined, nor indeed can well be, considering Mens various Stations, Circumstances, and Occasions; yet there are so many good Rules prescribed on that Subject, that if they were duly observed, they would keep both our worldly Estates and Cares within due Bounds; I mean the Bounds of Justice, and Contentment, and Charity, and Generosity, and Heavenly-mindedness, which would so cramp this worldly Spirit, that the Cares of this World would be so rooted out, as not to obstruct our Care for a better Life. 5. Lastly, the Belief of a Providence, which, we doing our Duty, will provide for all our necessary Occasions, cuts off the only Pretext which we had left for Anxiety and Solicitude, namely, the providing of Victuals and Clothes for the future. But I chuse rather to refer this to the next Argument, which our Saviour here brings in, namely,

2. *That*



2. *That our heavenly Father knows that we have need of all these Things.* This Argument is proposed very short; there is no doubt God knows all Things; but how doth it follow from thence, that we need not be anxious or over-careful ourselves? Again, if God knows that we have need of all these Things, perhaps he knows too, that considering what a scrambling World this is, there is no compassing what we have need of, without a great deal of Care and Pains. And perhaps to some, God's knowing that we have need of these Things, might look like a Motive to stir us up to seek after them with so much greater Diligence, so far from being an Argument to the contrary, the lessening of our Care about them. For clearing the Matter then, we must consider more particularly what is the Importance of this Expression, that *our heavenly Father knoweth that we have need of all these Things.* The Meaning of it in short is, to acquaint us that this immoderate Care of ours is altogether needless and superfluous; for that God who made us, knows that he made us subject to all these Necessities, and forbidding us to trouble our selves with any anxious Cares about them, he will certainly find some other way to supply them without our Anxiety. I cannot perceive any the least Flaw in this way of Reasoning. To illustrate it by a familiar Comparison: When a rich and kind Father sends his Son abroad, and gives him Orders to mind his Studies; but for all Money that he shall want, to depend upon him, and to draw upon him; would not this Father have Reason to take it very ill at this Son's Hand, if neglecting his Studies, for which he sent him abroad, he should go and hire himself

himself out to any Day Labour in that Country, and therewithal find himself Victuals and Clothes, and never more take any notice of his Father? Especially as to the mere Necessaries of Life, he could not believe that such a kind Father would begrutch them, as knowing that he has need of all these Things.

Now that this Argument may have its due Weight, there are these three Things in it, which require our serious Consideration.

(1.) The Relation we stand in to God: *He is our heavenly Father.*

(2.) The Things which we stand in need of, namely, the Necessaries of Life; *What we shall eat, and what we shall drink, and wherewithal we shall be clothed.*

(3.) The Duty which upon both those Accounts is incumbent upon us; namely, as Children to a Father, and as encouraged to look to him for the Supply of our Necessities.

(1.) The Relation we stand in to God; he is our heavenly Father: *Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these Things.* Now the Consideration of this Relation has a mighty Tendency to the Point in Hand, which is, to encourage our Hope and Trust in God. There are three Things which encourage a Son's cheerful Dependance on his Father. 1. If he knows the Father to be able to relieve all his Wants. 2. If he knows that his Father truly loves him. 3. If he knows that his Father is privy to his necessitous Circumstances. Now though one or other, or sometimes all these, are wanting in an earthly Father; for often he is not able to supply his Son's Wants, being but in poor Circumstances himself; and often he is alienated from

from his Son, that he has not the true Bowels of a Father towards him; and often, when the Son is at a distance from his Father, the Father may not know what hard Circumstances his Child is in. Though, I say, these are common Defects in earthly Fathers, there is never any of these incident to God: He not only knows our original Frame, and that this was the Infirmity of our Nature, that we were born subject to all these Necessities; but he knows likewise all the Changes, which from time to time are made in our several Circumstances, and is always both willing and able to help us.

(2.) We are to consider the Things which we are here said to stand in need of, for they likewise will help to furnish out the Argument against Distrust and Anxiety. These Things, as appears by the Context, are the Necessaries of Life, *What we shall eat, and what we shall drink, and wherewithal we shall be clothed.* Now, though many a Father will begrutch the supplying a Son with Money, or Credit, to support him in his Extravagancies, yet there is scarce any Father so hard hearted, but will, if he is able, help his Son out, when he wants only necessary Subsistence, as the Case is here put.

By the by, there is a great and very useful Distinction to be here made of our several Wants; some of these are the Necessaries of Life; Wants not of our own creating, but Wants to which, for wise Ends and Purposes, God has thought fit to subject our Natures; and there are other Wants, which, by our own Sin and Folly, we bring upon our selves. Now the first of these God has promised to supply without our Anxiety, and



therefore we have all the Reason in the World to be easy about them; we may with as great Confidence and Assurance address our selves to God for all those Supplies, as an hungry Child may expect to be relieved by a tender Father or Mother, or a naked Child to be clothed by them: for these are the Acts of God, and he takes Care that none of his Creatures suffer, for any of the natural Wants or Infirmities to which he has subjected them. But I find no such Promise to the other sort of Wants, which are the Effect of our own Sin and Folly; nor does the Reason of the Case afford us any such Comfort in that sort of Distresses, for that would be to encourage Sin and Folly. While we do our Duty, and keep in God's Service, and do not forsake him, we shall be duly provided for; but if we turn Deserters, we have then no more Right to the Victuals, and Clothes, and Medicines, which are provided for God's Soldiers, as it were; but run the Hazard of a thousand Hardships, which attend our rebellious Courses, and there is not the least Promise or Encouragement, I know of, that they shall be supplied, till we return to God and our Duty. And this leads me to the third and last Thing I proposed to consider; namely,

(3) The Duty which upon the above-mentioned Accounts is incumbent upon us, as Children to a Father, and as we are encouraged to look to God for the Supply of all our Wants and Necessities.

As to the first, the Duty which we owe as Children to a Father; to mention no more of it than belongs to this Subject of Anxiety, we must take care, 1. Not to distrust our Father's Care of  
us,



us; we doing our Duty, there is no better Cure of Anxiety than firmly to believe that we are under God's paternal Care. Let us in this Respect endeavour as much to free our Minds of all Cares and Fears and Solitude about the World, as an Embassador sent abroad in the Service of a generous Prince, or rather to keep to the Simile in the Text, as a Son sent abroad to travel by his kind Father's Order, and upon his Charge. If such a Son knows that there is no Fear but that his Father has Estate enough, and that he keeps within the compass of his Instructions as to his Expences, surely he will be in no manner of Pain as to the answering of his Bills; and under no sort of Concern how he shall subsist in that foreign Country, during the remaining time of his Travels; no further than to take care that he do nothing to alienate his Father's Affection from him. So let us only take Care to do our Duty, according to the Instructions of our heavenly Father; and never in the least doubt but that we shall be provided for in our Travels. But, 2. To keep to the same Similitude, another Part of our Duty is to address our heavenly Father in all our Wants; for as in the aforementioned Case, though a Father may know very well what Supplies are proper to be sent to his Son, without asking; yet he justly expects that the Son should from Time to Time let him know his Wants, and desire the proper Supplies of him, when he wants them, and likewise return him Thanks after he has them. This exactly suits our Duty in this Respect to our heavenly Father, as it is described by the Apostle, *Ph. iv. 6. Be careful for nothing: But in every Thing by Prayer and Supplication with*

*Thanksgiving, let your Requests be made known unto God.*

Then as we are encouraged to look unto God for the Supply of all our Wants and Necessities; this should teach us to take no unworthy, fordid or dishonest Course to supply our Wants, but cheerfully to depend on God for that Supply; and likewise to behave our selves so, that we throw not our selves out of God's Protection, and from under the Care of his Providence. Ye have heard of some Fathers disowning and disinheriting their undutiful Children. Let us take heed that this be not our Case, that we provoke not God to abandon us, both as to his Care of us in this World, and as to his providing an eternal Inheritance for us in the World to come. Or, if we have so provoked him already, let us be at no rest till we resolve to return with the penitent Prodigal, and submit our selves and make our Peace with our heavenly Father: Telling him that we are no more worthy to be called his Sons, and humbly begging that he would admit us in the lowest Station of his meanest Servants. And for your Comfort I have Authority to promise you, if ye come with true penitent Hearts, heartily sorry for what is past, and sincerely resolved to forsake your evil Courses, and to obey God for the future, he will for his dear Son Jesus Christ's Sake, both pardon your former Transgressions, and assist you with his Grace to make you new Men and Women hereafter, fruitful in every good Work, to his Glory, and your own Sanctification and Salvation.

