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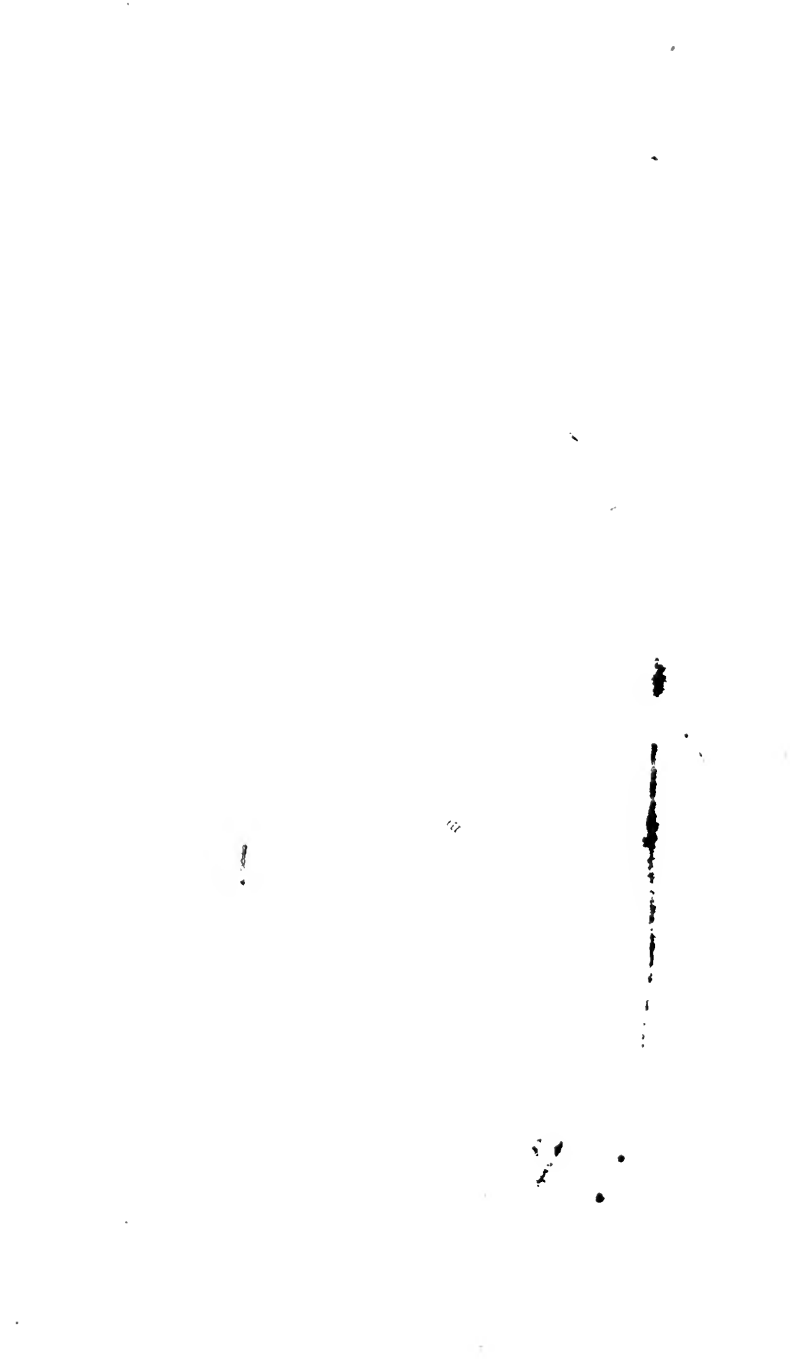
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P R A C T I C A L  
D I S C O U R S E S

O N S E V E R A L

Important Subjects.

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In Two VOLUMES.

---

By the Late REVEREND  
*DANIEL WILLIAMS*, D. D.

---

Published singly by HIMSELF, and now collected  
by the Appointment of his Will.

---

To which is prefixed,  
Some *Account* of his LIFE and CHARACTER.

---

V O L. I.

---

L O N D O N;

Printed by JOHN WILSON, at the *Turk's-Head*,  
in *Gracechurch-Street*.

M D C C X X X V I I I.





T O T H E

R E A D E R.

**I**N an age of so much speculation and debate, and where mens enquiries and contention about religion have been sometimes made an occasion of unsettling their minds, and breeding indifference and neglect; any rational attempts to revive and promote the *practice* of religion, can never be thought either improper or unseasonable. Among the many bad symptoms upon us, and the visible decay of serious religion among all parties, nothing has a better aspect, or gives a more agreeable prospect, than the close application to the study of the scriptures, the many

\* A 2'            excellent

excellent discourses upon practical subjects, as well as some noble defences of religion, which have been lately published among us.

THE following sermons were all preached upon *special* occasions, and were heard with great acceptance and regard; and with some allowance sometimes for the disadvantage of the style, will be allowed by equal and impartial judges, to be exceedingly fitted to convey a great deal of excellent instruction, and to make good impressions upon the minds of men: though perhaps every sentence, or every sentiment, may not exactly agree to their own: A candor, I believe, is found requisite in reading over any human writings whatsoever.

THE *Memoirs* of his life are put together, partly from the accounts already published\*, and partly

\* By Dr. EVANS in his *Funeral Sermon*, and Dr. CALAMY in the Second Volume of his *Continuation*.



partly from what was remembered from his own mouth, and the information of his family and intimate friends; and I believe they will be allowed, when taken together, to make as considerable a character for understanding and judgment, for honesty and integrity, for wisdom and conduct in affairs, for courage and zeal, and for usefulness and beneficence, as almost any man's, of his order, in the time in which he lived.

THAT they may be serviceable to the excellent purposes to which they were originally directed by the *Reverend Author*, and are designed by his *Trustees*, in this collection of them, by his appointment; is, I doubt not, the sincere desire of every one concerned in it.

*W. Harris.*





S O M E

# A C C O U N T

O F T H E

## L I F E o f D r. W I L L I A M S.



### S E C T. I.



*R. DANIEL WILLIAMS was born at Wrexham in the county of Denbigh in Wales, about the year 1643 or 1644. It appears that he laboured under some disadvantages in his education, which would have cramped a common genius, and hinder'd it from ever rising beyond a vulgar pitch; but the natural vigour and strength of his mind, improved by uncommon diligence and application, made up the want of such helps which many others enjoy in their early years. His rising to so great a capacity of usefulness under so few advantages, must be allowed,*

*instead of detracting from him, to add considerably to his real worth. This disadvantage appeared in nothing so much, as in the want of ease and purity in his style, which is commonly formed in younger life.*

*He was a lover of serious religion from his youth, and was one of the first of the rising generation, who entered into the ministry, after the ejection in 1662. He says of himself, "That from five years old he had no employment but his studies; and that by nineteen he was regularly admitted a preacher\*." He freely owned himself a Nonconformist at a time when he knew it must expose him to great straits and hardships: Whereas if he could have satisfied himself to submit to the terms of the national establishment, his intellectual furniture, joined with his uncommon sagacity and dexterity, and unwearied diligence, would have given him as fair a prospect of preferment, as almost any of his contemporaries could pretend to.*

*When he had spent a few years in preaching occasionally in several parts of England, and found the times so frowning and discouraging to Dissenters, that he had little prospect of pursuing his ministry without great hazard; Providence very seasonably opened him a way for service in Ireland: where even in those times, the government thought fit to treat men of his principles, amidst a swarm of bigotted Papists, in a very different*

\* Preface to the *Defence of Gospel Truth.*

*different manner from their brethren in England, and from the difficulties brought upon them in Ireland since. As he made an occasional visit to the pious Lady Wilbraham of Weston in Salop, he received an unexpected invitation to be chaplain to the countess of Meath in that kingdom: He readily accepted it; and here he found a refuge from the storm, and a considerable opportunity of service.*

*After some time he was called to the pastoral office in the city of Dublin, in a congregation of principal figure, who used to worship God in Woodstreet. In that kingdom he had an opportunity of publick service, for near twenty years, by his labours in the pulpit, by his prudent advice, by improving the interest he obtained in persons of the highest rank, and by several other methods, in which providence chose to make him a general blessing. Here he filled his station with unusual acceptance, in great harmony with his brethren in the ministry, and respected by most who were hearty Protestants in that kingdom. Here he married his first wife, who was not only a lady of distinguished wisdom and piety, but of an honourable family, and considerable estate; and so, by the bounty of providence, he came to be in a more plentiful circumstance than most of his brethren, and a greater capacity of usefulness, all his life †.*

*In the troubles of Ireland in the latter end of King James's reign, he was driven from thence,*

† See her exemplary character, in her *Funeral Sermon*, by Dr. Calamy.

thence, after escaping some threatenings dangers by the tyrannical and violent proceedings of a popish administration. The Romanists at that time were more insolent there, than here; and his warm opposition to Popery did not a little expose him. When he could not continue there any longer in safety, he came over to England in 1687. and made London the place of his retreat, where he was soon observed and esteemed. Here he was of great use upon a very critical and important occasion. Some of the court agents did at that time endeavour to bring the Dissenters in this city, into an address, upon the King's dispensing with the penal laws. In a conference at one of their meetings, upon that occasion, in the presence of some of the agents; Mr. Williams bravely declared, "That it was with him past doubt, " that the severities of the former reign upon " the Protestant Dissenters, were rather as " they stood in the way of arbitrary power, " than for their religious dissent; so it were " better for them to be reduced to their former hardships, than declare for measures " destructive of the liberties of their country; " and that for himself, before he would con- " cur in an address which should be thought " an approbation of the dispensing power, " he would chuse to lay down his liberty at " his Majesty's feet." He pursued the argument with such clearness and strength, that all present rejected the motion, and the emissaries went away disappointed. There was a meeting

meeting at the same time of a considerable number of the city clergy, waiting the issue of their deliberations, who were greatly animated and encouraged by this brisk resolution of the dissenting ministers.

He was of great use to such who came after him from Ireland into these parts, when things were carried to extremities, and they were in constant danger of being sacrificed to the cruelty of Tyrconnel, and his army of cut-throats. He not only gave them considerable assistance himself, but stirred up compassion towards them among his acquaintance, which was large and extensive, to the utmost of his power.

After the glorious Revolution in 1688, in which none more heartily rejoiced than he, he was not only sometimes consulted by King WILLIAM about the Irish affairs, with which he was well acquainted, but was often regarded at court on the behalf of several who fled from thence, and were capable of doing service to the government. He received great acknowledgments and thanks upon this account, when, in the year 1700, he went into Ireland to visit his old friends, and to settle some affairs relating to his estate; and even from several who at first had been apt to censure his quitting Ireland too hastily, for want of courage, or too great a concern for his own safety.

After he had spent some time in preaching occasionally about the city of London, with  
general

general acceptance and great esteem, and not without several motions made for a settlement, at length, about the latter end of 1688, upon the sudden death of Mr. John Oakes, he was chosen to succeed him, in his numerous congregation at Hand-Ally, in Bishopsgate-street. The call being unanimous, he accepted it, and continued with them in the service of the gospel twenty-seven years. He was then in the vigour of life, and used to say, “ He desired a station in which he might have a great deal of work, and a little wages.”

From the time of his coming to London, he conversed much with the eminent Mr. Richard Baxter, by whom he was greatly esteemed; and sometimes preached for him in his turn at the Merchants Lecture at Pinner-Hall, when he was indisposed. Upon Mr. Baxter's decease, he was chosen into that Lecture, in his room, 1691. A considerable interest was made against him, in favour of Mr. Woodcock, who was a learned man, and had been a noted tutor in the university. It happened that the electors were equally divided; and it was immediately agreed to appeal to providence by a lot, which fell upon Mr. Williams, and there was a general acquiescence in him. Upon this occasion it was said by one, who was a good judge of men, and not prejudiced in his favour, “ That tho' he had served Mr. Woodcock as his friend, and who exceeded him in learning, yet he thought providence had clearly determined  
“ the



“ the matter, and that Mr. Williams was  
 “ a man of the best natural parts of any  
 “ man in England\*.”

*It was not long after, that there were frequent clashings in the discourses of some of the Lecturers; and the supporters were divided. And tho' frequent attempts were made to prevent misunderstandings, yet in a little time the heat was revived again. At length a design was formed to exclude Mr. Williams out of the Lecture, for preaching against some Antinomian points, which began to be openly espoused by some. This being discovered, was vigorously opposed by far the greater number of the subscribers to the Lecture, who, at length, when no proposal for peace would be admitted, raised another Tuesday-Lecture at Salters-Hall. Three of the old Lecturers, Dr. Bates, Mr. How, Mr. Alsop, accompanied Mr. Williams; and two more were added to them, Dr. Annesly, and Mr. Richard Mayo: But this occasioned a great deal of noise and clamour.*

*It was about this time that Dr. Crisp's works were reprinted in one volume, with some additional pieces by his son, with an attestation prefixed by some ministers of London, to the genuineness of those additions: But the matter was managed in such manner, that it was apprehended that an ill use would be made of their hands, and which they never intended. Upon this occasion Mr. Williams,*  
*at*

\* Mr. Jer. White.

at the desire of several of his brethren, wrote his Gospel Truth, stated and vindicated: In which he reduces the controversy to certain heads, and distinctly states the truth and error, under each of them: then he proves the latter to be Dr. Crisp's opinion from his own express words; and shews distinctly what the difference is not, and what it really is; and then confirms the truth opposed, by proper reasons, and by the testimony of the Westminster Assembly, the New-England Synod, and the Congregational Elders at the Savoy, and of particular writers who were most generally esteemed. And, lastly, he gives the grounds of the Doctor's mistake. Of this book Mr. Alsop gives the following character, "That it was fairly written, rationally argued, exactly methodized, and piously designed\*."

It was first published in March 1692. with an approbation annexed of several principal ministers in London. The second edition had a larger number of hands; and to the third, was added a postscript, for the clearing several truths and facts. He wrote his Defence of Gospel Truth, in answer to Dr. Chauncy, who first attacked him with great heat. This answer was allowed by the best judges, and some who were not of his opinion, to be writ with great strength of judgment, and with a christian temper. The point of the gospel's being the law of Christ, is nervously argued and supported. Some time after,

\* A Faithful Rebuke, &c.

after, he wrote his *Man made righteous*, upon the subject of Justification, in which he had a particular sentiment peculiar to himself: with a large Appendix, in answer to Mr. Mather. This was written with a great compass of thought, and with great vigour and force. There was some debate between him and Mr. Stephen Lob, who had charged his Gospel Truth with favouring Socinianism. This occasioned an Appeal on both sides, to Dr. Stillingfleet, then Bishop of Worcester, and to Dr. Jonathan Edwards of Oxford, who had written with great learning, and were esteemed great masters of that controversy. They both honourably acquitted him of the charge, with many expressions of great respect to him. This debate was closed with a small tract entitled *An End to Discord*; in which he distinctly states the opinion of the Orthodox, the Socinian, and the Antinomian, about Christ's satisfaction. He disclaims the Socinian notion; and afterwards drew out a Renunciation of Antinomian errors, from several principal congregational ministers. Tho' this controversy drew a great deal of trouble and opposition upon him, he had the satisfaction to see his labours give a mighty check to the spreading of Dr. Crisp's opinions; and cheerfully submitted to the disposal of providence, which allots to every man his work and his treatment\*.

\* See a further account of this Controversy in Mr. Nelson's *Life of Bishop Bull*.

*It cannot be denied but he had hard measure from some violent spirits of those times. There was a terrible assault upon his reputation with respect to his Morals. Some were for strictly canvassing his conduct and behaviour, in all places where he had lived, even from his younger years. Hereupon he threw himself upon the body of the dissenting ministers, in and about the city, who chose a committee on purpose to hear any thing which could be alledged against him, and what he had to offer in his own vindication. The committee took a great deal of pains, heard all pretensions, and spent about eight weeks in the affair, and then made their report to the body of the ministers, who were expressly summoned for this purpose, April 8. 1695. and met to the number of sixty. They declared, " That 'tis the unanimous opinion of the united  
 " ministers, upon the report brought in by  
 " the committee, and the further account of  
 " those of the committee present, that Mr.  
 " Williams is entirely clear and innocent of  
 " all that was laid to his charge " \*.*

*Tho' great prejudices were raised against him in the minds of many, by the violence of this prosecution, yet his own Congregation stood firm by him thro' the whole course of this trouble, and he had many hearty friends all over the city, who pitied and prayed for him, and did all they could to assist and comfort*

\* See a more particular Relation of this matter in the *Postscript* to the *third Edition of Gospel Truth.*

fort him, while the malice of his adversaries was so violent and impetuous. It was observed by many that God gave him that calmness and sedateness beyond his natural temper, and that presence of mind under all the injury and provocation of this eager prosecution, as redounded greatly to his honour, and effectually defeated the designs of his enemies against him. He lived to see the minds of many softened who were most incensed against him; and to convince not a few of their mistakes in the doctrines contended for, and in their opinion concerning himself. This affair in all its circumstances, was as remarkable an instance, in its kind, as perhaps the age produced, of the violence of a party spirit, and how far an intemperate zeal for a favourite opinion, will sometimes transport men beyond all the bounds of reason and prudence, and all the laws of religion and humanity too.

The Doctor's second marriage was in the year 1701. to Mrs. Jane, the widow of Mr. Francis Barckstead; a lady of a considerable fortune and great worth\*, whose father left  
a noble

\* Mr. George Guill, Mrs. Williams's father, has left this memorandum under his own hand, in his Family Bible; " On Thursday, October 11. 1685. French style, " We set out from Tours, and came to Paris on Monday " the 15th of the said month. On the 17th came out the " king of France his declaration to drive out the Pro- " testants, who had notice in Paris in four days, which " falling out the 21st was just the day whereon our places " in the waggon for Calais were retained; and the day " before I was warned by letters from Tours, by several  
\* B " friends,

*a noble estate at Tours in France for the sake of his religion. He lived with her about fifteen years with great satisfaction to himself, and an high value for her. She is yet surviving, and retains an high honour for Dr. Williams's memory, and is waiting in hope for the heavenly felicity.*

*Tho' he was a constant preacher, and diligently attended to the proper duties of his station, yet he was not so confined to the pulpit, or the study, as not to mind how the world went about him, or to be an unconcerned spectator of the treatment of the body of the dissenters, whose interest he had much at heart; or of the state of the nation with respect to religion and liberty. He was active to the utmost of his power in the reign of Queen Anne, when a bill was depending in parliament against occasional conformity. It gave him no small pleasure to find it twice thrown out; and when it was at last carried in the third attempt, and by the help of those very persons, who strenuously opposed it before; he could not help laying it to heart. This affected him so much the more, because he well*  
*knew*

“ friends, that upon false accusations I was sought out  
 “ by the *Intendant*, and other magistrates; and that they  
 “ had written to the *Chancellor of France* to send after  
 “ me and arrest me: But it pleased God, that imme-  
 “ diately after his signing and sealing the declaration  
 “ for the open annulling the *Edict of Nantz*, he fell sick  
 “ and died, while we were on our journey. So I have  
 “ extraordinary occasion to take notice of God's provi-  
 “ dence towards me and mine in such eminent dan-  
 “ gers, out of which he hath miraculously saved us”.

*knew the dissenters deserved other sort of usage from those to whom they had upon occasion, done good service; and apprehended there was but little likelihood of any publick benefit, from such a step, especially in such a juncture: Nay he could easily foresee that the forward agents in that affair would themselves be despised by those they so officiously courted, at the expence of their friends, who had never deserted them in any critical exigence.*

*It was yet a greater trouble to him to find that in the year 1704. the most strenuous applications which could be made, could not prevail to prevent the imposing the sacramental test upon the dissenters in Ireland, who till that time had been free from it. It was inserted as a clause in a bill with the specious pretence of securing the Protestants of Ireland from the great numbers and insolence of the Papists there; which surely in all good sense was a strong reason the other way. The clause was added clandestinely, tho' it would be no difficult matter to tell by whom it was done; for the matter was concealed till the blow was given; and there was not the least suspicion of it till it was too late to prevent it. The bill being read in Ireland after it was returned from England, they must either take or lose the whole. But even this turned to the honour of the dissenters in the issue; for such was the posture of affairs some time after, in the reign of King George, that the Irish House of*

Commons *thought fit to resolve* nemine contradicente, “ *That such of his Majesty’s Protestant dissenting subjects of this kingdom, who had taken commissions in the militia, or acted by commission of array, have thereby done seasonable service to his Majesty’s person and government, and the Protestant interest in this kingdom.*” And, “ *That any person who shall maintain a prosecution against a dissenter, who has accepted, or shall accept of a commission in the array or militia, is an enemy to King George and the Protestant interest, and a friend to the pretender.*”

He was very much in his judgment for the Union with Scotland in 1707. being convinced that it was the most effectual way to secure the protestant succession, and the continuance of their ecclesiastical establishment in North Britain, against the attempts of such who were bent to oppose it, or might be tempted to betray it. He recommended with great earnestness the forwarding of the union to his friends in Scotland; and greatly rejoiced when it was settled and ratified, and hoped the good effects of it would be both considerable and lasting.

In the year 1709. he had a diploma sent him from the university of Edinburgh and Glasgow, at the same time with Dr. Oldfield, and Dr. Calamy. This was an honour he no way affected, or desired, but as circumstances stood, he could not decently refuse



refuse it. He always shewed a great regard to the religious interests of that part of Great-Britain, and by his good-will would have had all who were designed for the ministry among the Dissenters, in South Britain, to have a part of their education at least, in one or other of their universities. He encouraged the drawing up a scheme, for that purpose, which could not be brought to perfection for want of a general concurrence.

In the latter end of the Queen's reign, he had very dark apprehensions of the state of affairs, and great fears about the Protestant Succession. He dealt freely about this matter with the great man who was then at the head of affairs †, with whom he had been long acquainted; and warned him of his own danger, whether he was engaged in those designs, or had kept himself out of them. If he was really engaged, he press'd him to consider, how dishonourable a thing it would be to have a hand in the misery and slavery of his country, and which would not fail in the issue to be ruinous to himself and his family. If he was not engaged himself in such a design, but aimed at shewing his art and dexterity in keeping things in a pendulous posture, that he might have the honour at last of turning the scale; he begged him to consider, what hazard he run, if things went a little further, of their rising to such an height as would be out of his power to retrieve; and

\* B 3

of

† Earl of Oxford.

*of being over-ruled and born down by those with whom he was embarked. The freedom he took was not well relished; but he satisfied himself with discharging his conscience, and with his own good intentions.*

*Some time after he was served a scurvy trick by one whom he had endeavoured to oblige, and whom a small degree of honour and gratitude would have kept from so base and inhuman an action. The case was this: The Doctor was wrote to, with some earnestness, by his friends in Ireland, to communicate his thoughts to them, as to the posture of affairs at that time, and the designs and views of those at the helm. He drew up an answer with great frankness, and sent it into Ireland by a safe hand, only keeping a copy of it. He had this copy in his pocket when he waited upon a certain gentleman of the long robe, and pulling it out with a number of other papers, at his lodgings, he happened to leave it behind him, tho' he brought away all his other papers. The gentleman finding it contained a great many free thoughts concerning publick affairs, and some remarks on the great man before mentioned, thought he should merit his favour, if he communicated the letter to him, and accordingly went and left it with him. He was incensed to that degree against the Doctor, that he would never forgive him. The action was the baser, because the gentleman was under particular obligations to him, who had advanced a sum of money by way*

way of loan, at a moderate interest, when his credit was sunk so low, that he was utterly at a loss to raise it any other way.

No man in the nation more heartily rejoiced at the blowing over the storm by the accession of King GEORGE to the British throne, and the taking place of the Protestant Succession; which he hoped would be a spring of many lasting blessings, not only to this land, but to the whole Protestant interest. On September 28. 1714. he presented an address to the King, at the head of the dissenting ministers of the several denominations in and about the city of London, congratulating his Majesty's peaceful accession to the throne, and his own and the Prince's safe arrival, which he owned to be the merciful return of many ardent prayers, &c.

## S E C T. II.

He was blest by nature with an unusual genius: He had a penetrating judgment, a copious invention, a faithful memory, and vigorous affections; these were cultivated by much thought, and diligent reading. His mind was capable of the closest application. When he was engaged in a debate, or to resolve a case of conscience, he would immediately fasten upon the main hinge on which the thing turned, take the argument in its full extent, represent it distinctly in all its different views, and with a quickness and force

that few men were ever able to do. To this make of mind was added a strong and vigorous constitution of body, which continued with him till the infirmities of age grew upon him in the last years of life : the distemper which his friends apprehended might be peculiarly dangerous, from his natural make, who was sanguine and corpulent, viz. the small-pox, he escaped to the last.

As to his pulpit performances, tho' he never affected much politeness, yet he had a depth of thought, and compass of mind, which few polite men are capable of ; and they had a great aptitude to answer the ends of preaching, and were very instructing and affecting at once. His subjects were always practical and weighty ; his thoughts were solid and copious ; he went over the whole compass of a subject, and took in an uncommon variety of what was pertinent to it. His manner of managing it was plain and scriptural, with an intermixture of the doctrinal and applicatory parts, with great propriety and life. Light and heat were joined together in his discourses ; and he seldom closed a sermon without a particular address to good and bad men, according to the tenor of the subject ; or putting some close questions to them, which were peculiarly adapted to send them home in a serious frame. His success was remarkable as well as his labours, and he was owned of God to do abundance of good to the souls of men, to concert some from the error of their way,

way, to improve and confirm others, and to direct and comfort many. He preached for many years every Christmas-day to a vast audience of younger people, from various quarters of the town, and was the instrument of awakening and impressing the minds of great numbers, upon those occasions. I have known many who have spoken with great affection and pleasure, of the advantage of those opportunities, in their younger years. The vanity of Childhood and Youth, is a specimen of his judicious lively manner of preaching at those times, and his earnest pathetick pleading with men about the concerns of their souls. He was a constant preacher for about fifty years; and in a fit of sickness, seven years before his death, he said, That he had not been obliged wholly to omit preaching above five Lord's-days, from his first entrance into the ministry.

He was a great friend and encourager of young ministers: no man was a more candid hearer of their publick performances, or more glad of an opportunity to help them forward into usefulness; and yet no man was a more faithful friend by kind and necessary admonitions, when there was occasion for them. Nothing was more disagreeable and offensive to him, than conceit and rashness in younger persons; and he would often inculcate upon them the necessary disadvantage of inexperience.

He was remarkable for his courage and boldness in owning and defending the truth,  
which

which he thought of importance, whatsoever censure or opposition he might have reason to expect; and whatsoever he thought the present truth, or that branch of the Christian scheme, which was most struck at, in any particular juncture, in which he apprehended the honour of God, and the welfare of mens souls were concerned, he was always forward to appear in its defence. He argued strongly for the truth, without unkind or injurious insinuations of other men: He detested so mean an artifice.

He was great in prudence, and had a head admirably turned for business, which was observed by many of the highest rank, and made him frequently consulted by many in matters of the greatest difficulty and importance. Sir Charles Wolesey who was a wise and learned Gentleman, and had been himself employed in publick affairs, declared, upon a conversation he had with him, in his journey to Ireland, that he was surpris'd at the compass of his knowledge of the interests of Europe, and the state of the nation; and that he seem'd to him to talk like a privy counsellor. But he was always inflexibly honest, and abhorred any wisdom of the serpent, which could not consist with the innocence of the dove. He would never suffer himself to come into any court trick, or political doubling, nor could be affrighted or allured, into any measures contrary to the interest of his country: And quickly gave up an intimacy,

or friendship with the greatest, when they ventured to make any such attempt upon him.

He governed himself steadily in all the stations he was called to, by the dictates of his conscience; and when he was determined in his own mind, he was immovable by any temporal considerations. He pursued what he thought right with a blunt integrity, and unshaken resolution: It was a little thing with him to be judged of man's judgment. And what was his own beloved character, viz. simplicity, and godly sincerity, did above all things recommend others to his esteem, though it was found in the meanest people, and attended with very weak abilities, or discerned in those of different sentiments from himself: He truly loved an honest man, in whom there was no guile, wherever he met him.

He had an unusual readiness to forgive his worst enemies; and few men had ever greater occasion to exercise it. He rejoiced in their welfare, sympathised with them in their afflictions; willingly did good offices for them afterward, and seldom or never cared to speak ill of them, or to hear others do it, without important reason for it. The testimony of his conscience gave him sufficient satisfaction. However free some people made with his reputation, he was conscientiously tender of that of others, especially of ministers; as knowing how nice a thing a good  
name

name is, and of what consequence to mens service in the world.

It were well if such men would seriously consider how much guilt they contract, and what mischief they are doing, who take liberties with the characters of useful men, without any proper call, or perhaps any sufficient ground, whether it be from wantonness, envy or spite, to prejudice the minds of men against them, and weaken their influence and usefulness in the world.

Tho' he was a steady Nonconformist upon principle, yet he had a charitable temper towards the established church. This induced him at the revolution to be very desirous of a comprehension, on condition of a free toleration to such dissenting Protestants as could not be included. And tho' the temper of the prevailing part of the clergy at that time, made him apprehend that little good was to be expected that way; yet he often expressed a firm persuasion, "That God would in time  
 " bring all sober and moderate Protestants  
 " nearer together, and find some way of separating them more entirely from the loose  
 " and the violent."

His estate was chiefly used in doing good. He exercised a frugality as to his own person, possibly to an excess; but it was with this design, that he might be more useful to others: So he expresses himself in his last will;  
 " As for the estate with which God hath  
 " blessed me, I have used it with moderation  
 " as



“ as to myself, that I might be the more  
“ useful to others, both in life, and after  
“ my death”. And accordingly the blessing  
of many who were ready to perish came upon  
him. Besides, a number of ministers and  
students, who were in necessitous circumstan-  
ces, received frequent and liberal exhibitions  
from him. Though he was naturally of a  
provident temper, and might not go so far  
as some others, upon a mere principle of ge-  
nerosity; yet where a sense of duty, or pros-  
pect of service, called him, he would distri-  
bute freely, and was ready to any good work.  
There were no small sums of money which he  
lost among some to whom he charitably lent  
them, for their support and assistance, upon  
the apprehension of their good character, or  
the hopes of promoting some useful design.

He had an extensive care for the interest  
of Christ in all parts, and was ready with  
his advice, and purse, and influence to give  
his assistance for its support in remote quar-  
ters. Not only England, but Scotland and  
Ireland, and the American colonies, had a  
large share in his concern; so that it might  
be applied to him as truly as to most ordi-  
nary ministers, that he had upon him the  
care of all the churches.

He continued in the exercise of his mini-  
stry to the end of his days, tho' his strength  
visibly declined the last two or three years of  
his life, and he gradually decayed by the  
growing infirmities of age, till he sunk under  
the

*the weight of them. After a short confinement by an asthmatick disorder, with a firm and stedfast faith and hope, he committed himself to God, and fell asleep in Jesus, January 26, 1715-6. in the 73d year of his age. He was interred in a new vault of his own in the burying-ground near Bunhill-fields. His Funeral Sermon was preached by Dr. Evans, who had been eleven years his fellow-labourer, and afterwards his successor. The Epitaph upon his tomb-stone was drawn up by a learned and skilful hand.*

M. S.

## DANIELIS WILLIAMS S. T. P.

wrexamiae in comitatu denbigenſi  
inter cambro-britannos nati

qui a primis annis  
pietate aequae ac bonis literis feliciter imbuitus  
divini verbi praeconis munus admodum iuvenis  
in multis angliae partibus non sine laude peregit  
deinde apud hibernos praecipue eblanae  
ubi media aetate consumpta magnam sui desiderium  
inter omnes reformatae fidei cultores reliquit  
tandem pontificia tyrannide londinum se conferre coactus  
magna ibi celebritate famae per multos annos  
ad mortem usque floruit

vir amplissima mente  
in quo acutissimum ingenium cum iudicio subactissimo  
quod paucis contigit conivictum videbatur

in omnibus theologiae  
partibus si quisquam alius versatissimus  
concionator vehemens idem et acer gravis et copiosus  
assiduus et felix ad docendum probandum permovendum  
provi res postulabat aequae accommodatus  
pastor dubium peritior an vigilantior  
ad christianam fidem promovendam opera re gratia  
non in patria solum sed etiam apud externos  
semper paratissimus

ad consilia sive danda  
sive exequenda pariter instructissimus  
idemque in arduis atque difficillimis rebus tum publicis  
tum privatis peragendis non minori prudentia  
et diligentia quam integritate conspicuus

in omnes caritate  
atque candore animi singulari  
sibi in re amplissima, parcus in alios vero pauperes  
praecipue ac rem publicam ut semper alias  
ita testamento munificentissimus

denique omnis virtutis  
quantum mortalium capit conditio  
dum vixit studiosissimus eorum quae illa non admittit  
annis iam et laude plenus in coelesti coetu  
particeps factus vii. kal. feb.

anno  
aetatis suae lxxii. christi MDCCXVI.

*As he had spent much of his life in benefactions, as God had prosper'd him, so it was plain he designed the same at his death. He consigned the body of his estate to the greatest variety of excellent charities, for the glory of God, and the good of mankind, which will be easily met in the designs of any one man. Besides the settlement to his wife, and legacies to his relations and friends, he left a donation to the society for Reformation of manners; for the education of youth in Dublin, and for an itinerant preacher to the native Irish; to the poor in Woodstreet congregation, and in that in Hand-Ally, where he had been successively minister; to the French Refugees; to the poor of Shoreditch parish, where he dwelt; to several ministers widows; to St. Thomas's Hospital, and the London Workhouse; to the college of Glasgow; to the society of Scotland for propagating christian knowledge; to the society for New-England, to support two persons to preach to the Indians; to the maintaining of Charity-Schools in Wales, and the support of students. He ordered a publick library to be purchased or erected, to which he left his own books, and Dr. Bates's curious collection, which he bought for that purpose. It is now erected in Red-cross-street without Cripplegate; and has had considerable additions made to it since by several legacies, and gifts of money and books. He has ordered his sermons to be collected together, and that the following tracts, Gospel Truth,*

Truth, Man made righteous, Answer to the Report, End to Discord, and Ministerial Office; *should be turned into Latin for the use of foreigners: And that the Vanity of Childhood and Youth, should be translated into Welsh for the use of the schools, and printed oftner for the benefit of the poor. He closes his will by this awful and solemn clause: " I beseech the blessed God, for Christ  
" Jesus sake, the head of his church, whose  
" I am, and whom I desire to serve, that  
" this my will may, by his blessing and power,  
" reach its end, and may be faithfully exe-  
" cuted: Obtesting in the name of this great  
" and righteous God, all who shall be con-  
" cerned, that what I design for his glory,  
" and the good of mankind, may be honestly,  
" prudently, and diligently employed to those  
" ends, as I have, to the best of my judg-  
" ment, directed by this my last testament \*."*

\* A more particular account of his will may be found in Dr. CALAMY'S *Continuation*, &c. Vol. II. p. 983.



TRACTS *and* SERMONS *not contained in this Collection.*

**G**ospel Truth stated and vindicated, 1691. 8vo.

A *Defence* of Gospel Truth, 1693. 4to.

An *Answer* to the *Report*, 1698. 8vo.

An *End* to Discord. 1699. 8vo.

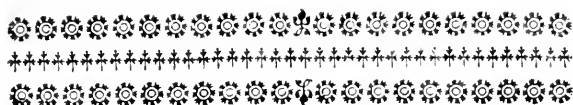
A *Letter* to the Author of *Freethinking*, 1713. 8vo.

Some *Queries* relating to the Bill for *preventing the Growth of Popery*. A Half-Sheet. Folio.

The *Vanity* of Childhood and Youth, 1691. 8vo.

*Man made righteous by Christ's Obedience*, 1694. 8vo.

The *Ministerial Office* : Two Sermons at the Ordination of Dr. GRAVENER, and Dr. WRIGHT, 1708. 8vo.



T H E  
C O N T E N T S  
O F T H E  
F I R S T V O L U M E.

1. **T**HE *Kingdom of God in Power* : A Sermon before the Lord-Mayor, Nov. 20. 1687.

2. *The Advancement of Christ's Interest, the governing End of a Christian's Life* : A second Sermon before the Lord-Mayor, Jan. 9. 1687-8.

3. *The Protestants Deliverance from the Irish Rebellion* : A Thanksgiving-Sermon, Octob. 23. 1689.

4. *Of Repentance for national Sins* : A Sermon in the Morning-Exercise, 1690.

5. *The Excellency of a publick Spirit* : A Funeral Sermon for Dr. Annesly, 1696.

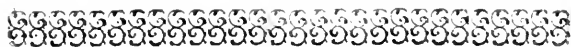
6. *A Sermon*

# C O N T E N T S.

6. A *Sermon* preached at *Salters-Hall* to  
the *Societies for Reformation of Manners*,  
*May 16. 1698.*







*The Kingdom of God in Power.*

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A

S E R M O N

BEFORE THE

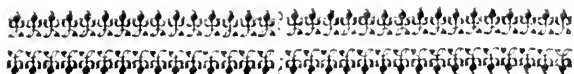
LORD-MAYOR,

*Nov.* 20. 1687.



A.





TO the RIGHT HONOURABLE

Sir *John Shorter*, Knt.

L O R D - M A Y O R

O F T H E

C I T Y of L O N D O N.



*W* H E N your Lordship desired me to preach before you, the improvement of it to the greatest usefulness was my concern. To this end it was needful to fix on subjects suitable to an auditory so promiscuous; none occurred to me so conducive to my purpose as this; which led me to deal with all men in things most important to their eternal condition, and yet to mind your Lordship and brethren of somewhat referring to your present office.