Which God of his infinite Mercy grant for the same Jesus Christ's Sake. *To whom, &c.*

S E R M.

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## SERMON XXVIII.

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MATT. VI. 33.

*But seek ye first the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness, and all these Things shall be added unto you.*

The Tenth Sermon on this Text.

**O**UR blessed Saviour having in the preceding Discourse from the 25th Verse, given us diverse Characters of Anxiety, with several good Reasons against it, comes now in this, and the next Verse, to direct us to the contrary Virtue, which consists in two Things; *first*, in bending our principal Care to seek after Heaven, and Holiness as the Way that leads to it; *then*, in moderating our Cares about the World, that they do not extend to any long Time to come, but that we refer the worldly Cares of the future Time to the Future itself. It is the first of these we are now upon: *But seek ye first the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness, and all these Things shall be added unto you.* In the Words we have these two Things.

I. A Precept by way of Antithesis, or Opposition to Anxiety: *But seek ye first the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness.*

II. A Promise, that in so doing all worldly Necessaries shall be added: *And all these Things shall be added unto you.*

I. I begin with the Antithesis, or opposite Duty to Anxiety: *But seek ye first the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness.* The Opposition appears by the first Word *But*; which I intend to consider in the first Place, for casting further Light upon the Sin of Anxiety, before I come to the Description of the opposite Duty. It appears then from these Words, that one main Character of the Sin of Anxiety is this, that in the chief and principal Place it seeks after the World, preferably to Heaven, as our chief End, and to Holiness as the Way that leads thither. But because the Deceitfulness of Mens Hearts is apt to mislead them in the Application of this Rule, and they will be ready to feed themselves with the Fancy that above all Things they seek after Heaven, though they are ever so deeply immersed in the World; I shall therefore assist you by a few other Rules, by which ye may try which of these two Ends, Heaven, I mean, or this World, ye do chiefly pursue and seek after.

1. Let us examine which of the two is most in our Thoughts, the gaining of the World, or the gaining of Heaven. (a) *If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, says the Psalmist, let my right Hand forget her Cunning; if I do not remember thee, let my Tongue cleave to the Roof of my Mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief Joy. What he said of the earthly, the true Christian may say*



of the heavenly *Jerusalem*. It is on all Occasions very much in his Thoughts; he orders, at least sincerely endeavours to order his whole Life and Conversation so, as that he may get to Heaven at last; that is the Mark he aims at; and when at any time, either through Ignorance or Inadvertency, or the Temptations of bad Company, or his own natural or acquired Corruption, he wanders out of the way or loyers in it, and makes not the due Progress that he ought to do in the Way to Heaven, he heartily repents, and begs God's Grace, and uses his own most vigorous Endeavours to recover himself quickly into the Way of his Duty, which is the Way that leads to Heaven. Heaven is the Object of all his Hopes; the missing of it is the Object of his Fears; the contriving to keep in the right way to it, is the chief of his Care and Study. But how then, doth not a good Man mind the World at all; does not he exercise himself diligently in some worldly Calling, as well as other Men, and endeavour to thrive in it as well as they? Yes he does, but with quite other Views, and in a quite other Manner than those Men do, who set their Heart on the World. They love the World so well, that they labour for it, as if they were never to leave it; he provides it only as a Thing necessary for his Journey, and would be glad at all times to exchange it for Heaven. They give up themselves to immoderate and excessive Cares about the World; he breaks off all these Suckers of impertinent Cares, and minds the one Thing necessary in the chief Place, and other Things with a much more moderate and inferior Degree of Care and Concern. Their Heads and Hearts are full of their

worldly Projects ; his great, and only great Care indeed, is to fit himself for Heaven ; and the World he minds as a Work by the by. In short, if we had a Window, that we could look into Mens Hearts, we should see that the main Affection of the worldly Man, that principal Wheel which sets all the rest agoing, turns to the World ; but that in a good Christian it turns to God. The chief, and main, and most predominant of his Desires and Aims is upon Heaven, where he may more fully and freely enjoy God to all Eternity.

2. Let us examine whether we use the most effectual Means to get to Heaven ; for by this we may know whether our Hearts are chiefly set upon it. For it is not an ill formed Design which will carry us thither, or is any certain Sign that it is chief in our Thoughts. If any of the *Israelites*, for Example, who were Captives in *Babylon*, had pretended ever so earnest Desires of returning to their own Country ; but when a good Opportunity presented of returning thither, as there did by the favourable Edict of *Cyrus* ; if, I say, at that Time any of them would not prepare himself to go, but stayed still in *Babylon*, would any one believe that such Persons were in good earnest, when they pretended such a Love to their Country ? So we may feed ourselves, and others, with the Fancy that our Hearts are principally set on Heaven, but if we do not set ourselves in good earnest to make use of the Means, we do but deceive ourselves, when we think we have such a noble End principally in our Thoughts. And more particularly, can any Man in good earnest believe that he is chiefly seeking after Heaven, when he neglects all the Means that lead thither ; such as the  
diligent

diligent Study of the holy Scriptures, the Exercise of Prayer, the frequenting of the holy Sacrament, Justice and Honesty in his Dealings, the shewing Mercy to the Poor and Needy, a thorough Repentance for his Sins, and a diligent Endeavour to amend them? If any Man is so taken up with his worldly Projects and Business, as to neglect these Things; if he prefers his Farms and his Merchandise to the great Concerns of his Soul, he may assure himself that the Love of the World is uppermost in his Heart.

3. Of great Affinity with this, is another Mark and Sign, whereby we may safely try ourselves whether our Hearts are chiefly set on Heaven or no; namely, if we are very much afraid of, and carefully avoid every thing which we are sensible is obstructive of that Design. The immoderate Cares of the World we must needs be sensible (as Suckers draw away the Substance from a Plant) withdraw our Care from Heaven, and from those Duties which lead thither. All Sin and Vice is a very great Hindrance of our Growth in Grace, and especially when sinful Actions, by frequent Repetition, grow up into sinful Habits, they are then like a great Clog tied to a Man's Foot, which effectually hinders his Progress in the Way to Heaven. And therefore, pretend what they will, whoever they are that indulge themselves in evil Habits, certainly they have not their Hearts chiefly set on Heaven.

4. Another Way to try whether our Hearts are chiefly set on Heaven or the World, is to observe which of them, upon a Competition, we rather chuse. It is to be feared, if our Saviour should say to us as he did to the rich young Man in the Gospel,



Gospel, (a) *One Thing thou lackest, go thy Way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the Poor, and thou shalt have Treasure in Heaven; and come take up the Cross, and follow me*; that many would do as that young Man did; that is, they would not come up to those Terms, and would sooner leave Christ than the World. The primitive Christians had many such Opportunities of giving Proof whether they would be Confessors or Deserters. This Duty of bearing the Cross, which was the great Sign whereby they proved the Truth of their Christianity in those Days, we are now great Strangers to, and for ought that can be conjectured from the Behaviour of many that call themselves Christians, they would sooner abandon the Truth, and change to every thing that is uppermost, before they would loose a Place or Preferment, far less all that they have in this World. It is dreadful to observe how, in Times of Trial, whole Countries, (a very few excepted) for fear of Persecution, have renounced their Religion, and followed that of the Prince, or any prosperous Usurper, when their worldly Interest directed to that, as the most prosperous Method for this World.

5. And lastly, We may know which our Hearts are most set upon, God or the World, by observing which we prefer, and which we postpone. If we spend the Prime of our Life, and Strength, and Health, in the Service of the World, and think to put God off with Sicknes or Old-Age, or a Death-bed Repentance; it is plain then that the World has the principal Place in our Hearts, and

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(a) Mar. x. 21.



that we think to sacrifice to God with the Blind and the Lame, and to serve him with that Time which is unfit for minding our worldly Affairs. This I think is a plain Demonstration, which of the two has the chief Place in our Heart and Affection. So much for the first Thing I observed in the Words, namely, the Light they cast on the Sin of Anxiety, from this Part of the Antithesis in my Text.

I proceed next to a more particular Consideration of the Duty here enjoined, which is *to seek first the Kingdom of God, and his Righteousness.* Where, first, I shall explain what is to be meant by these two great Objects of our Care, *The Kingdom of God, and his Righteousness*; and then what by seeking them *first*, or in the chief and principal Place.

By the Kingdom of God in the New Testament, is often meant that Method of Salvation laid down by Christ in the Gospel; and it is likewise called the Kingdom of Heaven, or the Kingdom of Christ or the Messiah; and in this Sense it is restrained sometimes to true Believers, and sometimes extended to all who have given up their Name to Christ, though there be Tares mixed with the good Corn, Hypocrites and wicked Men intermixed with true Believers; and in this Sense it respects chiefly the Kingdom of Grace; but in many other Passages of the New Testament, this Phrase, *The Kingdom of God*, signifies the heavenly Felicity itself. Now in this Place, *The Righteousness of God*, being added to it, the Kingdom of God I take to be the heavenly Reward itself, and the Righteousness of God, those Duties which God has prescribed as the Way and  
Means

Means for attaining it. Or if these are to be taken both for one and the same thing, they make up the Kingdom of God in that larger Sense, as it comprehends both the Kingdom of Grace and Glory. Which soever Way we take it, it comes all to one and the same thing ; it comprehends the Kingdom of Glory as the End, and the Kingdom of Grace as the Means, and both these are to be sought in the first or principal Place. To go on then in the Method of my Text : Let us first consider the ultimate End we are to aim at, the heavenly Reward, and then the Way and Means of attaining it, called here God's Righteousness, or that Righteousness which God requires and will accept, in order to our everlasting Salvation.

To begin with the eternal Reward itself. It is set forth to us in the Holy Scriptures, by all those Things which may give us the highest Idea of it, for Wealth, Pleasure, and Honour, separated from those sinful Appendages of them, with which they are usually attended in this World. Not to divert your Thoughts with any other Apprehensions of it at this Time, let us consider a little this of a Kingdom, and a Kingdom of God ; where, not to speak of the Glories and Splendour of the heavenly Court, I shall only desire you to consider the heavenly Felicity under the Notion of the most perfect Government. And in it, 1. The Happiness of being immediately under the best of Rulers, God Almighty himself. 2. The happy Constitution of that Government, which is a close Conjunction of their Duty, their Inclination, and their Pleasure or Happiness. 3. The Obedience and Felicity of the Subjects. 4. The Tranquillity

quillity and Security of this Kingdom. I am easily induced to say something, though but short, of all these; something, because the Explication of my Text, and the Agreeableness of the Subject requires it, and but little, for *who is sufficient for these Things?*

(1.) Let us consider that it is a Kingdom of God, and that the Subjects of it will have the Happiness of being immediately governed by the best of Rulers. It is hard for us to conceive how great an Ingredient this is in the Happiness of any Kingdom. Had we an Idea of the perfectest Ruler that ever was in the World, it might help us to a Conception of this Part of the heavenly Felicity. A Ruler perfectly well skilled in all the best Arts of Government, and as perfectly well informed in all the Circumstances of his Subjects; a Ruler that entirely loves his People, and has no Interest to drive on, separate from theirs; a Ruler entirely beloved by his People, and a People thoroughly sensible of their own Happiness; a Ruler against whom there is no rising up, but who has all Power in his Hand to keep under all his Enemies. Can any one tell what a great Blessing such a Ruler would be in the imperfect Governments of this World? Governments blended with a thousand miserable Circumstances, which the best Ruler could never remove. What must it be then where the Ruler has an Almighty Power to do as much good as he pleases, and an infinite Goodness to do as much good as his Subjects are capable of? It is not to be conceived, what an infinite Happiness would proceed from this one Consideration of such a King.

(2.) Let



(2.) Let us consider the happy Constitution and Model of that Government, which consists in a Conjunction of these three, the Subjects Duty, and Happiness, and Inclination. I know not whether I speak properly, when I mention the Duty of the celestial Subjects; for in so far as their Business will be prescribed them by God, it may be called Duty; but if we consider the Readiness, the Alacrity, the never-failing Compliance of all the Subjects of that heavenly Kingdom, we may more properly reckon them the Principles of that renewed Nature of theirs, which they are under not any the least Temptation to resist, than Duties which are commonly enjoined by Laws and Penalties. But whatever they are, it is certain they are not more their Duty than their Happiness; and not more their Duty and Happiness than their Inclination and Delight. So that there cannot be any Frame or Form of Government devised, that is any Way comparable with this for the Felicity of it.

(3) Let us consider the Obedience and the Felicity of the Subjects of this heavenly Kingdom; for if the Prince and the Government were ever so good, and the Subjects rebellious, this would mar the Musick of the whole, and put even an heavenly Kingdom into Disorder. But that divine Likeness into which they are framed, which removes far from them any Murmuring or Discontent, and keeps them at an infinite distance from any Thoughts of Disobedience, not only disposes them to an Harmony and Agreement, and a ready Compliance with every Thing required by this great King, or any of the Officers of his Kingdom, but makes them sensible of the  
extreme



extreme Happiness and Felicity they enjoy under that blessed Conduct. From whence we may gather how much those heavenly Inhabitants shall be spiritualized, and delivered from all earthly or carnal Inclinations, which gives them such a Relish of that heavenly State: For if it were possible for a carnal Man to be translated thither, without being changed in Heart and Mind, it is not to be imagined that he could be happy there; he would be out of his proper Element, it would be like a learned Mathematical Lecture to an ignorant Clown; he would be weary of it, and would turn Male-content in Heaven, and lose all the Satisfaction of that blessed Place and Government.

(4.) Let us consider the Tranquillity and Security of this heavenly Kingdom, molested with no Enemies within or without; a Kingdom so firmly established, that there is not so much as the least fear that there can be any Disturbance in it, or any overthrowing of it. The Apostle calls it *a Kingdom that cannot be moved*, Heb. xii. 28. What an unspeakable Comfort is this, to be in Possession of the greatest Felicity, and to know at the same Time that there is no shaking of that blessed State, but that it shall continue so for ever and ever? This is the Kingdom we ought to have in our View, and not only in View, but to bend all our Endeavours towards the Attainment of it. This is the ultimate End to which all our other Ends must be subservient. We must be sure to entertain no Design that doth in the least interfere with this; let this be *the first*, and all the rest *second to it*. Now in order to fit and prepare us for this heavenly Kingdom, we must take special Care to adorn our selves with such virtuous Qualities

Qualities and Dispositions, as are required by God to give us an Entrance into that heavenly State, and likewise to qualify us for partaking of the Felicities of it. And this leads me to the second Thing which is to be the Object of our Care and Study. Namely,

God's Righteousness, *But seek ye first the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness.* By Righteousness, whenever it is put as the sole Condition or Qualification for attaining the Kingdom of Heaven, is always meant universal Righteousness, which takes in not only the particular Virtue of Justice, but the whole Duty of Man, as at the 20th Verse of the 5th Chapter of this Gospel, *Except your Righteousness exceed the Righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no Case enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.* This Righteousness by the Evangelical Condescension is far short of a sinless Obedience; but is absolved by our sincere Endeavours, though in many Things we offend all of us. The Evangelical Righteousness consists in an hearty Endeavour to obey the Laws of the Gospel; and in a diligent applying to God for Grace to do it, and a quick and sincere Repentance after Lapses; and all this founded on a true Faith in Christ, in and through whom it is that we are admitted to the Benefits of the new Covenant. This is called God's Righteousness; for because of the Mercy and Condescension of it, it differs from Man's Righteousness in divers very considerable Points. For human Judgment requires such an exact Obedience, that if a Man is ever so good a Man in other Respects, that will not be admitted in excuse of any one Transgression of a penal Law; but God looks chiefly after the Sincerity of the  
Heart,

Heart, and if that be right with him, he is ready to pardon many Failings. In human Judicatories too, if a Man be guilty of a Crime, tho' he is ever so penitent for it, his Repentance will not save him before Man's Tribunal, though it will before God's. Since we cannot then attain to the Righteousness of Innocence, let us endeavour after the Righteousness of Repentance; and since we cannot attain to the Righteousness of a perfect, let us endeavour after the Righteousness of a sincere Obedience. And this is God's Righteousness, without which, notwithstanding all that Christ has done and suffered for us, we shall never enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. But I must not conceal from you another Notion I have likewise of God's Righteousness in this Place; that perhaps it is set here in Opposition to that of the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, which our Saviour is all this while improving; and then the meaning will be, Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and the Righteousness which he approves of, *viz.* not that which consists only in an external Obedience, like that which I have been describing of the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, which makes a fair show in the Sight of Men, and will be accepted in Man's Judgment; but that true inward Sanctification, which is required, and will be accepted by God the Searcher of Hearts. So much for the Objects of our Care, Heaven, and Righteousness or Holiness, which leads to it.