*The second subject I preached on, was pursuant to this, viz. The dedication of our lives to Christ and his interests, from Phil. i. 21.*

*After I had preached the second time, I was surpris'd with a request of your Lordship's and some of the Aldermen to publish both these discourses; but there wanted not many reasons which prevented any design of compliance with that desire, tho' enforced by your undeserved respects to one so much a stranger.*

*But finding some few days past, that after all my care to obviate any such surmises, some passages in that second sermon are misrepresented, as irritating of the church of England; I am inclin'd to publish very soon that second discourse, if I may prevent or remove any such offences, which are now at least more fatal than any imprudent propagators thereof do apprehend.*

*Being thus dispos'd to publish the last, I am obedient to your Lordship's*

*ship's repeated intreaties in sending out the first sermon in its order.*

*Tho' two days being all the time I had to prepare either of these discourses, and absence from my library limiting me to the use of no book besides the bible, are my just apology for some defects in them; yet I must say, that I have delivered nothing but what I believe to be the will of God: and had my helps or abilities been more considerable, I would not debase matters of so great concernment, by vain sallies of wit, nor deaden their common use by laborious periods, or a lighter stile. The institutions of God have their proper decency, and are best managed by a tendency to spiritual ends, and general edification.*

*The substance of the account of the nature of the kingdom of God, I give in scripture-words; tho' chiefly for greater conviction, yet also that none may arraign it as cant, without ridiculing the divine oracles, which*

*surely must command dread in all who esteem themselves by a christian name.*

*I believe your Lordship, in calling us Nonconformists to preach before you, and we in undertaking that labour, can have no turn to serve besides the enlargement of Christ's kingdom, and the revival of the power of godliness, so much degenerated into formality among all parties. We value capacious places no otherwise than as an opportunity for this; and now we enjoy such, we desire no attempts for more splendid ones, to the offence of any.*

*Perhaps your Lordship may share in our wonder at the silly descants of some on our persons and performances in this liberty: We must needs be tradesmen, because we have preached so long without publick salary: Our sermons are cant, because we use scripture-expressions, tho' in their proper sense: We are enthusias-*  
tick,

tick, if we say any thing of heart-work, or the Spirit's influence: We do nothing but whine, and make faces, if we appear in the least moved by what we say, and believe, or seem concerned to prevail with our hearers: We do ill to preach now we do not suffer by it; tho' they know we thought it our duty when we paid so dear for it. Or at best, that contingent events should supersede our labours, as a prudential act; when we are under a solemn dedication to the work of Christ as ministers; and our labours to bring the souls of men under the power of truth, will prove the best security to the profession of it; when great offers, and awakening fears, will trample on the clearest notions of an unregenerate heart. But I enlarge too far.

Your Lordship's acting the part of a christian magistrate, is recompence for whatever censures you undergo; the world is not yet of the temper to speak well of all that do

## Epistle Dedicatory.

well; and Christ exempts not the usefullest from hardships on this lower stage. Peace of conscience in having performed our duty, and the testimony of Christ to our faithfulness in the great judgment, is all the comfort a christian can now be sure of, and what he ought to be contented with.

There are many prayers sent to the throne of grace for your Lordship, that you may want neither wisdom nor steadiness in a place so eminent, and circumstances so perplexing. That promise (which hath somewhat of a rule in it) is applicable to you, The integrity of the upright shall guide them.

Prov. xi.  
3.

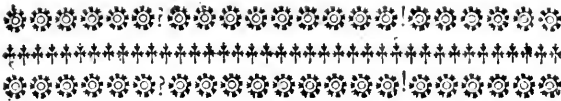
That you may find this accomplished to publick conviction, and a comfortable event of your present employ, is the unfeigned desire of,

Your Lordship's

most humble Servant,

*Daniel Williams.*





## I C O R. iv. 20.

*For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power.*



THE apostle, in the latter SERM. part of this chapter, doth I. more than hint at some attempts against the credit of his person and ministry; the men he points at as guilty of this design, did not only wear a christian name, but pretended to a more than common zeal and light, while they imputed to the apostle some contemptible plainness and remissness.

HE not only vindicates himself, but threatneth an enquiry into these plausible pretences of theirs; resolving, on that enquiry, to determine whether that extraordinary profession was expressive of the power of godliness, or only a dead image; and whether the improved doctrines they boasted of, were the great essential truths of the gospel, and those delivered in a manner conducive to the advancement of God's kingdom. This is the sense of *ver.*

SERM. MY text is a reason of that designed

I. enquiry; and the force of it, as a reason,  
 ~~~~~ lay in these implications.

ALL this noise may be without any substance; the power of religion lies in somewhat above these pretences; the kingdom of God, which is the only valuable concern, consists not in externals, but in the power of religion; and it is most suspicious that these censorious pretenders (who obstruct my ministry) are little sharers in, or friends to the kingdom of God, after all this *fair shew in the flesh*.

ON these accounts the apostle's search, in order to a judgment of these mens profession and doctrines, was justifiable and necessary; and his practice, with the reason of it, calls all christians, tho' not to busy or uncharitable surmises, yet to a prudent examination of men that deal with them in the concernment of their souls: and more especially if they challenge the graces and truths we have received, and pretend to outdo and blast the labours of such we have profited by, as if none but they could be instruments of conferring grace, or investing us in the privileges of the church.

THIS examination is frequently enjoined, 1 *John* iv. 1. 1 *Thess.* v. 21. God hath given us a rule to judge of men and doctrines by, and some degree of abilities to judge of them by that rule.

IT is true, *Paul*, as an inspired person, had an extraordinary spirit of discerning, which ordinary christians cannot pretend to. Nevertheless God hath appointed private christians to try all doctrines by the scriptures, *Acts* xvii. 11. and directed our judgment of men by their *fruits*, *Matt.* vii. 16, 20. As men, we are not utterly incapable to compare and judge of these; as believers, there is an additional fitness for it by the life and anointing they have received. This spiritual life is not so void of sensation, but that *the ears can try words*; and God's promise is a security, that the anointing shall prevent their finally erring in fundamental truths, *1 John* ii. 27. SERM. I.

THESE things must excuse any christian from blindly giving up his faith, or hope, to such who can most daringly pretend to dominion over them. He ought to plead a judgment of discretion as his right, in what concerns his own faith and practice. And tho' some (whose designs are thereby justly suspected) decry this private judgment, let not us be discouraged from the use of it: For it is a more publick judgment, if true, than the mistaken sense of a whole council: It is what distinguisheth us from brutes in our deliberate acts; yea, they that condemn it, are forced to use this private judgment in the choice of their church and guides.

BUT

SERM. BUT I shall wave any further regard to

I. the connection of the text with the rest  
 of the chapter, and improve it as a rule,  
 to judge our own state by, under this plain  
 position,

Doct. *The kingdom of God is not in word,  
 but in power.*

WITH what concern ought we to attend to a truth which is designed to discriminate the very professors of christianity; and which implies, that many such professors are deceived in their chief concerns in religion, as being content without that power wherein the kingdom of God consisteth? Yet what is more usual with fallen man, than to debase religion to what his own lusts and fancy will prescribe? He is scarce persuadable that God will exact more from him than a carnal idle spirit is disposed to allow. We are content that some external homage be paid to the Almighty; and that some slight attempts and attainments are intended; but we confine our religious endeavours within those limits, not regarding that real godliness consists chiefly in such dispositions and acts as express the supreme interest of God in the soul, and the effectual energy of his grace and power in a renewed mind.

THE text tends to awaken deep convictions in you, that God hath not admitted vain man into the consult about the nature

or standard of his kingdom; nor will he model the statutes of it according to a sinner's judgment and hopes: But whether they will be his subjects, or continue their rebellion, his kingdom truly is, and will shortly appear to be, *not in word, but in power.* SERM.  
I.

## S E C T. I.

I SHALL give you, I. Some account of what is intended by the kingdom of God.

2. I SHALL under the same heads explain, how it is *not in word, but in power*; and evidence the truth of the doctrine.

I BEGIN with some account of the kingdom of God. This hath various acceptations in scripture, and denotes several things more than is designed by this kingdom in my text. As,

1. God's providential government over all things.

*This is that kingdom which ruleth over all.* He hath not so left the creatures to their own conduct, but that he secureth his blessed ends by his management of them. This is that dominion, to be subject to which no man's consent is asked; to which all are obedient against their repugnant inclinations and deepest contrivance. Sinners in their utmost neglects of the revealed will of God, yea, in their most notorious violations of them, are subject

SERM. subject to this providence, and serve its

I. purposes: *Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee, and the remainder thereof thou shalt restrain.* By this kingdom's influence it is, that blessed effects do oft proceed from dismal causes; and what seems very destructive, doth contribute to the best event. We may well say of this kingdom, it is *in power*, it being the irresistible execution of what the divine will hath decreed; yea, is the effective will of the supreme disposer of all things.

Pf. lxxvi.  
10.

2. THE glorious state, rewards, and privileges of God's subjects in the highest heavens: That's the kingdom of glory, and compleats the things begun in this kingdom of grace. There God ruleth, and is obeyed in a manner incomprehensible to us: We shall be subjects, and yet *kings*.

Rev. i. 6. We must always pay our homage, but in princely robes. Bodies and souls will bear an amazing resemblance of Christ our

Phil. iii.  
21.

1 Joh. 32.

1 Cor. xv.  
28.

head. And tho' the divine essence, whose glory all the mediatorial contrivances of Christ's kingdom referred to, *will be all in all*; yet we shall behold in the human nature of Christ, as great manifestations of God as men or angels were capable of. The divine glory shineth in the face of Christ above all other things; and he seemeth designed to be a mediator of fruition, for the improvement of the glory of angels, as well as the other glorified subjects

subjects of that kingdom. The glory of God doth lighten that heavenly city, and *the lamb is the light thereof.* By all our present improvements, we labour for, and hasten to that kingdom; and therein terminate all the blessed methods we are under in this our lower state.

SERM.  
I.  
Rev. xxi.  
23.

BUT the kingdom of God, which my text refers to, is the moral government of God among men on earth, especially as he is King Redeemer, in and by the Lord Jesus.

THERE are three things belonging to this kingdom, which are severally called by this same term, *the kingdom of God*, and each of them may well be intended by the Holy Ghost in my text.

- I. THE gospel, which containeth the laws, institutions, and charter of this kingdom.
- II. THE graces and actings which qualify men as subjects of this kingdom, and express God's authority over them, and their loyalty to him.
- III. ALL true believers, who are the real subjects that make up this kingdom.

I MIGHT insist on some other things, but these will be of greatest use to us, and are principally intended.

I. THE

SERM. I. THE kingdom of God is the *gospel*,  
 I. which containeth the laws, institutions,  
 ~~~~~ and charter of our King Redeemer.

So it is taken, *Matt. xxi. 43. The kingdom of God shall be taken from you*; that is, the *gospel*. But when I use the word *gospel*, I do not mean the *gospel* in opposition to the *Mosaical* dispensation, as it is oft used. The *gospel* administration, in this sense, is often called, in the evangelists, the *kingdom of heaven*, as being a fairer, more full, and powerful edition of the institutes of this kingdom, than was published before; tho' yet the kingdom commenced, and had its essential laws and rules long before Christ's coming. But I mean the *gospel* as a law of grace, in opposition to the law of works delivered to man in his innocent state.

To direct your conceptions in this important truth, you must consider, 1. That God had, and exercised a supreme authority over men, as he was their creator; he enacted laws, for our observance, well-becoming his nature to injoin, and our condition to obey. For some time we continued loyal in *Adam*, our common head; but, by his fall, mankind became rebellious against God; and, by the penal sanction of the law of works, and the rule fixed for man's propagating his condition with his nature, we lost our original power to obey, and forfeited our right to all that  
 good



good which was promised to perfect obedience; yea, are exposed to the utmost misery in that curse denounced against the least sin. This is the condition of all men as related to God as our creator; though he has lost nothing of his right to command, or punish his rebellious creatures.

SERM.  
I.

Gal. iii.  
10.

How justly might our injured Lord have confined our state to these methods? Who might complain, if God had finally executed *that judgment which pass on all men unto condemnation?* The irremediable state of devils, on their rebellion, may awaken mankind to ascribe all new overtures for happiness to the riches of the grace of God: yea, every part of that curse which exerts itself by any degree of misery in soul or body, should convince us that it is of mere mercy we are not bound in chains to the judgment of the great day.

Rom. v.  
16, 18.

2. IMMEDIATELY after the fall, God erected a new kingdom in and by Christ as Redeemer. In the curse denounced against the serpent, he opened a door of grace to sinful man. He treats with us in order to our recovery, and resolved eventually to save the elect; yet this was to be in no other way, but by becoming subject to the rules of this new kingdom. This kingdom is owing to Christ as the procuring cause; and the management thereof was deputed to him. He ma-

B

naged

SERM. naged it in a variety of successive admini-

I. ministrations; as lawgiver he enacted terms of life, rules of practice, directions for worship and discipline among his subjects. He published blessed promises, and denounced threats against the unper-suadable.

No man was ever saved but by the rules of this new kingdom, and owes it to the grace and merits of Christ; tho' every dispensation did not give equal notices of him, or that explicate knowledge of God-man Redeemer, notwithstanding that sacrifices pointed to him, and sundry prophetick revelations foretold him.

3. ALL mankind are under all the laws of this kingdom, as far as they can attain to the knowledge of them.

THEY are obliged to obey the terms of life, which are enjoined by the Redeemer in their respective age and place. Life is offered to them, and they are saveable on those terms. Sinners now act a new rebellion, as well as bind the first curse on themselves, when they refuse obedience to the remedial law. Yea, they aggravate their ruin by their wilful obstinacy, which is a great part of the undoing impotency of mankind. Awful is that complaint of Christ, wherein he leaves the blood of lost man on their own heads: *Ye will not come to me, that ye may have life.* Refusers of Christ add to their rebellion against the

the Creator, most notorious disloyalty against the Redeemer, who hath an additional claim to dominion over us: For, *We are bought with a price, and therefore should glorify him with our bodies, and our souls, which are his.* And he had a respect to this new-acquired authority in his death; for, *to this end he died, and rose again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.*

SERM.  
I.

i Cor. vi.  
10.

Rom. xiv.

9.

ALL of us are further engaged to observe all the laws of his house, the rules of worship and practice, yea, every institution of his. There is an amazing sovereignty in the different promulgation of these to the world: But to give my sense thereof, would exceed the limits of one discourse.

II. THE kingdom of God denotes the *graces* and actings which qualify men as subjects of God's kingdom, and express God's authority over them, and their loyalty to him. Thus you must understand that scripture, *The kingdom of God is not in meat and drink, but in righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost;* q. d. the dominion of God over christians, and their loyal state of obedience to God, lieth not in your poor differences about meat, or such low matters. Therefore judge not others, who may differ from you; nor be you satisfied with your own

Rom. xiv

17.

SERM. usages in these less momentous things, as

I. an evidence of your christian state: God's kingdom is in far higher matters, even in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. How can any man, after so plain a signification of the divine will, place all his religion in trifles, or sacrifice the undoubted concernments of God's kingdom, to disputable things of far less moment? Peace alone, by this text, is more valuable than all the things for which some have long divided the church. This is the kingdom of God as erected in the heart, and is inclusive of whatever denotes sincere subjection to Christ. To this belongs every grace which is essential to a real christian, and all those acts which are necessary to express the prevalency of such graces over all opposite vices and defects.

THIS kingdom is advanced to the degrees of mens improvement in the divine life, and the dominion of God over their designs and actings.

III. THE kingdom of God is used for all true *believers*; who are the real subjects that make up this kingdom. These are they, in whom the former graces abide, and do acknowledge the authority of the Lord Redeemer: They are *all translated into the kingdom of Christ*. By their consent to the terms of the gospel, they who were

were aliens, are naturalized; and the out-  
lawry is reversed which stood against them  
as rebellious subjects. This kingdom is of  
the same extent with the church mystical;  
and as these subjects multiply, it is en-  
larged.

ITS true, that all who credibly profess  
subjection to Christ, are parts of this king-  
dom, as it is visible and external; they are  
subjects in the judgment of charity, and  
as to external privileges. This Christ as-  
serts in that parable, *The kingdom of hea-*  
*ven is like unto a net cast into the sea, and*  
*gathered of every kind; which when it was*  
*full, they drew to shore; and gathered the*  
*good into vessels, but cast the bad away.*  
You see that hypocrites and sincere belie-  
vers are of the kingdom; but hypocrites  
belong to it, as they wear the visage of the  
sincere; and therefore the name of subjects  
belongs to them only equivocally; where-  
as, in the most proper sense, it is confined  
to men heartily devoted to Christ. He is  
eminently *King of saints*, even of such who  
have unfeignedly subscribed his covenant,  
*Psal. l. 5.* All such are esteemed by him  
for his people; and they, yea, only they,  
can say concerning God, *The Lord is our*  
*lawgiver, the Lord is our king, he will*  
*save us.*

I CAN hardly forbear to bewail the dan-  
gerous condition of many men professing  
christianity: Crowds will be found rebels

SERM. in heart, dead as to a spiritual life, whilst

I. *they have a name to live*; and obeying  
 their lusts, when they bow the knee to  
 Jesus.

Rev. iii. 2.

HAVING finished this account of the kingdom of God, I proceed to explain how it is not *in word*, but *in power*: And with the explication I will insert the proof of the doctrine, That the kingdom of God, in the three fore-mentioned instances, is not *in word*, but *in power*.

WHATEVER mens conceits be of this kingdom, it will be found to consist not in weak appearances, but in effectual realities. It attaineth the ends of the constitution; it is expressive of a divine and supernatural virtue, and is not a dead image, and carnal matter.

I. THE *gospel* of Christ our Redeemer is effectual, by the *Spirit*, to recover fallen men, and to govern and improve them unto eternal life.

THIS is not an empty sound, it consists not in low or weak matters, but is life and power: Every command is enstamped with the authority of the Lord of heaven and earth, and is not the faint advice of poor mortals. Men disobey them at their utmost peril: Life and death is annexed to them by a sovereign, who is able, and resolved, to execute his royal sanction. They have a virtue in them to dispose

Heb. xii.

25.

us to obedience, and are holy, spiritual, and perfect. SERM.  
I.

THE *matters* revealed by the gospel are not vain conceits, but glorious realities; they are beyond the light of nature to conceive; they shine in a light fit to illuminate the darkened minds of sinners; and when they are apprehended, they must inspire with the highest resentments, and make lasting impressions on the soul.

THE *promises* are not doubtful words, but great and sure; they contain all that is good; they are founded on the veracity of God, who cannot lie; and on the virtue of Christ's undertakings and death, which cannot be disappointed. Yea, they are mighty to dispense the grace contained therein to needy souls, and are the effectual instrument to invest men in all the blessings of the covenant, when the condition is performed by them.

THE *sacraments*, and all institutions of Christ as to worship or discipline, are powerful to improve our graces, mortify our lusts, maintain our converses with God, and dispense joy and comfort thro' the operation of God by them.

THE *arguments* urged by the gospel, are fit to move, and have all in them necessary to an instrument of moral government.

THE *presence* of God is promised, and the efficacy of all these means argue the

SERM. Spirit's operation by them; they are the

I. vehicle of the Holy Ghost; and therefore  
 when we are profitable to the souls of  
 1 Thess. i. men, our *gospel cometh to them not in word*  
 5. *only, but in power, and in the Holy Ghost.*

THIS gospel is called the *arm of God*  
*revealed, the scepter of his kingdom, and*  
 2 Cor. x. *rod of his strength.* This affords *those wea-*  
 4. 5. *pons which are mighty through God to the*  
*pulling down of strong holds, and bringing*  
*every thought to the obedience of Christ.*  
 God hath appointed it to raise dead souls,  
 and subdue rebellious sinners to his go-  
 vernment. In the institutions of the gos-  
 pel God meets us, and blesteth us; he  
 communicateth light and strength, where-  
 by the weak christian is enabled to perse-  
 vere.

WHAT trophies of its power are in hea-  
 ven and earth? How many great sinners  
 hath it changed? Every age and place  
 where it cometh, yield a testimony of its  
 energy; restraining some, turning others  
 from idols, to serve the living God; from  
 a carnal life to a spiritual. This hath  
 made the ambitious and covetous to post-  
 pone all to the concerns of an invisible  
 world, and sacrifice their former idols to  
 the profession of truth.

How many weak christians hath it  
 strengthened to do, and suffer, unexpected  
 things? What joy hath it infused into  
 fadned hearts? On these accounts the  
*gospel*



*gospel is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth.* SERM. I.

2. THE *graces* and *actings* which qualify the subjects of Christ, are so *spiritual*, real, and sublime, as to argue a divine life, and the dominion of God in the soul. Rom. i. 16.

WHAT this kingdom requireth and effecteth, are not bare pretences, weak attempts, slight attainments, or external performances; these are too mean for God to injoin or accept.

HE doth not paint a dead carcase, but raise it to life; he createth a new heart, wherein his laws are prevalent dispositions, and communicateth a nature too divine to derive its birth from a lower original than regeneration by the Spirit. John iii. 3.

HENCE all real christians are said to be *born of God, and partakers of the divine nature*. Our crying, Lord, Lord, and all external alterations, signify little in this *new man, which after God is created in righteousness, and true holiness*. I will hint at some particulars which have the chief place in this kingdom, and you'll see that none of them is in *word, but in power*. 1 John v. 4. 2 Pet. i. 4. Eph. iv. 24.

*Faith* is not a faint assent to the truths of the gospel, but such a realizing of invisible objects, reliance on Christ, and consent to him the Redeemer, as purifieth the heart, worketh by love, and derives from Christ fit supports in the way of truth and holiness to eternal life.

SERM. GOSPEL *repentance* is not a bare sorrow for sin, but a true hatred and forsaking of sin on gospel motives.

OUR *love* to God is not in a few kind or sleighty thoughts of God, but a prevalent esteem of God, and delight in him, as the supreme good; and this expressing itself in sincere obedience to his strictest laws, and zeal for his interests when most despised. *If a man love me, saith Christ, he will keep my words.* If we love any thing equal to him, it is a hating of him by the rules of this kingdom.

John xiv.  
23.

John iv.  
24.

Pfal. lxii.  
8.

Iſa. xxix.  
13.

1 Pet. iii.  
21.


THE *worship* which Christ insisteth on, and disposeth all his subjects for, *is in spirit and in truth*; it is no sleight performance, nor by human inventions. Prayer must be a fervent pouring out of the soul to God, and not lip-labour. Hearing the word is of no esteem with him, unless the heart be obedient to the word, *Jam. i. 25.*

*Baptism* is not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God: that is, baptism lies in the soul's true correspondence to, and performance of our baptismal profession and vows, and not a mere sprinkling of water in an external act of the minister.

John v.  
53, 63.

RECEIVING the Lord's-supper is not the bare partaking of the consecrated elements; but communion with our crucified Christ, by faith and love, under the quicknings of the Spirit. We see that chiefly

chiefly regardeth the inward worship of SERM.  
the soul, and not bodily performances. I.

THE same power extends to every thing,   
wherein religion is concerned. If this king-  
dom of grace obtaineth in the soul, God's  
authority is set above our wills, humours,  
and lusts; satan is dethroned; sin hath Rom. vi.  
no dominion over us; spiritual things are 6, 14.  
relished above sensitive good; we are  
brought to live to God, and not to carnal  
self; and there is an impartial respect to Psal. xviii.  
all God's commandments. 22.


To finish this particular, this kingdom  
consists of holy inclinations in the heart,  
and implies a degree of strength to act  
those inclinations. Here are not faint vel-  
ocities, and uneffectual desires or com-  
plaints; *but a spirit of power, of love, and* 2 Tim. i.  
*a sound mind,* whereby temptations are 7.  
in a good measure resisted, and holy ac-  
tions performed.

THIS is the model of the kingdom,  
this his gospel enjoineth, this his grace  
effecteth, and any thing below it would  
not improve a sinner to the holiness our  
Redeemer designed reconciled sinners to.  
God's kingdom never hath place, where  
any of these essentials are wanting, or  
where there is only some dead form of  
them.

3. BELIEVERS who are the *subjects*  
of God's kingdom, are not mere profes-  
sors of christianity, but truly *regenerate*  
and practical christians. **THEY**

SERM. THEY are of another spirit than what  
 I. they once were, or the rest of the world  
 continue yet to be; their extraction is  
 John i. 13. higher, *being born not of the will of the  
 flesh, or of the will of man, but of the  
 will of God.* They have far different ap-  
 prehensions of spiritual objects than a car-  
 nal mind is capable of. These practically  
 Eph. v. 4. know the great things of God in a spi-  
 ritual evidence, *being taught by him as the  
 truth is in Jesus.* They are a people made  
 Psal. cx. 3. *willing in the day of God's power.* Then  
 a mighty arm subdued their obstinacy  
 without violence, silenced their prejudices,  
 and made them obedient by agreeable in-  
 clinations to the law, and powerful con-  
 victions of God's authority and goodness.  
 Their religion is not in empty speculations.  
 As every truth tends to practice, so they feel  
 the power of truth. The objective *glory of*  
 2 Cor. iii. *Christ transformeth them into the same glory,*  
 18. *in their measure.* They walk with God,  
 whom the world knows not; they live  
 above what sinners doat on; to please and  
 honour God is their governing aim; to  
 keep a conscience void of offence towards  
 God and men, is their exercise; and work-  
 ing out their salvation is their chief busi-  
 ness; while, as pilgrims here, they are  
 waiting for the expected inheritance: *These*  
*live the life of Christ,* are acted by his Spi-  
 rit, which dwells in them by an abiding  
 relation, and are appointed for his glorious  
 purposes.

THEY

THEY are not hypocritical pretenders, tho' censured as cheats by such men whose corruptions represent all better pretences as hypocrisy. How much do the conceptions, designs, experiences, attainments and actings of these men exceed the rest of mankind? There is more piety in many of their common actions, than in the religious performances of others. These are they whom the apostle describes as a *chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, fit and design'd to shew forth the praises of him, who called them out of darkness into his marvellous light.* SERM. I. 

CAN any of you doubt these express characters of all sincere christians? Of these, and only these, Christ's kingdom doth consist. There are such persons in the world, or God hath no kingdom in it. Such as are wholly otherwise in their temper and actings, are rebels and aliens in God's esteem, and declared incapable of eternal glory.

PERHAPS some of you may profanely scoff at this account, as if it were impossible to be thus sincere and spiritual; or it were needless to be thus pious, just, temperate, or heavenly-minded: but be it known to you, that you will shortly be convinced, yourselves ought to be such men; and passionately wish all this could have been truly said of you.

SERM. I HAVE designedly given the charac-


I. ter of the subjects of this kingdom in  
 ~~~~~ scripture-expressions, lest any should esteem  
 it a fancy, which they owe not that regard to, as to judge of themselves by it. But I hope you cannot shut your eye against the testimony of God, nor put any gloss on those scriptures which can prevent your suspecting your own condition. Must not you think now, how few are members of this kingdom? How unlike am I to these subjects of Christ, when I never found any of these things, nor proposed them to myself as things necessary to be attained by me? What a change must there be in my heart and life, before such  
 Col. i. 12. a wretch can be *meet* to be partaker of the inheritance with the saints in light, as every real christian is?

## S E C T. II.

IT remaineth that I apply more particularly such things as you have heard of the nature and power of this kingdom.

I. WHAT you have heard of the gospel may direct us in our judgment of a *gospel-ministry*.

WE ministers are appointed by Christ to persuade sinners both to yield subjection to God Redeemer, and then to walk in all due loyalty towards him. All our administrations

nistrations must be managed by those laws SERM.  
which respect our office, otherwise we af- I.  
front the Lord Jesus, in whose name we   
act, and become useless to men, for whose  
good we are designed.

THE *matter* of our preaching ought to  
be the gospel, *even the kingdom of God,* ACTS xxxviii  
*and the things which concern our Lord Je-* 31.  
*sus Christ*; the *manner* ought to be such  
as most conduceth to render it effectual  
to those ends for which it is published.  
Ministers are to do their utmost, that this  
gospel may come not in word only, but  
in power, and that all may be brought to  
a compliance with it.

THEREFORE we ought not to make ACTS xix.  
state-affairs, human conceits or dictates of 8.  
men, the matter of our preaching. The  
rules of the covenant of works, nor the  
law of nature as under a respect to that  
covenant, are not to be urged by us; tho'  
the law of nature, as a rule of our ac-  
tions, is still of force in this kingdom of  
God Redeemer, and so must be insisted  
on.

THE great things we ought to per-  
suade, are the things God hath made the  
terms of life to *redeemed* man. The me-  
thods of reconciliation must be intended;  
for God now dealeth with men not only  
as his rational creatures, but as fallen sin-  
ners, under new overtures for life. Sin-  
ners must be directed by us to Christ, as  
he

SERM. he on whose shoulders this new government  
 I. is, and in whom there is grace, strength,  
 and pardon, which our apostacy made impossible by the law of works.

Rom. ii.  
 16.

THE great doctrines of regeneration, repentance, faith in Christ, love of God, and sincere obedience (as explained by the gospel-standard) are the things to be urged as conditions of salvation. Should we mistake these terms of life, or neglect to persuade your compliance therewith, other things would be vain, and leave you dead in your sins. What profit is it that you learn and do all things else, if you submit not to the terms of the gospel? For this is the lowest rule of God's judgment by which the salvation of any sinner is possible: *He will judge the secrets of all men by the gospel.*

1 Cor. ii.  
 4.

THE manner also of a minister's preaching of these truths is considerable. We should publish these in the greatest evidence; and in a way most probable to be attended with the influence of the Spirit. Much of that divine power which persuades you, is exerted in fitting the preacher to plead with you. Ministers of the gospel are therefore to avoid *the enticing words of man's wisdom, and must preach in the demonstration of the Spirit, and of power.* We must represent things in the greatest plainness, urge gospel-arguments with the fullest evidence and importunity, *approving*



*ing ourselves to every man's conscience to the utmost, for their conviction and persuasion.* It is not unavailable to you, that the minister in all his work is under the power of what he preacheth, and doth all in a humble dependance on the blessing and power of the Holy Ghost.

SERM.

I.

THIS ministry answers the gospel description; this hath a tendency and fitness to subdue souls to Christ; this is that the Lord Jesus (who ordinarily works according to the aptitude of means) doth usually bless. Such a ministry is a sign that God intends the enlargement of his kingdom; and according to what appears of it among us, we may expect proportionable effects. The Lord bring the vain minds of hearers to approve this sort of preaching, and convince us ministers of all levity and mistakes in our ministrations.

2. WHAT you have heard of the nature of grace, and loyal actings towards Christ, may sharply *reprove* all such who seem by principle to place religion in any thing short of this power. Its needful they lock up the scriptures (those royal statutes of Christ) who dare place christianity in external rites, tho' the heart and life be un sanctified. Its disloyalty to Christ to exchange his institutions for human inventions: Yea, its disloyalty to exclude internal worship for external; and define graces and spiritual acts by no more than

Col. ii.  
18, 19, 23.

SERM. a dead image of them. How must they

I. debase religion, who commend pomp for  
 ~~~~~ spiritual devotion, and make carnal obser-  
 vances serve instead of gospel faith and  
 love? Surely they little regard the autho-  
 rity and constitutions of Christ, who ac-  
 count attrition to be repentance, and repre-  
 sent pilgrimages, confession, penance, and  
 blind obedience to the church, &c. too like  
 an atonement for the absence of the essen-  
 tial terms of life. What can more ex-  
 pressly contradict men's pleasing God by  
 mere external acts or profession, than my  
 text doth? But, alas! the doctrine of *opus  
 operatum* is too natural to a dead sinner,  
 to be confined within the walls where first  
 avowed. All are too apt to throw off du-  
 ties as a penance, and think the eternal  
 Spirit is satisfied with bodily homage.  
 Many judge that ordinances edify them  
 as a mere charm, without any due exer-  
 cise of soul in them. A mistake in this  
 essential point, is the reason also why many  
 jeer at the graces of God, promise life to  
 a just and civil demeanour, and scoff at  
 holiness as preciseness. The like effects of  
 a carnal spirit is men's esteeming regenera-  
 tion to be no more than external baptism,  
 when that is but a visible representation of  
 the nature of it, and a seal and instrument  
 of investiture in gospel blessings, on sup-  
 position that we are inwardly regenerated.  
 What a gross conceit is it, that conversion

is but a turning from a gross infidel's state, by a bare external profession of christianity, tho' the mind be still unrenewed, and the heart unimpressed by a divine principle? From these sentiments then ridicule all pretences to those things which the scriptures expressly declare concerning every believer, as praying in the Spirit, communion with God, union to Christ, spiritual joy, &c. tho' the things are intelligible by any that are judicious, and experienced by such as have any converse by faith with God and spiritual things. Its pity that a profane spirit should arraign the matters peculiar to a life so far above its self; especially when God hath told us,

*A natural man cannot know the things of God, because they are spiritually discerned.* 1 Cor. ii. 14

But whilst they must be *foolishness* to them, *wisdom will be justified by its children*, as Luke vii. 35 better advocates and fitter judges.

NEVERTHELESS the devil attains a destructive end by these notions; for his dominion is supported, and poor sinners are secure in a state of rebellion against Christ, whilst they flatter themselves as subjects to him, because they do a few trifles which neither satan nor their lusts forbid, and custom, interest, or natural conscience persuade to. How will any soul among you, who stands guilty of this charge, dare to look the blessed Redeemer in the face? What terror will surprize you, when you

SERM. are accused by him as disloyal in your very

I. principles, and asserters of that for religion  
 whereby God's sovereignty over the heart  
 is excluded, and all real actings of grace  
 unprovided for? You have reproached that  
 which God lays the greatest stress on,  
 which his kingdom chiefly consists in, and  
 his saints most value themselves by.


BEFORE I proceed to the exhortations  
 I design, its needful to insert two *cautions*  
 that may obviate our abuse of this subject.

1st *Caution.* Do not deny this power  
 of religion, concerning any person or party,  
 without manifest grounds.

CHARITY binds you to think all are  
 truly religious that profess to be so, unless  
 their defects or works palpably blast their  
 pretences, or their profession be nullified  
 by a direct contradiction. As the power  
 of religion should not be sacrificed to a ce-  
 remony, so lesser faults do not warrant us  
 to accuse men as wanting the power of  
 godliness. Whatever is consistent with the  
 habitual subjection of a soul to Christ, can-  
 not justify our excluding that soul out of  
 Christ's kingdom. We may say, yea must  
 affirm of men differing from us in many  
 things, *the same Christ is their Lord and*  
*ours.* Peace and love are essentials in Christ's  
 kingdom; and shall we challenge our own  
 interest by being censorious; or enviously  
 narrow the dominion of our blessed Re-  
 deemer?

1 Cor. i.  
 2.

2d *Caution*

2d *Caution*. DESPISE not the external SERM.  
institutions of Christ under pretence of I.  
this power; the power and spirit of Christ   
concur with his ordinances, and the life  
and vigour of our graces are exerted in  
those ordinances, and nourished by them.

THAT spirit is a delusion which puts  
men above divine appointments; and the  
guilty are as truly superstitious as the greatest  
formalist. Whilst we are subjects of Christ's  
kingdom here below, we must attend the  
ordinances of the lower state of this king-  
dom; and divine institutions are parts of  
this kingdom; which though it be not in  
word, so as to exclude the power, yet it  
lies in power as inclusive of a christian Acts xxxviii  
profession and external ordinances. 19, 20.

THE next improvement I shall make  
of the text, is by way of *exhortation*;  
wherein I shall regard the kingdom of  
God, as the power thereof lies in graces,  
and acts expressive of a divine life, and  
the governing authority of God in the soul.  
This includes the two other particulars;  
for these are the effects of the power of  
the gospel, these answer the spiritual rules  
and demands of the gospel; and because  
of these the subjects of Christ's kingdom  
are not hypocrites, but truly regenerate,  
and practical christians.

I. BE throughly convinced that the  
kingdom of God *is* in these graces and  
vital acts, and can consist in nothing

38 *The Kingdom of God in Power.*

SERM. lower. I have given you undoubted

I. proof of this, if you will believe the  
 gospel beyond your own fancy, or satan's  
 suggestions. And whether you will en-  
 large your judgment to God's decision or  
 no, the time is near when this great King  
 Rom. ii. *will judge the secrets of your hearts and*  
 16. *lives, by this very gospel rule.*

ITS undoing to most professors of chris-  
 tianity, that they fondly persuade them-  
 selves the demands of God are not so  
 high and exact, as truly they are: Its true,  
 indeed, he makes no legal perfection to be  
 the condition of a right to life; but yet he  
 enjoins a spiritual life and faith, (exten-  
 sively taken) in order to our interest in  
 John iii. Christ, and to salvation on his account.  
 36.

METHINKS you can hardly, in a seri-  
 ous frame, conceive how any thing below  
 real grace and vital acts should serve your  
 turn. Consider the glorious nature of God,  
 and can mere external performances be  
 suitable to him, either to injoin or accept?  
 Mal. i. 14. Would Christ have died to raise dead sin-  
 ners to no more conformity to God than  
 an unholy heart, and hypocritical actings,  
 amount to? Are the designs of the gospel,  
 and the attested influences of the Spirit,  
 answer'd by a dead soul, or formal duty?  
 Judge you whether an ungodly, stupid,  
 graceless professor of christianity, can, ei-  
 ther here or in eternity, serve the purposes  
 for which God erects this kingdom among  
 men?

men? What delight can his holy nature take in such? What service or glory can he and his Christ have by such? Yea, what satisfaction can such men have in God or heaven? These, and the like considerations, may well awaken you to juster apprehensions of this matter, and convince you that the kingdom of God must lie in this *power*. And if it be needful to add more, consider wherein can the kingdom of Satan and dominion of sin consist, but in the want of these gracious qualities, neglect of those acts, and the prevalency of what is opposite to them?

SET therefore this standard before the eye of thy soul, as that which thou must examine thyself by, and be conformable to, if thou desirest to belong to this kingdom of the Redeemer.

*Labour* industriously for, and rest not contented till you have attained, this power of religion. *Exhort. 2.*

I DO, in the name of your Redeemer, press you to get the graces, and perform those acts which argue a spiritual life, and the restoration of God's image and authority in your souls. Be christians in truth as well as in name; let no external performance or profession content you; see that your wills be subject to God, that your lives be regulated by his laws, and all your religious acts inspired with a divine power. This is the principal mat-

SERM. *ter* we are to treat of with you, and what

I. you are chiefly concerned to attend to. To  
 accomplish this, it is, that you are entrusted with the means of grace, and yet spared after so long provoking obstinacy, which is more aggravated by your treacherous pretensions.

THAT I may enforce this exhortation, I shall desire you to apply to yourselves these few motives.

*Motive 1.* — You pretend and *engage* to no less than this power of religion by your christianity.

WHAT you despise in others, and neglect in yourselves, even this you pretend to, and have solemnly promised. Do not you profess to be the subjects of Christ? Have not you renounced the world, the flesh, and the devil, and covenanted to fight under Christ's banner? And ought you not to be, and do all this truly? Renounce all these rivals with Christ, and he must then reign in power. Can you think that the covenant you have sealed so oft at the Lord's-table, engageth you to no more than external profession? When you stipulated with Father, Son, and Spirit, was no more intended, than that you would pay them a slight bodily worship? Sure you profess as much sincere subjection as the strictest, in professing yourselves christians; and are not you hypocrites then, whilst your souls are unregenerate, and your lives not governed by the laws of Christ?



Christ? Oh! tremble to think *that you* SERM.  
*profess to know, and yet in works deny him.* I.

Your hearts breathe rebellion against God, Tit. i. 16.  
whilst you seem loyal to him. What  
agreeableness to thy name, doth a covetous,  
intemperate, carnal, irreligious spirit and  
life bear? Renounce the name, or else be  
and do what that name is designed for.

How sad will the thoughts of thy state  
be, when thou findest thyself branded by  
the heart-searching God, as one *that bath*  
*a form of godliness, but denying the power* 2 Tim. iii.  
*thereof.* The word we render form, is 5.

Μόρφοσις, q. d. they have the visage or ap-  
pearance of true piety: thou wilt be found  
a virgin, without oil; at the feast, with-  
out a wedding-garment; the son that said  
to his father, I will work in the vineyard,  
but faileth to do so. Surely what induceth  
thee to profess to be a devout christian,  
should encline thee to be so.

2. ANY thing short of this power of  
religion, will *avail* you nothing, but  
greatly damage you.

You are enemies in God's account,  
whatever you perform, and he will treat  
you as such when the time of retribution  
cometh. How wilt thou, Oh rebellious  
christian, endure that sentence? *Bring* Luke xix,  
*these my enemies, that would not that I* 17.  
*should reign over them, and slay them be-*  
*fore me.* What a loss wilt thou sustain,  
when thy gold becomes dross, when thy  
know-

SERM. knowledge, duties, yea, all thy religion,

I. is vain? Oh! that so much should be attained in vain, and done to no purpose! You will find, that if your graces be not sincere, they will not save; yea, and if they partake not of this power, they are but gilded vices: Your feigned faith is but unbelief; your pretended love is enmity; your partial obedience is rebellion; and will God reward, nay, must not God severely punish, unbelieving; irreconcilable, rebellious professors of christianity, and give you a portion with the most profane? Nay, your guilt is aggravated, and your woes will be the greater. What profit will you reap by orthodox principles, while you are hypocrites in heart? Church-membership will expose to the forest rebukes; for if *the children of the kingdom perish, they are cast into outer darkness.*

Matt. xi.  
23.

Matt. viii.  
12.

At least pity yourselves. Why should you be at any pains, if you will not do enough to bring you to heaven? Can any thing on this side *glory* be the reward you intend by being religious? Why then will you not be so religious as to obtain that glory? Oh! mock God no longer, delude thy own soul no more; thou art almost a christian, be altogether so; or the convictions and helps that have almost persuaded thee, will aggravate thy ruin when thou fallest into hell, from a pitch so much

much higher than the *Atheist* and *Pagan*. SERM.

3. VERY *plausible* appearances of religion may be without this power. I.

MEN may appear sincere to others, yea, to themselves, and yet be hypocrites. There is a very probable form, without the power of godliness. Every living grace hath its dead image; thy heart may be hard when groans abound; thou mayest cry loud, and oft to God, and thy soul never pray; thy affections may be on earth, when thy eyes are lifted up to heaven. So inward is the life of grace, and so deceitful are our hearts, that we can say, of the seemingly greatest christians, but as *Peter* did of *Silvanus*, a faithful brother, as I suppose. (For the supposition may regard that, as well as the uncertainty of his being *Peter's* messenger :) Yea, we are so subject to deceive ourselves, that we have need to pray, with *David*, *Lord, search me, and try me.* <sup>1 Pet. v. 12.</sup>

ALAS! how many, with *Alexander*, may have great zeal, and want integrity; promise much, and perform the contrary? You will be found virgins with lamps, and yet want oil; seem lively saints, and be dead sinners. We may, with bleeding hearts, consider, that very many have been not far from grace, and yet never attained it, because some one lust opposed it, or some one idol prevented it. It is a great thing to be truly religious. The best

SERM. best natural temper, the most splendid acts,  
 I. the exactest profession, are not infallible  
 ~~~~~ evidences of a man's being truly pious,  
 but are separable from saving grace.

Acts xx.  
 25.

You have need therefore of the strictest care and jealousy in dealing with your hearts. Oh! look to it, that your religion hath in it the undoubted characters of a spiritual life, and of God's kingdom being set up in you, in its very power. The hardest task is to arrive at this power of godliness, to get carnal self dethroned, and the government of Christ cheerfully submitted to. This kingdom, in its duties and privileges, hath been long preached to you; now God is importunate that you exclude not yourselves from the rewards of it, by rebelling against the laws and terms of it. Were you acquainted with the nature of Christ's kingdom, it would soon be desirable. The King is our rightful Lord, and not an usurper; he hath the tenderness of a father, is infinitely wise and good; he admits all his subjects to the state of children, yea, the dignity of kings. All the laws of it refer to our good, and tend to our perfection; and whatever is required of us, he is present to assist us in; yea, ready to forgive all weaknesses consistent with sincere endeavours: And can you refuse this easy yoke of Christ from day to day? Will you refuse this, that you may continue slaves to the devil,  
 and

and servants to your lusts? Oh! that even now you were made willing, and able, to submit to Christ, and inspired with that divine nature which agrees to this state; that is, even the heavenly kingdom begun. Oh! perish not in your misconceits and wilful disobedience, after all these pleadings.

SERM.

I.



3. *Improve* in the power of religion, if you have attained to any degree of it.

THERE are remains of weakness and disloyalty in the best of us, and so there's place for our utmost endeavours to become more suited to this happy state in our temper and behaviour. How much are we short of our fellow-subjects in light, strength, and love? *We are come to mount Zion, the city of the living God; to an innumerable company of angels, to the church of the first-born, and the souls of just men made perfect.* We serve the same Lord, we partake of the same nature, are admitted to the same relation, and we expect the same glory which our King doth design us to, as well as them. And must not these things cause a blush in us, that we are so remiss in our improvements? Can they fail to awaken our souls to proceed *from strength to strength*? Therefore let mortification be your work while any lusts remain. Be more spiritual in every duty, more renewed in your minds; and let all your works be more perfect. What should

Heb. xii.

22, 23.

Pf. lxxxiv

7.

SERM. should be so much your concern, as that

I. the laws of Christ have a more absolute authority in you, that God's image impress the whole man, and your souls be more enlarged and lifted up in all the ways of this kingdom? Rest not till you find Christ rules alone, and that you entirely live to Christ under the very constraints of love to him. How happy will you be, when the very peace of God rules in your hearts, yea, so rule, as that it restrains all that may interrupt it, and command to all that can express and maintain it? When this is your frame, your delights will be more refined; you will now live much nigher to God, your *exceeding joy*, and have an *abundant entrance* to his palace above, when a few days are over. Resolve then that you will still grow up into Christ, till nothing inspires you but his life, and nothing be done by you but what is loyalty to him.

Psal. xliii.

4.

2Pet. i. 11.

4. VISIBLY *express* the sincerity of your subjection to God, and the efficacy of his grace in your souls. This is incumbent on all christians; but I shall apply myself more especially to you that are magistrates, and the occasion of this assembly. You do profess yourselves real subjects to Christ; evidence then that real christians are more fitted to serve their generation than other men. Let Christ govern by all your power, and his interests be advanced by you to the utmost

utmost of your talents. Convince the world, that nothing can allure or affright you from exact obedience to Christ's laws, and fidelity to his concerns. Christ's eye is on your hearts and behaviour in your present circumstances: The eyes of many of very different sorts are on you; yea, the credit of religion is concerned in your behaviour. And it is but a few days, when you must, with awakened spirits, review your present actings; it may be under afflictive dispensations, when thrust off your present stage: But, certainly, when you come to die, and appear before the tribunal of the Lord your judge. Therefore create not bitter reflections by selfish aims, sinful neglects, or unbecoming deviations. A tormenting conscience in that day, will not be countervailed by any present advantage. You are employed in a time that may evidence the utmost which a christian can do or endure. But whatever may be your exercise, let it be seen that you serve Christ with the same honourable thoughts of him, and devotedness to him, as ever. You have the same Lord, whose laws, authority, and interests, do not vary with the uncertain motions of this lower world, and whose concerns are of an infinitely higher nature than the poor and perishing toils of mortals.

THAT I may improve and enforce this exhortation, consider,

SERM. I. As christians, and as magistrates,  
 I. you are the *subjects* of Christ, and so owe  
 the utmost fidelity and serviceableness to  
 him. If you are real believers, you are of  
 his kingdom; and that admits none that  
 will not serve him without limitations.  
 Duty and gratitude bind you to act with  
 a supreme regard to Christ, and to all others  
 only in subordination to him: You must,  
 with *Joshua, follow him fully*. It ill be-  
 comes you to consult with flesh and blood:  
 For did not you covenant thus with Christ,  
 with *Joshua, follow him fully*. It ill be-  
 comes you to consult with flesh and blood:  
 For did not you covenant thus with Christ,  
*Gal. i. 16. Lord, do but save me, and I solemnly sur-  
 render myself to thee*. What tho' his service  
 may expose you to some acts of self-denial,  
 doth not he deserve that from you? Shall a  
 dying Christ endure so much for you, and  
 will you think a little contempt too much  
 to bear for him? Doth not he, in the midst  
 of his exalted glory in the heavens, in-  
 tercede for you? and can you, in a little  
 painted honour, forget to plead his cause?  
 Shall your mite (which also is his) be un-  
 employed for Christ, who daily lays out  
 his power, wisdom, and fulness, for every  
 believer's use?

As you are magistrates, you are ap-  
 pointed to the service of this Redeemer.  
 All power and judgment is committed to  
 him; magistracy is his ordinance, and  
 should be executed, in Christ's behalf, as  
 well as the ministry: He is *King of kings,  
 and Lord of lords*, and hath appointed the  
 rulers



rulers of the earth work in his kingdom, whether they attend it or no. Magistrates have the sword, as ministers have the word; they have the coercive power, we the persuasive; and Christ will as truly bring the unfaithful magistrate to an account for his neglects and mistakes, as the unfaithful minister.

2. YOUR sovereign Lord will prosper you, according to what he designs to effect in your day, and by your hands. You serve him who manageth all by his providence, and hath chalked out, in his purpose, what shall be executed in every age. *De jure*, the kingdoms of the earth are his from the first; but from age to age he is advancing mens acknowledgment of his dominion, and erecting a holy government in the world on the ruins of satan's kingdom. He hath a kingdom which all the powers of hell shall not extirpate the ru-  
der beginnings of, nor prevent its utmost growth. This kingdom lies in the dominion of light over darkness, truth over error, holiness over sin, pure gospel-worship over corrupt worship, and the interests of Jesus over all rivals. It includes the devotedness of earthly powers to Christ's service, and a national dedication to him as supreme Lord. This kingdom he enlargeth in set times, and towards the latter days more eminently, upon the desolations of *Paganism* and *Antichristianism*. This  
D happy

SERM.  
I.



Dan. vii.  
14.

Isa. xlix.  
7.

Zech. xiv.  
9, 16, 19.

Rev. xi.

SERM. happy time I live expecting, and rejoice in some hopeful, tho' awful, prognosticks of.



I T pleaseth Christ more eminently to employ his real subjects as his instruments to advance his interests by ; and they shall not want an anointing to fit and succeed them, let the work seem never so hard, and the success never so improbable.

Dan. xi.  
32.

IT'S not in you or me to allot ourselves our day or work, we must take that as our great Disposer hath allotted. This only is incumbent on you, that you fill up your places, and see that Christ wants no service he calls you to, and qualifies you for.

IT'S not without his counsel that you are at this season in the magistracy ; this he appointed you to, and hath some design to serve by you. And tho' it now appears not what may be the influence or event of this surprize, leave that to him whose counsels are a great depth, and doth nothing in vain ; yea, hath ordinarily some great things to do by such, whom he signally calls to an opportunity of service. You ought therefore to do what good your hand finds to do from day to day, and that with all your might. Resign up yourselves to his conduct, and be faithful in present trust, within the bounds of your places. Keep innocent in all your ways, suppress all sin, and advance righteousness. Whilst you are thus exercised, you may expect the presence of God with you, and have a considerable


SERM.  
I.  
~~~~~

considerable influence in whatever work Christ hath now in hand. Others may little esteem any usefulness of this kind; but what to a discerning christian can be more pleasing, than contributing any thing to Christ's interests? What can be more honourable than to be one of them whom Christ designs in that account; *They that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful?* Rev. xvii; 14.

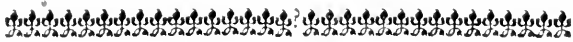
3. THE kingdom of *glory* is reserved, and will be certainly bestowed on all such as are loyal to Christ in all their present trust. They that follow the Lord, shall reign with him. 2 Tim. iv; 8. Will you repent present hardships when you stand about the throne? Can you grudge him a few days service, who hope to be ever with him? Will you not, in those rivers of pleasures, even relent that your service was no greater? You will wish, Oh that I had exceeded the utmost which I did best perform! that I had been entrusted with opportunities for more difficult work! Its no such wonder the damned should have lived to themselves, and guide their course by secular interests; but that the *heirs of glory* should be afraid, or ashamed of their fidelity to Christ, would be strange.

MUST not these things, realized by faith, endue you with new vigour. Oh! therefore gird up the loins of your minds; be prepared to endure reproach, and any evil

SERM. that may attend you. Be fortified against

I. all allurements; be not of them that are  
 *corrupt with flatteries*, which sometimes  
 Dan. xi. are more ensnaring than frowns. What-  
 32. ever others chuse, see that, in all your  
 perplexing doubts, you be most solicitous,  
 what now would Christ have me to do?  
 And let your determinations be fixed by  
 the light you gain through that enquiry.  
 Examine your duty as under the eye of  
 Christ, and resolve in it as men persuaded  
 that your happiness or misery depends only  
 on his favour or his frowns, and that he  
 will deal with you according to your faith-  
 fulness to him. He will not put you off  
 with vain hopes, or an imaginary king-  
 dom, if his grace rule in you, and you  
 express it in your station, by a carriage  
 becoming the living subjects of this king-  
 dom of grace.

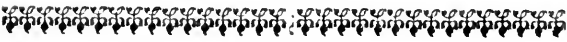


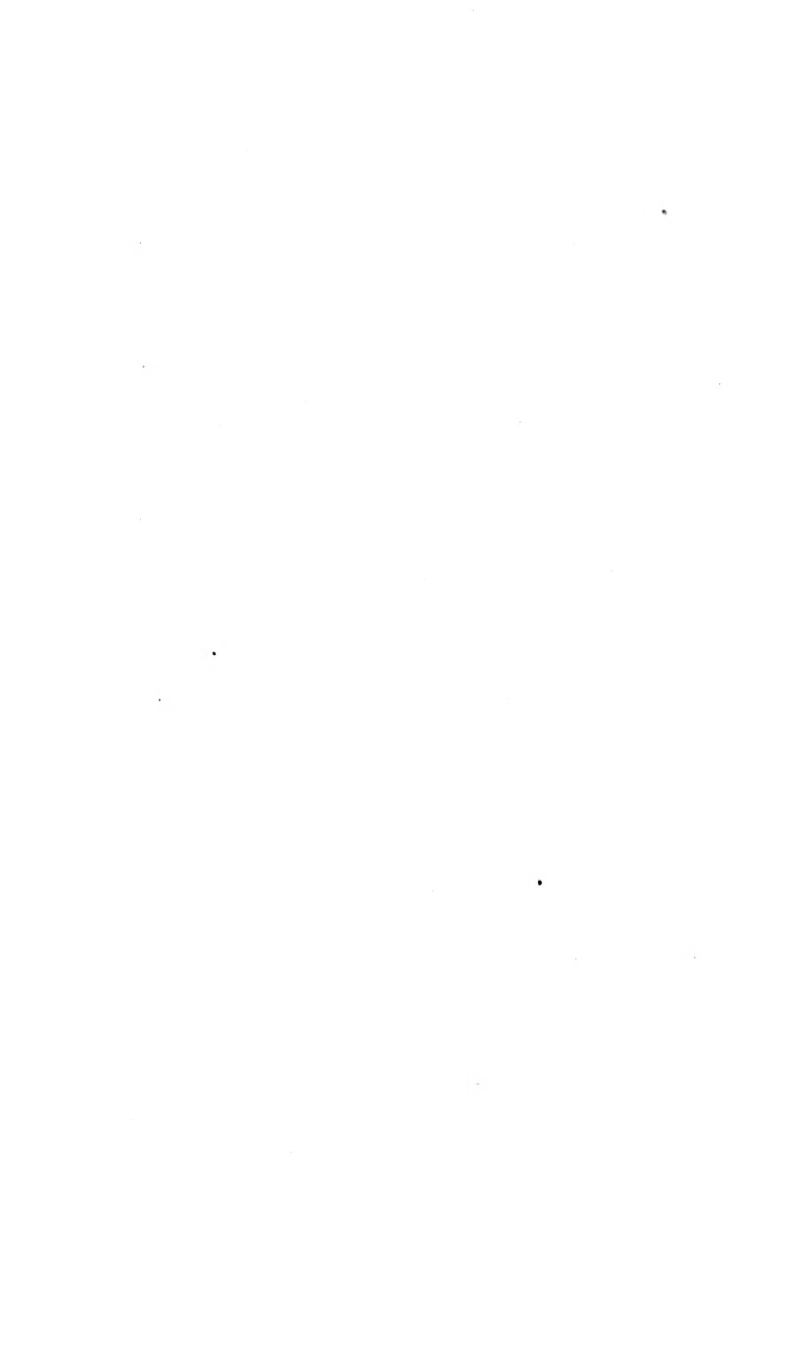


*The Advancement of CHRIST'S  
Interests, the governing end of  
a Christian's Life.*

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A SECOND  
SERMON  
BEFORE THE  
LORD-MAYOR,  
*Jan. 9. 1687-8.*







TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

Sir *John Shorter*, Knt.

L O R D - M A Y O R

O F T H E

C I T Y of L O N D O N.



*PRESENT* to your  
*Lordship* the second  
*sermon*, and the book-  
*seller* is accountable for  
*the late publication* of it.

By the first sermon, I endeavoured a real subjection of hearts to Christ as King; in this I call men to the utmost serviceableness to him, as the governing aim of their lives. No service to Christ is possible, but with respect to his interests; and by our devotedness to these, he determineth our regards to himself.

If we consider that part of the world called christian, we shall find

*that nothing is more pretended than the advancement of these interests of Christ, even when they are most dis-served. These are made to patronize the great weaknesses of some, and the grossest villanies of others. This induced me to explain and state the interests of Christ, as far as one discourse would admit.*

*Natural religion is not so much opposed, as the additional and more peculiar concernments of Christ as mediator: the innate enmity of mens hearts, and satan's attempts, are more directly level'd against these; the former, because they are less advantaged by those remains of light preserved by God in our apostate nature; the latter, because the devil well knows, that natural religion will not be improved to any saving purpose, if these additional interests of Christ prevail not. This consideration led me to insist on these mediatorial concernments of our Lord Jesus, and persuade to a more special*



*cial regard to such points, which Christ is gradually advancing in the world in our day; and the rather, because the testimony of Christ, and the mighty influences of the Spirit in any day, are much confined to those points, which at that time he designs the advancement of.*

*I am express and large in proving that the dedication of our lives to the service of the interests of Christ, is an essential duty of all christians, because it is the great security to our holy profession; its the spring of all endeavours whereby God is glorified, and a common good promoted; and without it, truth will be betrayed by men that make the greatest noise.*

*The hints I am confined to, may be subject to various inferences; to direct which, I do declare, that in general I do intend the persuading christians to do all that is lawful in their places, to promote true religion and godliness, and their cautious  
forbearance*

*forbearance of whatever is a certain detriment or hazard thereto.*

*In particular, I would have none in this crisis (if duly called) scruple offices from uncertain events; much less employ them to lower ends than the advancement of truth, and that with all prudence and meekness.*

*I would persuade all nonconforming ministers not to neglect the present opportunity of exercising their ministry; their obligation and license to it, is from Christ's prior commission, and not the present removal of a physical obstacle; and woe to us if the undoubted interests of Christ gain not by this liberty. I think I have more comfort than seeming caution or idleness would afford, when I reflect, that from the 20th year of my age, I remember not three Lord's-days, wherein I have not preached in one place or other.*

*A subsistence to these ministers I also aim at. How sad is that narrow and unjust spirit in men of estates,*

*estates, which restrains the gospel for want of maintenance? I am sure none that know me will suspect a selfish design by this.*

*The only thing I can foresee the need of an apology for, is my plainness with some persecutors that are members of the church of England, and lately monopolized the name even from all others of their own communion. These I call to repentance for their great opposition to the interests of Christ. Some part of the two days allowed to prepare this sermon, was spent in debating with myself the expediency hereof; and I judged, at last, it was my duty, and conducive to the publick good, on such grounds as these.*

*The crime is too notorious to be palliated, when they have silenced 2000 ministers, because they durst not lie, &c. and with such rage persecuted their quiet neighbours, for worshipping God according to all the instituted rules of the gospel, their enemies being judges. The*

*The effects of their severities, are visible in the danger, that not only the power, but the very probable form of religion, is reduced to.*

*The repentance of these very men, is necessary to divert the judgments which hang over our heads. That temper continued, makes all healing methods for accord impossible. If they repent not, its of little moment if they be irritated by a call to it; being disowned by all serious men of their own party, who indeed were hated and wounded by them as well as the dissenters.*

*Yea, God by his present providence seemeth to design these mens repentance, while he is blowing on them from that very point, where their faces and regards were directed in all their mischievous attempts.*

*I hope no pious men of that party, who approved not these mens practices, will think themselves concerned in this reproof; their credit and serviceableness I am tender of. Yea, I would*

would persuade a forgiving of the most guilty, tho' I call them to repentance: And providence directs the sufferers not to exert their resentments, by the damage it will expose to.

I find it convenient to explain somewhat in my first sermon.

By conditions, I mean the things which the gospel injoineth indispensibly on all men, that shall partake of the saving blessings of the new covenant, which are owing to Christ only as the meritorious cause. By spiritual life, I intend that inherent vital principle wherein all graces are comprehended. By remedial law, I mean the law of faith, published for the recovery of apostate sinners; and by which God will judge the secrets of men.

But yet the objectors are very weak or uncharitable, and little consider what fatal influence their distempers have on the interests of Christ, whilst they sacrifice the serviceableness of others

*others to their own little aims and fancies.*

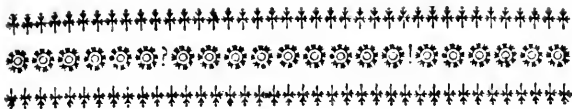
*It may be added, that I managed my first text without much reference to the extraordinary power of apostolical administrations, as not so suitable to our day, nor yet principally intended.*

*Your Lordship is concerned, or I would not preface your name to this apology. I believe its your aim to serve Christ in the world. Many of your actings may convince the envious, it is not a selfish interest you serve. That you, and your brethren, may entirely dedicate yourselves, power, and advantages, to the real advancement of the interests of Jesus, was the design of this plain discourse, and is the prayer of,*

Your Lordship's

most humble Servant,

*Daniel Williams.*



PHILIP. i. 21.

*For to me to live is Christ.*



THE apostle was in a happy SERM. strait, from his fitness to II. live, and readiness to die. He knew not well how to fix his choice, because both life and death had a desirable tendency. There was service to Christ by his life, and great happiness to himself by death.

AFFECTION to Christ swayed his inclinations both ways; he loved Christ, and therefore must desire death, that he might fully enjoy him; he loved Christ, and so might incline to a longer life, that he might more advance his interest. Rational self-love would move to the former, yet regard to Jesus and his members overweighs him to the latter. He is content to expect the crown, rather than quit his work: And though heaven was the better state in itself, and happier for him, he prefers his stay on earth, as better for the church, which could not bear his absence. A wonderful instance of a publick spirit! How enlarged is this soul, that was assured of glory

SERM. glory in heaven, and of very sore trials on

II. earth, and would yet tug longer at the oar  
 for publick good, rather than be at rest!

THE great purposes he resolved to live to, are manifest from his contentment with the delays of glory. Had sensual enjoyments, and trivial employs, been the advantage proposed by a longer life, how impatiently must he have endured a moment's absence from heaven? He that knew death could not lay his soul asleep, but that it immediately passed into a state of the highest activity and receptiveness; yea, and would be admitted to a near converse with Christ, and other glorious objects, which must fully employ these active powers of the soul, and fill it with good to the utmost of its capacity to receive. Could he (I say) desire an abode on earth, to relish carnal or animal delights, which with him is *a being dead while one liveth*? By no means.

1 Tim. v. 6.

BUT my text represents to us the design and tendency of the apostle *Paul's* life. *To me to live is Christ.*

I KNOW there are many things to be inferred from the words, besides what I think is their principal scope. As, 1. Christ is a believer's happiness while he liveth; *g. d.* life were worse than death, were not Christ known, and enjoyed by me, in this life. 2. A christian's life is a mere dependence on, and a manifest discovery of the power



power and grace of Christ. Emanations of his power supports it, and his grace is displayed in our lives, when useful to any valuable purposes, or employed in any momentous actions. But I pass by these to the chief design of the text, which may be expressed under two heads.

I. AN entire dedication of *Paul's* life to Christ, exclusively of any carnal designs of his own.

As if he should have said, I devote my life to the glory of Christ, I propose the advancement of his interests; my design is to be instrumental in his work, and the propagation of his concernments: There is no base selfish turn of my own intended, nor shall my life waste in idle uselessness. I will be active, and that for him, to the last moment, and the utmost of my abilities. This my judgment dictates as my duty, to this I am devoted, and on this only I am intent.

II. A PERSUASION that Christ had been, and still would be, advanced by his life and labours. This he expresseth in *ver. 20.* *As my expectation and hope, that Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether by life, or by death; q. d.* I have by his grace promoted his interest, I fear not but the same aids and blessing will still concur to the like serviceableness; and so the issue of my living will be his gain. This is the *κατὰ τὸ ἐπὶ*, in *ver. 22.* Its no secular interest


SERM. rest of my own is like to be advanced :

II. The building of my house, or erecting trophies to my name, I expect not. Nay, I am sure poverty, contempt, and hardships in those respects will attend me ; but Christ, in his gospel-interests, will be contributed to, and he will over-rule my sufferings and labours to his own advancement.

THE text may also include an hint at the reason of this confidence, as to this described success, it being introduced under such a respect ; *For to me to live is Christ.* Sincere devotedness to Christ, is ordinarily successful ; and upright designs, duly managed, prove not abortive. When the best endowments of a man indisposed to the service of Christ, produce not equal fruits to the lower gifts of a soul engaged for his concerns.

THE first of these will be the subject of my discourse ; *viz.* The *dedication* of the life to Christ. This was no duty peculiar to the apostolical office ; and tho' its predicated of St. *Paul*, in his own person, yet he affords us an example which binds our imitation : Yea, it is the fundamental duty resulting from our baptismal vow, included in all our christian profession, and supposed in all acceptable service. So that the obligation is universal ; its the duty of all here, even of such who least regard it, yea, live in greatest repugnancy to it.

By

BY *living* to Christ, must be meant SERM.  
living to the promoting and defence of II.  
the interests of Christ in this world. This   
his designed endeavour had a respect to,  
and to this he devoted his *life*; that is,  
all the opportunities for acting which life  
includes, all the abilities which life im-  
ports, and all the good things he possessed,  
which are comprehended in the word *life*,  
as being less valuable than life is: Even all  
these he designed to lay out for the interests  
of the blessed Jesus. He valued living for  
no meaner uses, and determined to live to  
no lower purpose.

WHEN the advancement of Christ's in-  
terests governeth our time and abilities,  
then to live is Christ: For herein is our  
living to him within our reach; by this it  
is expressed, and the evidencing thereof in  
this instance, is what he hath appointed,  
and still expecteth from all his members  
and servants.

I NEED say no more to introduce the  
doctrine I purpose to insist on; which is  
this:

*Doct. It is the duty of all christians to  
dedicate and employ their lives to the  
advancement of the interests of Christ  
in the World.*

ITS not sufficient to be religious in con-  
templation, or mental acts; our Lord ex-  
pecteth, and real piety enclineth to, a vi-

SERM. glorious activity in our holy profession. He

II. will be served by his members, as they expect to be saved by him. They must imitate him in his communicative goodness, and express their resentments of his grace to them, by these powerful acknowledgments. They must not grudge his service; tho' he redeem them freely, they shall sacrifice all to him; and while he is managing our interest in heaven as intercessor, he will have us employed in his concerns on earth, as instruments dedicated to the advancement of his name, and enlargement of his kingdom.

To do thus, is agreeable to the inclination of every holy christian; love to Jesus fills with zeal in this enterprize: Therein they are employed; nothing delighteth them more than any visible success; yea, they bemoan their usefulness when their industry seems greatest. A hermit's cell, for rest, is not esteemed by them as an opportunity for service; tho' the service is difficult and dangerous.

I SHALL manage this subject in this method:

- I. I WILL lay down some preliminary propositions.
- II. ACQUAINT you more fully with the nature of this duty, of dedicating our lives to the interests of Christ.

III. OFFER

III. OFFER plain reasons, to put it out SERM.  
of doubt, that to dedicate our lives II.  
to Christ, is the indispenfible duty of ~~~~~  
all of us: And then apply these things  
more particularly.

## S E C T. I.

*Prop.* I. SATAN, the world, and the flesh, have an *interest* among men; in the overthrowing whereof, much of the interests of Christ consisteth.

THE interests of the former are one, and principally stated, and managed by the devil. He set up the world as an idol, and the flesh as a ruler, by introducing sin into the world; so that the whole may be called his interest; the inclinations of the flesh affording him advantages, and the world yielding him means to advance that interest by.

THIS interest of satan is fixed, 1. In opposition to the original dominion of God among men. 2. To the attempts and successes of Christ in restoring of God's dominion, and advancing some additional interest of his own, with respect to fallen man.

I. THE interest of satan is fixed in opposition to the original dominion of God among men.

MAN was made upright, loyal to God, Eccl. vii. 29.  
glorious in the image of God on the soul, Gen. i. 27.  
and