The last Thing we are to consider in the Duty here required, is the high Degree of Care, with which both these are to be sought after, expressed in these Words, *Seek ye FIRST the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness.* By this Word *first*,



we are taught to make these our chief and principal Care, as being the only Things almost, worthy of our Thoughts and Labour. It is very observable how honourably the Scripture speaks every where of the Study of Heaven, and of Holiness as the Way thither; and how diminutively, in comparifon, of all worldly Affairs. (a) *Wisdom is the principal Thing*, says Solomon; *therefore get Wisdom: And with all thy getting get Understanding.* By Wisdom in those Books is meant Religion and the Fear of God. When *Martha* complained to our Saviour that her Sister *Mary* left all the Care of the Household Affairs upon her, while *Mary* made use of the Opportunity of Christ's Company to improve her Soul in its spiritual Concerns: Our Saviour in his Answer shewed how little he esteemed all the household Affairs in comparifon of this. (b) *Martha, Martha, says he, thou art anxious, and troubled about many Things: But one Thing is necessary; and Mary hath chosen that good Part which shall not be taken from her.* It is certain, as much as Heaven is preferable to Earth; as much as the Soul is preferable to the Body; as much as Eternity is preferable to this short Time which we live here; so much is Religion and the Fear of God preferable to all temporal Concerns whatsoever.

To conclude then (for I find I have not time now to speak to the Promise annexed) let this be our chief and main Care and Study, let this be the Business of our Lives: all other Things are but By-works; they are Matters indifferent, this

(a) Prov. iv. 7.      (b) Luke x. 41.



is the *unum necessarium*, *the one thing needful*; and therefore let us mind it, not in a negligent, unconcerned Way, but with as great a Degree of Application as a covetous Man minds his Gain, or a voluptuous Man his Pleasure, or an ambitious Man his Honour, or a malicious Man his Revenge; let this be our Study day and night, to acquire all the Parts of Holiness in as high a Degree as we can, that being true Members of Christ's Kingdom of Grace here, we may be Members of his Kingdom of Glory hereafter.

*Now to him with the Father and the Holy Ghost, &c.*



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## S E R M O N XXIX.

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### M A T T. VI. 33.

*But seek ye first the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness, and all these Things shall be added unto you.*

The Eleventh Sermon on this Text.

**I**N a former Discourse on these Words, there were two Things I observed to be contained in them.

I. A Precept by way of Antithesis, or Opposition to Anxiety. *But seek ye first the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness.*

II. A Promise, that in observing this Precept, we shall not only obtain the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness, but likewise all worldly Necessaries. *And all these Things shall be added unto you.*

Now having spoke to the Precept opposite to Anxiety at the last Occasion, the *seeking first the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness*, I proceed now,

II. To the Promise or Encouragement annexed, *And all these Things shall be added unto you.* What is meant by all these things, is very plain from  
from

from the Context, which runs thus, Verse 31. *Therefore take no Thought, saying, what shall we eat? or what shall we drink? or wherewithal shall we be clothed? (for after all these Things do the Gentiles seek) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these Things.* Then follows the Text, *But seek ye first the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness, and all these Things shall be added unto you.* So that it is very plain, the *all these Things* here is the same which was mentioned in the preceding Verse, namely, the Necessaries of Life, *What we shall eat, and what we shall drink, and wherewithal we shall be clothed.* But what is the meaning of this, *they shall be added unto you?* It is not said, they shall be given to you, but *they shall be added*, implying, not that we shall have them as the principal Reward of that Study; but that they shall be thrown in to a greater Bargain, as an inconsiderable Overplus or Addition to it; so that there are two Things in this Promise.

First, One supposed, that whosoever principally sets his Heart on Heaven, and sincerely studies Holiness as the Way to it, he shall be sure to gain that noble Prize. And,

Secondly, The other expressed, that all Things necessary to Life shall be superadded.

As it was in the case of *Solomon*, upon his first entering upon the Kingdom, 1 *Kings* iii. 5. where God gives it him in his Choice to ask what he would, and he should have it. And when *Solomon* asked an understanding Heart to judge and govern the People wisely, God was so well pleased with his Choice, that he gave him both it, and Riches and Honour which he did not ask. *And the Speech*

*pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this Thing. And God said unto him, Because thou hast asked this Thing, and hast not asked for thy self long Life, neither hast asked Riches for thy self, nor hast asked the Life of thine Enemies, but hast asked for thy self Understanding, to discern Judgment: Behold I have done according to thy Words; so I have given thee a wise and an understanding Heart, so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall there arise any like unto thee. And I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both Riches and Honour, so that there shall not be any of the Kings like unto thee all thy Days.* I have quoted you this Passage of Solomon's History at large, because God's dealing thus with Solomon casts great Light upon this Promise in my Text. For God is so well pleased with our Preference of the Kingdom of Heaven to this World, and with our minding the Study of Holiness before the Study of the Ways to grow rich, that he promises here both to grant us these principal Things which we desire, and to throw in a Competency of worldly Blessings to boot. But to return from this Digression concerning Solomon, the first Thing included in this Promise is a Grant of Holiness here, and Happiness hereafter; *God's Righteousness and his Kingdom.* This is the main Thing; the other is but an Addition and Bounty thrown into the Bargain. In speaking to this Part of the Promise,

(I.) I shall prove that Holiness and Happiness are promised, and shall infallibly be bestowed upon them, who seriously and with their chief Industry seek after them.



(II.) I shall answer some Objections to the contrary.

(I.) I am to prove that Holiness and Happiness are promised to them, who seriously and with their chief Industry seek after them. To confirm this Doctrine I might transcribe all the Promises of the Gospel, for they are all made upon Condition of our diligent asking and hearty endeavouring after them; but I shall confine my self to the Text and Context. To what purpose doth our Saviour exhort his Disciples so earnestly to seek for Heaven and Holiness, with their principal Care, if he did not mean that they were attainable by that Care? But perhaps it may be said, that he exhorts to these Things, as Generals in an Army exhort their Soldiers to fight courageously, in hopes of Victory; not but that it often happens that a Soldier, though he do his Duty ever so well, may miss of the Victory. It is true, it is often so in the Affairs of this World. (a) *The Race is not always to the Swift, nor the Battle to the Strong, nor Bread to the Wise, nor Riches to Men of Understanding, nor yet Favour to Men of Skill; but Time and Chance happeneth to them all.* But there is no such Lottery in our Spiritual Warfare. (b) *We so run, not as uncertainly; and we fight so, not as one that beateth the Air.* We go upon sure Grounds; (c) *for he is faithful that hath promised.* It is true so far, may some think, if we are holy and righteous Persons, we shall not miss of Happiness; but how are we sure that this Holiness and Righteousness shall be attained by

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(a) Eccl. ix. 11. (b) 1 Cor. ix. 26. (c) Heb. x. 23.

our Endeavours, though ever so diligent? It is so hard a Matter to conquer corrupt Nature, and to overcome evil Habits, that perhaps with all our Endeavours we shall fall short of that Degree of Holiness, which is necessary to the Kingdom of Heaven. I answer, that provided our Endeavours are sincere, and so vigorous that we study Holiness in the first and chief Place, it is certain both from the Nature of God, and the whole Current of the Holy Scripture, that our Labour shall not be in vain, but that (a) *we shall reap if we faint not*. God is always represented as an Encourager of the least true Beginnings of Goodness. (b) *He will not break the bruised Reed, nor quench the smoking Flax*. To him who improves the Talent he will certainly encrease it, as it is in the Parable. (c) Let us deal honestly as to our Parts, and there is not the least Doubt of God's Goodness and Fidelity as to his. And that the Promise in my Text was designed by our Saviour to be extended to the Kingdom of Heaven, appears by his making the good Things of this World but an *Auctarium, a little Overplus*, which used to be thrown in to make good Measure. And St Luke in the parallel Place, *Luke xii. 32.* is more express in explaining it in this Sense. For having said, *But rather seek ye the Kingdom of God, and all these Things shall be added unto you*, he adds immediately, *Fear not, little Flock; for it is your Father's good Pleasure to give you the Kingdom.* q. d. Fear not that this your Study and Industry will prove in vain; or that it will be God's Pleasure to

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(a) Gal. vi. 9. (b) If. xlii. 3. (c) Matt. xxv. 29.

give the Kingdom of Heaven to others who do not take so much Pains for it, and exclude you after all your Pains; for it is his good Pleasure to give it to those few in comparison, who prefer it to all Things else, and diligently seek it.