SERM. and expressing the nature of God in light,  
 II. love, justice, purity, &c.

~~~~~  
 SATAN hastily engageth in a design of overthrowing the authority of God, defacing his image, and introducing his own temper and power in the hearts and practices of men. He soon effected this by the compliance of our first parents with his snares; and pursueth it from one age  
 Eph. ii. 2. to another, *still working in the children of disobedience.*

HENCE you may easily conclude, that his interest lieth in man's rebellion against his maker, darkness of mind as to divine matters, injustice, cruelty, irreligion, blasphemy, uncleanness, intemperance, wrath, earthliness, and all things which render men devilish, or brutish. His great concern was to dethrone God, whom he hated; and to destroy man, whose happiness he envied; tho' he concealeth the latter, that he may the better effect it.

2. SATAN's interest is in opposition to the attempts of Christ for restoring of God's dominion, and advancing some additional interests of his own with respect to fallen man.

SATAN hoped, from the sanction of the law, and God's dealing with himself, that his design, so far accomplished by the fall, would never miscarry; but that such rebellion and misery begun so to be executed, could never be retrieved. He enjoyeth  
 the



the prospect of a quiet throne but a small moment; then a curse (which affects him, tho' spoken to the serpent) seized him as a tempter, and Christ set up as his antagonist, to recover the elect, revive the trampled interests of God among rebellious sinners, and erect to himself a glorious name and body, as the mediatorial head.

SATAN endeavoureth the blasting of these attempts of Christ, and the support of his own interests thus threatned: And hereby we see there is an interest of satan's, which, tho' to the same ends, is yet managed more directly in opposition to Christ, as redeemer.

THIS lieth in obstructing the gospel, hardening the heart to impenitency, *blinding mens minds, lest they should believe*; advancing idolatry and superstition, in opposition to the worship of Christ; perverting the mind with errors, contrary to the truths revealed; persecuting the members of Christ, silencing a faithful ministry, dividing the church, destroying godly discipline, causing backslidings and apostacy; with whatever else may hinder the attempts of Christ, or blast the successes of our Redeemer in any place, person, or matter; that by all he may obviate the gracious purposes of Jesus towards men, and make his enterprise abortive.

1 Theff. ii.  
18.  
2 Cor. iv.  
4.

How vigilant, subtil, and unwearied is satan in managing this interest? He

SERM. engageth all instruments, he takes advantages of all tempers and circumstances; oft influenceth good men to serve his purposes; transformeth himself sometimes *into an angel of light*; at other times, as a dragon, poureth out a flood of persecution. Innocent things he oft abuseth; by things seemingly indifferent he propagates his designs, as well as by grosser matters. He waits every age to obstruct the points Christ seems designed to gain, (called by the Spirit *the truth of the present time*) as if he were content to endure past instances of Christ's conquest, which he could not hinder. He refineth his interests according to the light that groweth, that they may be the more likely to be complied with; tho' every step he gaineth is but a degree, which he would improve to the utmost villany, by a gradual process.

THE more eminently any thing, constitution, or party, expresseth his prevalency, or serveth the devil's purpose, the more his interest is staked therein, and his power exerted thereby. Thus after *Rome Pagan* failed his design, he begins an idolatrous apostasy in the christian church, and giveth the head of that apostasy (under the emblem of *a lamb with two horns*) wonderful skill and power: By him he corrupts the church, and encounters the growing kingdom of our Lord, as the great antichrist. By him satan's interests are

Mark viii.

33.

2 Cor. xi.

14.

Rev. xii.

5, 15.

2 Pet. i.

12.

Rev. xiii.

3, 11, 12,

13, 14.



are kept up for many ages over many nations, wearing a christian name; and the remains of his infection disturb the interests of Christ in churches relieved from grosser pollutions; which is effected by customs and officers uninstituted by Christ; by errors eclipsing the authority, operations, merits, and free grace of our blessed Lord, wherein many departed from *Babylon* are too deeply engaged. In every one of these satan's interest consisteth, either as a means which satan makes use of, or as it stands in opposition to any truth and institution of Christ.

MUCH of the interests of Christ consists in opposing each of these, and blasting those counter-designs of satan. Wonderful will be the scheme of Christ's counter-acting, and baffling these various efforts, when the methods and seasonableness of all shall be at once made known.

*Prop. 2.* ALL men, by nature, are devoted to the interest of satan, the world, and flesh.

SATAN executeth his purposes by men as slaves in chains. Its true, this is generally by uniting his interests with theirs, and so serving himself by them, while they are acting their own lusts, and consulting a fleshly interest. They are bribed by advantage, engaged by grandeur or politick reasons, whereby they seem to justify the devil's drudgery. They favour some errors,

SERM. errors, as the lusts of the mind; others, as

II. leading to licentiousness, or countenancing them therein. Their corrupt hearts are under the government of lust; and the world being their idol, the devil may thereby gild over any pill, and employ them in most undertakings. *The God of this world* wants not means to hire, fright, or allure them by; and these seldom are unsuccessful, unless when God over-acts their inclinations, or in his providence prevents the gainful offer; or when he chaineth some loss, shame, or such sensible evils, with their serving satan's turn at present.

2 Cor. iv.  
4.

BUT with most sinners, in most of his concerns, the devil gains concurrence, and that by means grateful to the flesh. Ecclesiastical grandeur supporteth uninstituted officers in the church; vast incomes, and exorbitant power, tempt to idolatry, to an universal headship, and a world of vile appendants. Ignorance must be countenanced, lest these emoluments be exposed to hazard. Superstition will be contended for, as its pomp is pleasing to a vain mind; dead forms are abetted, as lulling conscience asleep; which is needful to the quiet of an unregenerate heart, where the gospel-light is by Christ forced on them.

*Mahometism* and Pagan idolatry were introduced by methods adapted to mens lusts,

lusts, and are maintained by reasons from worldly interests. SERM.  
II.

THIS way usually satan attains his ends by miserable men; but sometimes he doth by strong delusions hurry them without apparent motives; yea, by his service, expose them to hardships ungrateful to nature, tho' vicious. A strange *impetus* reconcileth them to torments, yea, and death, in the devil's work; God permitting him to impress their imaginations, and act their souls in an amazing manner. Thus many errors are suggested and propagated. z Theff. ii.  
8, 11.

ONE way or another, all ungodly men willingly serve the devil's interest.

How are most of mankind employed in this slavery by satan? Yea, their lusts often carry them to intemperance, impiety, violence, &c. when unsolicited. Oh dreadful aspect of an apostate world!

*Prop. 3.* MEN are naturally disposed to *resist* the interests of the Lord Jesus, especially as far as they are opposite to their own carnal inclinations, or interests.

CHRIST is sure of an enemy, where a carnal mind prevaieth; and no endowment short of grace, prevents the opposition. The wise resist his doctrine as *foolishness*. *Its a stumbling-block* to the Jewish church, tho' entrusted with divine oracles; and a long-expected Messias is rejected by them, because he appears void of pomp, and to purposes more spiritual than a carnal mind 1 Cor. i.  
23.

76 *Advancement of Christ's Interests,*

SERM. mind could relish. The best natures be-

II. come cruel from a blind zeal, and the very  
*devout* turn persecutors of religion, as abo-  
 minable to their unrenewed minds. Satan  
 paints the servants of Christ as factious,  
 turbulent, and dangerous, and so engageth  
 the powers of the earth to the highest vi-  
 gour in their extirpation. The rules of his  
 house are oft opposed as inconsistent with  
 some maxims of policy. Ignorance and  
 strong delusions cause many to sacrifice the  
 real interests of Christ, even from seeming  
 regards to him, where providence hath  
 forced some reverence to his name, tho'  
 enmity against his laws and nature do still  
 abide.

Acts iii.

50.

Acts xxiv.

5.

Amos vii.

10.

ITS true, that ungodly men may bear  
 with the external profession of religion,  
 when education hath familiarized it, and  
 they find it can consist with the dominion  
 of a carnal heart; nay, they greatly like a  
 dead form of christianity, because it suits  
 all men to be of some religion; and no  
 other can quiet their conscience in its  
 awakened foresight of eternity, when en-  
 lightned at all by the gospel; but still their  
 enmity vents its dislike against the inwards,  
 and power, of religion; though the form  
 thereof is become thus necessary.

Phil. iii.

3.

THEY despise *worshipping God in the  
 spirit*, as unintelligible, because unfelt. A  
 lively ministry is hated, as disquieting their  
 seared consciences: They loath the strictly  
 pious,

pious, as a reproach to themselves. A  
progress in reformation in the church, is  
obstructed from inward antipathy to any  
further advance to Christ, and hazard to  
secular interests thereby; or it looks too  
trivial to be contended for by them, to  
whom all religion is indifferent, further  
than as rivited by long custom. Yea, they  
oppose it from a proud conceit that it  
would reproach their former usage as er-  
roneous and imperfect.

INDEED sometimes the profane 'grow  
*zealous* for some cause of Christ, but ne-  
ver for the sake of Christ: Applause, secu-  
rity to their own interest, or long custom,  
awaken their concern. God, by his pro-  
vidence, supports his own cause by evil  
men; their estates, honour, emulation,  
quarrels, and the like, influence their en-  
deavours in that which proves a service to  
the truth. They are often zealous for a  
lower degree of reformation, in opposition  
to a greater; not seeing that that lesser de-  
gree ceaseth to be the interest of Christ,  
when it becomes an impediment to, or  
rival with, reformation in greater instances.

BUT however the ungodly may be thus  
over-ruled to comply with any thing which  
belongs to Christ, their prevailing inclina-  
tion is to betray all of Christ which they  
profess, when damage to their fleshly in-  
terests attends it: Yea, in a quiet season  
their religion dwindles into an empty form,  
the

A SERM.  
II.



SERM. the truths of the gospel are supplanted by

II. encroaching errors, and christianity so  
 clogg'd and eclipsed in evil mens management, that it hardly retains what deserves that name. To this opposition in the nature of man to the interests of Christ, must be ascribed the wonderful degeneracy of christian churches. And as far as the remains of corruption influence the best men, Christ shall suffer by them in his concerns; his name shall endure reproach, and his ministers damage; his church is divided, love destroyed, the conversion of sinners hindred, advances in godliness obstructed; and many such ways our sinful natures deserve, yea oppose the interests of our blessed Lord. This should make the pious watchful, as not ignorant they have lusts which the devil may improve to the damage of Christ. And it should make the ungodly suspicious, when they contend with many good men, that it is not the interest of Christ they are engaged for, which they are so far likelier to mistake and oppose, than those more holy persons are.

*Prop. 4.* OBLIGATIONS, and a call to service, result from, and are measured by, mens *different* places and capacities for the advancements of Christ's interests.

ALL should be devoted to it, but all are not equally capable of it, nor called to express it in the same instances. None  
 I should

should usurp another's station, under pre-  
 tence of service; yet all must be diligent  
 to the utmost of their own talents. God  
 hath wisely ordained variety of callings,  
 with a tendency in their nature to his use;  
 providence disposeth and fitteth men to  
 these several offices: the faithfulness of the  
 meanest is regarded; *servants do serve the*  
*Lord Christ*, when their meaner employs  
 are clothed with an obediencial respect to  
 him. *Two mites* from the poor's stock, is  
 a commended offering; and a book of  
 remembrance treasureth the concerned  
 thoughts, and edifying discourses, of them  
 that fear the Lord, when disabled from  
 performing more.

SERM.  
II.



Col. iii.  
23, 24.

Luke xxi.  
2.  
Mal. iii.  
16.

BUT Christ will not accept a faint en-  
 deavour from a man of strength, nor a  
 bare advice against sin, when we are in-  
 vested with authority to restrain it; as you  
 see in *Eli's* case. A few pence are not fit  
 layings-out to a good use, for him who  
 hath a great estate. Woe be to him that,  
 in any respect, hath a *male in his flock, and*  
*gives to God the blind and lame.* Not dis-  
 cerning this, keeps so many useles and ill-  
 employed. All may be useful to Christ in  
 their own place, by doing or suffering;  
 none may neglect the greatest service which  
 their callings and gifts give opportunity for.  
 Magistrates, ministers, parents, are, by their  
 place, servants to the Lord Jesus, and for  
 him should they be employed.

1 Sam. iii.  
13.

Mal. i. 8.  
14.

SERM. No station is so high, as to plead exemption by its dignity; not any gifts so eminent, as to allow remissness. To forbear the utmost service of Christ in the ministry, when dedicated to him in that office, is sacrilegious; yea, a degree thereof is chargeable on men in any other office wherein God hath placed them.

II. No man may refuse any office or work, to which Christ manifestly calleth him; a call to service, or suffering, ensureth sufficient aids; and we know not what we can do, or suffer, till our work or trial discover what supplies Christ will afford. *Zerubbabel* is called to build the temple, when visible abilities render'd the success improbable; but he attempteth it, and succeedeth under the influence of that: *Be strong, for I am with you.* We must attempt what Christ makes our duty, and he will take care his interest shall not suffer by our weakness.

*Prop. 5.* THE success of all faithful endeavours to advance the interest of Christ, depends on the influence and blessing of God thereon.

*Zech. viii.* *He buildeth the temple, and must bear the glory, whoever be the instruments.* *He*  
 13.  
*1 Cor. iii.* *that planteth, tho' it be a Paul; and he*  
 7. *that watereth, tho' it be an Apollo, are nothing; but God that giveth the increase.* There is an hidden energy and disposition of circumstances which do effect what we otherwise



otherwise vainly attempt. No concernment of Christ would prosper in the world, if left to the sole management of them, who are most fitted or devoted to it; their power being so incompetent to the opposition which every design of Christ meets with. The interest which a subtil and mighty devil hath in men, the abject state and vile inclinations of mankind, the suitability and power of sensitive things, the enmity of the heart against Christ, the incapacity of a dead blind world to relish, and perceive the nature, glory, and advantage of all the designs of Christ, are all such obstacles as might cause us to despair, if a divine power were not at hand to execute this purpose.

To set up God's throne, cast down Satan's kingdom, and convert sinners, was an enterprize becoming only an almighty Saviour to undertake, and possible only for him to effect: Therefore we should, in all our endeavours, rely on his help, and in every success humbly acknowledge him. He is pleased to secure this honour to himself, by blasting often the most probable means, and giving the greatest lifts to his interest, by instruments too contemptible to conceal his arm.

ITS enough for us, that our *work is* II. xlix. 4.  
*with the Lord* for reward, when our upright labours are in vain as to the event. Yea, he may hereafter prosper our attempts  
F beyond

SERM. beyond what their present influence can  
 II. promise.

*Prop. 6.* I HOPE I need not add, that the doctrine of *merits* receiveth no support from our greatest services.

OUR forfeitures are too many, our performances too imperfect, our engagements too strong, divine aids too arbitrary, and the rule of righteousness too strict, to allow us to plead our service in bar to *eternal life as a gift*; or to the atonement of Christ, as the only meritorious cause of all the good we hope for. Whatever evidence our faithfulness gives to the sincerity of that faith, whereby Christ is made ours; whatever encouragement the promises may yield to the diligent soul, no upright heart can be puffed above subscribing his hearty amen to that caution of our Lord's, *When ye have done all, say, we are unprofitable servants; we have done that which was our duty to do*: No, not that, Lord, so as not to need forgiveness for many faults cleaving thereto.


Rom. vi.  
23.

Luke xvii.  
10.

I SHALL now proceed to explain the nature of this duty of dedicating our lives to the interests of Christ. This will be done under these two enquiries. 1. What are the interests of Christ? 2. What is it to dedicate our lives to the serving these interests?

*Quest. I.* WHAT are the interests of Christ, to serve which our lives should be dedicated?

*Ans.*

*Ans.* ALL the declared designs of SERM.  
Christ in his mediatorial office, in oppo- II.  
sition to the devil, the world, and the   
flesh.

To this must be referred all the ends which he pursueth; and to effect which, his heart is intent on, and enjoineeth our concurrence in. They may well be called his interests, considering they are things undertaken by him; all his institutions, laws, and providences, refer to them; he died, sent his Spirit, and still intercedeth, as means of their accomplishment. His glory and truth, as Mediator, is concerned in them. These things may be referred to these three heads.

I. THE restoration of God's *original* dominion and image among men, against the usurpations and defilements of satan, and vile apostasy and rebellion of finners.

His design is *to destroy the works of the* 1 John iii. 8.  
*devil*, and advance that purity and order, which the entrance of sin expelled. His interests under this head consists in the conversion of finners, obedience of men to all the laws of God; their resemblance of his imitable perfections, and utter renouncing of all that is devilish or brutish. His concern is to enlighten the ignorant mind, subdue disorderly appetites to the dominion of grace and reason. Sound knowledge, fear of God, love to God and one another, justice, temperance, chastity,

F 2


discharge

SERM. discharge of relative duties, divine worship  
 II. in opposition to idolatry, and all godliness,  
 ~~~~~ truth, and goodness, are parts of his interest, which men should studiously promote, that God may be the portion and supreme end of men.

2. SUCH things wherein the peculiar glory and influence of Christ, as *Mediator*, consists.

UNDER this are included every doctrine, institution, and matter, which relate to Christ, and are superadded to what concerned mankind before the fall.

Rom. xiv. *He died to be Lord both of dead and*  
 9. *living.* And his interest, which we must  
 John x. serve, is in these things; gathering to him-  
 15. self a body of all that belong to the election of grace; the improvement of every believer to the *measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ*; that he prevail, and be acknowledged as Prophet, Priest and King; all pardon and favour with God ascribed to his merits, all grace derived from his fulness, and all duty performed in his name. That his people; who are his members and heritage, be succoured, his churches have their due privileges, all worship managed by gospel-rule, a gospel-ministry encouraged; no officers imposed, but whom he hath appointed in his house; and none of them neglected: Love and peace maintained among his followers, and they admitted to the privileges of his sanctuary, on his terms.

IT belongs to him that there be a godly SERM.  
magistracy, a gospel discipline, and what- II.  
ever else he hath either appointed as means,   
or declared as instances of his triumphs as  
mediator ; and also that the gospel terms of  
life be truly stated, and complied with.

3. THE interests of Christ may be con-  
sidered as they stand in an *opposition* to  
such errors, parties, and practices, wherein  
the attempts of satan against the glory and  
influence of the mediator consist.

THE devil sets up his standard at every  
point which Christ gaineth ; no truth es-  
capeth his assault ; and he never wants men  
of wit and power to abet his opposition ;  
yea, generally the croud have been of his  
side, when the witnesses of Jesus have been  
few and contemptible. Satan hath his  
stated sects and parties ; and though many  
truths of Christ be owned by some sects,  
yet in whatever respect they are denomi-  
nated from their contests against Christ,  
the interest of Jesus lieth in opposition to  
them. Under this head I shall be sparing,  
because I fear no party hath all the interest  
of Christ, and nothing else. And I hope  
God is about some great things, which will  
be attended with such a light and spirit, as  
may end in a name comprehensive of all  
that is Christ's, and exclusive of all else.  
He hath promised his church, *Thou shalt* If. lxii.  
*be called by a new name, which the mouth*  
*of the Lord shall name.* Christian is the

SERM. best we yet know; but how much opposite to Jesus is pretended to under that name? However, I must not fear to say, the interests of Christ consist in Protestantism, in opposition to Popery in all things wherein it is antichristian, (which are too many.) The interest of Christ is in non-conformity, in opposition to the imposing, sinful, and doubtful terms of communion of saints, or exercise of the ministry; and sacrificing the great things of God to a constitution uninstituted by Christ, and incapable of promoting real religion to that degree, as I hope many of its abettors desire.

*Quest. 2.* WHAT is it to dedicate our lives to the service of the interests of Christ?

I MUST suggest to you, that under the word *life* (by a synecdoche and metonymy) are included our time, talents, opportunities, all enjoyments, yea, life itself, as an offering, whenever the service, or testimony of Christ require it. Having premised this, I answer,

*Ans. 1.* IT implieth a solemn *offering* of ourselves, and all in our power, to Christ.

Rom. xii  
v.

THIS is enjoined; *Present your bodies a living sacrifice, &c.* This ought to be expressly done in our first conversion, and oft repeated, especially at the Lord's-table. Engrave the stamp of Christ on all you possess, and acknowledge his propriety. Lord, myself, and all that is mine, I offer

to thee, and will serve thee with. This SERM. II.  
vow, in thy constant observation, will keep thee from a supine neglect, when opportunity of service is given; and silence all repinings, when his service is hard or expensive. He that neglects this, will soon find matter of excuse in his holy profession.

*Ans<sup>w</sup>.* 2. THE service of Christ and his interests, must be the governing *end* in all deliberate acts and contrivances.

MEN are devoted to what they chiefly intend. *Paul* expresseth that his life was indeed dedicated thus, when, amidst all dissuaves from a dangerous duty, he asserts, *I count not my life dear, so I may finish my course, and the ministry which I have received.* Acts xx. 24. Woe to them whose consults still terminate in some selfish matter, and are concerned for Christ only by the by. Providence may serve itself by their sins, as well as by their chance services, which they hardly intend. Christ accounts none faithful to his concerns, who provide for them last, but chiefly contrive for things that are none of his. Which prevail when in competition? for what are we most industrious? about what are we most solicitous? *that* our lives are dedicated to, whether they be the interest of Christ, or other things.

3. THERE is an *actual* and stated employing our lives and all our abilities for Christ.


SERM. THIS dedication consists not in faint  
 II. acts of the mind, but extends to, and ex-  
 presseth itself in the doing all we can to  
 promote Christ's interests.

THY heart cannot concur in this dedi-  
 cation, when thy performances do not con-  
 duce to exalt him. You must be *fervent*  
 Rom. xii. *in spirit, serving the Lord.* To live is  
 11. Christ; when our parts are engaged to  
 plead for truth, our power subserveth his  
 claims, our time and estates are employed  
 to uphold his gospel, advance piety, and  
 Phil. i. 27. abet the testimony of Jesus; *striving to-  
 gether for the faith of the gospel.* He dedi-  
 cates his life and talents to Christ, who  
 useth them for Christ in all opportunities  
 of doing, and willingly parts with them,  
 rather than renounce his interests. *Moses*  
 Heb. xi. yields an instance, when *he esteemed the*  
 25, 26. *reproach of Christ greater riches than the*  
*treasures of Egypt,* renouncing all tempo-  
 ral hopes, to give a specimen of future  
 service.

THIS living to Christ imports also a  
*stated course* of life. Its not enough to  
 serve Christ by starts, or occasional acts.  
 It must be our ordinary employ, and the  
 scope of our lives. Our abilities must be  
 still on the altar, and our ears ever open to  
 the voice of God on all occasions, however  
 frequently they return. Happy they, who  
 early engage in this; and the longest life  
 gives no period to it. Yea, all we do, and  
 every



every moment we spend, should mediately SERM.  
or immediately serve the interest of Christ. II.

4. WE live for Christ, when we *value*   
our lives and talents, as they be serviceable  
to the interests of the Lord Jesus. Men  
live to themselves, and their time is dedi-  
cated to their lusts, when they esteem their  
estates, as they afford fuel to carnal incli-  
nations; and are fond of long life, as an  
opportunity of pleasing their senses and ap-  
petites. To such all is despicable and un-  
easy, which yield not flesh-pleasing con-  
tentments. Thus, brutishly, they express  
their sentiments, *Let us eat and drink, for* 1 Cor. xv.  
*to-morrow we shall die.* 32.

BUT he that dedicates his life to Christ,  
is glad of an estate, that he may be useful  
by charity in employing it; and expresses  
lively hopes of heaven, when called for  
Christ's sake to relinquish it. What is  
esteem with men farther than as it may  
add to his influence? or parts, or power,  
than as they qualify him for greater ser-  
vices? A good soul (assured of heaven)  
would gladly resign his spirit, when he  
ceaseth to be useful.

WHAT is more awful to such a man,  
than to be cast by *as an useless vessel*, whom Jer. xxii.  
God disdaineth to employ? And nothing 28.  
yields them greater delight, than capacity  
for the service of Christ, and success therein.  
Every convert by their ministry, is their  
*joy, and their crown.* How chearfully do 1 Thes. ii.  
they 19.

SERM. they own divine goodness, when their

II. hearts are enlarged to any useful act, and they enabled for it? *Who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort?* are the words of David, when his people had joined with him in so liberal an offering for temple-work.

1 Chron.  
xxix. 14.

ITS a curse, in a holy man's thoughts, to have talents without a heart to use them for God; and much more to be abused in spending them on his lusts. How contemptible in their eyes are the *Nimrods* of the earth, whose greatness is merely for oppression, foolish grandeur, and the devil's service? They would prefer the condition of a beast, to the greatest monarch's thus brutishly satisfied and employed. The saints would not change their persecuted state, for that of the greatest prince's, unless *they bring the honour and glory of their nations to the new Jerusalem*; that is, to the church of Christ fully reformed and enlarged.

Rev. xxi.  
26.

HEREIN you have an account of the dedication of our lives to Christ; thus do all they to whom to live is Christ.

PERHAPS you may say, these are mere contemplations; but to do thus is not the duty of all, nor the attainment of any, whatever they pretend.

I SHALL therefore undertake next to prove, that it is the duty of all of you thus  
to

to dedicate your lives to the service of the Lord Jesus, and his interests. I shall offer reasons to convince you, which refer to us as men and christians. SERM. II.

THAT supreme love and regard to God, which is the duty of all men, must dispose them to this dedication. *Reason 1.*

CAN you doubt, whether you ought to love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind? Must not God be loved above self, by every rational creature? Is it not the appointment of God to every man, *Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, him shalt thou serve, and to him shalt thou cleave?* These are duties resulting from our relation to God as our maker, and due to him on the account of the transcendant excellency of his being; yea, the very order of the universe directs to it; the first cause of all should have the supreme regard and interest among all beings. Mat. xxiii. 37. Deut. x. 20.

Now know that it is impossible to love and regard God in this supreme manner, if you dedicate not all to his interest. Can any man regard God above himself, and yet serve himself above God? Or can any man serve God above all, and neglect the interests of God? These are the occasions he gives men to express their regard to him by: His essence is above what our goodness can be extended to; but his saints, his honour, his truth, his image, and cause, Psal. xvi. 2.  
are

SERM. are his concerns on earth; and as these are


II. regarded or neglected, he esteems himself  
 valued or despised by us. To each of these  
 Matt. xxv. the saying of Christ is applicable, *Verily, I*  
 40. 45. *say unto you, inasmuch as ye did it not to*  
*one of the least of these, ye did it not to me;*  
*and inasmuch as ye did it to one of the least*  
*of these, ye did it unto me.*

THE relation God hath to, and concern he hath in, these interests, transfer the respect of all to himself.

So that it is a duty to dedicate all to his service, and, as far as he calls us to it, to employ all to that end; or it is no duty to love and regard God above all: yea, it must then be a duty to despise God, and prefer self, satan, and other rivals, to the infinitely blessed God; which a reasonable soul must tremble at.

*Reason 2.* GOD'S absolute *propriety* in men, and in all which they possess, makes the sacrifice of all to his interests a duty, by all the rules of justice. Notions of *just* and *unjust* are preserved by God in the conscience, above most others. Principles of justice are the strongest in that natural habit, which we call *συντήρησις*; and these require that every one receive his own. Now what hath any man, which he hath not received at the hands of God? Is it not he that made us by his power, endued us with gifts intellectual? Hath any  
 Eccl. vi. 2. man an estate or honour, but he to whom  
 God

God hath given them? And is not all at SERM.  
his disposal? II.

GOD did not release his own right,   
when he entrusted us with the use of any  
talents; and as to him we are *stewards*, Luke xvi.  
not proprietors, and therefore accountable <sup>2.</sup>  
for all.

GOD had a respect to his own glory  
and service, in his creating of all things;  
*he made all things for himself.* Yea, he Prov. xvi.  
hath dispensed all under this rule, that <sup>4.</sup>  
they be employed for him. This law every  
brute creature, and inanimate being, ob-  
serve; yea, the glorious angels do not deny,  
or disdain, this homage: They are *mini-* Heb. i. 14.  
*string spirits*, whose utmost abilities are  
consecrated to the execution of God's will,  
tho' it be often us poor sinners in whose  
behalf they serve.

AND must not the same justice be ob-  
served by men? Can any thing be denied  
God equally, when all is his, and he ask-  
eth service by nothing but what's his own?  
*Paul* is but righteous, when his labours  
and sufferings for Christ were most abun-  
dant: this he suggests, as well as his privi-  
lege by it, when he saith, *The angel of God,* Acts xxvii.  
*whose I am, and whom I serve, stood by me.* <sup>2.</sup>  
*David*, in his large offerings, acquits God  
from being a debtor, and himself of being  
more than just; *All things come from thee,* I Chron.  
*and of thine own we have given thee.* xxix. 14,  
16.  
chargeth the man who improved not the  
one

SERM. one talent, not with unkindness, but un-  
 II. justice; and so will he reprove all that  
 deny him any thing which his interest re-  
 Matt. xxv. quires: *Thou oughtest therefore to have put*  
 27. *my money to the exchanger, and then I should*  
*have received my own with usury.*

You may as well accuse God of injury, when, by his providence, he brings you to death, poverty, or decay of parts, as deny him the utmost service in his concerns. In the former, he asserts his own right without your leave; in the other, he yields you opportunity for consent, to your own benefit. He offers you an occasion to trade for yourselves with his stock. If the testimony of God requires any thing to be laid out for it, which is not his, you have some pretence to plead; but that can never be, unless when men do *wickedly for God*, which he abhors.

Job xiii. 7. *Reason 3.* 3. THE Lord Jesus hath an *additional* right to all of us, and our utmost services by purchase.

THE interests of God and his claim, as creator, are in the hands of Christ: But, as redeemer, his title is added too, and our service more strongly demanded: For  
 I Cor. vi. *ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify*  
 20. *God in your body, and in your spirit, which*  
*are his.* He may justly serve himself of us, and by us, as his redeemed captives. We cost him dearer than our utmost service can amount to. All our graces and gifts  
 are

are from him by a new dispensation, and held by a new tenure. You have an emblem of it in the redemption of the first-born, and in the ransom of all souls.

SERM.  
II.

Exod. xiii.  
15.

How much more may Christ use the words to *Philemon*, which *Paul* uttered only as an instrument of his conversion? *Albeit, I do not say to thee, how thou owest me even thine own self besides.* ver. 19.

DO TH he wrong us, if he calls for our gifts, our estates, yea, our lives, when he continues them to us after our manifest forfeitures; and gave them to us, if believers, as he is head over all things to the church?

So that if it be a duty to be just to God as creator, or just to Christ as redeemer, all our lives and abilities must be devoted to his interests.

4. No man is a christian *indeed*, that dedicateth not himself, life, and all, to Christ. And so if it be a duty to be a christian, this devotedness is a duty, as it is essential to our christian state. Reason 4.

ITS true, you may bear the name, but you cannot be the thing designed by that name, if you devote not all to the honour of the Lord Jesus, and design it as the chiefest purpose of your life, to propagate his interests. Can any man be his subject, who contributes not to his affairs what in him lieth? Consent to be his, is the greatest fundamental of religion; and this includes a solemn

SERM. a solemn surrender of all to him. Union

II. betwixt Christ and his members, makes  
 ~~~~~ their interests common; his interest is their  
 interest; and they are to submit to his con-  
 duct as their head, in what their usefulness  
 must consist. Their character is, *They follow  
 the Lamb wheresoever he goeth*; their motto  
 is, *I serve the Lord Jesus*.

Rev. xiv.

4.

John xii.

26.

Col. iv.

25.

RELIGION is not a state of freedom, to  
 live to ourselves under the covert of gospel-  
 pardon, but an obligation and inclination  
 to live to our blessed Lord; *being not with-  
 out law to God, but under the law to Christ*.

1 Cor. ix.

21.

Therefore you must account christianity  
 a crime, or you must profess the true  
 faith, and plead Christ's cause to the ut-  
 most.

*Reason 5.*

5. IT is as much mens duties that profess  
 to be christians, to dedicate their lives and  
 all to the interest of Christ, as it is to avoid  
*perjury, sacrilege, and hypocrisy*.

THESE crimes are too horrid to neces-  
 sitate arguments to prove that forbearance  
 of them is a duty. Your conviction, that  
 to neglect this dedication is thus criminal, I  
 hope will suffice. To this end let me reason  
 with you. Is it not perjury to violate your  
 baptismal vow? Yea, sure the greatest.  
 And did not you then vow to fight under  
 Christ's banner, renounce the world, the  
 flesh, and the devil; and that you would  
 never be ashamed of Christ's cross? Is not  
 your neglect of dedication of all to Christ,



an exprefs violation of this vow? When you fear, or grudge, performing a christian's work, dare not profefs the true faith and worship of Chrift, nor engage in the supports of his gospel and truths, are not your estates and abilities dedicated to the devil, and your lusts? Is not Chrift deserted, is not his crofs refused, when you prostitute the concernments of your Saviour? None can do more for Chrift, than the baptismal vow includes. What perjury then lies at your doors, who are no way concerned for him? Is it no sacrilege to alienateduly-dedicated things to common use, without divine allowance? Were not your souls, bodies, gifts, and all you have, dedicated to the Lord Jesus, when you were baptized in, or into, the name of the Father, Son, and Spirit? This surrender was professed, and God's propriety and disposal acknowledged: *All past under the rod*; and God's name was enstamped on all thus devoted to his use.

SERM.  
II.



Mat.xxviii  
19.  
Ez. xx.  
37.

Now when you neglect to honour Chrift, and serve his interest with your substance, time, and gifts, do not you withhold what was consecrated, and apply it to your own carnal ends and use? Every idle cowardly christian, keeps back what is God's, and not his own. Every apostate doth the same more grossly; every enemy to any concern of Chrift, employs the consecrated things of Chrift against him.


SERM. So that here is sacrilege at your door, if

II. you improve not all for Christ's interest in your places: And this perjury and sacrilege is double in any ministers or magistrates, who are under vows and dedications, additional to what is common to all christians. Is it not hypocrisy solemnly to profess to intend, do, and be, what we neither do, nor are? Now can you deny that you profess to intend Christ's service, to advance his name and interests, and be for his praise, as witnesses to him in the world? You appear, and would be thought such, in professing to be his followers; for on these terms he admits men to wear his name; *If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.* There he enjoins, that self have not the disposal of us, or ours; that we follow him in his testimony and designs which he is carrying on in the world, and abet these still, tho' the cross be our daily associate. All this thou pretendest.

Luke ix.  
#3.

AND now when thou refusest to dedicate thy life to Christ, dost not thou betray Christ with a kiss, affront God, and abuse men by delusive mockery, and wearest that title of *hypocrite*, which thou brandest the upright with? Oh! think of this, you who spend your time and estates as fuel to your lusts; not once laying to heart any engagement on you, to employ them to higher ends.

6. ALL living christians are *chosen* ones, appointed by Christ to advance his interests in their day. SERM. II.



GREAT are the purposes our Lord is accomplishing. And tho' his immediate power, or the ministry of angels, would be effective of them, yet he honours mortals as instruments therein. He overturns satan's throne, erects and propagates his own kingdom, leads men into truth and holiness, by the ministrations of men like ourselves; tho' the effective virtue be from him.

ALL are obliged to concur; but living saints are under a more peculiar anointing for it, and more especially entrusted with it in their respective stations. He saith of every godly magistrate, *This is the son of man, whom I have made strong for myself.*<sup>17</sup> Ps. lxxx.  
Of every holy parent, as of Abraham, *For I know him, that he will command his children, and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord.*<sup>19</sup> Gen. xviii.  
Its true of every upright minister, that *he is set for the defence of the gospel;* Phil. i. 17. yea, every private christian is among them, who *are an holy nation, a peculiar people; that they should shew forth the praises of him, who called them into his marvellous light.* 1 Pet. ii. 9 The weakest christian hath some influence, and is furnished suitably to what Christ intends by him.

100 *Advancement of Christ's Interests,*

SERM. Is it not a great duty to discharge this

II. glorious trust, and observe these precepts  
which connote our excellency as well as  
duty? In this respect, we are they of  
whom he says, *These are the people I have*  
*formed for myself, they shall shew forth my*  
*praise.* If you are believers, you have a  
greater aptitude to serve Christ; and devo-  
tedness to his designs, is directed to you  
above the rest of the world.

1sa. xliii.  
21.

Heb. x.  
23, 25.

THIS is but keeping up our holy *pro-*  
*cession*, which Christ is so intent on. And  
what engagements had other saints to trans-  
mit to us Christ's truth and worship, which  
we are not under to imitate in our day, for  
the good of following ages?

WHAT good do we enjoy? What ad-  
vantage doth the cause of Christ now reap  
by the expence and labours of christians  
in former days; yea, by the blood of many  
faithful martyrs?

SHALL then any thing dear to Christ, be  
so trivial with us, as not to command the  
utmost service or suffering? We owe Christ  
as much as others ever did; we cost him  
as dear; he hath forgiven us as much, if  
not more; we hope to be possessed of the  
same glory; and his interests in our day,  
are likely to be attended with more glori-  
ous success.

IF your hearts be not obstinate against  
what God enjoineth, you must engage in  
this duty, which is so apparent by these  
reasons,

reasons, to which many more might be added. Can you, after all I have said, let any gasping concern of Christ want the utmost aid, which you are able to afford it duly, and in your places? Or, dare you do any thing fatal to it, whatever be your temptations? I am led to the application of this truth, which I shall attend under these following particulars.

## S E C T. II.

1st *Exhort.* I WOULD call such of you to deep *repentance*, who have employed your lives and abilities in opposing the interests of Christ.

WHAT I shall say under this head, is not designed to upbraid or reproach any man; much less to hinder peace with, and love to the most guilty, when you become sensible of the provocation God layeth to your charge: And least of all would I be interpreted to impeach the innocent, to whom the things perpetrated by men under any distinguishing character with them, must needs be afflictive.

MY aim is only to bring you to repentance, if so be your hearts are not so desperately hardened, as to bind on yourselves those woes, which so unchristian a behaviour hath exposed you to. I am induced to this unpleasing work, by the opportunity

SERM. nity which this mixed congregation affords

II. me of speaking to such, whom I expect  
 not to meet elsewhere; and I fear, this  
 admonition to you, is too much neglected  
 by such, from whom it might be better  
 resented.

REPENTANCE is the great design of  
 the present providences we are under, and  
 the best expedient to prevent the evils we  
 are threatned with. God will embitter  
 that profane and persecuting spirit which  
 hath raged in the church of *England*; and  
 tho' forgiveness be our duty, yet provi-  
 dence levels its arrows against the guilty,  
 in a manner too extraordinary to be disre-  
 garded; but how few consider the deal-  
 ings of God, even when clothed with the  
 greatest light and wonder?

I KNOW the guilty have ignorance  
 enough to impute to their zeal for truth,  
 what they have done from their innate  
 enmity to Christ; but mistakes do not  
 acquit in a matter so important; and per-  
 secutors never ruin the godly under a good  
 character, but *think they do God good ser-*  
*vice*, in destroying whomever they can  
 call factious, or schismatical. The concern  
 of Christ is too hid, not to be oft mistaken  
 by sinners; *For had they known it, they*  
*would not have crucified the Lord of glory.*  
 And profane persecutors do as truly wound  
 Christ in his doctrines, worship, and mem-  
 bers, as if they laid violent hands on his  
 very person.

OH profane ones! who else could it be but Christ, whom you opposed in his members, whilst you persecuted the most serious imitators of him, and men, of all their neighbours, most devoted to him? SERM.  
II.

WAS it not Christ, in his gospel, you despised, when you ridiculed the most essential doctrines of his gospel?

HAVE you not acted against Christ in his ministers, whilst you stopped the mouths of such, who were as likely to advance his interests by their ministry as any others; yea, and to this added a heap of malicious lies and slanders, lest Christ might be served by them?

HAVE you not hated, and laden with contempt, the most probable evidences of real holiness; as a strict life, serious discourse, and holy tenderness?

Is it not the special testimony of Christ in your day, which you have resisted, when you disabled from service, and exposed to extreme hardships, all that considerable number who stand and suffer for this, *viz.* That the ministry of the gospel, and the communion of saints, ought not to be clogg'd with sinful, needless, or uninstituted terms and practices, to the wounding of conscience, dividing the church, hazarding the reformed interest, and destruction of christian love and serious piety?

WHAT hath all your pretence been, but a zeal for what yourselves call *indifferent*?

SERM. *rent?* And for these you have hated, op-

II. posed, and almost at last quite ruined the  
 ~~~~~ undoubted interests of the blessed Jesus.  
 How much have you done to give a fatal  
 wound to the very form of your religion,  
 not to be recovered by a little unseasonable  
 noise?

SURELY its high time that your personal irreligion and profaneness should force you to suspect, that you are not so likely to know or serve the cause of Christ, as others, so much more pious and concerned than yourselves.

OUGHT you not at least to fear, you have been acted by the Devil against Christ, especially when you reflect on the methods you have used? Would Christ have put you to serve him by lying, perjury, profane scoffing, and cruel persecution, to the utmost of your power? Were sabbaths spent by you in disturbing meetings, as if you were the men that designed to serve Christ thereby? If nothing else will cause you to suspect, that enmity against Christ did govern you, consider how you treated any of your own church, who were pious and serious: How much more were they valued by you, than we whom you pretended some difference with, as cause of dislike?

GOD calls you by me to deep humblings for these things: Be convinced and ashamed of your opposition to him; and be assured,  
 if



*if you repent not, you shall all perish.* Can you pretend so much as to say, *To me to live is Christ*, who would have and holiness, have as little interest in others as they have in yourselves? Was it not too much that yourselves did not live to Christ, but that you must grudge and ruin any that did live to him?

How will you answer the Lord Jesus, when he shall ask you, *Why persecutest thou me?* What account can you give of all your *hard speeches uttered against him*, his truths, and people? Must not you fear you have filled up your sins, and the wrath of God is come upon you to the uttermost, by forbidding the ministers of Christ to preach his gospel? How must you wail, when he shall at his appearance convince you, that you have pierced him in your evil treatment of those men and things, which he will then own to be his interests?

IN pity to your souls, consider, Is this you have done suitable to your baptismal vow? Doth your profession of christianity oblige you to do nothing for Christ and his cause, except venting your scoff and rage against things wherein his interest seemeth most concerned? The Lord fasten these things on your hearts, and force you to a repentance as notorious as your scandal.

I SPEAK not these things, as if repentance were confined to you; we have all need

SERM. II.

Luke xii. 3.

Acts ix. 4.  
Jud. 15.  
1 Theff. ii. 16.

SERM. need of it; and if God intend good for us,  
 II. he will incline all sorts to it, according to  
 ~~~~~ our respective guilt: But yours is most no-  
 torious; and God seems, by his present  
 dealings, to point more directly at it.

HAVING said what I think myself en-  
 gaged to suggest to profane and persecuting  
 ones, I must solemnly warn you against  
 all censorious thoughts and evil speeches,  
 against any godly ministers or people of  
 the church of *England*; their differences  
 with us will not justify uncharitable surmi-  
 ses, nor reproachful language against them.  
 All good men aim at one thing, even to  
 serve Christ, tho' they do not agree always  
 in the means. God serves himself by the  
 different sentiments of his people, and hath  
 his own methods to convince and cement  
 them; greater union is reserved for that  
*new Jerusalem that will descend out of hea-*  
*ven from God, that beareth the form of a*  
*cube; its of one measure, and there carnal*  
*interests will not divide.*

Rev. xxi.  
 10, 16.

2d *Exhort.* LET all real christians live  
 more *entirely* to the service of Christ and  
 his interests.

YOU may be humbled that you have  
 done no more for him, and that your un-  
 usefulness to his concerns, is imputable to  
 your remiss temper, more than want of  
 talents. How many of your gifts were  
 never employed to advance truth? His  
 members have been in straits, and his gos-  
 pel

pel languishing, when your riches were hoarded up. Many neglected opportunities of service must reproach you, when the frame of your hearts bespeak them tender. Many have been your industrious contrivances, wherein Christ hath had the least, if any share.

OH! be awakened this day to strong resolves, that hereafter *to you to live* shall be *Christ*; yea, only Christ, and all other interests subordinated to his. Let all you have be laid anew on his altar. Get your hearts lifted up in the ways of the Lord; and be wholly for him, whatever choice shall be made by others. Satan's instruments are industrious, unwearied, and prodigal in his service. Christ hath but few engaged in his behalf; and shall the declinings of his interests lay at your door?

2 Chron.  
xvii. 6.

I SHALL annex some directions and motives.

*Direct.* I. EXERCISE yourselves in the advancement of the interests of Christ in your *own* souls.

IF Christ reign wholly in us, he will reign greatly by us. *Grow up into Christ in all things, till you are filled with all the fulness of God*; and your capacity and readiness for his advancement will be enlarged. Be more acquainted with him, and you will judge him worth your service, and highly value all that is his. Flaming grace will contrive much: What can I serve

Eph. iv.

15.

ch. iii. 19.

SERM. serve Christ in, and freely consecrate all to

II. him? Whereas our backwardness is an infallible sign that his life is feeble in us. In a word, he that neglects Christ in himself, will be little fit for, or concerned in, the advancement of Christ in the world; nor indeed be blessed with much success in his attempts for it.

*Direct.* 2. SEE that your aims be *sincere* in all which you seem to serve Christ by.

Low or bad purposes spoil good works. God trieth the heart, (in our best services) *and loveth uprightness.* Good sermons were spoiled by envy, and charitable deeds by ostentation. Its unhappy when our hearts have not higher aims for Christ, than our hands at best can accomplish; but its wicked, when what we seem to offer to Christ, is a sacrifice to our idols.

*Direct.* 3. CHEARFULLY dedicate *all* you have to the concernments of Christ.

Its a cursed wedge which is reserved from this dedication, whether it be estate, relation, gifts or life. What *Ananias* spared, spoiled the acceptance of the part he offered. Tho' it be not always necessary all should be parted with, yet it is necessary that nothing be unemployed, when fidelity to Christ calls for it; and it ceaseth to be yours, when it cannot be kept without treachery to his interests. As all must be dedicated, so it must be chearfully laid out,

out, as what is fit and best. None but free-will offerings, and a *cheerful giver*, are lovely in God's account. Its left on record as the praise of some, *They took joyfully the spoiling of their goods*. Indeed, the hardest thought in our greatest toils and expence for Christ, should be; Blessed be God, that I have any thing to express my love and zeal for Christ by.

SERM.

II.

~~~~~

2 Cor. ix.

7.

Heb. x.

34.

*Direct.* 4. BE always solicitous to know what the interests of Christ are, which you should at *present* serve; especially if there be doubts concerning them.

THE gospel is an infallible rule in general; providence and the series of prophecies may contribute to your direction, under the guidance of that higher rule. Undoubted duties must always be done in their season; undoubted truths must never be denied, yea, must always be professed, if some damage to the interests of Christ do not attend it, beyond what our profession of that truth, at that time, will counter-vail; doubtful sins must never be committed; undoubted sins must be discouraged in our place. Present good, which is less, may not be bought by the certain loss of a greater good at some distance; nor at the expence of a greater evil in sure prospect. The more material interests of Christ must not be sacrificed to those less considerable, nor undoubted to doubtful. I can but glance at these.

You

SERM. You ought to be assured in every thing  
 II. you engage in as for Christ, that it be his  
 concern and your work; yea, your present  
 duty, which a greater is not excluded by.  
 Assurance in this will command your enga-  
 ging for it, and encourage under all diffi-  
 culties in it.

Rom. x. 2. MISTAKES herein cause great disorders,  
 kindle a fiery zeal, which is oft fatal to  
 the concerns of Christ; and whatever we  
 do to advance these mistaken interests, are  
 offerings to a lust, and unprofitable to our-  
 selves. It would amaze one to see the heat  
 of some in supporting errors, opposing truth,  
 destroying peace, and propagating a weak  
 notion, to the hazard of the most confi-  
 derable *interests* of Christ.

BUT yet our indifferency is carnal, when  
 Christ seemeth by his providence, by sa-  
 tan's violent assault, or by the great influ-  
 ence of a truth at that time, to call us to  
 engage strongly in it, though it appears at  
 other times less momentous. To say no  
 more, search well what will be most for  
 Christ's glory.

*Direct.* 5. MORTIFY those lusts which  
 most hinder, and improve in those graces  
 which most forward your living entirely  
 to Christ.

MENS lusts are their greatest obstacles  
 to service; and its impossible to advance  
 Christ considerably, if improved graces af-  
 ford not willingness and strength: There-  
 fore

fore trample on your pride which will disdain low service, and fret at any contempt which attends your labours; but be more humble, and you'll agree to be any thing, so Christ may be all. Be more free from covetousness, which grudgeth all expence and loss for Christ, selleth truth to get or save a little dross; but get more heavenly-mindedness, which disdains earth, so it may but get more treasure in heaven. Cast away that slavish fear which betrays conscience to a mortal's threatening; but be more endued with holy courage, which will dare to be zealous for Christ in the very face of danger. Silence unbelief that still suggests difficulties, but hides from you both supplies of strength and the promised rewards; whereas more faith will still enlarge your service, in the view of sufficient aids, and an eternal crown. Above all, trample on selfishness, which most devoureth our talents; whereas a publick spirit, and superlative love to Christ, would constrain your consecration of all to him, as one well deserving of it.

SERM.  
II.  
~~~~~

Dan. iii.  
13.  
2Tim. i.  
12.  
2 Cor. iv.  
18.  
2 Cor. v.  
13, 14.

*Direct. 6.* I MIGHT add, that you ought to *manage* all your designed service, as may be most conducive to the advancement of these interests of Christ.

GREAT prudence is necessary to give an advantage to all our undertakings, that the success we aim at be not prevented.

BUT

SERM. BUT I have no more time than to  
 II. conclude all with a few *motives* to this  
 ~~~~~ duty.

1st *Mot.* ITs the interest of *Christ* I am persuading you to dedicate your lives to.

ITs that *Christ* who hath so amazingly denied himself for you, to whom you owe so much, from whom you have received, and still expect, such great things. Can you behold any thing as *his* concernment, and not be enflamed with zeal? Oh! what honour is it to serve him! Being his interests, they must needs deserve our regard, and command our industry: This glorious One would not stake his glory, and set his heart on trifles; and who but the unbelieving and ungrateful can grudge him any thing? Methinks a reflection on any thing as his concern, would inspire with all that can enervate our attempts.

2d *Mot.* ITs but our *lives*, at most, which are to be dedicated to him.

THEY are short, and so its but a little while, and the hardship is over. They are but poor and mean things to be an offering so acceptable to him. Alas! how inconsiderable is all we can do or suffer, that they should reflect any glory on him who fills the heavens, and is now (by us) raising a monument which will be admired for ever? Who would not strive to contribute most to his blessed designs? How can our little matters be laid out to so great purposes?

3d *Mot.*



3d Mot. IN serving the interests of Christ, we do, in the best manner, serve our own. SERM. II.

WHAT we do for him, he doth not need; but if we refuse it, we are undone. We must shortly reckon for all talents; and how uncomfortable will the account be, when little can be reckoned as placed to Christ's account?

BUT there is gain by the most costly service, and profit by the worst of hardships; the advantage is more than *an hundred fold*; if you live to him, you shall ever live with him; a share in his glory will be yours, if you partake in his concerns: *If any man serve me, him will my Father honour.* How wisely is our all laid out, when it will yield such great returns? Look upward, and see what mansions Christ is preparing for you, whilst you are labouring and laying out yourselves for him; and he is like to receive the most illustrious crown, who yields the greatest service. Surely you are injurious to yourselves in sparing any seed now, when you have Christ's word for so vast an increase: *He that soweth sparingly, shall reap sparingly; but he that soweth bountifully, shall also reap bountifully.* Oh! into what a state will you soon pass from an useful life? *To die will be gain, if to you to live be Christ.* In eternity you will find all your endeavours

H carefully

114 *Advancement of Christ's Interests,*

SERM. carefully recorded, and abundantly rewarded.  
II.

Must not you say, From this moment, Whatever I can do, and all that I possess, shall be devoted to him and his interests. Engage then in his service; you have angels and all saints sharers with you in the undertaking, and Christ at the head of this royal company. They are interests will stand, tho' you refuse to assist; they do still advance, tho' invisibly to us. If you dedicate not your lives to the concerns of Christ, you must lay them out for the devil; one of them is served at all times, and by all persons. Faithful service will give a great *testimony* to the Lord Jesus, and yield wonderful advantage to such under your influence, whose good you are inclined to endeavour. You will prejudice no *interest* by this, but the *interests* of the devil, which commenced and grow still on the manifest ruins of mankind; and ought you not to oppose him, to whose usurpation are owing all the disorders and calamities in the world; which evils are redressed to the degree of the advancement of the *interests* of Christ, and no further.

Est. iv. 14

1 Cor. xv.  
25; 28.

CAN you, after all this, refuse to bemoan the world, where so many opposite *interests* are set up against Christ; and pity sinners, who so blindly resist, and impatiently bear, the merciful and just attempts of the Lord Jesus?

Jesus? Must not every soul eccho to the apostle in my text, *Now to me to live is Christ?* SERM.  
II.

THE whole discourse is so applicable to your Lordship and brethren, that I need no more than intreat, yea, charge you to act, in your places, as men *to whom to live is Christ*. Let not any opportunity for service to him, bring your souls under the guilt of negligence, nor yield Christ matter to upbraid you with. A trust is in your hands, see that the ends of God be faithfully answered: Consider that place, *Thou* Ps. lx. 4. *hast given a banner to them that fear thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth*. Resolve then, in your station, that if Christ gain not by our power, our consciences shall not reproach us with refusing to dedicate all our abilities to him, whose glory we chiefly aimed at, and to whose interest we are fully devoted.







*The Protestants Deliverance from  
the Irish REBELLION, begun  
October 23, 1641.*

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BEING A

Thanksgiving-SERMON

PREACHED

The 23d of *October*, 1689.







T O T H E  
R E A D E R.



*HAVING lived many years in Ireland, where much of my temporal concernments do yet remain, I think myself more especially concerned in such providences as affect that kingdom. The present state thereof directs us to mourning and prayer, as our ordinary employ; however, I was content, for once, to take down the harp from the willows, and make a thankful mention of our past deliverance. Great are the praises due to our God, for saving the Protestant interest from the Irish rebellion begun in forty-one. Thou wilt find somewhat in this sermon that may command thy wonder, and thereby heighten thy acknowledgments. Herewith I have*

*joined some hints referring to the hopefulness of Ireland's redemption from its present distress, with directions to such a temper, as may hasten a period to our hardships,*

*But how difficult is it to convince men, that their danger or safety is decided by God's sentence; and that their carriage, with respect to him, hath a greater influence in determining the condition of a people, than all second causes?*

*The common neglect of approving ourselves to God by repentance, suggests to me those fears, which for several months I have mentioned, and again expressed in this discourse; viz. That the deliverance of Ireland will not be so sudden or easy as most conclude.*

*Its no slight matter with me, that such as have fled hither, so little answer the purpose of God, in driving us from our estates and dwelling. Who can think we are suffering God's rebukes, when we still*

*still*



*still add to our provocations? Intemperance, pride, formality, divisions, and levity in Irish Protestants, are indecent, because we are a spoiled people; they declare the greatest obstinacy, being we are under the loudest calls of God by afflictions; they argue the grossest madness, as they obstruct the return of our blessings, for which we are so impatient. Can we imagine that he who hath begun a controversy with us, will not force our amendment, or prolong our hardships?*

*We are under too plain indications of unfitness to receive or improve a new deliverance; among other testimonies thereof, How sadly is a small beginning, or presage of it, abused? Londonderry, so wonderfully preserved by the concurring help of all Protestants there, is become a bone of contention. Unexpected success hath made it a thing too angrily disputed, who had the greatest hand in it; tho' its plain  
what*

what men must have sustained the reproach, if that city, and the interest it was concerned with, had been overcome. But now, what God in a manner wrought alone, people endeavour to ascribe to this or that sort: What God accomplished for the common good of Protestants, men are appropriating to the sole benefit of their several parties. Had conformists and dissenters disputed thus in their dangers, or foreseen these debates, the consequences had been fatal. For my part, I adore the providence that inclined the church of England to join with those dissenters who had shut the gates: Their union was their strength; and they became united on necessary terms, and mutual allowances. The church of Englandmen laid by the doctrine of non-resistance; the dissenters waved the advantage of their number in choosing the officers; indeed they had more reason to induce them to this,  
it

*it was not a time to indulge ambition; military skill was very small among the ordinary people of the dissenters; for many years they were not admitted into any employments, yea, oft disarmed; and most of their leading persons gone; so that it is much they had so many dissenting officers as they had. Blessed be God, that managed that multitude to so great purposes; officers could have little influence over them, when they were made by themselves; and who, without money, can be expected to govern a body of mere volunteers, further than their common sentiments lead them?*

*Is this a matter to serve little ends by; and that whilst there are difficulties enough before us, to try the vigour of Protestants, however united? Durst I speak heaven's mind by this affair of Derry, for the conduct of our present King, I should say; God will preserve the protestant religion, and their majesties,*

sties, by the united force of conformists and dissenters; leaving out, that the dissenters must be ten to one, as they were in Londonderry. Further, I should think it a reward sufficient for us, if all the church of England would now glory in this action as theirs, and that I never see such a change of things, as to prevail with any of them, to reproach any man as no true member of their church, for having a hand therein.

I am solicited to vindicate the dissenters from some late reflections made on them by a right reverend prelate of Ireland; but I think it no proper work to irritate any, while I am calling all to repentance, that our desolations may not become perpetual. I can engage for myself, and many others, that nothing but sin shall prevent my compliance with the national settlement of the church; yea, if any thing that is sinful be removed, I shall be thank-  
ful

*ful to God, that the nation is become so far more innocent. Non-conformity is neither so profitable nor creditable, as to induce a fondness of it, when providence shall once remove the things that render it as yet our duty.*

*Yet I would intreat all persons not to be angry with us, that we do not change our judgment of things on their bare assertions. Degrees of light are not equal; and a judgment of private discretion must be allowed every man, as to his own practice; tho' that justifieth no deviation from the divine rule.*

*And the more the constitutions of the church are accommodated to that rule, the more easily will a people be gathered under her wings.*

*The Lord grant that the awful providences we are under, may abate all selfishness, and incline our souls to holiness and peace; that so God may restore Ireland to its happy state, and prevent new forfeitures,*

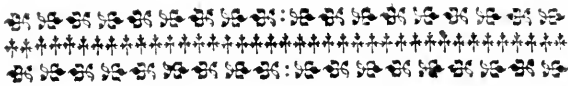
*tures, by mortifying all those sins which have exposed us to our present anguish. This is that which we ought all to desire; and were we answered therein, other matters were soon adjusted. I will only add, that importunity extorts this sermon from me; I had no design when I preached it, nor a fortnight after, to publish it; but if God is pleased to bless it to the good of any, it will satisfy*

Thy Servant, in our

Nov. 11, 1689.

Common L O R D,

*Daniel Williams.*



## I S A M. xvii. 37.

*David said moreover, The Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and the paw of the bear; he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine.*



SERM. III.
**I** WAS willing to fix on a subject which might lead me to mention our past deliverance, as matter of praise; and to hint at our present dangers, so as to prevent our despondency: My thoughts soon entertain'd this text, as apt for both purposes. Here is a great deliverance recited; *He delivered me out of the paw of the lion.* And from this another deliverance is concluded; *He will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine* In the former, his own life, and his father's flock, were concerned; on the latter depended the welfare of all *Israel*. The anointing which *David* received by *Samuel*, fitted him for the first, and that was a pledge of the latter; which was the first noted step to the throne designed for him. The text is some addition

1 Sam.  
xvi. 13

SERM. addition to *ver.* 36. That *verse* asserts his conquest past and expected; but here he acknowledgeth God as the principal author of his success, whereof he gloried; *q. d.* I slew the lion and bear, as the instrument; but it was in the virtue, and by the aid of the Almighty that I did it. God wrought therein by my hand; I was but a youth, those beasts were more than a match for a man; yet God rescued me out of their power, and enabled me to destroy them as contemptible things: *I took him by the beard.*

HENCE he infers, that the displays of God's power would not be wanting in this new and more momentous occasion: *He will deliver me.* *David* had an impulse warranting him to this encounter; a revelation persuaded him of success. He might in general conclude it, from what *Samuel* had said concerning his being king of *Israel*, which must have failed if he were now overcome: But no doubt a conquest was particularly suggested at once with the impulse which pressed him to this engagement.

THE design of the whole is to direct *Saul* to due acknowledgments of God, and to encline him to suffer *David* to encounter *Goliath*, who defied the armies of *Israel* with such contempt: *q. d.* Entrust me in this affair, notwithstanding my youth and unskilfulness, God that hath  
owned



owned me in a matter as dangerous, will supply my defects, and cause me to prosper by his all-sufficient power at this time.



Two observations from the words will introduce what is apposite to our occasion.

*Observ. 1.* ALL deliverances ought to be ascribed to God as the author; and he should be owned according to what is signal in those deliverances.

*Observ. 2.* PAST deliverances are some ground to hope that God will yet deliver.

IN treating of the first of these, my work is to explain what may have any difficulty, to prove that truth which is asserted, and then apply it to the deliverance we commemorate.

ALL will be contained in the following heads.

## S E C T. I.

1. A *deliverance* is the freeing of persons from some inflicted or impending evil: Its an *evil* we are freed from, or exemption from it is not worth the name of deliverance: There is some obnoxiousness to, or dangers of that evil, or it is no deliverance.

DELIVERANCES are various, according to the several sorts of endangering mischiefs.

SERM. III. THERE are *eternal* miseries, with respect to which we are *delivered from the wrath to come*. Salvation from any other calamities, are a light matter to this, and leave us miserable without it. What avails escaping the lion's paw, if we fall into the devil's clutches? Temporal deliverances will soon be forgotten in endless flames.

1 Thess. i.  
10.  
'Πρόσωπον.  
He hath  
begun, and  
is still deli-  
vering us.

THERE are *spiritual* evils, from which we are freed by preventing grace, renewing grace, or pardoning mercy; the first secures from the actual commission of many sins, the second from the habitual dominion of all sin, the third from the guilt of our transgressions, which otherwise binds us to punishment, privative and positive.

THERE are *corporal* evils of sundry sorts, from each of which a deliverance receives its name. A deliverance is sometimes complete, *viz.* when the mischief doth not at all touch us, or when none of it remaineth, tho' suffered for a time. Sometimes the deliverance is partial, as when it happeneth, that tho' we are safe from part of the distress, yet some degree thereof continueth: As in the case of *Israel*, *I will grant them some deliverance; nevertheless they shall be servants, that they may know my service, and the service of the countries.* There are personal and publick deliverances, &c. Each deliverance supposeth us actually hurt, or some way in danger of it. Whether it be from this, or that kind

2 Chron.  
iii. 7, 8.

of misery we are saved, all are comprehended in this general. SERM.  
III.

2. ALL deliverances should be *ascribed* to God, as the author of them. Whatever kind they be of, however few or many, of all its true, that

(1.) GOD is the *author* of deliverances, whoever be the instrument. God puts in his claim as of old; *I am the Lord thy God from the Land of Egypt, thou shalt know no God but me; for there is no Saviour besides me.* When the instrument seems most probable, *he* is the deliverer. The worthies of *David set themselves in the midst of that parcel, and delivered it, and slew the Philistine, and the Lord saved them by a great deliverance.* When second causes are weak, its grossly stupid not to see his hand: He gives means their aptitude, who instructs with wisdom, whereby men are politick: *He teaches my hands to war.* Who endueth the spirit with courage, or the arm with strength? *Its God that girdeth me with strength, and makes my way perfect.*

THE success of all means depends on him: *The victory is the Lord's.* The proud helpers stoop under him, if he withdraw not his anger. To convince men of this, he oft waves the ordinary course of things, baffling the strong, who seems to have conquest in his grasp, while he giveth triumph to the feeble. The multitude are made a

SERMON. prey to a small number; yea, God hath refused numbers, lest the people should vaunt themselves against him, and say, My own hand hath saved me. Who can, on a strict observation, disown that deliverances call this God their father, and the highest means are subordinate to him? He subdues the enemy, whoever gives the stroke:

III.   
 Judg. vii.   
 2.

*Thou subduest before them the inhabitants of the land, and givest them their land.* Its God that calls and summons instruments:

Neh. ix.   
 24.

*I commanded my sanctified ones, I have called my mighty ones for mine anger, even them that rejoice in my highness, &c. The Lord of hosts mustereth the host of the battle.* Its he that strikes terror into the hearts of enemies, and hides counsel from them, whereby the men of might do loose their hands, and their knowledge becomes foolish. So that which way ever he exerts his power, salvation is of the Lord.

Isa. xlii.   
 3, 4.

*I commanded my sanctified ones, I have called my mighty ones for mine anger, even them that rejoice in my highness, &c. The Lord of hosts mustereth the host of the battle.* Its he that strikes terror into the hearts of enemies, and hides counsel from them, whereby the men of might do loose their hands, and their knowledge becomes foolish. So that which way ever he exerts his power, salvation is of the Lord.

Isa. xlii.   
 25.

*I commanded my sanctified ones, I have called my mighty ones for mine anger, even them that rejoice in my highness, &c. The Lord of hosts mustereth the host of the battle.* Its he that strikes terror into the hearts of enemies, and hides counsel from them, whereby the men of might do loose their hands, and their knowledge becomes foolish. So that which way ever he exerts his power, salvation is of the Lord.

(2.) HENCE it followeth, that all deliverances should be ascribed to this blessed God; the principal efficient may well claim the honour of the effect; every man ought to say from the heart, *The Lord is my fortress, and my deliverer.* He permits dangers, to excite mankind to seek his help; and thereby heighten their acknowledgments. Every deliverance is a witness for God, and ought to be a remembrancer to our sluggish minds: *His own arm got him the victory; the Lord hath made known his salvation,*


2 Sam.   
 xxii. 2.

*His own arm got him the victory; the Lord hath made known his salvation,*

Pf. xcvi.   
 2, 4.

*His own arm got him the victory; the Lord hath made known his salvation,*

salvation, and his righteousness hath he SERM.  
 openly shewed in the sight of the heathen: III.

And thence we are called to exalt him.   
 Ascribing the glory hereof to him, is a fit  
 homage to the discoveries of his power.  
 When his arm is made bare, how pro-  
 fane is it *not to ascribe strength to our God?* Pf. lxxviii.  
 Praise is a tribute of gratitude to his good- 34.  
 ness, expressing itself in every such relief.  
 Where God's kindness so discernably enga-  
 geth our regards, its the basest ingratitude  
 not thankfully to own our Saviour. Who  
 must not expect to be left to the next  
 danger, that ascribeth not to God the ho-  
 nour of past deliverances? Our minds are  
 distempered, if they be remiss to so poor  
 a return under so great engagements. In  
 every deliverance, the infinitely glorious  
 God compassionates the distressed, and en-  
 gageth his power and wisdom in their  
 concernments. On their behalf (tho' oft  
 base and wicked) he stirs up himself, and  
 commands salvation by the appearance of  
 his glory.

THESE acknowledgments are but the  
 reflections of that glory from a well-dis-  
 posed soul, capable to observe, and willing  
 to own it. If there be any light in our  
 minds, we must see that this hath the Lord  
 done. If there be any love to God in our  
 hearts, affectionate resentments will inter-  
 mingle with our convictions, and from  
 both an offering of due praise will ascend

SERM. to him as our Redeemer from all evils:

III. The very Pagans thought sacrifices due to their idols after a victory.

(3.) THE last part of the observation is, That God ought to be owned according to all that is *signal* in a deliverance: Some pieces of providence are more curiously wrought. The footsteps of God are more discernably impressed, yea, his very image seems enstamped on them. Many things concur to set off his power, wisdom, and goodness, in a brighter light; these are called his *wonderful* works; in them we may direct ourselves to God, as *Moses* did;

Exod. xv.  
6, 7

*Thy right hand is become glorious in power, thou hast appeared in the greatness of thine excellency.* He oft fills a salvation with wonders; we can fix our eye on no part of it, but there occurs somewhat extraordinary; somewhat too difficult for a lesser strength than omnipotent; somewhat too excellent for a lower hand than what's divine; with instances hereof are the scriptures full. Thus it was when God so immediately avenged his peoples cause, by his plagues on the *Egyptian* task-masters.

Exod. viii.  
9, 10.

Ex. xiv.  
22.

HE made the waters a wall of defence for their feeble army, while he treasured a deluge to overthrow the host of their strong pursuers.

Exod. xvii.  
11.

*Amalek's* success is limited by their prayers. How miraculously did he ruin the confederate forces of the five kings before

before *Gideon*? *Hail-stones devoured more than the sword*; and that darkness might not abate the deliverance, *the sun and moon stand still until the people had avenged themselves*. *Jericbo's walls fall down without any battery, besides the sound of rams horns, and the shout of the people.*

SERM.  
III.

Josh. x. 8,  
11, 13.  
Josh. vi.  
20.

*Gideon*, and three hundred men, with pitchers and trumpets, destroy an army numerous as the sand by the sea-side.

Judg. vii.  
12, 22.

A THOUSAND fell by a jaw-bone of an ass in the hand of *Sampson*; and *Shamgar* slew six hundred with an ox goad.

Judg. iii.  
31.

GOD saved *Israel* by *Jonathan*, and his armour-bearer; but it was by causing a trembling in the host; the garrison and the spoilers trembled, and the earth quaked; the multitude melted away; they went beating down one another, every man's sword was against his fellow.

1 Sam. xiv.  
15, 16, 20.

OF a like nature was the discomfeiture of *Benhadad*, with thirty-two kings assisting, by the two hundred thirty-two young men; and afterward a small party slew a hundred thousand, because they said the God of *Israel* is not God of the vallies. When *Hezekiah* is in a perplexity, an angel slays 180000 men.

1 Kings  
xx. 28,  
29.

2 Kings  
xix. 35.

THE *Jews* are rescued from a destruction, near to be executed, by the interruption of *Abashuerus's* sleep.

Esth. vi.

TIME would fail, should I enumerate the deliverances which carry with them the

SERM. astonishing indications of the divine arm.

## III.

SOME are recommended by the extremity of the dangers, others by the improbability of the instruments. Oftentimes the methods God is pleased to chuse, are so remarkable, that a disregard is scarce consistent with the grossest stupidity.

WHATSOEVER is signal deserves our notice; they are beams of divine glory, which creatures ought to entertain with strict observation. To huddle over the wonders of God, or view them by epitomes, is too expressive of a contempt of God, and an abject spirit; whereas *the works of the Lord are sought out of all them that have pleasure therein; his works are honourable and glorious.*

Psal. cxi.  
2, 3.


## A P P L I C A T I O N.

I SHALL now apply what I have said, to that which called us together at this time. My work is to rear a pillar, and engrave this inscription:

**The Lord delivered Ireland from a bloody and horrid Rebellion, begun the 23d of October, 1641.**

POPISH craft so imposed of late on the foolish temper of some, as that it was become a doubt with them, whether there was an *Irish* rebellion; by such it was complemited with the title of *a civil war.*



FORTY-five years had reconciled them SERM.  
to the barbarities they had not felt; the III.  
*Irish* were all become innocents, popery   
was grown tame and good-natured. I hope  
such at least, as share in the present cala-  
mity, are too concerned to remain infidels.

SUCH seeming Protestants you wanted  
not in *England*, who denied the popish  
plot till they saw it executed; yea, then  
seemed to favour it so much, as to disbe-  
lieve it still.

WE are come hither to make mention  
of that mercy God extended to us; I wish  
all of you, that belong to *Ireland*, may  
own God with affections becoming that  
deliverance. Its matter of reproof against  
*Israel*, that *they remembered not the day* Pf. lxxviii.  
*when God delivered them from the enemy.* <sup>42.</sup>

Let not the remissness of our souls, spoil  
our seeming remembrance of that time.  
For your assistance, I shall,

- I. REPRESENT to you some things  
that were signal in this deliverance.
- II. DIRECT you to such acknow-  
ledgments of God, as become a de-  
liverance so great.

THE first may serve as an argument to  
enforce the latter, because acknowledg-  
ments should bear some proportion to the  
greatness of our mercy. The deliverance  
of *Ireland* was not common, every thing  
therein was eminent; the things which  
singly

SERM. singly made other deliverances great, all  
 III. meet in this. Let us instance some of  
 ~~~~~ them.

I. IT was a deliverance from the *awfullest* evils; it was from the *Irish*, the most savage of christians; from *Poper*y, the worst system that pretends to the name of religion. The calamity was not small; we  
 Psal. cvii. may truly be spoken of in those words, *He*  
 20. *sent his word and healed them, he delivered them from their destructions.* This will appear,

(I.) IF we reflect on what the Protestants of *Ireland* did suffer, as far as the *Irish* prevailed.

WHAT a number lost their lives by violence! The land was become an *aceldema*. Two hundred thousand Protestants were destroyed by these bloody men. Many, at the first breaking out of this rebellion, were invited to feasts by the *Irish*, and butchered at the entertainment, without the least warning: Mere dying was a kindness; tediousness and barbarity must heighten their slaughters; they stripped multitudes, and forced them to perish by cold and famine in that hard winter. Crowds were burnt together in barns; many driven into rivers, and such as attempted to escape, were forced back to perish in the waters. Women with child they ripped open; poor babes they tossed on pikes, as pleasing sport. Candles were made of man's  
 greafe;



greafe; no entreaties of women or children could induce to pity: A conceit of merit excited their bloody inclinations. Women exceeded the men in rage, if possible. Their enmity extended to all that bare but an *English* name; houses and improvements they laid waste; they would cut collops out of the *English* cattle, and let them live in torment.

WHERE was there a house in their power, that had not the inhabitants slaughtered? how few children left to mourn for their murdered parents? or women to be-moan their butchered husbands or children? Scarce a family in *Ireland* that groaned not for some massacred relations. What shall I say? It was an epitome of the worst mischiefs the earth at any time beheld; the devil seemed to boast to what rage and cruelty he could instigate corrupted nature. All these villanies they exercised, when enjoying their religion, and civil immunities, in common with the *English*, and no way provoked by them.

FROM these men we were delivered; from these very men you in *England* were lately saved. That you may be thus managed by these persons, is the desire of such who press the restauration of the late king, who hath no other instruments, except the *French*, he can confide in.

(2.) LET us further take notice, what yet greater miseries the *Irish* Protestants must

SERM. must have suffered, if *Ireland* had not been  
 III. delivered.

THEY who survived the former attempts, must either have been destroyed as their dead friends, or exposed to penury and contempt by flight, or undo their souls by idolatrous compliance. Popery had reigned in that country, and gospel-worship and doctrine had been utterly banished, if this salvation had been denied us. This accents that deliverance; thereby God prevented the establishment of spiritual abominations, and revived his own interests, and the pledges of his gracious presence there. Our salvation was great, as it secured us from Popery, which includes the utmost repugnancy to the essential designs and nature of the christian religion.

INSTEAD of knowledge, ignorance is by principle urged, as most tending to devotion.

How is God worshipped, when the greatest expressions of worship are paid to angels, saints, and images? To them they offer incense, prostrate themselves, invoke them in the second person. Its true, they say their worship terminates not in those lower objects; but the generality of their ignorant followers are tempted to think otherwise, especially when the most agree, that the same worship is given to the image and the exemplars; and few of the ignorant  
 can

can exert any act of the mind, whereby the worship is to pass from the image to God himself; neither by the determination of their best casuists, is such an act needful; a virtual termination is sufficient.

THE idolatry of the Pagans is equally justifiable; they declared, We believe not the copper or gold, whereof the images are made, to be God; but in these materials we adore those, that sacred dedication introduceth, and causeth to dwell in the images.

FURTHER, if the bread and wine remain in the eucharist after consecration, they own themselves guilty of the grossest idolatry; for the council of *Trent* declares, That what we bodily receive in that sacrament, is to be worshipped with the supreme worship *Latria*. Now what can be more evident, than that the substance of bread and wine remain after consecration? The Spirit of God again and again calls it bread: It could not be the broken body of Christ at the time of institution, for he was not yet crucified; the blood of the new testament was not shed, which must be the dying blood of the testator. It destroys the nature of a sacrament to suppose no sensible representation, and brings the thing represented from an object of faith, to be an object of sense. This conceit of theirs enervateth the testimony given to the person and doctrine of Christ

SERM.  
III.

Arnob.  
l. 6.

Conc. Tr.  
Sess. 3.  
c. 5. can.  
6.

1 Cor. x.  
and xi.

SERM. Christ by all his miracles; they might be

III. all forgeries, at least the spectators were  
 not sure the miracles were performed, tho' they saw them with their eyes. If you allow not our senses to be judges of their proper objects, farewell all evidence and certainty of reason, yea, of faith itself. Upon this sordid supposal, that its not bread we eat, tho' we feel, taste, and see it to be bread, depends their acquittal from the grossest idolatry, themselves being judges.

THERE is an idolatry forbidden in the second commandment, *viz.* worshipping God by an un instituted medium: This all their distinctions cannot evade; and most of their worship is grossly chargeable therewith.

FROM this idolatry in a people, once a church of Christ, *Rome* comes to be called the *Great Whore*. So far is her plea, That she was once a church, from securing her present church-state under her spiritual adulteries, that she could not be an idolatrous whore, had she not sometimes been a church. Compare *Hof. ii. 2, 4.* with *Rev. xix. 1.*

THE honour of Christ is as much debased by Popery, tho' the exaltation of it be the great design of christianity. His royalties are usurped by the universal headship, dispensing with his laws, altering his institutions, imposing new articles of faith,  
 and

and terms of life. He hath no title nor peculiarity, but what the virgin, or some other faint or pope, is crowned with<sup>a</sup>.

SERM.  
III.

HIS mediatorship is divided among thousands of rivals; each priest offers a propitiatory sacrifice in every mass. Some of the best authors affirm the saints do intercede in the virtue of their own merits; the most modest impeach Christ as unwilling to intercede, without their minding of him; or unable to prevail with God without their concurrence<sup>b</sup>. Thus the old dæmon-worship is revived.

BUT I have not time to hint at the general heads of their abomination.

POPERY is as fatal to civil society, as to souls. What security have Protestants of their estates, when as hereticks and excommunicate, they have forfeited all, and any man may make the seizure? Their lives are as ill secured, when its meritorious to kill them. All compacts are eluded by their doctrine of equivocation; and the grossest villanies may be allowed of by that of good intention; *Suarez, Angelus, Lopes, &c.* all agree.<sup>c</sup>

KINGS are bound to be destroyers of their Protestants subjects, on pain of excommunication and deposition: Should he  
bind

<sup>a</sup> *Vid.* Rosar. beat. Virg. & Antiphon. de Domin. &c.

<sup>b</sup> Conc. Tr. 6. c. 2. Can. 3. Longobard. l. 4. dist. 45.

<sup>c</sup> Grot. l. 2. cap. 11. Num. 12. Decretal. Greg. IX. l. 5. cap. ult. *Omni debito fidelitatis dominii obligationis hæreticos privatos esse, &c.*

SERM. bind himself by never so many oaths, or  
 III. promises to them, they must not be kept  
 with them because hereticks. On this bot-  
 tom the *Irish* acted, when they destroyed  
 such Protestants as surrender'd to them on  
 articles<sup>d</sup>.

INSTEAD of answering any holy pur-  
 pose, Popery is a system of politicks to  
 enslave the nations, and aggrandize the  
 clergy: Its calculated for all tempers; it  
 stoops so low, as to provide a pardon to  
 delude such who resolve not to change  
 their lives<sup>e</sup>.

HAVE we not cause to esteem this sal-  
 vation great in this respect? We were saved  
 from *Rome*, whose *hier-archy* wants not one  
 mark of the antichrist; from the *Roman-  
 church*, that *mother of abominations*, whence  
 so many christian churches derived the in-  
 fection; in which meet the several enor-  
 mities of *Sodom*, *Egypt*, and *Babylon*;  
 which names the Spirit stigmatizeth her  
 with, as having respect to her filthiness,  
 cruelty, and idolatry. God saved us from  
 the greatest hazard of eternal misery, which  
 he threatneth for compliance with this  
 church, (since the reformed churches were  
 erected) above any other sect or party.

If

Navar. c. 12. N. 14. Conc. Later. sub. Inn. III.  
 Conc. Conitan. Seff. 19. Crab. tom. 2. p. 947.

<sup>e</sup> Well did Pope Martin V. fix this on the Duke of  
 Lithuania, Scito te mortaliter peccare si fidem servabis da-  
 tam hæreticis. *Cochleus Histor. Hussit.* lib. 5.



If any man worship the beast, and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wrath of God, &c. And he shall be <sup>f</sup> tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and of the lamb.

SERM.  
III.  
Rev. xiv.  
9, 10.

THUS you have our deliverance considered, as to the mischiefs *Ireland* was redeemed from.

2. THE danger and *obnoxiousness* of *Ireland* to these forest miseries were great, and scarce avoidable.

EXTREME hazards do heighten a deliverance. On this account also was our salvation great. Whence could we expect it? what was there to render it probable? The boasts of the *Irish* were not esteemed vain, considering their advantages, whilst our hopes were on the confines of despair. All prospect of relief was reduced to a small point of time, and means least promising.

THE design of this rebellious insurrection was universally laid, which succeeded in most places according to their project. People from several counties were secretly lodged in *Dublin*, without any publick observation. Matters were so far prepared, that all things promised success, and in a very few hours to be put in execution, by

K surpri-

<sup>f</sup> Βασανιζέσεται, He shall be racked with anguish of mind, and torments of body.

SERM. surprizing the castle and stores: But he  
 III. who makes one in the most secret designs,  
 ~~~~~ interposed in this extremity, and saved the  
 city and castle by a seasonable discovery,  
 in this manner:

ONE *Macmohan* acquainted *Owen O Conally* (another *Irishman*) with all their purposes. *O Conally* urged him to discover it, which did expose him to suspicion and threatenings. They being jealous of him, would not suffer him to go out of their company: But, late at night, *O Conally* pretended necessity to ease himself; they sent one with him as a guard, but he leaped over a fence, and so escaped, and acquainted *Sir William Parsons* (one of the justices) with the plot, That the *Irish* were in the city, that next morning they would surprize the castle, and possess the city; which when accomplished, they resolved to destroy all the Protestants; adding, that at the same time the *Irish* would be in arms in all parts of the kingdom to massacre the Protestants, men, women and children.