II. The Objections against this Doctrine are chiefly three; which I shall briefly propose and answer.

*Obj.* I. Some depend on their relation to some famous Church for Salvation, and so they are but reckoned true Members of it, think themselves safe, even without making Heaven and Holiness their principal Study. The *Jews* expected to share in the Kingdom of Heaven, as being the Descendants of faithful *Abraham*. Some think Salvation is theirs, as being true Members of the Church of *Rome*; and some that it is theirs as being true Members of the Church of *England*; and others that it is theirs, as having addicted themselves to some Party, that they think holier and stricter than the rest. *Ans.* Such Objectors do not understand the Principles of the several Churches and Parties; for though some of them are so uncharitable as to condemn all other Churches but their own, yet none of them pretend that there is any Church in the World endowed with such a Virtue, that without diligent seeking after Heaven, and studying the Way of Holiness that leads to it, their Members shall attain it, purely by Virtue of their joining themselves to their Society. And if I knew any such Church in the World, I would desire no better Proof of her being a most false and erroneous Church;

Church; for as St Paul tells us, (a) *In Christ Jesus neither Circumcision availeth any thing, nor Uncircumcision, but a new Creature.* And there is no less than a natural Impossibility in the thing, that without Holiness any one should enjoy the Happiness of Heaven; the Pleasures there being no such Pleasures, as that an unholy Person can delight in them.

*Obj. 2.* Against this Doctrine, that Heaven will be bestowed on them who diligently seek it in the Way of Holiness, it may be objected, that Heaven is allotted in the secret Decrees of God, and therefore does not depend on our Diligence in seeking after it in the Way of Holiness. But this dangerous Objection may be briefly answered thus, 1. First, that we are forbid to look into God's secret Decrees; (b) *Secret Things belong unto God:* We are to govern our selves by his revealed, not by his secret Will. 2. I answer, that it is a great Mistake to think there is any Difference between God's secret and revealed Will. The same Persons who he has told us in his revealed Will shall obtain Heaven and Happiness, the same very Persons, and no other, has he decreed it for in his secret Will; so that there is no Relief to be had from this Doctrine by God's secret Decrees.

*Obj. 3.* Lastly, Against this Doctrine, that Holiness and Happiness shall be bestowed on them who seek after them most earnestly, and in the principal Place, may be objected the common Opinion, that by a few Acts of Sorrow and Contrition on a Death-bed, one may get to Heaven,

(a) Gal. vi. 15.

(b) Deut. xxix. 29.



though we have principally served the World, and our Lusts, all our Life long; and therefore there can be no such Necessity of making this our principal Study and Business, as this, and several other Texts do direct. But to this I answer, that for that very Reason, that Doctrine of an easy way of getting to Heaven by a few Acts of Sorrow and Contrition at last, though we have not been serious in the Business of Religion all our Life long, we ought to suspect a dangerous Doctrine, contrary to the Scriptures, and to common Sense and Reason. It is true, there are great Promises in Scripture to Repentance, but can any one think that a few Acts of Sorrow is true Repentance, if it doth not proceed to Amendment of Life? By all the Descriptions of Repentance I could ever gather from the Holy Scripture, if it does not bring forth the Fruits of a good Life, it is only Hypocrisy, or at best the lazy Wishes of the Sluggard, and will not be accepted by God. There is a great Difference between a Sluggard's wishing and wouling, and a diligent Man's getting up and doing; and there is great Difference between a godly Sorrow, which produces a real Change of Heart and Life, and another Sorrow which evaporates all in a few good Words and Wishes; the one is a true, and the other a false Repentance. From all which it appears, that this is a certain true Doctrine, that Holiness and Happiness are promised, and shall certainly be bestowed on them, and only them, who seriously, and with their chief and principal Industry, seek after them.

*Secondly*, I come next to the second Thing more expressly contained in the Words; namely, that to the same Persons all the Necessaries of Life shall

be super-added: *Seek first the Kingdom of God, and his Righteousness, and all these Things, (viz. the Necessaries of Meat, Drink, and Clothing) shall be added unto you.* Having on some other Occasions handled this Subject, particularly in treating on the fourth and fifth Beatitudes, Meekness and Justice, I shall be now the shorter upon it; only shall briefly lay before you these three or four Considerations, for confirming this Truth.

(1.) That the Scripture is very plain in this Promise.

(2.) That this Doctrine is very agreeable to the Belief we have of God's Providence.

(3.) That right Reason and Experience confirm this Truth.

(4.) That particularly there is something in the Nature of the Christian Institution, that makes it good.

(1.) As to the Scripture Promises, I think nothing can be plainer than that of my Text, *All these Things shall be added unto you.* I shall give you two more, one out of the Old, and another out of the New Testament. *Pf. xxxiv. 9, 10. O fear the Lord ye his Saints, for there is no Want to them that fear him. The young Lions do lack and suffer Hunger, but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good Thing.* And *Heb. xiii. 5. Let your Conversation be without Covetousness, and be content with such Things as ye have; for he hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.* I could bring you a great many more to the same Purpose, to shew that (a) *Godliness hath the Pro-*

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(a) 1 Tim. iv. 8.

*mise of the Life that now is, as well as of that which is to come.* But for Brevity's sake, these may suffice for such as neither distrust God's Veracity, nor his Ability. And to others, if there were ever so many more, they would signify nothing.

(2.) This Doctrine is very agreeable to the Belief we have of God's Providence ; which is, that as in general he takes Care of all his Creatures, so more particularly that he takes Care of good Men ; and therefore St *Peter* exhorts them (a) *to cast all their Care on him, for he careth for them.*

(3.) Right Reason and Experience confirm this Truth. The Man that fears God has many Advantages of the wicked Man, for being supplied with the Necessaries of Life. The Faculties of his Soul are in much better Tune, as not being abused to wicked Purposes ; his Time is more his own, as not being squandered away in bad Company or Idleness, or the Pursuit of any sinful Lusts or Pleasures. His Abstinence from many wasteful Vices, Gluttony, Drunkenness, Whoredom, Luxury, and Prodigality of all Sorts, enables him to mind his Business much better, and to husband better what he gets, than they who are entangled in any of these Vices. And if there were nothing else, that exact Honesty, which he strictly observes in all his Dealings, is a wonderful Help both to introduce him into Business, and to continue him in Employ ; and he minds his Affairs more cheerfully, as being confident of God's Aid and Assistance, whose Blessing he continually invokes ; so that there is nothing, in the Reason of the thing to hinder, but that he is like to thrive and prosper in the World ; not indeed to get suddenly

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(a) 1 Pet. v. 7.



rich, (for that is commonly the Effect of some hidden Piece of Knavery) but gradually and honestly to thrive in the World. Then he is much securer in his Possession of what he has, than a wicked Man, who is continually in Danger of being detected and fleeced. And particularly,