THE justices and council, by this notice, preserved the city, which was within a few hours of destruction; and thereby prevented the loss of the whole kingdom, thus within a step of death. But the saving of that place did not remove all the difficulties that lay in the way of our deliverance.

THE *Irish* were exceeding numerous above the *English*, more than twenty to one; they possessed in a few days almost the whole kingdom, destroying the *English* as you have heard. SERM.  
III.

THEY were yet more formidable, as they were strangely abetted, not only by the Pope, who excited them, and allowed their cause, but even by such as gloried in a Protestant name: To say nothing of commissions from *England*, which they boasted of, though perhaps only pretended. Yet it is plain, that a great part of that army, which the Lord *Strafford* raised in *Ireland*, to enslave *England*, was engaged in this rebellion: Several officers had passes for *Ireland* soon after the beginning of the rebellion, and as soon as landed, appeared at the head of the *Irish*. All the importunity of the parliament here, could, after a long time, procure but forty proclamations to be printed, wherein the *Irish* were declared rebels, and none of those to be published without farther orders. In a proclamation soon after, they are called subjects; the Earl of *Leicester*, the Lord Lieutenant, was forbid to go for *Ireland*: Commissioners from the rebels courted here, they from the Protestants frowned at. When the *English* had got great advantages against the *Irish*, orders are sent to the Lord of *Ormond* to make a cessation, and several of the honest members of the

K 2


council

SERM. council imprisoned for opposing it. Soon  
 III. after a peace is concluded, upon articles  
 ~~~~~ utterly destructive to the *English* interest,  
 both religious and civil: Upon this many  
 of them are brought over for *England* and  
*Scotland* to fight for the king. It was not  
 long, but matters were so contrived, that  
 that part of the *English* called royalists,  
 joined with the *Irish* under the Lord of  
*Ormond*, destroying such Protestants as  
 would not concur with them. The *Irish*  
 thus encouraged <sup>5</sup>, became again masters of  
 almost all *Ireland*, except *Dublin* and *Lon-*  
*donderry*; and an army of near thirty thou-  
 sand besiege *Dublin*, no way doubting to  
 become soon masters of it, considering the  
 small force, and poor works which were  
 its security.

You see that all Protestants were not  
 formerly averse to the *Irish* no more than  
 now; the same spirit will act alike under  
 the same circumstances, yet many instances  
 will not caution against such. Under these  
 hardships and difficulties our deliverance  
 groaned. Many years it lay between life  
 and death in these struggles; we might  
 well cry, *We know not what to do; but our*  
*eyes are unto thee, O Lord*; and that was  
 not in vain, for the Lord saved us, not-  
 withstanding the advantages of our ene-  
 mies,

<sup>2</sup> Chron.  
 xxiii. 12.

<sup>5</sup> At the treaty of *Uxbridge*, the King's commissioners would not at all agree to that proposition of the parliament, That a war should be entered into against the *Irish* rebels.

mies, and our own weaknes. He made SERM.  
those mountains a way, and claimeth the III.  
higher acknowledgments, by breaking thro'   
such obstacles for our relief.

3. THE *appearances* of God in *Ire-*  
*land's* deliverance, were glorious and con-  
vincing. He saved us with an out-stretched  
arm, forcing this assurance in all men,  
*That verily he is a God that judgeth in the* Pfal. lviii.  
*earth*<sup>h</sup>. 11.

I MIGHT instance most remarkable  
preservations of many particular persons;  
but as to that, I will confine myself to  
*Mrs. Teate*; She was, with others, driven  
naked from her dwelling; she had a child  
sucking on her breast, but neither meat  
nor drink to support her; wandering in a  
wood, where she was hiding, on the way  
to *Dublin*, her milk was dried up, the  
babe ready to perish, she resolved to leave  
the child, and not see it die in this an-  
gush: But as she was laying it down, she  
finds covered in the Snow under her feet,  
a sucking-bottle full of warm milk, where-  
by God saved the life of the infant.

THE common salvation affordeth ama-  
zing indications of God's power. He di-  
vided the *Irish* by the Pope's Nuncio, and  
many other ways; he dispirited them be-  
yond what is usual, struck such a terror

K 3 into

<sup>h</sup> שְׁפָטִים בְּיָדָעֵי. Not only passing sentence, but  
executing it, in punishing the wicked, and delivering the  
just.

SERM. into them, as rendred a few *English* victorious over multitudes; yea, a few sick men have routed a great body of their strongest foldiers. Their counfels were infatuated: *The sword of God was evident on their right eye.*

Zech. xi.  
17.

How did vengeance overtake them, and the God of recompence made them drink deep in the cup they had forced on others?

Rev. xvi.  
6.

*He gave them blood to drink, for they were worthy.* His three sweeping judgments were commissioned against them, and each accomplished its message on thousands. Multitudes were starved by the famine; the plague spared them not, and the sword devoured. What numbers lost their lives in *Ireland*? *England* and *Scotland* found graves for many of these bloody creatures. Several thousands of them were called hither by king *Charles* I. they entered into a vow against the covenant and puritans; but neither was much hurt by them, nor their friends much profited. God found a way to follow them with vengeance, and few returned back. The same eye watched those twenty-five hundred which were sent

Exod. vi.  
6.

to *Scotland*. Thus *God redeemed us with great judgments, and made bare his arm: His jealousy sustained him, whilst he rescued us from the destroyers; whenas till the last stroke, the strength of the Protestants was very disproportionable. Who*

Pf. lxxvii.  
14.

*can refuse to say, Thou art the God that dost*

doſt wonders, thou haſt declared thy ſtrength among the people. SERM.  
III.

4. THE effects of Ireland's deliverance was very benign and extenſive.

A SALVATION may very well be eſtimated by the good it produceth; and its rare that the good is not proportionable to the wonders whereby the deliverance is accompliſhed. On this account was our redemption ſignal; the ſettlement of *Ireland* became more firm, the Proteſtant religion obtained more extenſively than before was poſſible; the *Iriſh* weakned themſelves, and the miſchiefs deſigned againſt the Proteſtants, fell on their own heads; the *Iriſh* forfeitures augmented the number of *Engliſh* planters. Had not an old Popiſh deſign (though more diſcovered, at leaſt believed of late) governed our ſettlement, on the reſtauration of the royal family, an *Iriſh* intereſt could never have been rampant there, nor have bid for it by any dangerous ſtruggle.

BUT alas! from that time the ſnake was cheriſhed, many *Iriſh* murderers reſtored to the defrauding of the adventurers and ſoldiers. In a little time their influence became ſo great, that their vote determined moſt of our publick offices; an addreſs to them was the ſure way to make an intereſt; though had our gentry encouraged the *Engliſh* more, and the *Iriſh* leſs, they had been ſafer. By theſe things

SERM. matters ripened to their present *crisis*.

III. However, for a great while, *Ireland* reaped the fruits of this mercy; peace, plenty, liberty, trade, made that land flourish to the envy of such mean spirits, who can attempt no means to thrive, but by depressing their nearest friends.

*Ireland's* deliverance, which was owing to *England*, did in some measure affect your own safety: Had that country been unreduced, much misery had broke forth, which by our redemption is stifled in the womb of probability. And its manifest, that while a Protestant interest was supported in *Ireland*, there could no nursery of instruments be raised to set up Popery and slavery among you. I deny not, we had some Protestants fit enough for such designs, if the late King's wisdom had served to employ them: But the infatuation which excluded them from service in *Ireland*, made others of the same temper useles in *England*, as being convinced that their own employments here must cease, as soon as professed Papists could be found to fill up their room. Hereby the means of our present ruin, became an occasion of *England's* safety.

THESE things may serve to express the greatness of *Ireland's* deliverance. Each particular is an argument to inforce the next exhortation; *viz.*

Exhort.



Exhort. *Be persuaded to acknowledge God with praises answerable to a deliverance so great.*

CAN such a mercy be received, and but a common tribute be paid to the sole author of it? Ascribe ye the highest praise to our God, these were his doings, and they were marvellous in our eyes. It well becomes us to say, *Who is like unto thee,* Exod. xv. 11. *O Lord, among the Gods; who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praise, doing wonders?* We are monuments of his glory, and witnesses to his mighty workings among the children of men. We alone are not capable of becoming-praises for what he hath done; he deserves the admiring thoughts of all that hear these wonders: We beseech all to join us, that our acknowledgments may be the higher, *Oh* Psal. cvii. 21. *that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his<sup>i</sup> wonderful works to Ireland; bless him with us, bless him for us. You that join in this celebration, speak to us as Jethro did, Blessed be the Lord who hath delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians: Now I know that the Lord is greater than all gods; for in the thing wherein they dealt proudly, he was above them.*

HE

<sup>i</sup> The word render'd *wonderful*, is derived of נִלְבָּב; noting, that these works are separated from man's conception, skill, and power, *Exod. xviii. 10, 11.*

SERM. HE pitied *Ireland* in its low estate;

III. and though his anger did for a while burn like fire, he turned from his indignation, and renewed the face of that desolate country. Shall not we read his name in every part of our deliverance? It was altogether a redemption becoming himself. Herein God made himself visible to us, and to the whole world by us. Though we need a new deliverance, let him not lose the glory of this that's past. If he should, for the sins committed after so great a mercy, go no more out with our armies, but leave us desolate, as he hath begun to make us, yet all praises are due to him, for what his hand hath wrought in this deliverance.

BUT is it enough to praise him with our mouths, or spend a few hours to record his wonders? No, this would be no fit homage to an infinite Spirit; he cannot accept of that for praise which is so lifeless. Therefore, if we will praise him,

I. SEE that God have a greater *interest* in our souls, by what he hath wrought for us.

HIS greatness is manifest, let him be had in higher esteem: Who will not fear him more, after his terrible judgments thus executed on our enemies? Shall we limit the Holy One, or distrust his delivering us in the like extremity, when he rescued us out of such depths? We must say, *The God of my rock, in him will I trust; he is*

*my*

*preached* Oct. 23, 1689.

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*my shield, the horn of my salvation, my Saviour.* The weakness of means should not discourage, the most probable means ought not to be idolized, now that we see he commands deliverances, and doth whatever seems good to him. Shall we measure our hopes by the enemies weakness, or our own strength, allowing little for him that so convincingly appeareth to be the Lord of Hosts, and the God of Battle?

SERM.  
III.



OH love him with more ardent affections, whose goodness was at such expence to entitle him to our kindness! Let him have more of our hearts, who in the greatest extremity did relieve us, and bless us with our lives, our estates, our peace, and, above all, with our religion.

2. LET us *live* this deliverance to the real honour of our God that saved us.

WITHOUT this, our mercy becomes our snare; and that which was for our good, will turn to our harm. God did not deliver us to work abomination; he designed not those blessings for fuel to our lusts, which he gave us to render our service to him more enlarged and chearful. He expects men should pay the vows to him, when delivered, which they made to him in their distress; and dedicate those things to his praise, which he granted them by his wonders. They praise God unacceptably, that live not more like saints. The richest offerings are not valuable, if  
men

SERM. men yield not themselves to the Lord that saved them, and live his praises. Those

## III.

See Psalm  
lxxviii. 57,  
58, 67,  
62.

Ezra ix.  
14.

deliverances are of short duration, which are acknowledged by bare words, and disowned by gross miscarriages. People may read their future doom, when they provoke God after signal mercies, in those words of the Scribe; *Should we again break thy commandments, wouldst not thou be angry with us, 'till thou hadst consumed us? so that there should be no remnant, nor escaping.* Oh! that Ireland had been awed hereby to a forbearance of those sins which now have provoked God to expose us to the former rebukes, and to repent him of that deliverance which we are now remembering. Our return to God for the former mercy, must be very unsuitable, and defective, that God (in less than fifty years) repeats the same national calamities.

THE sense I have of the present frame of the *Irish* Protestants, almost prevents my proceeding to the next observation. My mind is often exercised with this thought, Will God twice, in one age, deliver a people from national ruin, who have so visibly abused their first mercy, and seem so far from repenting under their present distress? I shall however say somewhat to this next particular.

S E C T. II.

Obj. 2. *Past deliverances are some ground to hope that God will yet deliver.*

WE gain, by being saved once, an assurance that God is able to save us again. When God hath once delivered, we may conclude the good-will of God to repeat that deliverance, unless some great forfeiture prevent it, or the designs of providence be greatly altered.

FORMER mercies are allowed by the Holy Spirit, to be argued as arguments with God for renewing those mercies, yea, adding to them.

WHEN God hath saved from his enemies, its a plea against God's giving us up into their hand. Thus pleaded *Sampson*, *Thou hast given this great deliverance into the hand of thy servant, and now shall I fall into the hands of the uncircumcised?* Judg. xv. 18.

A P P L I C A T I O N.

1. I SHALL say somewhat of the probability of our deliverance.

2. DIRECT you to what may help towards this deliverance.

1. I SHALL endeavour to hint somewhat as to the present state of *Ireland*, and consider what may *probably* be the event of God's present dealings with that nation. You have heard how we were once delivered ;

SERM. vered; some of us, to our cost, know the  
 III. danger that nation is in at this time. Its  
 true of it, the bear was killed; its as true  
 the cubs are risen up to devour, and *Goliath*  
 at the head of them. Oh! may I add, *The*  
*Lord will yet deliver.* I have no revela-  
 tion, as *David* had in the text, and there-  
 fore I undertake not positively to answer  
 this question:

WILL God, that once delivered *Ireland*  
 from the *Irish* rebellion begun in forty-  
 one, deliver it again from its present dis-  
 tress?

THO' I dare not be positive, I shall  
 offer,


1. THE things which may be objected  
 against God's delivering us.

2. THE things which give us some  
 ground to hope that God will yet deliver;  
 and then add my conjecture from both.

1. THERE are many things which may  
*weaken* our expectations of a new delive-  
 rance.

I WILL not lay stress on obstacles from  
*second* causes, tho' they are not inconside-  
 rable; as the *Irish* are numerous, discipli-  
 ned, united, engaged by the highest inte-  
 rests and inclinations, strengthened by a  
 neighbour tyrant, excited by the priests,  
 to whom the vulgar are blindly obedient.  
 They want not friends in *England* and  
*Scotland*; and some more capable of ser-  
 ving them, by assuming a Protestant name;

our

our soldiers are not habituated to the foil. SERM.  
III.  
 These and many such things affect me not, they are all easily resolved in God's omnipotency, had we good signs that God would but undertake to save us. 

BUT our just fears are from *moral* reasons, which render it suspicious, that divine indignation will further commission our enemies, and blast our attempts against them.

*Ireland* hath grossly abused the former deliverances; the sins before forty-one, revived, and continued to eighty-eight: What profaneness, abuse of plenty, and irreligion, abounded in that nation, so lately, and so miraculously, delivered, and that out of the forest anguish? There is little visible repentance under our present distresses; ministers and people, conformists and non-conformists, discover no temper answerable to the fore effects of God's displeasure, but the contrary. Alas! how doth sin abound still, even among such as have fled from *Ireland*, tho' they can hardly subsist?

OUR army there is full of sin; I wish all be faithful; I hear that very few are seemingly serious.

MEN generally rely on our forces courage, and the contemptibleness of the enemy, allowing nothing for the supreme influence of the Almighty, who alone can spirit or dispirit men as he will, and whose purposes all shall execute. I WISH

SERM. I WISH the strange neglect of *Ireland*,  
 III. is not with God as a provocation to abate  
 some mens honour in the relief of it.

Is there no cloud over *England*, which the speedy deliverance of *Ireland* can scarce consist with? These things may at least moderate our confidence.

2. YET there are many things which administer *hopes*, that God will again deliver that country.

THE enemies are the same in principle and disposition, as they were, from whom God once saved us. They are adversaries to God and his truth, whereby his interest is embarked in our hazards.

THE former blood and mischiefs remain in their skirts, the guilt of forty-one is not purged away, many of the actors are with them, the rest are their off-spring and approve of it. They have added new mischiefs of late to their former rebellion; what rapine, and spoil, yea blood? God's people and concernments have been defied, and they have been obstinate in their Popish errors beyond any people.

THE cause of the *English* Protestants is good, even the common defence of our religion, lives, and estates, from the unjust attempts of most barbarous enemies; its the publick good, notorious beyond debate; its that for which government is appointed by God. I think it one of our great mercies, that the consciences of men  
 are



are delivered from that enslaving principle, That a whole nation must tamely yield to be destroyed by the mere will of a prince, notwithstanding our legal securities and restraints on all absolute power, in the fundamental constitution: A doctrine fit for the harangues of such who had little to preserve by the laws, and much to get by gratifying the lusts of a prince; tho' yet they barely provide for their posterities enjoyment of those estates, which by their preferments are acquired.

GOD hath given great pledges of deliverance in some remarkable beginnings of it: *Londonderry* is miraculously preserved, tho' not altogether by the influence of such as now assume the entire glory.

THE *Inniskilling* men (as they are called) have prospered answerably to the Protestant successes in the former rebellion. Now it was either inspired, or of very vulgar observation, that *Haman's* wife, and wisemen, suggest; *If Mordecai be of the seed of the Jews, before whom thou hast begun to fall, thou shalt not prevail against him, but shalt surely fall before him.* E.t. vi. 13.

IF God deliver not *Ireland*, the Protestant interest in these three kingdoms, and many other places, can hardly subsist as national; whereas a little apocalyptic skill will direct us, that the work God hath in hand, and the time we live in, sets us beyond the ruin of any Protestant state,

SERM. tho' not past the forest struggles and convulsions.



Ezek.  
xxxiv. 27.

THESE things offer us matter of hope, that it may be said of that nation, *They shall be safe in their land, and shall know that I am the Lord, when I have broken the bands of their yoke, and delivered them out of the hand of those that served themselves of them.*

HAVING represented these things that may induce, and also encourage, our expectations, I shall humbly offer my thoughts.

I BELIEVE God will again deliver *Ireland*, the Protestant interest shall revive there, our enemies shall be overwhelmed, and be more broken by this attempt; but yet I cannot hope to see that land saved so suddenly as most expect, nor so easily and cheaply as we all desire. Our struggles are like to be such as may bring the Protestants to repent, and fit them by reformation to use their mercy: God will force men to a greater dependance on God as the only Saviour; and, it may be, lengthen our exercise, until many false Protestants be discovered, and other such ends be accomplished on us. Its rare that God begins such national afflictive rebukes, and hastens a period to them, before any such considerable purposes be effected, which were agreeable to the perfections of his nature to intend.

THIS

THIS may serve as to the first head, SERM.  
*viz.* The probability of *Ireland's* renewed III.  
 deliverance. I shall now proceed to give  
 such counsel as God directs a people to in  
 our case, and may contribute to our deli-  
 verance.

2. LET us *resolve* to be, and do, that  
 which may render us a people likely to be  
 delivered.

THO' we cannot merit deliverance by  
 any amendment in our frame, or any act  
 we can perform; yet there are qualifica-  
 tions which dispose for mercy, and exer-  
 cises which God enjoins in order to our  
 relief, and to which he hath graciously  
 promised the deliverance of a people. If  
 these be neglected, we vainly hope to pro-  
 sper; we strengthen the yoke, we provoke  
 God to leave us grappling with our woes,  
 and delay, yea, prevent, our expected ble-  
 sings. 2 Chron. xxiv. 20.

COMPLIANCE with God in these, is  
 the surest prognostick of God's appearances  
 for us, as in times past. Jer. xxxv. 15.  
 Isa. i. 17.  
 18.

IN order to this, I will propose these  
 directions:

I. HEARTILY *repent* for *Ireland's* sins.

HAD not we sinned, God's restraints  
 had been still on the wrath of the *Irish*.  
 Our provocations are the great springs of  
 our distress; look not at men so as to  
 overlook your faults: *Hast not thou pro-*  
*cured this unto thyself? in that thou hast*  
Jer. ii. 17.

SERM. forsaken the Lord thy God, when he led thee

III. by the way. Thy way and thy doings have

*procured these things unto thee; this is thy  
wickedness, because it is bitter, because it  
reacheth unto thy heart.* Take repentance  
in its essential parts.

Jer. iv. 18.

(I.) THEN be *convinced* wherein you have offended; impartially search, and humbly acknowledge your transgressions. You have time and loud calls to reflect. Who can plead innocency? and who that is guilty, dare be so stout-hearted against God, as not to charge himself, especially when God writes our sins in our punishments? Popery is set up, but is it not because you have not lived like Protestants? We have rebelled against God, and he hath advanced our enemies above us. We are returned with the dog to the vomit, therefore *the land hath spued us out.* God hath deprived us of our estates; but did not we spend most of them on our lusts; and very little to any charitable uses? How seldom was God worshipped? how much was he provoked in those houses that are now in ashes? Let all the hardships you feel, awaken conscience, and bind you to listen to its accusations. Lose not this opportunity for the welfare of your souls: If you be faithful, you may eternally bless God for your losses, as well as more suddenly repair them.

Lev. xviii.  
23.

(2.) WHEN

(2.) WHEN your sins are set before you, SERM. bitterly *mourn* for them. Bewail the sins III. of others, which thou hast made thy own by not grieving for them. Mourn most for all those iniquities thou hast committed. Canst thou, without self-abhorrence, remember thy fraud and oppression? the sabbaths thou hast profaned? the oaths which God hath heard from thy mouth? Ought not tears run down thine eyes, now that the hand of God is against thee for wasting thy time, resisting the Spirit of God, mocking at religion, trifling with the eternal God by formal and heartless devotions?

OH! that we could afflict our own souls, whilst God is embittering our national sins, and receive instruction by his rod. Oh! the perjury, injustice, gluttony, pride, uncleanness, contempt of the gospel, murder, and other crimes, which that land did groan under! What frothiness, enmity against the power of religion, errors, ignorance, idleness, and superstition, appeared in too many, on whom it was incumbent to warn and recover others! Selfishness, formality, and divisions, who can tolerably acquit themselves from? What work have we made for sorrow? how ripe were we for judgments, before God inflicted them? Just is God in all that is come upon us: He was weary with repentings, e're he summoned our calamities to testify

SERM. against us. You that never mourned for  
 III. sin in your plenty, mourn for sin in your  
 wants. What contempt you meet with,

let it teach you to blush for your offences, whereby you have brought your christian profession under reproach. Instead of fretting at your hardships, bemoan the provocations which brought you into them.

Isa. xxii. God calls to weeping and mourning, woe  
 12, 14. to such as despise it.

Jer. vii. 3. (3.) *Amend* your hearts and doings; vow reformation, and be sure to pay it. Dare you harbour a resolve to sin as you have done? Will nothing reclaim you? Can nothing alter you? How will you reckon with God at the great day, for your present affliction, if your lusts baffle it, and break out in the same instances?

THINK what *God* expects from you, what *men* may expect from you under what you feel. Can you hope that God will deliver you, whilst you are unwilling to leave a sin for his sake? Will he subdue your enemies, when you harbour his, and will not put them away? Do you find any delight by sin, which countervails your present distress for it? What then will it be to endless burnings?

SHOULD God be pleased to save *Ireland*, whilst the Protestants continue as wicked as before, our calamities would soon return, and our safety, in the mean while, be the greatest plague. To be given up  
 Heb. iv. 17. to

to sin as irreclaimable, is the worst symptom a man or a nation can be under. SERM.  
III.

HARDEN not your hearts against this admonition. Let *Israel* be your example in amendment, and then you may look on it as a president for mercy: *And they put away the strange gods from among them, and served the Lord, and his soul was grieved for the misery of Israel.* Judg. x.  
16.

CARRY not back to *Ireland* the same vicious inclinations which you brought thence with you; get a spirit more holy, and devoted to the service of God and your country; hold not fast those sins which made you unfit for your places, and plagues to the land, as far as you contributed to make it guilty, and thereby miserable: If we refuse, I know not how much we contribute to prolong the miseries of our brethren there, as well as our own. See how *Nineveh* reformed by a warning, and shall not we do so, that feel so much? Jon. iii.

2. CONTRIBUTE your utmost *help* to the reducing of that country.

SUCH as are able, should put their hands to it. I know, as matters stood, it was a vain attempt, when you left that place; but now let not cowardise or idleness restrain you; God's cause, and your own concern, require it. If any object incapacity of getting thither in a condition for service, I can only answer, with a compassionate wish, Oh! that likely men were  
I. 4. employed!

SERM. employed! good men that are likely to  
 III. be blessed; men interested in *Ireland*, that  
 ~~~~~ are certain to be faithful. Its pity that they  
 who killed the *bear*, should not fight the  
*Philistine*; and they whom God delivered  
 once, should not be employed the second  
 time.

HOWEVER, such as cannot remove thither, should do their utmost here for the help of that place. Let us intreat and persuade succour, if we can do no more; not fretting at past unsuccessfulness, to the irritating of such as must help us, or exposing the common interest, by the advantage that bad men may take from our too quick resentments, though they proceed from our feeling, not our ill-will.


3. BE earnest in *prayer* to that God, who is ready to hear, and able to help.

LEARN what fervent prayer meaneth; such miseries should open the dumb mouth, and quicken the drowsy spirit. We should all learn to plead our cause with God, for distress suggests argument and fervour too.

I FEAR some of you have too much time to spare; you may use it to good purpose, by giving yourselves to prayer: cry often, and strongly to that God, who is not faint, nor weary; his fitness to save us now, is not less for saving us once.

PRAYER hath done great things; it is of mighty force with God, to put his power on work. A spirit of prayer is a certain  
 preface



prefage of deliverance, and it will sweeten, SERM.  
heighten, and secure a mercy, that it was III.  
prayer obtained it. 

PLEAD therefore with God; Say ye, 1 Chron. xvi. 35.  
*Save us, O God of our salvation, and gather us together, and deliver us from the heathen, that we may give thanks to thy holy name, and glory in thy praise.* What if you should urge God, as *Israel* did; Judg. x. 15.  
*We have sinned against thee, do unto us whatsoever seemeth good unto thee; deliver us only, we pray thee, this day.*

As we should pray for God's help in this thing, so pray for hearts fitted to improve it. I can hardly wish a conquest for our return, till reformation make us fitter for it. I think we have also cause to beseech him, that if there be a deliverance on God's part, there may be a deliverance on man's part: If he give the victory, that men may not refuse the forfeitures<sup>k</sup>, lest growing miseries be entailed on *Ireland* from age to age.

I SHALL enforce these directions with this motive:

THE condition of the Protestants in *Ireland*, is very dismal. You have all need to repent and pray, for they who are here, did escape *but with the skin of their teeth*, for the most part. How great Job xix. 20.  
are

<sup>k</sup> I apprehend the author's meaning is, That men may not refuse taking the advantage of the forfeitures which our enemies will make by this rebellion, as had been done in former instances.

SERM. are their straits! the rich have not bread  
 III. to eat; they who lately abounded, depend  
 ~~~~~ on charity, and are forced to beg.

THEY who are still in *Ireland*, are in sore anguish and distress. How desolate is the North? thousands are perished. I hear, from a dissenting minister, That hardly one man of seven of his congregation but perished in *Derry*. By the way, I'll tell you, the burden of the work, and misery in that town, fell on the dissenters, being ten to one of the conformists, tho' it seems their graves deserve not a paper-inscription.

SUCH as have their livelihoods in *Ulster*, are so spoiled, and poor, that they cannot sit down with hope of living. But, alas! how much more calamitous is the state of such as are yet in the power of the *Irish*? Their houses robbed, their stocks wasted, the most of the men in prisons, and like to starve this winter by cold and famine. This lingering death is like to be as terrible as the former massacres, and many are daily subject even to that: Not a few have already been barbarously murdered. What awful days, and frightful nights, pass over them? What intolerable insolencies do they bear from the *French* and *Irish*, who now are their inmates? I am credibly informed, that in some parts of *Munster*, there's scarce a woman from the age of ten to sixty, that is not ravished. This is the stratagem of the priests, to make the case of the soldiers desperate.

desperate. Hath Popery lost its sting, when it acts thus against Protestants, whom its all policy to court for a while? SERM.  
III.

WILL not these things excite your repentance and prayer, that so God may be enclined to hasten the relief of those poor creatures? If you have any bowels of pity, be serious and importunate.

I SHALL address a few words to such of this auditory who belong not to *Ireland*. *To the English.*  
My request to you is, That you would *treat* the *Irish* Protestants according to their condition: Look at them with a becoming concern; they are bone of your bone, they are of one faith with you, they have been delivered once by the mighty hand of God, and he will yet deliver them.

DENY not to relieve them in their present straits; there cannot be greater nor fitter objects than may be found among them; grudge not to help on their deliverance; pray for them; let them be still upon your hearts; *England* was never forgotten by many of us. Murmur not under any taxes the reducing of that kingdom may bring upon you: Shall such a tribe be lost for want of your utmost help?

ITs your advantage that our miseries are your warnings; by us you may cheaply learn to reform your miscarriages, and so keep off the judgments which we suffer.

*Ireland*

SERM. *Ireland* now is under the force of that  
 III. storm, which lately more threatned *Eng-*  
 ~~~~~ *land*; this war begun in your bowels, and  
 was transferr'd to us by unaccountable  
 means on all hands. Its equally strange,  
 that the late king should be necessitated to  
 that place, by a needless forsaking of this  
 city; or that he should, by the influence  
 of his seeming enemies (tho' real friends)  
 find that kingdom in a case to receive him.  
 Need I add, that you will be concluded  
 by our case: If we be not delivered, you  
 will soon feel calamity; we cannot perish  
 alone; if God do save us, your cloud will  
 blow over as to popish threats. *Ireland*  
 is the place that *England's* doom depends  
 on; the war cannot be long confined with-  
 in that land, at least the issue will not.  
 Though your deliverance be begun by the  
 marvellous successes of our gracious king  
*William*, it is not perfect before *Ireland*  
 is reduced: So that to help to rescue us,  
 is your own true interest.





# SERMON IV.

## Of Repentance for national Sins.

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In the FOURTH VOLUME of  
*Casistical Morning EXERCISES.*

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H O S E A X. 12.


*Sow to yourselves in righteousness,  
reap in mercy: break up your  
fallow ground; for it is time to  
seek the Lord, till he come, and  
rain righteousness upon you.*



HE prophet joineth counsel with threatnings; amendment is that he calleth them to, as a means to save them. That he might induce them to this, he represents their aggravated sins, and the dangers to which they were exposed by their provocations. Yet lest this call should still be uneffectual, through an opinion that repentance could

SERM.  
IV.

SERM. could avail little to a people so guilty;

IV. he added, that if they returned to God,  their sins, tho' great, should not prevent mercy; and the threatned judgments, tho' near, might be diverted.

By this text God proclaims, not only to particular persons, but to nations, how desirable it is to him to execute his goodness; and his extreme backwardness to avenge himself on the most provoking kingdoms, unless they add impenitency, under solemn warnings, unto their rebellion.

GOD seems to address himself to *Ephraim*, to this purpose, Thou art a very guilty people, yet turn, that I may forgive: Thou art on the very brink of ruin; thy obstinateness is so notorious, that it will not consist with the rules or credit of my government, to spare thee longer. Oh yet be persuaded to render thyself a subject capable of my kindness. I have long pleaded, and thou seemest even un-persuadable: Yet I will make one further essay; I will try thee once more: *Sow to yourselves in righteousness.*

*First*, THE words containeth some of the essentials of repentance, and suppose the rest. Under a metaphor from tillage, God applieth himself in the description of this duty; *q. d.* 1. He that will repent must deal with his indisposed heart: *Break up the fallow ground.* Whatever pain or difficulty

difficulty attends so barren or obstinate a frame of soul, you must strive with yourselves, pluck up those weeds, strike at the root of your lusts, which render the fruits of righteousness impossible. This sense of that clause is more evident from those words of another prophet, *Break up the fallow ground; sow not among thorns.* 2. Jer. iv. 5.

When the heart is thus prepared, we must proceed to proper acts of reformation: *Sow to yourselves in righteousness*<sup>a</sup>. Let the rule of righteousness be observed in your hearts and ways, be just to God and men, return to God in sincerity, be and do what may argue you to be *trees of righteousness*. Isa lxi. 3.

Do thus *to yourselves*, i. e. leave it not to others; or, you shall reap the advantage of it yourselves, if you repent. 3. You must also *seek the Lord*; i. e. worship God, and not idols, as hath been your way. Follow after him, who is departed from you; call upon him, crave his grace to help you; but be not satisfied with faint and short attempts: persist in this work till you find his favour in the blessed effects of it, even *till he come and rain, &c.* These heads of repentance this text affords.

Secondly, THIS repentance is urged from variety of arguments, but principally from this, *That national mercies would certainly follow this national repentance.*

Reap

SERM. *Reap in mercy*<sup>b</sup>. Its promised more strongly, than if it had been said indicatively, you shall *reap* in the future tense. Being put thus imperatively, the import of it is this: You have no more to do, but possess your mercies upon your repentance; mercy will of itself grow from that root. God hath provided all antecedent causes; he hath ordained the connexion, and it lies on him to make a repenting people happy. You may be assured of this; for that which was mere mercy in making the promise, is become an act of righteousness by the promise: You may now expect it from God as just; in which sense I take that clause, *till he come, and rain righteousness upon you*. That which was mercy in the first part of the verse, is righteousness in the last part. I know its true doctrine to say, till God bestow on you holy inclinations, and ability to perform; but that's not the most designed sense. He further argues, from the plenty of those blessings which God would afford on their repentance: *Till he come, and rain righteousness*. The returns of God to a repenting people, are in a fulness of blessing; and *there shall be showers of blessings*.

Ezek.  
xxxiv. 26.

THERE is one motive more, *viz.* The seasonableness: *Its time to seek the Lord*. Its high time, and but barely so; you cannot say there is no hope, though you must

<sup>b</sup> *Reap at the face of mercy, or immediately.* לִפְנֵי חַסְדֵּךָ  
repent



repent soon or not at all. The consideration of this paraphrase must lead any one to the case that I am to handle. Can any serious spirit think it vain to ask, What is that national repentance, which may give a sinful people hope of mercy? Which is the same with the case as it is given me.

*What repentance of national sins doth God require, as ever we may expect national mercies?*

I HAVE led you to it by this text, that it may not seem a melancholy fancy, a mystery not to be handled, or a needless inquiry.

ITS an awful case: Its not put to satisfy your curiosity, but to guide your fears and hopes. Its not only to direct your minds to a right judgment of the matter, but to excite your hearts to that repentance which may afford us hope in the midst of our dangers and guiltiness. Its the happiness or misery of nations which are concerned in it: Its the only remedy that a sinful nation can use or turn to. God is peremptory; *Except you repent, you shall all likewise perish*<sup>c</sup>.

Luke xiii.  
5.

MY work is, 1. To resolve the case in general. 2. To apply the case resolved to our own nation. I shall use this method. As to the first:

M

I. SHEW

<sup>c</sup> Ἀπολέητε, *utterly be destroyed.*

## S E C T. I.

1. SHEW you what is supposed in the case as stated.

2. EXPLAIN the terms, national sins and mercies.

3. STATE the case itself.

4. PROPOSE the difficulties that attend the resolution of it.

5. RESOLVE the case, which the fore-mentioned particulars will much conduce to. I shall, as proof to this resolution of the case,

1. EVIDENCE that the repentance expressed in the fifth head, doth ordinarily afford ground of our expectation of national mercies, notwithstanding national sins.

2. THAT when this repentance is not in a nation, we cannot ordinarily expect national mercies.

*First*, THESE things are supposed in the case as stated. Where there is sin, there ought to be repentance. There are national sins, as well as personal sins; and a nation, as such, becomes guilty by national sins. There are mercies which attend a people as a community: Our national sins have removed national mercies, or at least prevent and suspend the bestowing of these mercies. God requires a repentance for national sins, and that as a means of national

national mercies. There may be a repentance which may be defective to this end, and from which we cannot groundedly expect such mercies. That there is a repentance for national sins, which, if we arrive at, may warrant our expectation of national mercies. These, and such like, are supposed as the case is stated, and therefore I pass them by.

Secondly, I SHALL enquire what *national* sins are, and what national mercies are. The rest of the terms in the case will be handled under other heads.

Quest. *What are national sins in the question?*

Ans. SUCH gross sins as render a nation guilty, and expose it to national judgments, and forfeit national mercies: *When the land sinneth against me by trespassing grievously, then will I stretch out my hand<sup>a</sup>.* Ezek. xiv. 13.

Whatsoever sins God hath threatned to destroy a body of people for, are in the question.

THE answer directs us to consider these several parts of it.

First, THESE sins are *gross* in their nature; they are not sins of infirmity, or sins which ordinary care, labour, and watchfulness, could not prevent. They are called *bloody crimes*. You may find them enumerated, Ezek. vii. 23.

M 2

merated, 23.

<sup>a</sup> לְמַעַן מְעַל לְמַעַן *Wilfully and repeatedly against God's covenant.*

SERM.  
IV.



merated, when God arraigns nations in the testimony of his prophets, when calling them to repentance, and when God justifieth the severity of his judgments against a people. I shall name some of them which defile a land: Idolatry, perjury, breaking of covenant, blood, uncleanness, apostacy, oppression, profaneness: I need not bring proof hereof, the scriptures are full<sup>e</sup>. Yea, among such provocations are reckoned mens refusal of the gospel, silencing and obstructing the ministry, malignity against good men, divisions and enmity, lying, pride, abuse of mercies, gross formality, hypocrisy, great decays among saints, and gross backslidings.

*Secondly*, THESE sins must be national, which denominate a *kingdom* sinful. We consider them not as the sins of particular persons, but as they affect a community, as united among themselves, and distinguished from others by some special bonds.

WE will enquire for the clearing of this,

*Quest. How sins become national?*

*Ans. 1.* BY all, or the *generality* of a people, being personally transgressors, as to those crimes: *The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint; from the sole of the foot, to the crown of the head, there is no soundness.*

III. i. 5.

<sup>e</sup> Hof. x. 4. Jer. xxiii. 10. Psal. lxxviii. 50. Isa. iii. 15. Ez. xxi. 23, 24. Isa. i. 21, 23. Luke x 10, 11, 13. 1 Theff. ii. 16. Rev. ii. 3. Hof. xi. 7. Ma. lix. 13, &c. Ezek. xxxv. 15. Amos viii. 9.

*ſundneſs*. Thus *Sodom* could not afford ten innocent perſons. The infection is oft propagated to the whole body, though begun in a few; as, *From the prophets of Jeruſalem is profaneneſs gone forth into all the land*. This doth not mean that every individual is corrupted, but the generality of all ſorts; magiſtrates, prieſts and people were profane: *Ye have robbed me, even this whole nation*.

SERM.  
IV.Jer. xxiii  
15.Jer. xxxii  
32.  
Mal. iii.  
9.

2. WHEN the governors, repreſentatives, and influencing perſons, are tranſgreſſors: *I will love them no more, all their princes are revolters*. *Iſrael* is become vile by the ſins of *Jeroboam*; wrath againſt *Judab* remained, becauſe of the provocations that *Manaſſah* had provoked God withal. Provoking abominations by the rulers of a people, and curſed laws, deſile a land, and expoſe it. *Saul* brings a famine on *Iſrael* by violating the covenant with the *Gibeonites*. What governors do, may be ſaid to be done by a nation; tho' I think, when judgments take their expreſs riſe from the ſins of rulers, there is ſome other guilt among the people, ripening them for judgment, or a compliance with their rulers ſins.

Hof. ix.  
15.2 Kings  
xxiii. 26.2 Sam.  
xxi. 1.Hab. iii.  
8.

3. BY the generality of a nation making itſelf *partaker* of other mens ſins, though it do not actually commit them. Some that do not perſonally commit the ſins, may become guilty of them, by not hindering

1 Sam.  
13

SERM. dering those sins according to their power ;  
 IV. by rejoycing in those iniquities, or plead-  
 ing for them ; by not mourning for them ;  
 by contributing to those enormities. These  
 ways a land may be guilty, though a few  
 chief men act the sin.

Zep. iii.  
 13.  
 Isa. xxii.  
 12.  
 Hof. vii.  
 5.

*Thirdly*, THESE sins are such as *expose* to judgments, and forfeit national mercies. These are here intended, and reference to both the former heads must be had ; but besides the grossness of the sins as to the nature of them, and their extent as national ; on both which accounts they become national provocations, the case requires our observing further,

I. THAT more *refined* sins may expose one nation to judgments, which may not expose another land. This depends on the variety of advantages some people are under above others. A nation that hath gospel helps, and professeth holiness, and worshippeth the true God, may be exposed to judgments by formality, backsliding, and more spiritual evils, than other lands not so circumstantiated. Sins below gross immoralities may as truly forfeit their mercies, as injustice, blood, or idolatry, amongst ignorant paganish countries.

2. THE provoking sins of one and the same nation, may be made up by *various* kinds of offences, according to the different condition of the offenders.

SOMETIMES a land is polluted by the same sort of sins propagated through the body of the people. But it is not always so, the offences vary, and the national guilt results from the several offences. The sins of magistrates are of one kind, and the sins of the subjects of another, according to their different talents and station.

SERM.  
IV.



THE profane part of a nation transgress by enormous crimes, and the professing part are polluted with more spiritual wickedness, as barrenness, deadness, censoriousness. The offences of the gentry and commonalty may be several. Ministers and people may fill up the measure of iniquity in a different manner.

Am. lxiv.  
6.

Jer. xxiii.  
11.

Isa. lvi.

10, 11.

Jer. xxviii.

& v. 31.

Mic. vi.

11, 12.

Mic. vii.

4, 6.

HENCE you see, that a nation may be guilty, though some remarkable villany may not be universal: Its enough if the different sorts of inhabitants grossly offend in their several kinds.

3. USUALLY the sins of a nation do not bring judgments, or forfeit mercies, by the *simple* commission of them, but as attended with some additional aggravations. A land rarely is destroyed, unless sins are committed after warnings. Utter destruction comes not before lesser judgments have been tried, and prove unsuccessful. Security and impenitency is added to rebellion before God proceeds against a people.

Am. iv.

SERM. THE Lord's goodness displays itself in  
 IV. his calls, and patience waiteth an answer,  
 e'er he takes the advantage against a land.

Often, besides the grossness of sins, there  
 Isa. iii. 9. is boldness and shamefulness: *They declare  
 their sin as Sodom.* I shall not mention  
 antecedent aggravations, as light, convic-  
 tions, covenant-bonds, &c. which add a  
 weight to sin whilst committing.

You see what national sins are in the  
 question, and when they become such as  
 hazard the ruin of a people.

Quest. *What are national mercies in the  
 case before us?*

Ans. SUCH blessings as truly and con-  
 siderably affect the good of a *community*.

THEY must be blessings in their nature,  
 and national in their extent; they must  
 have an aptitude to the common-weal;  
 the more they conduce to make a land  
 happy, the greater the mercy is: Neither  
 is the gracious design of God to bless a  
 land thereby, to be disregarded, for some-  
 times he rains snares, and gives quails in  
 judgment.

Pf. lxxviii.  
 29, 31.

THESE mercies regard our souls, or our  
 bodies, or both. I shall enumerate some  
 of them. The pardon<sup>f</sup> of past sins, and  
 help against the like offences; the presence  
 of God as effective of spiritual and tempo-  
 ral good; gospel ordinances; a holy, ju-  
 dicious,

<sup>f</sup> By pardon, I mean an exemption from temporal pu-  
 nishments for those sins.



dicious, faithful ministry; a pure worship; the Spirit's energy in the gospel, to the conversion of many sinners, and real edification of saints, whereby the estate of believers may be flourishing; a godly discipline, and communion of saints, founded on plain gospel terms; love and peace among churches, grounded on essential, not disputable, notions, and expressed in all the fruits of christian love; freedom from persecution and malignity; a godly magistracy, using its power to restrain sin, and promote godliness; peace in our borders; justice in our courts; learning in the schools; wisdom and sincere designs for publick good among counsellors; plenty, by a blessing on our trades and labours; health in our streets; credit and influence among neighbouring countries; freedom from such judgments as waste and debase a land. These, and the like, constitute a happy nation. They are mercies which national sins forfeit, and without which the aspect of a land is mournful. Greater or less degrees of all or any of these are within the question, as the object of our expectations, and the sorts and degrees are often proportioned to a nation's repentance, and determined by it.

*Thirdly,* THE case *stated* and distinguished from what seems like it. It is not what repentance God requireth of particular

SERM. cular persons in order to eternal life, nor


IV. what repentance God requireth of a sinful nation as its duty; nor what's that repentance, without which a nation shall never enjoy national mercies; nor what repentance is that on which every nation, in all cases, shall partake of national mercies; nor what shall limit our prayers, nor yet altogether our hopes, as to the state of a land; much less what is that repentance which will best secure national mercies? But the question connects our repentance and warrantable expectations. The scope of it is, What is the *lowest* sort or degree of repentance for national sins, which is requisite to warrant, and ordinarily direct our expectations of national mercies?

THE reason why I add *ordinarily*, will appear after; the indefiniteness of the term *national mercies*, whether of this kind or of that, to this or that degree, I insist not upon; supposing that it imports at least so much and many mercies, as render a nation tolerably happy, and exempted from what it esteems calamitous.

*Fourthly*, THE *difficulties of the case*.

ITS not only hard to determine it, as the *minimum quod sic* in any qualification for mercy, nor yet as a thing depending on multitudes, and relating to the providence of God as to what is future, but there are these other things that make it difficult:

I. OTHER

I. OTHER nations are not under such SERM.  
*express* rules, with respect to God's out- IV.  
 ward dealings, as the *Jewish* nation was. 

THAT people was under a theocracy,  
*God was their king*: On this account the 1 Sam. xii.  
 Lord chargeth them, when they were for 12.  
 a king; *they rejected me that I should not* 1 Sam. viii.  
*reign over them.* Idolatry also was high- 7.  
 treason in that state; they were God's pe-  
 culiar nation, and were to live in a more I sa. li. 4.  
 immediate dependance on him, even in civil  
 respects, than other people.

THE rules of their external privileges  
 (both church and national) were *express*  
 in that covenant of peculiarity, whereinto  
 they were admitted. This covenant easily  
 determined mens expectations of God's  
 dealings with them. But I think we can-  
 not always conclude from God's methods  
 towards them, how he will deal with  
 other nations that are not under the same  
 law.

2. THERE have been always great dis-  
 plays of *sovereignty* in God's dispensation  
 of judgments and mercy towards nations:  
 He waits longer on some people than on  
 others, tho' no more guilty. Sometimes he  
 granteth favour to a nation, though its sins  
 be many, and punisheth it when its pro-  
 vocations appear less. The sins of multi-  
 tudes are connived at sometimes, and at  
 other times he afflicteth for the offences  
 of a few, as in the case of *Achan*.

Josh. vii.

HE 1.

SERM.

IV.

Exod.  
xxxii. 11,

14.

Ez. xiv.

14.

Jer. vii.

16.

HE hath diverted judgments at the prayer of one *Moses*; but sometimes *though Noab, Daniel, and Job* be there, they shall deliver no more than themselves; yea, he hath forbid his servants to pray for a people as a thing to no purpose. God hath tormented *Abimelech* & *small sins* in particular persons, as *Moses, Uzzab, &c.* to let men see its patience in God, not innocency in men, that he still destroys not.

THERE is exact wisdom and righteousness in all this variety, which the light of a higher state will discover; though now, by reason of darkness, his ways seem perplexed to us. However, this sovereign unaccountableness must abate our positiveness in judging what will be the way of God towards a people, though it hinders not the determining our ordinary expectations.

3. THERE are *prophetick* periods wherein national mercies shall not be obstructed by impenitence; but repentance shall follow them. *Israel* was not remarkably penitent, when the time of redemption from *Egypt* was come; yet God keeps his day. Their release from *Babylon* found them in the like unfit posture, yet God is pacified, and brings them to repentance by their return. *This people is unclean, and what they offer is unclean*; yet he makes them prosper, and build the temple, even tho' they had not turned to him. And it seems

Ezek. xvi.  
63.Hag. ii.  
14, 16,  
17, 18.

to be not much otherwise with the church, when it sings the praises of God for the consummating stroke against antichrist; she is not ready, nor clothed with eminent holiness.

SERM.

IV.

Rev. xix.  
1, 7, 8.

4. THE desolation of a land is sometimes *absolutely* determined.

WHEN its thus, a blessing is withheld from means that tend to make a people penitent; and what of repentance there is, becomes uneffectual to divert the misery. *Manasseh* repented, *Josiah* and the people, with some solemnity, humble themselves; but notwithstanding this, *the Lord turned not from the fierceness of his wrath, &c. because of all the provocations that Manasseh had provoked him withal, &c.* When the utmost limits of the time of God's patience is over, ruin is unavoidable. God bemoaneth a land in this condition, as our Saviour in his tears over *Jerusalem*: *If thou hadst known at least in this thy day the things that belong to thy peace, but now they are hid from thy eyes*<sup>g</sup>.

2 Kings  
xxiii. 25,  
26, 27.

Luke xix.

42.

5. GOD sometimes moderateth and refrains his judgments from *other* considerations besides repentance.

IF executing judgments upon his people, will occasion blasphemy and reproach to his name, he often forbearth his people

<sup>g</sup> The figure *Apopsiopsis* is twice used in this verse: *Thou hadst been happy, hadst thou known in thy day; thou art now undone, because they are hid from thy eyes.*

SERM. ple though impenitent: *I would scatter*

IV. *them into corners, &c. were it not that I*  
 Deut. *feared the wrath of the enemy, and they*  
 xxxii. 26, *should say, Our hand is high, the Lord hath*  
 27. *not done all this.* Joshua, and others, knew  
 Joth. vii. it was a strong plea, *What wilt thou do for*  
 9. *thy great name?* Again; when his people  
 Isa. xlvi. have been so obstinate under judgments,  
 8, 9. that if he preceded in his wrath, they  
 Ezek. xxxvi. 2, must be utterly destroyed; rather than do  
 8, 22, 23. so, he hath eased his hand. If the sins of  
 his enemies be full, he conniveth at his  
 church, whilst he avengeth himself on his  
 adversaries, especially if his servants are to  
 be executioners of his wrath. Sometimes  
 God hath had respect to some *ancestor*,  
 or some particular *action* of a people, that  
 hath been pleasing to him; and on that ac-  
 count hath been favourable, tho' they have  
 been otherwise obnoxious to judgments.

6. IT'S not very easy at all times, to  
*judge* of national judgments or mercies.  
 God may afflict in order to mercy; he  
 may take away lesser mercies to make  
 way for greater blessings: He often lays  
 a foundation of lasting good, by delays  
 and astonishing struggles. On the other  
 hand, he may forbear judgments, and be-  
 stow good things, whereby a nation is  
 ripened for sorer plagues: He may de-  
 stroy the gentry to save the vulgar, or  
 level his stroke against evil magistrates or  
 ministers, and so shake the state, to make  
 the

the body of a people, or his own people (at least) prosperous. Many such ways are with him. Each of these affect a community, and yet the aspect of them are so intricate and clouded, that deep thoughts are needful to determine, when we see the mercy we expect, or the judgment which we fear.

You may perceive that the case before me, though it seemeth so popular, is not so easily decided: But the greatest difficulty is to adjust the nature of repentance, as accommodated to our expectation of national mercies; which will fall under the next head.

*Fifthly*, THE case resolved; and somewhat concerning the rule by which it is resolved.

THE rule by which we must determine this, is hinted in the case itself, under those words, what repentance *doth* God require? Some expression of the divine will must guide us; we must not judge by second causes, or by vain fancy, as we are too apt to do; neither too rigid, nor yet too compassionate, inclinations, must decide the matter, or lead our expectations. The directions of the sovereign ruler of kingdoms, must alone take place; what notices he hath vouchsafed, must be regarded with reverence: natural principles, due inferences from his essential perfections,

SERM.  
IV.  
~~~~~

SERM. tions, the nature, order, ends, and methods

IV. of his government well considered, and an  
 ~~~~~ observation of his dealings with ourselves  
 in past times, and also with other coun-  
 tries, do all contribute some light in the  
 matter before us.

BUT our chiefest regard must be to the  
*scriptures*, especially to such parts of them  
 as urge repentance on a people with pro-  
 mises of good, in case of compliance, and  
 threatnings of ruin upon their obstinacy.  
 Also such parts should be observed as con-  
 tain instances of national repentance, which  
 have been succeeded or accompanied with  
 national mercies. By this rule we must  
 determine what that repentance for natio-  
 nal sins is, whereupon we may expect na-  
 tional mercies. Here we must consider  
 repentance modified as a means to this  
 proper end, *viz.* national mercies: And its  
 to be considered as to that lowest degree,  
 which will support our expectations of  
 those mercies.

HAVING premised this, I think it may  
 thus be determined:

I. A REPENTANCE *short* of that which  
 is enjoined in order to eternal salvation, will  
 suffice to warrant our expectations of na-  
 tional mercies. Eternal issues are not de-  
 termined by the same rules as temporal  
 blessings. Unregenerate persons may re-  
 pent, so as to divert present judgments,  
 and



and secure mercies: This is evident in *Abab* and *Nineveh*. SERM.  
IV.

IF it were not so, we could not expect national mercies before the generality of a land became true converts, yea, active converts; for regenerate persons that shall possess heaven, may come short in that repentance which secures blessings to a nation. 1 Kings  
xxi. 29.  
Jonah iii.

SAVING repentance is the grace we call sinners to by our ministry; the more of this prevaileth in a land, the more sure are the mercies of that people: Without it a nation will soon run into new forfeitures, and bring plagues on itself at last, as *Nineveh* did. Nah. ch.  
ii. & iii.

THIS saving repentance is a change of heart as well as practice; it strikes at the root, and excludeth the dominion of all sin, as well as national provocations: It hath a mixture of divine love reigning in the heart, as well as fear: Its excited by a sense of pardoning mercy through the blood of Christ, as well as God's wrathful displeasure: Its an effect of the Spirit indwelling, and not only of its common operations: Its the fruit of the divine life, and not merely of natural principles excited by foreign impressions.

IN these and the like, saving repentance exceeds that repentance of a land, which yet may afford expectations of national mercies.

SERM. 2. THE repentance which yields us  
 IV. ground to expect national mercies, I shall  
 describe in these following particulars:

1. IT hath several things wherein it partakes of the nature and sincerity of a true repentance. 2. It must be for national sins. 3. The repentance must usually be national. 4. It must be suited to the different condition and circumstances of such as make up a nation.

1. IT must have so much of the nature and sincerity of a true repentance, as is included in these following heads:

(1.) CLEAR *convictions* of the guilt and offences of a nation.

WE must believe those things to be sins, which God chargeth us with, and truly own, that we are chargeable with the faults for which God reproveth us. This God enjoineth: *Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the Lord thy God.* They cannot be said to repent, who plead guiltless. This Plea God reproveth *Israel* for: *Yet thou sayest because I am innocent, &c.* Whilst men plead for sin as no sin, or acquit themselves when they are criminals, sins bind on them the wrath of God, and stand in the way of a peoples good. But there's hope of a land, when it pour-eth out its confessions with them: *We acknowledge, O Lord, our wickedness, and the iniquity of our fathers, for we have sinned against thee.*

(2.) SHAME.

(2.) SHAME, fear, and deep humblings SERM. of soul under the sense of the wrath of IV. God, as provoked by our sins. *Abab humbled himself: Turn to me with fasting and with mourning; rent your hearts, and not your garments, for he is gracious, &c. and repenteth him of the evil; who knows if he will return, and leave a blessing behind him?* Joel ii. 13, 14. 1 Sam. vii. 6.

God will embitter sin to us; or avenge it. Provocations shall prevent mercy, when they are easy and pleasing; but this remorse must reach to the heart, though it do not savingly change it. The heart must tremble at the threatned wrath. God will have his anger awful to men, and their abominations shall cause a blush, at least in a sense of what miseries they expose to.

THEREFORE while people make a mock of sin, as harmless; while they sport with the wrath kindled thereby, as a scarecrow, God will go on to strip a kingdom of its blessings, and load it with judgments: *They were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush; therefore at the time that I visit them, they shall be cast down.* Jer. vi. 15.

BUT this humiliation, fear and shame, must be from an affected soul, not bare bodily appearances in a day of humiliation, or hanging down the head like a bulrush Isa. lviii. for a day; these the Lord despiseth; for such things he will not turn away his anger.

SERM. WHEREAS there is hope, *when a people lie down in their shame, and confusion covers them, because they have sinned against the Lord.* It bodes well, when men tremble at the words of the God of Israel because of transgression.

(3.) SUCH a compliance with God's warnings and rebukes, as to put men on seeking God's favour, and resolving to forsake the national pollutions.

THERE must be supplications as well as weeping: *A voice was heard on the high places, weeping and supplications of the children of Israel, for they have perverted their way.* This is God's advice to a land, and its the constant way of a repenting people.

Thus *Nineveh cried mightily to God.* Herein the dominion of God is owned, and so far men acknowledge a dependance upon him: But this must not be only with the mouth; no, it must be with the heart as to this act and occasion. A sleighty cry will not prevail: Its a brand on a people, that *they cried not unto me with the heart.*

With our prayers there should be a justification of God's threats and punishments. How hopeless then is the condition of a people, when that is true of them, *we made not our prayer to God*; and as sad, whilst they arraign his ways as unequal?

BUT good resolves must attend prayer; a full purpose under present convictions, though it may not always prove effectual, through

through want of a principle in sinners, and remains of corruption in saints. We are led to this by that place, *Take away all iniquity, Ashur shall not save us; what have I to do any more with idols?* Expressive hereof was *Exra's* and *Nebemiab's* entering the people into a covenant with God against national sins.

SERM.

IV.

Hof. xiv.

2, 3.

Ezra x. 3.

Neh. ix.

38.

and x. 29.

Now what hopes can there be of a land, if it neglect the Lord, as if he had nothing to do with them; yea, continues resolute in its sins. Thus did they who said, *After our idols will we go, we will worship the queen of heaven, &c.* Alas! such a people may lie down in fear, and look at the mercies they want as impossible; yea, consider the blessings they yet enjoy as soon to be removed.

Jer. xliv.

17.

I ADDED, that prayer and resolves should be in compliance with God's warnings: God will have a regard to his threatnings, and some tribute of obedience rendered to him by them whom he spares. Thus *Abab* yielded to *Elijab's* message, and *Nineveh* regarded the threatnings of the Lord by *Jonah*. Therefore its an awful sign, when nations *refuse to hearken, draw away the shoulder, and make their heart as an adamant, lest they should hear the law, and the words of God by the prophets.* When this is the frame and carriage of a people towards God, what effects follow, the fol-

Zech. vii.

11, 12.

SERM. lowing words acquaint you : *Therefore*

IV. *came a great wrath from the Lord of hosts.*

WHETHER the warnings are sent by the word in the mouth of his servants, or by his wonders, or by lesser afflictions, the disregard of them makes the bands of a people strong; whereas attentiveness and compliance therewith, affords encouragement.

(4.) THERE must be a *reformation*.

ALL the former without this, are insufficient to be a prognostick of good; the other things tend to this, and must terminate therein, or repentance wants its aptitude to the designed end: *I have sent my prophets, saying, Return ye now every man from the evil of his way, and amend your doings, &c. and ye shall dwell in the land:* A gracious offer: But behold the obstacle to their benefit thereby: *You have not inclined your ear, nor hearkned unto me.* In the same manner God leaves it on this issue, *Learn to do well, &c. If you be willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land; but if ye refuse and rebel, you shall be devoured with the sword, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.*

ITS no repentance while gross evils are continued in, if our sins be sins of commission: Its no repentance while an express duty is not complied with, when the offence is a sin of omission: *This shall be the punishment.*

*punishment of all Egypt, and of all nations that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles.* Let there be never so much mourning, though it rise to *the covering the altar with tears*, it yields but vain hopes, when men continue unreformed.

SERM.  
IV.

Isa. lviii.  
6, 7, 8.

BUT amendment carrieth with it a happy presage; it restraineth the bitter effects of past provocations, and God in mercy encourageth it in a people, though on the brink of ruin. We see an instance in *Judg. x.* the people having confessed their sin, *ver. 10.* accepted of their punishment, and called upon God, *ver. 15.* *They put away their strange gods, and served the Lord; then the soul of God was grieved for their misery, and he delivered them, ver. 16.* A parallel you have in *Nineveh*, the charge given by the king (which was complied with) was, *Let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in his hand; then they conclude a possibility of escape, according to the tacit reserve in the prophet's message: Who can tell if God will turn away from his fierce anger, and we perish not.*

Jon. iii.  
8, 9.

2. BUT yet further. The repentance in these acts must be for *national* sins: If it be for other sins, and not for the sins of the land, it will not warrant our expectations of national mercies. God will have men direct their repentance to that which his wrath is kindled for, and which his

SERM. testimony is against. Its not enough that  
 IV. you bewail your own personal private sins,  
 but these publick faults. People are lothest  
 to own, bewail, and leave these national  
 offences; custom fixeth them; they are  
 commonly reputable, and by the generality  
 of transgressors thought innocent; they are  
 supported by interest and power; there's  
 danger by repenting thereof. If you re-  
 form as to these, there's oft a loss of pla-  
 ces; men are subject to shame by leaving  
 faults in fashion, or the reproach of having  
 long offended in those things; and how  
 backward are our proud hearts to acknow-  
 ledge we have been in an error?


BUT let it be never so hard, the arrow  
 of God is levelled against these very sins,  
 and even these shall be bewailed and for-  
 faken, or he will proceed to embitter them.  
 People may think to commute with God,  
 and amend in other matters; but this  
 is a vain attempt, to their own delusion  
 and ruin. *Thou shalt sow, but shalt not  
 reap; for the statutes of Omri are kept, and  
 all the works of the house of Ahab; and ye  
 walk in their counsels, that I should make  
 thee a desolation, and the inhabitants thereof  
 an hissing: therefore you shall bear the re-  
 proach of my people.* This leads me to an-  
 swer one objection.

Mic. vi.  
 15, 16.

Object. *How may we know which are  
 the national sins?*

*Ans.*



*Anfw.* IF the same particular fins be SERM.  
*universal.* Consider the carriage of a people IV.  
in general, and compare it with the word:   
National fins are too gross not to be seen,  
when the rule of a peoples walking is set  
before us. But if you would know which  
are more eminently the national fins, ob-  
serve what fins have the greatest *influence*  
in corrupting the land; which cleaveth  
fastest to a people, and most (especially  
leading persons) are guilty of; which have  
been longest continued in, and in their  
nature and consequences are most grievous;  
which the judgments of God seem most  
directed against; what fins do the best  
ministers and people witness most against.  
By these rules you may discern what are  
those national fins which the nation agree  
in the commission of, or connivance at.  
But if the national fins be, by accumula-  
tion of several sorts of fins, according to  
the different state of people who constitute  
that community, you then must distinguish  
a nation into its *constituent*, or remarkably  
differing parties; as magistrates and subjects,  
ministers and people, rich and poor, infi-  
dels and believers, &c. Compare the frame  
and carriage of each of these, with that  
which God hath made their peculiar duty;  
and adding the former helps, those nation-  
al fins will appear, which are made up  
by complication, though the same individ-  
dual

SERM. dual crimes are not entertained by the several parties in a nation.

3. THE repentance must usually be *national*. I do not mean that every individual must repent, but the generality; or at least some very considerable number, and those of such men that most represent and influence the body.

A SMALL number of private penitents may save themselves, but seldom secure a nation. I confess here I must be wary, considering how graciously God is pleased to admit sometimes a few to personate a body, and give in blessings for many on their mediation: *Phineas's* zeal turns away wrath from all his people. God seems to conclude the unavoidableness of *Israel's* woe, from the want of *one man* to divert it; *I sought for a man among them that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me, for the land, that I should not destroy it, but I found none.* This the desolate church complains of: *There is none that stirreth up himself to take bold of thee.*

BUT though sovereignty admits a very few penitents to profit many transgressors, yet we are not usually to expect this, whatever in extremity we may hope, for want of better grounds; usually a few are called *none*, as to this effect: *No man repented him of his wickedness; I called, and none did answer; he wondered there was no intercessor.*

THERE

THERE were the prophets themselves, and some others that repented; yet so few were as good as none to secure the good, which multitudes concurred to remove. His call is to the generality to return, and on that he promiseth favour: *Hear ye the word of the Lord, all ye of Judah; thus saith the Lord, Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place: And the failure, by the refusal, he affixeth to the body of them, ver. 28. Thou shalt say, This is a nation that obeyeth not the voice of the Lord, nor receiveth correction, &c.*

SERM.  
IV.



Jer. vii.  
2, 3.

WE can hardly look for good to a land, unless the repenting persons be numerous enough to vindicate the glory of God, and influence the land to reformation. The assembly of penitents must be solemn. How general was the repentance of *Nineveh*, from the greatest to the least, from the king and nobles, to the most abject.

Joel i. 14,  
15.  
Jon. iii.  
5, 6.

SOME farther light may arise from the next head.

4. THE repentance should be *sui*ted to the different condition and circumstances of those that make up a nation: Each must repent of the sins common to all, yea, the gross trespasses of each sort must be bewailed by every sort.

BUT yet there is a repentance peculiar to each, which ought eminently to appear, or at least really to be, and this exerted according

SERM. according to their respective abilities. Magistrates ought to mourn for the sins of the people, and also to repent of their own ill examples, bad laws, &c. And they must express their repentance by exerting that power which they have above others: they should enact good laws, restrain and punish sin, command days of humiliation, appoint good ministers, &c. So *Ezra* did; the same did *Nehemiah*. Magistrates do not repent, if they do not so; and a land may perish for their neglect.

Ezra x. 8,  
2.  
Neh. xiii.

SUPPOSE a land divideable into unbelievers and believers; these believers must repent of their own sins, as well as the sins of unbelievers; they must be humbled for their own decays, contentions, worldliness, barrenness, vanity, pride, though less gross than others, as well as for the idolatry and profaneness of the irreligious. The reason is, that these sins of theirs contribute to the bringing down judgments, and obstructing of mercies, as well as the grosser sins of unbelievers, nay, in some sense, more; because they ought to be witnesses for God in a degenerate land. Their examples encourage the grosser villanies of others; they have more light and strength to keep themselves pure; yea, if the number of good men be considerable in a land, the lot of a nation is mostly determined by them, and God's regards is much more to them than others.

IF you take the epistles to the seven churches to be so particular, as most do, you may see how God reproveth and threatens them, though small portions of those states, of which they were members in civil respects. I think I may say that the repentance of believers for their sins, must exceed the repentance of unbelievers in some proportion to that life, grace, and aids which they have above those unbelievers; their humiliation must be deeper, and more ingenuous; their resolves stronger; their return more universal; their prayers more fervent; their reformation more extensive, spiritual, and vigorous than other men. In this its true, as a man is so to his strength. If their repentance be no greater than others, they may expose a nation, and prove its ruin.

I MIGHT proceed to gentry and commonalty, to ministers and people, but time prevents me; and the same rules may guide you in these, as in the instances before described. I shall only add, that supposing a part of the land persecutors, and the other persecuted for truth's sake; these latter must be humbled for the sins of persecutors, and repent of their own sins, and that according to the advantage which their afflictions give for their humiliation and amendment.

WHILE men throw repenting work off of themselves to others, as if they could  
acquit

SERM.

IV.



SERM. acquit themselves of God's challenge; are

IV. there not also sins among you? are you not way guilty? The land is like to suffer, and the common condition to be deplorable.

ITS true, if the design of God be to single out any one sort of a nation to suffer by themselves, the impenitents of that sort may not damage the body of the nation, further than their struggles with, or their loss of, that part may affect the residue. As if God resolve to punish professors of religion only; their impenitence may affect the whole no farther than the distress of such professors amount to, except as it is an awful omen; because judgment seldom begins at God's house, but it reacheth in woful issues to others afterwards. Or, if God hath a controversy with the gentry of a land, their impenitency may not fatally reach the ordinary people, if penitent. For if God resolves to punish ravenous, domineering pastors, or persecutors, their neglect of repentance shall not hurt the whole who repents; nay, it will be their advantage to have them blasted, if they remain impenitent, as the kingdom's plagues. Its much more so as to particular families, whether the highest or less influencing the corruption of a commonwealth.

BUT where God designs not a distinct respect in his judgments, the stubbornness of any one sort doth threaten the nation; their not repenting in a way proper to them,  
may

may plunge the whole into a loss of mercies. SERM.  
IV.

THUS I have, according to my small light, resolved the case.

THE decision of the case *proved*.

I. THE described repentance doth *ordinarily* afford a people national mercies, notwithstanding national sins. In the resolution of the case, there occurred some reasons, and many scriptures, to evidence this; so that I shall need to say little more for proof. There seems to be an express rule in this matter: *At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, or concerning a kingdom, to pluck it up, and to pull down, and to destroy it: If that nation against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them.* Jer. xviii.  
7, 8.

THE repentance which God hath accepted, so as to prolong the welfare of nations, was of this sort, as you see in *Nineveh*, and other places. Should we examine the repentance of any land, it hath rarely arrived to a greater height. A defect of the repentance enjoined in the covenant of grace, is obvious in that repentance which hath yet been effectual as to national mercies. This repentance answers the great methods and ends of God's general government, as to the temporal weal of nations, and provides a foundation to proceed upon in those methods, whereby 2 Chron.  
xii. 7.  
his