4. There is something in the Nature of the Christian Institution, that makes good this Doctrine, That a good Christian shall not readily be destitute of the Necessaries of Life. There is a Christian Duty called (*a*) *Brotherly Love*, which our Saviour instituted with all the Solemnity that could be, calling it *a new Commandment*, and *his Commandment*, and making it the Test and Badge, whereby his Disciples should be distinguished from all other Men. This Duty is nothing else but a very high Degree of Friendship, which he has established among his Disciples; all Expressions of which he has promised to accept, as if they had been performed to himself; and by virtue of this Friendship, there is no Christian but will find so much Favour among Christians, that he is not like to want Necessaries; for this Friendship will exert itself in a great many Ways of Industry and Charity for our Brother Christian's Relief, before Things can come to that Extremity. It was this Brotherly-love that made all their Sufferings fit so easy upon the primitive Christians. There was such a Sympathy among them, such a Readiness to join Hearts and Souls, Pens, Purfes, and Estates, that there was no such Thing as breaking any one of them, without breaking and extirpating them all. And if they had attempted that in

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(*a*) John xiii. 34, 35.



one Country, so extensive was their Charity, that from all the remotest Countries, Supplies would have been sent them, so that there was none of the Christian Believers lacked any Thing; but they found greater and better Supplies from their Christian Brethren, than ever they had found from their own kindest Relations in the World. Then was that seeming Paradox of our Saviour's Promise made good, which we have, *Mark x. 29. Verily I say unto you, there is no Man that hath left House, or Brethren, or Sisters, or Father, or Mother, or Wife, or Children, or Lands, for my sake, and the Gospel's, but he shall receive an hundred Fold now in this time, Houses, and Brethren, and Sisters, and Mothers, and Children, and Lands, with Persecutions, and in the World to come eternal Life.* And though, alas! Charity is now much decayed, and in the room thereof there is introduced a great deal of meer formal Civility; yet it is to be hoped there are still some good Christians every where, who will take Care that their fellow Christians do not want the Necessaries of Life. And besides the Charity of Christians alive at the time, there are great Foundations of Charity in most Christian Countries, from the Benefactions of charitable Christians, who lived in former Days; out of which a comfortable Subsistence is provided for those that are in Want. But tho' the particular Ways and Means could not be all enumerated, whereby Relief doth come; it is enough that we have Christ's Promise here, that if we seek first the Kingdom of God, and his Righteousness, all these Things shall be added unto us.

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But there are two considerable Objections against this Doctrine, which it will be fit to remove, before we conclude.

*Obj.* 1. Are there not diverse Precepts of the Christian Religion, inconsistent with this Supply of all Necessaries, promised here to good People? Such as this same minding of Religion in the first Place. Is not the covetous Man, who sets his Heart upon it, and makes it his principal Business, who employs his Thoughts, Time, and Care, and Contrivance chiefly about it, much more likely to thrive in the World, than he who minds it only by the by? Is not he whose Desires after the World are boundless and insatiable, much more in election to be vastly rich, than the good Christian, who is commanded to be contented with Food and Raiment; that is, with a Competency of the good Things of this Life? Is not he who will take all Advantages that Self-Interest directs him to, much more likely to lay up, than he who confines himself to the strict Rules of Equity and good Conscience, and deals with all Men as he would wish to be dealt by in the like Circumstances? Is not he more like to save, who keeps all close hoarded up, than he who is perpetually laying out in doing good according as he is able, and has Opportunity? And finally, is not he who is under no Restraints of Conscience, but is ready to turn with all Tides, and to comply with every Thing that is uppermost, rather than he will run the Hazard of the Loss of a Place, or incur any other worldly Penalty, more like to hold his Feet in this World, than the strict conscientious Man, who would chuse sooner to forsake all, than to keep it on sinful Terms? But to  
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all these Precepts of the Christian Religion, I answer, *1<sup>st</sup>*, That none of them make any thing against our being provided with a Competency of the Necessaries of Life; but only against our providing our selves with it in unjust knavish Ways; which Ways, if ever they are detected, endanger our utter Ruin even in this World. *2<sup>dly</sup>*, I never pretended that Religion was a means of purchasing this World by Ways inconsistent with our Purchase of Heaven and Happiness, for it is certain all our worldly Cares must be subordinate to our great Care for Heaven: (a) *For what shall it profit a Man, if he should gain the whole World, and lose his own Soul; or what shall a Man give in exchange for his Soul?* This may serve for an Answer to all the unjust Ways of getting or keeping an Estate. It is true, Charity may seem inconsistent with laying up much: But as long as we have enough for all the real Occasions of Life, whether is it better that we keep a great deal of useless Wealth to look upon, or to lay it out both to do good to others, and to help forward our own Salvation?

*Obj. 2.* But how is this Doctrine reconcileable with the Doctrine of the Cross, for which our Saviour would have us always be prepared? it often happens, that instead of having all Things relating to the Necessaries and Comforts of this World, added to us, we must patiently bear with the spoiling of our Goods; nay, sometimes must lose our Lives for our Religion. I answer, that God is then no worse than his Pro-

(a) Mark viii. 36, 37.

mise, when instead of the Comforts of this World, he gives us the Kingdom of Heaven. The patient bearing of the Cross, is always attended with much more valuable Blessings than Wealth and Riches ; the Loss of which shall be compensated both with an Encrease of spiritual Blessings here, and an higher Degree of Glory hereafter.

To conclude then, let us firmly believe that if we diligently labour for Heaven, and study our Duty in all the Parts of Holiness, we shall not only be holy here, and happy hereafter, but shall be supplied with all Things necessary for us in this our Pilgrimage, by means of our own moderate Care and Industry ; and without such a vexatious Care, as to divert our Minds from the Study of better Things, such as lead to Heaven and Happiness: Which in due Time God of his infinite Mercy bestow upon us all, for Jesus Christ's Sake. *To whom, &c.*





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## SERMON XXX.

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MATT. VI. 34.

*Take therefore no Thought for the Morrow ; for the Morrow shall take Thought for the Things of itself : sufficient unto the Day is the evil thereof.*

The Twelfth Sermon on this Text.

**I**N these Words our Saviour concludes his divine Discourse against Anxiety, and the inordinate Cares of the World. In them we may observe these two Things.

I. Another Precept by way of Antithesis or Opposition to Anxiety. *Take therefore no Thought for the Morrow.*

II. The Enforcement of this Precept by two new Reasons ; namely that the Morrow, when it comes, will be more proper to take care of its own Matters, *the Morrow shall take thought for the Things of itself* ; and that the present Time has enough to do with its own Cares ; *sufficient unto the Day is the evil thereof.*

I. I begin with the first, which is a second Precept by way of Antithesis, or Opposition to Anxiety ; *Take therefore no Thought for the Morrow.* The first, as I lately told you, was that of seeking first the Kingdom of God, and his Righteousness, which was encouraged with a Promise that besides the attaining that Kingdom and Righteousness,

teousness, all worldly Necessaries should be super-added. This second too of not taking Thought for the Morrow, is enforced by the Reasons annexed.

Before I consider this Precept in itself, I will take leave to consider it by way of Antithesis, or contrary Principle to Anxiety; that under this View, it may help to cast some further Light on that Vice, from which our Saviour doth so industriously here dissuade.

Now looking upon the negative Precept in my Text with this View, it affords this Character of the anxious covetous Man, that he is not contented to take care for a Competency of the Necessaries of Life at present, but extends his Care for them to a long time to come; for that is what is meant by the Day and the Morrow, the present and the future time. I shall not here consider the Anxiety or Solitude signified by this Word of taking Thought, having done that already in some former Discourses against this Vice. What I shall now confine myself to, shall be to consider the Bounds as to Time, to which we ought to limit our Thoughts and Cares of the World; that in pursuance of the Design of my Text, I may find out this Part of the anxious Man's Character. 1. Then, That our Care and Provision is to be regulated by the Uses we are to have for it, is, I think, very plain; for that these Things are not the chief Design of Life, but only Necessaries and Conveniencies in order to it. We must then so moderate our Cares about the World, as to bear some Proportion to the Uses and Occasions we may probably have for it. As a Master of a Vessel in laying in Provision, has under his Consideration both the Length of the  
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Voyage, and the Number of Mouths he has to feed ; for it would be thought a very impertinent and superfluous Piece of Providence in him, should he lay in three Years Provision for a three Months Voyage, or as much for ten Mouths as for an hundred. But some may reply, if he should do this, what is left after one Voyage, is not lost, it may serve another. I answer, But has not the Vessel carried so much less of other more precious Commodities, that might have yielded Freight, and so have turned to much better account ? So we may say of these worldly Cares, when they extend far into Futurity. Have we not lost our Time and Labour, which might have been bestowed to good Advantage on the great Business of Life ? Have we not made a very bad Calculation, and so wretchedly thrown away the Voyage of Life, which is never to be retrieved ? 2. It is plain likewise, that whatever worldly Care we take, should be a Care that is proper for the present Time, and that we ought not to anticipate the Cares of the future. This will be rendred more intelligible by the help of the former Similitude. Suppose a Master of a Ship designs one Voyage from *England* to this Country this Year, and another the next, if God spare him Life and Health, would it not be a much more rational Way to victual but for one Voyage at once, than to victual for both Voyages together ? The Truth is, we do not act with half the Wisdom and Sagacity, in the Affairs of our Souls, as we do in the Concerns of this Life ; for the covetous Man goes by no Rules, he utterly forgets that he is making the Voyage of Life, and does not steer steadily to the Port of Heaven ; he makes no Distinction between his Provision



and his Loading, and never minds the Reckoning he must make one Day to his Owners.

But the covetous Man has a great many Pretences for this his anticipating the Cares of the future Time; for is it not reasonable that in their Youth Men should work, and lay up for old Age? Is it not reasonable that a Man, who has a Charge of Children, should provide for them, to set them out in the World? And is it not reasonable, considering the many Accidents and Misfortunes of Life, that a Man should have more Strings to his Bow than one? All this is but a fallacious way of arguing, and doth not come up to the Case: for provided the main Thing be minded; that is, Heaven sought after in the principal Place, and Holiness seriously studied, as the Way that leads to it, all these Things may be pursued with an inferiour moderate Degree of Care. But then, that can never be done, if we bestow the chief of our Time and Thoughts on the World; if we gather or heap up faster than the Laws of Justice, Piety, and Charity, will give us leave; if we do not keep our Affections set on Heaven, and disentangled from the World. It will never be asked us in the great Day of Accounts, how rich we were, but how much Good we have done. We may flatter our selves with an inward Thought or Promise, that when we have much Goods laid up for many Years, we shall then begin, and do a great deal of Good. If it were so, what is this but serving the World in the first Place, and putting God and our Duty off with future Uncertainties? Whereas God requires a diligent serving of him preferably to the World, and a trusting his Providence for all future Wants and Accidents:

But to come to the Duty itself, *take therefore no Thought for the Morrow*; we are not to imagine



gine that all provident Care for the Future is here forbidden. There is a certain Care for the Future, which yet is proper for the present Time; as when we lay up in Harvest the Grain, out of which we expect our Bread for all the Year; and as the *Israelites* gathered a double Portion of Manna on the sixth Day, to serve them both for that Day, and the following Sabbath. The meaning then of this Precept of *taking no Thought for the Morrow*, I take to be only a Prohibition of those Cares, which are more proper for the future than for the present Time. Every Day has its peculiar Work and Trouble; and if God supplies us at present with what we want, we are not to distrust his Providence for the Future, nor to let the Cares and Fears of it enter into our Minds, but cheerfully to cast all the Care of the future Time upon God, we doing all that is proper for us at present. Nor are we to think it unlawful, if God gives us Opportunity, to lay up for Sickness, or Old-Age, or for the Provision of Wife and Children, so that it be done without Anxiety or carking Care. Only we must be sure to keep our Minds always in a cheerful Temper, depending upon Providence, and loading them with no more Cares and Troubles than we needs must. For after all the best Precepts against Anxiety, there is a great deal of necessary Care and Trouble we must take, so much indeed, that unless we part it, there is no dealing with such a heavy Burden to take it all together. As if a Man had twenty Days work to do, his best way to go through it cheerfully, would not be to fret and tire himself, and strain hard to do two Days work in one, but to let every Day undergoe the Trouble of its own Work and Business. The chief Faults

then here reprehended are, an Over-eagerness to get rich, and a Distrust of Providence for the Future: Like those *Israelites* who in the gathering of Manna, though they were promised that they should have it fresh and fresh every Day, yet not believing that Promise, would be at the trouble to gather a Super-abundance of that Provision; the Consequence of which was that (a) *it bred Worms and stank*. So much for Explication of the Precept, *Take no Thought for the Morrow*. I shall add but a little concerning the Connexion of the Precept with what went before, from which it is drawn by way of Consequence, denoted by the particle *Therefore*, *Take therefore no Thought for the Morrow*. Now the Words immediately preceding were the Promise, that *if we seek first the Kingdom of God, and his Righteousness, all worldly Necessaries shall be super-added*. And if we believe this Promise, it follows very naturally that we may cheerfully devolve all our Cares of the Future upon God, as to the Necessaries of Life; and employ that Care upon better Things; namely, *the seeking the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness*: This being a much surer way to be supplied with these Necessaries, at least to be supplied with them with God's Blessing, than if we had directed our principal Care after them: As it was a much surer way for *Solomon* to come by *Riches and Honour*, to beg only of God *Wisdom to do his Duty*, than if neglecting the Search after *Wisdom*, he had set himself with all his might to seek after *Riches and Honour*. So now I come to

II. The second Thing observed in the Words; namely, our Saviour's Reasons for this Doctrine,

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(a) Exo. xvi. 20.

that we are to lay aside all worldly Anxiety for the Future. The Reasons are two.

1. That the Morrow, or future Time, when it comes, will be more proper to take Care of its own Matters, than any Time at a distance from it. *The Morrow shall take Thought for the Things of itself.*

2. That the present Time has enough to do with its own Cares. *Sufficient unto the Day is the Evil thereof.* I intend to speak to them as they lie in order.

1. That the future Time, when it comes, will be more proper to take Care of its own Matters. *The Morrow shall take Thought for the Things of itself.* For clearing and proving of this Doctrine, I shall briefly offer to your Consideration a few Particulars, which I think are included in the Proposition itself. As,

(1.) That it is not certain we shall ever see this future Time, for which we are so anxious and solicitous; and in that Case all our Labour is like to be lost.

(2.) That it is impossible, supposing we may live to that Time, to foresee so long before, what Circumstances we shall then be in; so as to answer them exactly by all our Pre-anxiety.

(3.) That it is very possible, if we take our Aim in the dark, that we may do more hurt than good by the Methods we shall lay down.

(4.) That our Circumstances may chance so much to alter, that when we come to that Futurity itself, and to see all the Circumstances of it in a true Light, we shall then wish that we had taken other Measures, and shall begin to pull down what with all our Anxiety we had been building up. All these will help to demonstrate the Truth



of this Reason in my Text, that *the Morrow will take Care of its own Matters.*

(1.) It is not certain that we shall ever see this future Time, for which we are so anxious and solicitous. And in that Case all our Labour is like to be lost. In the twelfth Chap. of St *Luke's* Gospel, (a) we have a Parable contrived on Purpose, to shew us the Vanity of this Projection for the Time to come. There is a rich Man brought in, who upon the Prospect of a great Crop was a forming to himself Resolutions, not of doing any more good with it, but Resolutions of making more Conveniencies to treasure up his Goods; and likewise of spending more freely upon himself than he had done before that Time. And withal he is represented as hugging himself in his present Plenty, and as resolving to stir up himself to a more jovial and plentiful Way of living. *I will pull down my Barns, says he, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my Fruits, and my Goods; and I will say to my Soul, Soul, thou hast much Goods laid up for many Years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.* Here ye see he was just beginning to resolve to be a Slave to the World no longer, but to live up to his Estate. Whether he would or could have performed this Resolution, we cannot tell; for a long Habit of worldly Mindedness and Penuriousness, is not immediately, or so easily shaken off. Only whatever there was in it, it came all to nothing, for quickly after his Life and his Projects ended together. And so it commonly happens. For these covetous worldly Men seldom take the Thoughts of Death

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(a) Luke. xii. 16, &c.



into their Schemes. That one Thing being forgotten marrs many a good Project.

But the covetous Man may think perhaps; though I do not live to see all the Fruits of my Carefulness, some or other will be the better for it; and therefore even in this Case all will not be lost: It will do some good to my Posterity or Relations, or some Body or other. To this may be replied these three Things. 1. That the Man himself who took all this immoderate Care, is an egregious Loser; for he himself has got nothing by all his Labour, he has bestowed his Pains upon what turns to no Account in another World; *he has laid up no Treasure in Heaven.* He has only gathered an earthly Treasure, a Thing of which he has no Manner of Use, after he leaves this World; whereas had he taken Care to lay it out in any pious or charitable Uses, it would have been like Seed sown, which would have brought forth Fruit to eternal Life. 2. But this is not the worst of it; for that Wealth which we gather with much Pains, we are not in strictness of Speech *the Proprietors*, but only *the Stewards* of it; and in the other World we shall be called to an Account of our Stewardship. It behoves us then to look to the laying out as well or more than to the gathering of this Estate; for if we do not employ it to the proper Uses for which God designed it, that is, if we are rich, and are not rich in good Works, ready to distribute, and willing to communicate, we shall not only not lay up for our selves a good Foundation against the Time to come, but shall be further grievously punished for our Infidelity in our Trust. But, 3. It is a great Mistake in us, if we believe that our Wealth being left to others will be sure to do them good.

It is certain if Wealth falls into the Hands of an unwise Man, it will prove only a Means of ruining him both Body and Soul. And generally speaking it is much easier to manage a moderate, than a very plentiful Fortune. The middle way between riches and Poverty, according to *Agur's* wish, is certainly the safest. Too great Plenty is apt to make Men proud and prodigal, and lazy and luxurious, and to run them without restraint into all manner of Vice; whereas the having of a Competency with the Help of a lawful Calling to exercise their Industry, keeps them innocently employed, and free from many Temptations, that Idleness, Drunkenness, Gaming, and other Debauchery exposes them to; when they are left so much, that they have nothing to do, but to take their swing. So much for the Consideration of the future, as of a Time, which we may never live to see. But,

(2.) Suppose we live to see it, it is impossible so long before hand to foresee what Circumstances we shall then be in, so as to answer them exactly by all our Preanxiety; or to grapple so well with them, as upon the spot, when we have the full Consideration of our several Necessities, with all the proper Means for remedying and redressing them before us. *e. g.* Suppose *David* when he was a young Man, instead of resting his Mind on that solid Principle, the Belief of God's Providence, that *the Lord was his Shepherd, and therefore he should not Want*; had gone about to vex himself with the Cares of what was Future, and at that time invisible in his Circumstances, and by his early Anxiety had set himself to obviate and prevent the many Troubles of the following Part of his Life; would it not have proved for  
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the most part Labour in vain? for what Mortal could have foreseen, far less could have prevented or remedied the strange Casualties of his uncertain Circumstances? such as the fighting with a Lion and a Bear; his Combat with the Giant *Goliath*, the dangerous Songs made on that Action; the Envy and Fury of *Saul*; the Friendship of *Jonathan*; the Treachery of *Doeg*; the Policy of the Court of *Achish*; the gathering of so many idle Men to him, and their choosing him for their Captain; the Churlishness of *Nabal*; the Death of *Saul* and *Jonathan* on Mount *Gilboa*; the choosing him King over the House of *Judah*; the Differences between *Abner* and *Ishboseth*, which brought over to him the Kingdom of *Israel*; the infinite Troubles in his own Family, by the Power and imperious Temper of his Kinsmen the Sons of *Zeruiab*; the Incest of *Thamar*; the Rebellions of *Absalom* and *Achitophel*, *Adonijah* and *Joab*; and all the other strange Turns of his Life, which no Care could avert, and all the Preanxiety in the World could not stave off? Yet when these, or any other Events happened, God, upon his Application to him, furnished him with Wisdom and Presence of Mind, to behave himself better than all the Preanxiety and Forecast in the World could have directed. A Man may as well pretend to shoot at a Mark at a very great distance, and in the dark, and hit it, as by Trouble and Anxiety to obviate the infinite unforeseen Accidents of Life. And therefore all such Cares are to be totally disburdened from our selves upon God, who foresees all, and will order all to his own wise Ends and Purposes.

(3.) To convince us that future Uncertainties are not a proper Object of our Care and Anxiety,

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let us consider that it is very possible, if we take our Aim in the dark, that we may do more Hurt than Good by the Methods we shall lay down. And the Reason is, wise Resolutions about any future Events cannot be taken, but upon Consideration of all the Circumstances we shall be in at the Time when the Action is to be done. For if any one material Circumstance be left out unconsidered; it may occasion a great Mistake in the Resolution we form to our selves about it. As for example, if a Man should lay down a general Resolution with himself, as a great many Men do, to take always the most narrow saving Method he can, this Resolution will be found often not only to lead a Man to unjust and ungenerous Courses, but to such Courses as will prove destructive of itself. Had not *Nabal* like to have lost all through a little Penuriousness? (a) And did not *Abigail* save all by a little Generosity? *Judas* betrayed his Master through Covetousness, and had never a Day to do well after it, or to enjoy the unrighteous Mammon. (b) *Ananias* and *Sapphira* thought to have put a trick upon the Church, by entitling themselves to Relief out of the common Stock, pretending to have put in all their own to it; but the Fraud they were guilty of was quickly detected, and severely punished. And so many a Man's ill gotten Goods prove a Canker in his Estate, which at the long run consumes the whole.

(4.) It is to be considered, against our carking at present for the future Time, that our Circumstances may so alter, that when we come to that Futurity itself, and to see all the Circumstances

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• (a) 1 Sam. xxv. 4, &c. (b) Acts v. 1, &c.



of it in a true Light, we shall then wish that we had taken other Measures, and shall begin to pull down what with all our Anxiety we have been building up. How many are there who have made it their Business to lay up for an Heir, who if they had lived to see what a Fool or Prodigal he proves; would wish they had directed their Pains to some better Purpose? How many have I seen on a Death-Bed condemning all the Drudgery and Pains they had been at all their Life long, and declaring if it were to be done again, they would turn over a new Leaf with themselves? As Age then brings Wisdom, and an Alteration of Circumstances represents Things in a new Light, it is much better that the Morrow take Care of its own Matters, than that we anticipate the Cares of them, and by that Means both do them worse, and make our Lives at present uneasy, by overburdening them with Cares which do not belong to them. And this leads me to the second Reason given by our Saviour in the Text; namely,

2. That the present Time has enough to do with its own Cares. *Sufficient unto the Day is the Evil thereof.* There is no Part of Life so free from Trouble, but that it gives us Employment enough to answer it. While we are confined to crazy and indigent Bodies; while we are condemned to Toil and Labour, and nothing can be effected but with abundance of Pains and Diligence; while we are encumbered with the necessary Care of Families, and a great many weak, sickly and troublesome Creatures to give us Uneasiness; while the Return of the several Seasons of the Year brings along with it a new Task of Care and Business; in short, in a World of Uncertainties, where there is a vast Number of trouble-  
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some Accidents to add to our Care and Concern ; God Almighty, who would have us make our Lives as easy as we can, and keep our Minds as much as is possible intent upon better Things, forbids us to encrease our Trouble by forecasting and foreboding, and anticipating of it before it comes ; but by a cheerful Acquiescence, and Dependence upon his good Providence, would have us serve him without Distraction, casting all our Care on him, who careth for us.

And thus now I have gone through this excellent Discourse of our Saviour's against Covetousness, and the inordinate Cares of the World, having in no less than twelve Discourses explained his Description and Characters of, and opened up and urged his Arguments against this Vice, without allowing myself the Liberty of offering any other. The Design of all this, which our Saviour has handled more fully than any other Argument, is not that we should live in Idleness, but that our Hearts and Minds being free from the inordinate Cares of the World, we may more stedfastly mind and pursue the better Part, the one Thing needful, our everlasting Happiness, and the Gospel Righteousness, that is, Holiness and Virtue, as the only Way and Means for attaining it ; a Study which the many Examples of the Shortness and Uncertainty of Life do daily put us in mind of, and which will infinitely answer all our Pains, and will not fail to turn to the best Account, through the Merits and Mediation of our blessed Mediator and Redeemer, Christ Jesus. *To whom, &c.*

*The End of the THIRD Volume.*