SERM. his spiritual kingdom is advanced, and the

IV. eternal welfare of souls is promoted, we  
 ~~~~~ may expect God will continue national  
 mercies to a people who come up to that  
 repentance which hath preserved other na-  
 tions. We have great encouragement to  
 our hopes from many texts<sup>1</sup>.

2. WHERE this repentance obtains not, a people cannot justly *expect* national mercies.

Isa. viii. 9. LET a nation seem never so safe, its security is vain, and all its supports shall be blasted by impenitency. What though

Jer. xv. 7. a people are related to God? *I will destroy my people, sith they return not from their evil ways.* May not their privileges, and pledges of God's presence secure them?

Jer. vii. No: *Trust not in lying words, saying, The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are these: Will ye steal, murder, commit adultery, and swear falsely, and say we are delivered to do all these abominations? Go to Shiloh, and see what I did to it, for the wickedness of my people Israel; and now because you have done all these works, and I spake unto you, but you heard not; I will do unto this house, wherein you trust, as I have done to Shiloh; and I will cast you out of my sight.* Mock shadows of your repentance, and weak uneffectual attempts for  
 4, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15.  
 Jer. xiv. it, will leave men under disappointments.

WHEN

<sup>1</sup> 2Chron. vii. 14. and xxx. 8, 9. Jer. xxvi. 3, 13.





WHEN a people is given up to impenitency, and God with-holds a blessing from the methods that tend to their repentance, there's just cause of fear that judgments are determined against that land: *Hear you indeed, but understand not; make the heart of the people fat, and shut their eyes, lest they see with their eyes, and understand with their hearts, and convert and be healed. How long, Lord? till the cities be laid waste.* Isa. vi. 9, 10, 11.

GOD is so positive against a land refusing to return, that their felicity is impossible: *Wrath came upon Judah for their trespass, yet he sent prophets to them to bring them back to the Lord, but they would not give ear. Thus saith God, Why transgress you the commandments of the Lord, that ye cannot prosper? Were it otherwise, God's name would not be sanctified, no order in this lower world would be kept. But further,* 2 Chron. xxiv. 18, 19, 20.

IMPENITENCE is not only a *moral* obstacle to good, as it provokes God to with-hold it, but its a *natural* obstacle: The wickedness of men is efficient of woe to a people, and is, in many senses, destructive of mercies, and inconsistent therewith. Many enormities of a nation are its plagues, as bad laws, wickedness in magistrates, a corrupt ministry, oppression, &c. Its iniquity is even materially its ruin.



## S E C T. II.

## A P P L I C A T I O N.

MANY inferences are obvious; as, How dreadful an evil is sin; how dangerous to a land are multitudes of offenders. A nation is foolish that discountenances piety, and destroyeth the godly party, whereby it strikes at its own refuge. How good and long-suffering is God, that calls the vilest nations to return, waits long for their answer, and destroys not till their repentance is even hopeless? What enemies to themselves, neighbours, and posterity, (bound up in their doom) are an impenitent people? What sottish and atheistical men are they, that guide their hopes and fears of a nation's welfare, by fancies or second causes; but without regard to God's favour or anger, or the influence that repentance or impenitence have upon the ways of God towards a people? What a dismal prospect is a wicked nation, sporting with their provocations and warnings? How uncertain a tenure do most nations hold their mercies by? But I have not time to insist upon these.

I SHALL briefly apply the resolution of the case to our own nation. We are a nation, we have national sins, repentance of these sins is a presage of our future state

as well as others. I know no exemption, or peculiar allowance, we can expect at the hands of the righteous governor of the world. Oh that our hearts were under the power of this awful truth, that *our iniquity may not be our ruin.*

SERM.  
IV.

Ezek. xviii  
30.

IN order to this,

1. I SHALL insist on some things in order to our repentance.

2. ENQUIRE whether we may groundedly expect national mercies from our present frame.

3. CONCLUDE with an use of lamentation of our national impenitency and dangers.

IN order to our repentance. I shall,

1. *Represent* to you the national sins we ought to repent of. Hereby you will know what we should be humbled for, resolve against, and reform. What a terror ought it to be but to mention our provocations? Oh that a land of light should be chargeable with such enormities, and yet be secure, and hate to be reformed! Where shall I begin the charge? We and our fathers, for some ages, have been guilty of the same sins, yet unrepented of: Against whom shall I level the indictment? Alas! we *have all sinned, and done wickedly as we could.* Magistrates and subjects, ministers and people, the unbelievers and believers. To what sorts of sins shall I confine myself? Woe is us: What sins did God

SERM. ever destroy a land for, that are not national with us?

IV.

~ BUT that the sound may not appear uncertain, I account myself bound in conscience to be more particular: My subject forceth me, not any uncharitable design. Oh that my own heart were more filled with zeal for God, and deepest sorrows for the nation's sin, whilst I am recording what may offend the guilty, though the charge be too plain to admit a denial. Let us enquire,

Is *England* altogether innocent as to its laws? Do not we see that some of the terms of conformity are far other than our blessed Lord hath instituted? Are they not remote from a tendency to advance real piety, and exclusive of some things that would much conduce thereto? Is not a diocesan bishop set up, whose sole jurisdiction bars all the other ministers from the exercise of a great part of their office, while the bishop is utterly unable to perform it through the largeness of his diocese? Is there not more than an umbrage of lying and perjury imposed on all ministers, when they must assent, subscribe, and swear to what is more than suspicious, yea, utterly false? Are not a heap of ceremonies and corrupt usages re-assumed, (though once cast out) to the facilitating of the return of popery, dividing of Protestants, and the scandal of the weak, who  
are

are too apt to place religion, yea, all their religion, in those vanities? How many severe laws were made against dissenters, and severely executed to the ruin of thousands? Was it no provocation to silence two thousand faithful ministers when their labours were so necessary, and their places were to be filled up with many young men, who have proved fatal to serious religion? The sacrament is made a politick engine, to further the damnation of unworthy receivers; that all such may be kept out, whom they suspect any way hazardous to excessive pomp and ecclesiastick pegeantry.

CAN the land be innocent, where *atheism* is so professed, the most blasphemous oaths are fashionable, perjury, uncleanness, drunkenness, malignity against all credible holiness, so common and consistent with reputation? Was it not among us, that the covenant was burnt by the hands of a common hangman, and horrid murders committed as legal executions?

Is not that christian nation guilty, where *prophanation* of sabbaths is so notorious, yea, pleaded for as warrantable? Most families have nothing of God's worship, the plainest essentials of religion by few understood; the operations of the Spirit turned into ridicule, and religion placed in things that bear not a faint resemblance of the very form of it, while sobriety itself is mere

SERM. matter of scoff, and the fountains of learning send forth many more fitted to infect than reform the age?

IV.



Is it to be concealed, that men enter on the ministry, as apprentices on a trade, and use it as a mere means for a livelihood? How many are pastors without the peoples consent? And too many preach, while unacquainted with the gospel as a law of faith, and rule of the recovery of apostate sinners. The labours of such have no tendency to convert or edify their hearers; yea, alas, conversion is judged a foolish thing to urge: All the most debauched and profane are regenerate, if they were baptized, and come to church. Many souls eternally perish by the influence of this one principle, and the ministry is diverted from its greatest end.

HAVE we not seen the ministry too much laid out to serve the late governments in designs of enslaving the nations, and ruining the life of the *Protestant* religion? Though amazing was the providence which almost too late opened some men's eyes by a close attempt against their own places, and so swayed their minds, that they contributed to save the land from that ruin, which a few more sermons of non-resistance (if believed by the nation) had render'd unavoidable. The good Lord continue that impulse, lest our miseries become greater by the beginnings of our deliverance.

I DESIGN

I DESIGN not this account of all our publick ministers; blessed be God there are many to whom the interests of Christ were more valuable, than to allow their labours to serve any base design. But this of late was found the way of church preferments, wherewith too many complied; and made the pulpit a stage for a poor oration, rather than a place to testify for God, or bring souls nigher to him.

ARE believers and serious christians (whom I confine not to any sect or party) free from contributing to fill up the measure of our iniquity? Oh that they were! then should my soul rejoice in hope; but its otherwise. Alas, how much have they made the vilest abominations their own, by not mourning for them, and by their carnal liberty contributing to them; *Our gold is become dross.* How unedifying are their discourses? how unexemplary is their walking? *Each one seeks himself, and none the things of Christ.* Circumspectness is laid by as unfashionable; the *virgins all slumber and sleep.* How few dare plead the cause of God, or do express his image! What heartless duties, froward passions, notorious pride, and neglect of education of children? Fast-days are kept without humiliation; sacraments and sermons are become lifeless; God is sensibly withdrawn, and none bemoan it; religion is dying, and none uphold it.

SERM. WHAT a chilness on the love of saints

IV. to each other? what fordid divisions and distances? A new standard of godliness is erected, *viz.* a zeal for parties, and selfish interests, under pretence of Christ's interests; whilst what is essentially and undoubtedly his, recommends men little. How little do good men relish that life, light, and love, which is purely divine?

CAN I excuse *dissenters*, as such? No: To say nothing of some of them immersed in destructive errors; alas! the more orthodox have a share in polluting and exposing the nation; a vain itch hath seized much of our ministry; we study to please rather than profit; we envy one another; run into extremes, because others come not up to divine institutions; we overlook the mercy of our ease and liberty, because we abound not as others do. Tremble! oh my soul! to think, how many, even of them, persecute by railing, lying reports, non-communion, and censuring the state of souls for non-compliance with doubtful notions. Too many set up uninstituted terms of communion, destroy the pastoral office, promote little designs with base tricks, and grossest lying, under the covert of equivocation and surmises.

WERE it not that some breathe another spirit, and more suitable to the divine nature, and the gospel of Christ, I should sit down with horror, and give up the land for  
for





for lost. The shadow hath sensibly eaten up the substance; we have fancied, talked, and disputed a gospel frame, and practical holiness, almost out of the land. A dead form is that which most are content with, and carnally plead for, whilst they profess more purity and power than others.

ARE these evils in the land, or no? are they sins? are they not general? Arise, O God! and convince us, embitter them to us. Oh, was there ever more need to crave the pourings out of thy Spirit, now its recesses are so manifest! How discernable will be its pourings out, if thou bless us therewith?

2. I DO, in the name of God, *call* you to this true repentance for these national sins.

WE have nothing else left to relieve us; our begun deliverance will be abortive, yea, more destructive, without repentance. What nation ever needed repentance more; whom hath God oftner called, and more expressly warned? He hath long waited to be gracious, and must he destroy us at last, when weary of repenting? The ruins of all our neighbours cry to us, Repent, or you will be more miserable than we are: God seems to be on his way to you with the dregs of the cup. Our sins are of the grossest nature, the longest continuance, and forest aggrava-  
tions.

SERM. How often has God punished this land  
IV. for them, and yet we hold them fast?

What variety of judgments hath he essayed  
Jer. viii. our reformation by, but in vain? Thou  
5. *London's* plague and flames, shall not they reform thee? Will not former streams of blood extinguish our lusts and divisions? Shall we force God to repeat them? We were lately on the brink of ruin, and yet the same malignant, formal, and irreligious temper revives.

God hath, by a train of miracles, respited our woe, and begun our deliverance, but what are any sort of men amended? Methinks we should have past our own doom with *Ezra*; *Should we again break thy commandment, &c. wouldst thou not be angry with us, till thou hadst consumed us, so that there should be no remnant nor escaping?*

THESE abominations are yet more odious by our profession and advantages. To be acted by such a notion, wearing a christian name! These villanies were tolerable among Pagans, in comparison of us; but in a place of light we have thus transgressed, in a land of uprightness we have been thus vile. Oh the convictions, struggles, and helps we must have trampled on! the many vows we have broken in all these transgressions! Yet in the midst of our rebellion, God renews his call, Repent, Oh  
sinful

sinful nation. Let the cry of mourners be heard in our streets! Oh let shame cover our face; if you have any pity for yourselves or posterity, truly repent at last.

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IV.

VIEW the national *mercies* you may enjoy by repenting, and that you are sure to lose by hardening your hearts against it. Read them over again where I named them; are they not valuable enough to excite your reformation? Oh that all would concur in their places to reform! When will magistrates restrain sin, disannul all bad laws, and state the terms of our ministry and communion, so that all may be useful, and not spoil their efficacy by guilt contracted at their admission; nor perpetuate our divisions, the consequences whereof have been so dismal, and are like to be more so. When will *ministers* engage in the reformation of the land, by faithful warnings, sharp reproofs, good examples, plain and importunate pleadings? Will the grossly scandalous *gentry* and people abhor their enormities, and put away their great provocations, whose cry is gone up to the heavens? Shall *England's* mercy be secured by a revival of strictness of life, more love and power, among professors? Will you be your country and church's plagues? That great good, which primitive saints rejoiced in the hope of; or overwhelming judgments, which posterity will be astonished at, do depend upon the return we shall make

SERM. make to God's present call. Mercies of

IV. the most glorious nature are in the birth,  
 and shall your, *even your*, impenitence stifle them?

Jer. iv. 1. OH return; and *if you will return, let it be to the Lord your God.* All changes that

amount not to this, will avail us nothing. Your prayers, your fast-days, are as water spilt on the ground, without reformation. How can I cease till the generality be per-

Lam. v. 21. *suaded to do this, which is so necessary to our commonweal? Let us all cry, Turn us, O Lord, and we shall, or will be turned.*

Hos. v. 4. *Frame your doings, as men determined to turn unto the Lord. Set heartily to it with all your might, for its hard work; delay it not a moment. Oh God bow our wills, that the land may jointly answer, Lo, we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God.*

Jer. iii.  
22.

Mal. iii. 7. CAN you pretend, *Wherein shall we return?* Alas, wherein have we not departed from him? All in a manner is out of frame; every thing, every person, considerably needs amendment. Let us all unite in this, and God will bless us with light and love for union in other things. This work needs all our hands; let us make up that wherein others will be defective, all striving to begin and outdo each other. Oh that all emulation and strife were reduced to this, which of us shall first and most reform.

3. IF the generality will not be persuaded to repent of national sins, let not *particular* persons neglect it.

SERM.  
IV.

I AM loth to descend so low, yet this is better than none: Who knows how many may be convinced by the repentance of a few? At least you may preserve yourselves, and view the publick calamity with more composure than other men, as having done your utmost to prevent them. We know not but God may delay judgments for the sake of a few remarkable penitents, though we may not commonly expect it. Shall there be so great cause, and none set themselves to it? Hath God none among us that regard his loudest calls? Can there be so little love to his name and honour in *England*, that even a few will not afflict their souls; and is he so provoked, that a few will not testify against this common apostacy? Poor nation! that hast none that love thy welfare; that all will lose showers of mercy for thee, rather than *sow in righteousness*.

Ezek. ix.  
4, 6.

OH that some would resolve this day--- Let not God say, *I sought for a man, but I found none*. Repent of your personal sins, otherwise how can you repent of national sins. Examine thyself how far thou art infected with the national provocations; what hast thou contributed thereto; charge thy soul therewith; say, the measure is so much the fuller for my

Ezek. xxii.  
30.

my

SERM. my sake; bewail thy share, mourn over  
 IV. the faults of others; thou mayst grieve  
 ~~~~~ for what thou canst not reform, but be  
 sure to reform thyself to thy utmost; re-  
 form thy family; yea, set thyself to bring  
 all (thou art in thy place capable) to amend-  
 ment.

Do not judge of faults by the common opinion; let not the example of others be thy standard, but set the divine rule before thee, and review things thereby: Resolve to stem the tide, and to judge and act in the face of it. What though the multitude be against thee; what though bigots rail; what though many professors, yea, men of thy own party condemn thee; all is nothing, whilst God will accept and approve thee. A man must be singular that will reform himself in a degenerate age; he must be resolved, that will attempt to reform others.

2. LET us enquire, whether we may expect national mercies from our *present* frame and state. I believe God will not forsake us, but in time he will do us good. But the enquiry is meant thus; Whether mercy will be immediately enjoyed; is the wrath of God turned away; and will his progress in a way of judgments be stopped?

CAN we reasonably conclude, tho' the sword hath been furnished, it shall not destroy; our warfare is accomplished, the clouds are past, the bitterness of death is  
 over.

over. Dare I say, Rejoice, O land, in the favour of a reconciled God; for good, only good, shall presently be unto thee? SERM.  
IV.

I SHALL, by way of objections, give you what is matter of hopes; and, in the answer to those objections, give you the ground of my fears, and in the end declare my thoughts.

*Object.* 1. ARE there not some testimonies of national repentance, from whence we may hope mercy is towards us? As,

1. *Penal laws against the worship of God are as good as disannulled, and persecution is at a stop.*

*Ans<sup>w</sup>.* 1. I WISH the general remains of malignity, argue not a sorrow for that liberty.

2. I FIND most of them that were guilty of persecution, instead of repenting of it, do justify it as a just prosecution, though it was an usurpation of the rights of people, as men, and as christians.

3. ARE the sacrament test, and act of uniformity removed?

2. *We had a publick fast-day kept with outward solemnity.*

*Ans<sup>w</sup>.* I WILL judge of no man's heart; yet I cannot but observe,

1. THE most *polluting* sins of the land were not solemnly owned, much less bewailed. Where was a publick acknowledgment of the sinful silencing two thousand ministers, because they durst not profane

SERM. fane their office, and plainly lie and per-  
 IV. jure themselves. I might name many such  
 ~~~~~ other fins: Alas, general confessions avail  
 little.

2. WHAT publick *reformation* in life and manners appears since that day? what fewer oaths? Profaneness is no way abated; men are returned with the dog to the vomit. Now fastings, without amendment, are but a mockery with God, and profit not a people.

3. MEN are so far from repentance, that they cannot endure to be *reproved* for their sins. They say you irritate, if you mention their offences: They like to hear others accused, but abhor the least hint against their own faults. Tell the imposer on the church, that uninstituted terms of communion are sinful, and rage is awaken'd. Persuade the bitter spirit to be peaceable, and his tongue is soon envenomed, and you shall be railed on as the great disturber.

Object. 2. *But a great part of the land is innocent of some of the most notorious crimes; the sober persons are many, who share not in the profaneness of the land; the persecuted and ejected cannot be guilty of the oppressions they were under; and many of the church of England never agreed thereto.*

Answer. 1. How little do such truly *mourn* for those sins of other men? How much more common is it to hear the better sort scoff and laugh at profaneness, than bewail



bewail it? Persecutors are more railed at, than mourned for. By this we become guilty.

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IV.



2. ARE not there iniquities with the *soberer* part of the nation, impenitently continued in to this day? Do we see backslidings healed? How much more mortified, heavenly, circumspect, charitable or fruitful, are the hopefullest persons in the land, by all our calls? Yea, our complaints, tho' so general, little tend to alter us: *Our righteousness is as filthy rags; we fade as a leaf.*

Isa. lxiv.  
6, 7.

*Object.* 3. BUT if we consider the *sovereign* dealings of God with us, may not we expect mercy, though we see not repentance? As,

1. *God hath lately wrought a great deliverance, when we were on the brink of ruin; and that by a series of miracles, when we were as unworthy as we are now.*

*Answer.* 1. SUCH deliverances are never completed, and seldom long continue, where repentance doth not immediately follow. Though God may command deliverance first, yet he annexeth holiness to it; and where that fails, the beginnings of safety prove a snare, and do expose to greater distress: *When he saved from Babylon, he cleanseth them from iniquity.*

Obad. xvii.  
Ezek.  
xxxvi. 23,  
25.

2. Do not we find that deliverance is at a sensible stop, for want of our amendment? Instruments to save us seem less apt, our enemies are in better heart, and a much

SERM. more threatening posture. The hand of

IV. God is at a stop; those hopeful touches on the minds of men, are much defaced; they that mean well, are less spirited and entrusted; they who design ill, are more vigorous and countenanced. What a change have a few months made in our hopes, tho' they were raised by the highest displays of divine power and goodness? Its almost true, *You shall conceive chaff, and bring forth stubble; your breath as fire shall devour you.*

2 Kings  
xix. 3.  
Ist. xxvi.  
17, 18.  
& xxxiii.  
11.

2. *May not we hope that God will finish our salvation for his own honour, and not suffer a work, wherein he hath so immediately appeared, to be imperfect, notwithstanding we reform not?*

*Ans.* I. GOD hath his honour concerned in giving national mercies to an *impenitent* people, as well as in not perfecting a begun deliverance. He is sanctified in afflicting a sinful land; his government is exposed in sparing an unpersuadable people; nay, we oftner find him bear the reproach of not delivering his afflicted people, than of not punishing a rebellious people.

Ist. v. 16.  
Ezek.  
xxviii. 15.  
Pl. lxxiv.  
10, 18.

2. GOD can secure his honour in both these respects, with great *consistency*. He may ruin popery in other places, whilst he exposeth Protestants to it here. He may perfect this begun deliverance in *England* as to Papists, that they may not blaspheme,  
and

and yet distress Protestants by each other, and so still punish the land for its impenitency.

SERM.  
IV.

Object. 4. *God seems to single out some particular families for judgments, who have been most necessary to the sins of our land. He hath altered the succession, and so its probable he may not punish the nation for the iniquity of the throne.*

Ans<sup>r</sup>. 1. GOD may punish a land for the sins of a former king, though the government be transferred into another family. God punished *Israel* with three years famine, in *David's* reign, for *Saul* and his bloody house, because he slew the *Gibeonites*. 1 Sam. xxi. 1.

2. IF others do not take warning by such judgments as are levelled against particular persons, and repent, judgments will extend beyond those persons or families. Successors, by the same neglects and provocations, will expose a land to miseries, though their title be not derived by descent from former offenders. Yea, if a new government and people purge not the land of the crimes, which had their rise in a former court, the vengeance will follow to the extent of the infection, and the guilty at least be in danger of misery. *David* righted the injured *Gibeonites* before the famine ceased.

3. How little is profaneness or *irreligion* restrained? how faint and few are the

SERM. attempts for reforming the nation, since  
 IV. God hath blessed us with a prognostick of  
 ~~~~~ good in the change of our government?  
 Are men spirited for this, as *Josiah, Ezra, Nehemiah, &c.* To be infected by others seems easier than to reform them.


Object. 5. *Are we not under such accomplishment of prophecies, as may argue a Protestant kingdom begun to be delivered, shall have its deliverance perfected, notwithstanding its sinful distempers? Is not the Philadelphian state beginning, the witnesses rising, the Ottoman empire falling, and Antichrist's ruin just reviving and perfecting even to the utmost of the judgments determined against him?*

Answer. I AM well persuaded of all this, and have declared it many years, when the contrary was more probable as to the posture of affairs here, and in the rest of *Europe*; yet let me tell you,

I. THAT in the accomplishment of these prophecies, the *Spirit* will be abundantly poured out, in order to the eminent holiness of such places as share in these blessings. All the promises that refer to these latter days, are full of peace, purity of doctrine, and worship, and true godliness. With the song for antichrist's fall, the church is made ready, and clean linnen, which is the righteousness of the saints, is given to her.

Rev. xix.  
2, 7, 8.

2. ALMOST

2. ALMOST at the entrance of fulfilling SERM.  
 these prophecies, there will be the most IV.  
*shaking* and astonishing dispensation to-   
 wards the churches, as ever befel them:

Then is the great earthquake, such as was Rev. xvi.  
 not since men were upon the earth, so mighty 18.  
 an earthquake, and so great. This is that and iii. 10.  
 hour of temptation which shall come upon  
 all the world. These epistles I take to be  
 prophetick of the most eminent periods of  
 the church state, from Christ's time, to  
 the end of the world; and this trial is in  
 the beginning of the *Philadelphian* state.  
 Its true, indeed, this will benefit the church  
 at last, and be fatal to its enemies and false  
 members, but it will be terrible to all.

3. SUCH an awful dispensation seems  
 necessary to *purge* the church, and lay a  
 good foundation of its real and lasting glory.  
 This will be a means to convince false and  
 irreligious Protestants, *that said they were* Rev. iii. 9.  
*Jews, and were not.* It will pluck up  
 every plant out of the church, which God  
 hath not planted. Hereby all constitutions  
 repugnant to Christ's interests will be over-  
 thrown. Without such a paroxysm, how  
 should degenerated christianity recover it-  
 self? how shall the power of reforming the  
 church be rescued out of the hands of such  
 who hate its purity and spiritual welfare?

ITS next to impossible, by any calmer  
 means, to settle peace in the church, or  
 awaken Protestants out of that formal tem-

SERM. per, which is the epidemick crime of the  
 IV. *Sardinian* interval. You have it expressed  
 in those words, *Thou hast a name to live,*  
 and art dead. Many are really dead as  
 unregenerate, others dead in opposition to  
 spiritual liveliness.

Rev.iii.11

THUS I have represented to you, what  
 seems most considerable, as to the posture  
 of our land, with respect to national mer-  
 cies.

I SHALL offer my own thoughts upon  
 the whole.

I THINK the repentance of *England* for  
 national sins, is *short* of that which may  
 give us grounds to expect national mercies.

THE methods of God indeed seem de-  
 signed to make us a happy people, but it  
 must be in the proper way and season.  
 The great things God hath begun to work,  
 the liberty he hath settled, the disposition  
 in many young ones to return to God, and  
 comply with his designs; his manifest ex-  
 posing such who were likely to obstruct a  
 reformation, support my hopes that blef-  
 sings are in reserve for this sinful land;  
 but yet its probable that some extraordi-  
 nary storm will fall upon the nation, as a  
 means to bring us to amendment, and a  
 testimony from heaven against our crying  
 evils, and shameful impenitency. By ter-  
 rible things God will prepare us for blef-  
 sings, and introduce our happiness by that  
 which

which will try our utmost faith. I can hardly account our foundations sure, while men justify their sins, and persist in them. Our very reformation is impossible, whilst men of most influence have no heart to it, yea, hate and fear it. Whenever I see magistrates engage in reforming us, as their great duty, and with their whole might: When men of power esteem repentance to be the truest interest of the nation: When the ministry is awakened to cry aloud, and doth impartially represent to the land all its sins and dangers, not mistaking, or palliating, our offences: When the body of the land, at least a considerable part of it, do crave and approve of reformation, and concur with the means God shall prepare for it: Then, and not till then, shall I account our repentance hopeful, and consequently expect the blessings to be established which God seems earnest to bestow.

SERM.  
IV.



BUT *who shall live when God doth this?* Numb. xxiv. 22.  
What overturnings will effect it, when so many have failed to do us any good? Its something very amazing, which can alter minds so averie, or remove men unchangeably obstinate; yet the providences of God towards *England* are like to be terrible in proportion to all this. I do not herein limit the Holy One, but humbly propose my thoughts, as to the usual aptitude of means to their end; not wholly neglecting

SERM. the indications of present providences, as  
 IV. to this matter; much less would I overlook scripture prophecies.

### USE of LAMENTATION.

LET us *lament* the impenitency of the nation, and its forfeiture of mercies, and hazard of judgments hereby.

Jer. viii.  
6.

WHAT can be cause of mourning equal to our obstinateness? We are guilty of bloody crimes, and most regard it not: We seem reconciled to our abominations, as if they were innocent; and are as secure as if God had not threatned to punish a people for them.

Jer. xii.  
27.

THE land is full of sin, after all the means which were sent to cleanse us. The fire hath devoured, yet our dross remains: The plague hath, in its rage, swept away thousands, yet the provocations of *England* abate not. How oft hath the Lord cried, *Wilt thou not be clean; when shall it once be?* But we have held fast our several iniquities.

ITS but lately that popery and slavery were coming on us like a deluge, to the amazement of all that could with any zeal consider it; but the nation now seems sorry that it was at all convinced, and repents that there was the least motion in it towards amendment.




OH the ferment that hastily succeeded SERM.  
 our fears, lest sobriety or holiness should IV.  
 obtain! God hath followed his rebukes  
 with undeserved, yea, unexpected, mercies;  
 but this sun-shine hath made weeds to  
 grow, instead of rendering judgments ef-  
 fectual to make us holy.

WHAT methods have been untried, but none succeed? Which is the nation that ever withstood so many and various calls to repentance? *Nineveh* is *England's* reproach; she repented at the first warning: *Sodom* would have condemned us, had it been trusted with half our advantages. Can the earth shew an instance of perverseness equal to ours? as if the gospel had extinguished natural conscience, or a christian profession did make us more regardless than Pagans. Every thing seems to harden us; we grow worse by those things that recover others.

ALAS! we have few that bemoan our want of mourning: Are all our *Jeremiahs* asleep, that none drop a tear for *England's* security? Do all think it needless, or hopeless, to turn unto the Lord, that so few seem to set themselves in earnest about it. How very few symptoms have we, that we are not under a judicial hardness? Many are convinced they ought to repent, yea, many resolve it; but how abortive doth all prove? Our iniquities baffle our resolves, and satan triumphs over the vanity of our purposes.

SERM. purposes. What a hateful prospect doth

IV. our nation afford to God and angels? We  
 are a wonder to ourselves, when a drowsy mind allows us to entertain any serious considerations.

LORD, what will the end of these things be? Wilt thou always bear, and seem to observe our provocations as slightly as we do? Alas! this would make us more miserable than God's forest rebukes: Judgments more awful than any we have yet felt, are become even necessary to our happiness; but though they are needful, what heart can endure them? What terror must attend those dispensations, which will separate the precious from the vile, pluck up constitutions so rooted by interest, custom, malignity and ignorance; disable the irreligious from settling church or state, and embitter our reigning sins to careless, scornful, and resolute offenders? How dreadful is that storm that will drive all good men together, when they are canton'd into so many parties, embittered by mutual prejudices, fond of, and valuing themselves by fond opinions, and distances from others, especially whilst self-conceit and ignorance so prevail? How hot is that fire which will purge out the dross among churches, when its eaten even into our hearts? What's that which can awaken drowsy saints, make the selfish, publick-spirited, bring the careless to holy watchfulness, and revive that  
 simplicity,

simplicity, favouriness, and heavenly-mindedness, which is become such a mystery, and so unfashionable? Surely we may expect a complication of woes, and each filled with unusual degrees of God's avenging skill and power.

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WHAT may we not awfully expect? Disappointment by the likeliest men, dissolution of the most conceited churches, a shaking of the nation's pillars, a successive change of instruments, frequent blasts on begun deliverances, revivals by the most improbable instruments, many entire overturnings and changes; opposition among the best friends, very near approaches of the most dreaded mischiefs, mens minds struck with tremblings, all carnal refuge failing us, reason put to a nonplus, probable and improbable confounded beyond conjecture, counsel hid from the wise, force and power baffled, authority become weak, all order disturbed, men at a loss what to wish, or deprecate; uncertain what to hope or fear, whom to distrust, or confide in.

THESE, and many such things, seem obvious in the constitution of that *day of the Lord* that is like to be upon us. And how many more awful things are in his treasures, to fill up that dispensation, of which he hath so long warned the world, as strange and unusual? We cannot judge of this great *earthquake* (which will affect

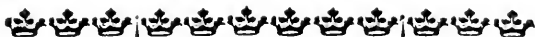
us

SERM. us as well as other nations) by what hath  
 IV. been ; for it is to exceed ail that is past.

Who knows what new fights, strange strokes upon the spirits of men, and unheard-of judgments, may be reserved for this season. Can we love our nation, and be unmoved? Can we hate ourselves so, as not to lament that these awful things should find us impenitent; yea, carry in them displeasing rebukes for that impenitency? Should not we all wish, that each of our eyes were fountains of tears, to bewail, at once, the obstinateness and the impending dangers of the land of our nativity: *Look away from me, I will weep bitterly; labour not to comfort me, because of the spoilings of the daughter of my people: For it is a day of trouble, and of treading down, and of perplexity by the Lord God of hosts in the valley of vision, breaking down of walls, and of crying to the mountains.*

Ifa. xxii.  
 4, 5.





*The Excellency of a Publick Spirit :*

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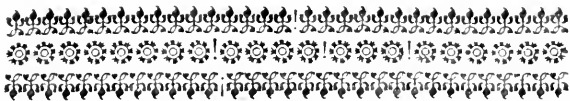
I N A  
**S E R M O N**

PREACHED AT THE  
**F U N E R A L**

Of that late Reverend DIVINE  
*Dr. SAMUEL ANNESLEY.*







To that Flock of CHRIST,  
 over which the Reverend  
 Dr. *Annesley* was lately  
 Pastor.

Much honoured, and esteemed,



*HIS* presents you with  
 a discourse (for sub-  
 stance) preached and  
 printed at your de-  
 sire. I faintly hope  
 its acceptance with many, when  
 justice is become a stranger, and  
 a mere honest man a glorious ti-  
 tle. Publick usefulness must scarce  
 escape with the brand of folly, with  
 those whose trade is turned into trick-  
 ing, or account publick employes no  
 more than a decent opportunity to  
 cheat

*cheat the people: But truth may profit them, unless a zeal for their disease will not allow their reading what is directed for their recovery. To you, and some others, this subject must appear too plainly instamped with God's image and authority, and a tendency to common-weal, to admit the censure of a narrow spirit (however disguised) to be its standard; especially, when this is what commended your late pastor to such unusual affection, as you expressed to him living, dying, yea, when dead. Yet this might be expected, seeing his very spirit is transfused into his people; by whose bounty (in good part) he performed such great things for a common good. Few ministers had such cause of glorying in so many publick-spirited bearers, as yours, Mr. Denham, Mr. Hartley, Mr. Cockerill, with many now at rest, might be named; the living*  
I scarce



*I scarce forbear. The sermon is much enlarged, and the method somewhat changed, that it may more contribute to common service-ability. What's more desireable, than to be useful in making others so? Hence the eminent services of Mr. Brand so revived the Doctor: And hereby we must extend and perpetuate publick benefits, yea, oft above our own ability, and beyond our life. Promote you that design in this barren age, by putting this tract into hands who need it, and by your own vigorous example and prayers, that it may be seen the spring of your charity and christian activeness, is more lasting than the exemplary life or labours of your deceased Guide. May you find, in spirituals and externals, there is that scattereth, and yet increaseth. The liberal soul shall be made fat; and he that watereth, shall be watered also himself. And may all*

Q

of

## Epistle Dedicatory.

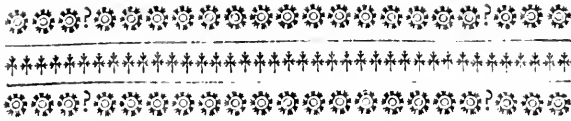
*of us be excited to more holy fervour, by the death of two such as Dr. Annesley, and fervent Mr. Oldfield in one day, and worthy Mr. James soon after.*

*I am,*

Your Servant,

In the Gospel,

*Daniel Williams.*



A C T S XIII. 36.

*For David, after he had served his own generation, by the will of God, fell on sleep.*



OUR request bringing me SERM.  
hither upon this sad occa- V.  
sion, (your venerable Pa- ~  
stor's death) I have made  
choice of this text as pro-  
per to inforce an impor-  
tant duty, which, though so little regarded  
by most in our age, yet the deceased was  
faithful in the practice of; yea, so eminent,  
that I hope he will be a moving example  
to others in this, wherein the signal excel-  
lency of his own life consisted.

THE words read are part of *St. Paul's*  
sermon to the *Jews* at *Antioch*, in which,  
after a fit introduction,

1. HE proves *Jesus* to be the *Christ*,  
from *ver. 23*---*38*. an article which (sup-  
posing the knowledge of *God*) hath the  
greatest influence in all our religious hopes  
and duties; and therefore a firm assent  
thereto ought to be more endeavoured than

SERM. I fear is usual with many, who boast of a  
 V. christian name. This point he argues from  
 these topicks; Jesus was of *David's* seed,  
 which the Christ was to be, *ver. 23, 24.*  
 Jesus was he whom *John* (in such esteem  
 with them) *did bear testimony* to, that he  
 was the Christ, *ver. 24, 25.* In the unjust  
 condemnation and barbarous killing of this  
 Jesus, the *Jews* had unwittingly *fulfilled,*  
 in every circumstance, *all the prophecies*  
 which foretold the unjust and cruel usages  
 the Christ should meet with, *ver. 27, 28,*  
*29.* This Jesus God had certainly *raised*  
*from the dead,* according as it was in several  
 places prophesied of the Christ, and  
 promised to him; which resurrection was  
 God's testimony concerning him, that he  
 was his eternal *Son* incarnate. But lest any  
 might object that that text, *Pf. xvi. 10.* was  
 fulfilled in *David,* the apostle obviates this,  
 by shewing that *David* lay in his grave so  
 long as to putrify, which the Christ was  
 not to do, neither did our Jesus: And by  
 this occasion the words of my text are in-  
 troduced, as *David's* praise, which the apo-  
 stle would not omit, tho' his argument lies  
 in that part of the verse which I have not  
 read, *viz. He saw corruption.* And the fol-  
 lowing *verses, 38, 39.* are both arguments  
 for Jesus being the Christ, in that *forgive-  
 ness of sin* (to which the *Mosaick* ceremo-  
 nies and sacrifices were altogether unavail-  
 able, but as types and shadows respecting  
 what

what Jesus did and suffered) *was preached* SERM.  
*through this Jesus.* V.

2. THERE is a serious offer of forgiveness to all of them, made in the name and authority of our Saviour Christ.

3. HE inforceth this with an awakening caution, *viz.* That they prevent not their own salvation, yea, aggravate not their misery by rejecting this Jesus, the Christ, the Lord; *q. d.* the Lord Jesus, fulfilling all that's foretold of his death and resurrection, his being the crucified and risen Saviour; yea, the offer of that blessed forgiveness he purchased, will not suffice to your salvation, unless you also trust and receive him. Nay, if you receive him not, and accept not salvation in the way he proposeth, your punishment will be sorer than if forgiveness had been never offered, yea, than if there were no Saviour, *ver.* 40, 41. For the profitable matter, not the mere connexion, having thus far diverted, I assume the text, which gives us account,

I. OF *David's* publick usefulness while living; *he served his own generation by the will of God.* Γερεζ and Γεραη, being alike governed by the verb *υπερετίσας*, causeth another reading to be as grammatical, *viz.* After he had served the will of God in his own generation; (that of *Erasmus* being too remote to deserve much regard, *viz.* That he fell asleep by the will of God) yet

SERM. the sense of both readings alike secures the  
 V. great duty of publick usefulness to be *David's* praise. If you prefer the latter, his service is determined to the publick weal in his own generation, tho' it may more expressly include also his care for his own soul, by his obedience to God's will, as prescribing the rule by which we must be saved; (which was the gospel law then as truly as it is now) of which a faithful improvement of our talents is no small part. But the order of the words most favours our own translation, which it is a fault needlessly to recede from. The former part, *viz. Serving his generation*, will be so enlarged on, as the scope of my discourse, that at present I need say no more than to note, that the word *serve*, *ὑπερτίσας*, is metaphorical, and denotes both the publick influence of *David's* labours, and his great subjection: It alludes to a man's rowing in a vessel under the conduct of a superior pilot. The royal prophet was but an under-rower; *i. e.* as much under divine authority, and as dependant, as if the meanest man. He served in the vessel, *viz. the church and state*, the safe passage whereof he consulted, and subserved, as his principal business.

*By the will of God.* God did not only serve his purposes by him, which the most regardiefs and obstinate cannot prevent, but this blessed man did designedly and faithfully

fully serve those purposes God intended in his age and place; he obeyed God's will as he had notice of it, and whatever labour, expence, or danger attended it. This will of God he still consulted, as to the matter and manner of his performances. If you read the history of *David's* life, and the book of *Psalms*, you'll find the laudable character in my text evidenced in almost an uninterrupted series of publick and profitable actions, from his very youth to his death. By him God saved *Israel* from greatest dangers; he secured their peace, enlarged their borders; he fought their battels, united the tribes, brought the ark to *Zion*, established the publick worship, encouraged and propagated real piety, exemplified the divine law in the course of his practice. Few are the instances wherein he came short of the common good as the scope; yea, his heart was so enlarged, as to resolve greater things than God thought fit to permit his execution of, as building the temple (for which, nevertheless, he prepared the materials). How solicitous was he that his indisposed age itself might not fail to be useful to God's honour in his own, yea, future generations? *O God, thou hast taught me from my youth, and hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works: Now, also, when I am old and grey-headed, O God, forsake me not until I have shewed thy strength to this generation,*

*Psal. lxxi.  
17, 18.*

SERM. *ration, and thy power to every one that is*  
 V. *to come.* A life so eminently useful, might

Pf. lxxiii.

5.  
 2 Sam.  
 xviii. 3.

well warrant his saying, *I bear up the pillars of the earth*; deserve the peoples acknowledgment, *Thou art worth ten thousands of us*; and answer the testimony the omniscient God gave beforehand concerning him, *I have found David a man after my own heart, who will fulfil all my will.*

A&S xiii.  
 22.

2. OF *David's death*: *He fell asleep*, after, not before, he had faithfully served a common good, nor later than he was capable to do so. Every man is immortal, be his danger never so great, till he hath accomplished the service God designed by him; and there is scarce a good man (that knows himself such) but would live till his course in service be finished, or would chuse to live longer than he can be serviceable: But when we are unfit to be instruments of good to others, and are wrought to a meetness for glory, its fit time others have our place whom providence hath suited to God's further designs, by somewhat peculiarly fitted to the rising generation.

THE word by which *David's death* is expessed, is ἐκοιμήθη, he laid him down to sleep; which notes death to be no terror to him, and that resurrection would certainly ensue.

THE former part of the text is what I shall principally insist on; therein *David* is commended, and they who imitate his  
 life,



life, partake of the like honour. Two SERM. observations the words easily afford. V.

1st *Obj.* IT is an excellent character of a deceased person, that by faithfulness and diligence in his place, he hath been eminently useful in his generation.

To render this intelligible and useful, I shall,

I. EXPLAIN this character.

II. GIVE an account of some things requisite to render a man eminently useful in his generation, who is capable to be so by his gifts, estate, office, &c.

III. EVIDENCE the excellence of this described character.

## S E C T. I.

FOR the explication of this character, I shall propose the following heads, which I think will render that duty plain, which I would this day call you to the performance of.

I. GOD so disposeth of men in their respective generations, that they are *capable* of being benefited by each other.

THE parts of a political body can no more say to each other, *I have no need of thee*, than those of the natural; which disposition of things is the foundation of all societies. Men need each other, and are receptive of mutual advantages; conversation, friendship, families, trades, common

SERM. mon safety, (and what not) are provided  
 V. for hereby, and without it would be de-  
 feated and cease. The all-wise God hath  
 placed men in that posture towards each  
 other, that no one is self-sufficient: Some  
 need health, others knowledge, others de-  
 fence, others food and raiment, others  
 counsel, others reproof and spiritual in-  
 struction, others comfort, and the like:  
 In each of these respects, those words of  
 our Saviour may be applied, *The poor you*  
*have always with you*; some that need  
 your help, many in a great degree, most  
 in one sort or other; so that none can  
 pretend want of objects, or occasions, as  
 a plea why they are not useful; they are  
 daily at hand, and adapted to the nature  
 and proportion of your talents. Infinite  
 wisdom hath contrived the several wants  
 of mankind to give opportunity for em-  
 ploying that common stock he hath dis-  
 tributed; and as wonderful is it, that those  
 very wants are the great means that the  
 several possessors of that common stock re-  
 ceive benefit by the shares thereof which  
 they respectively do enjoy: For its visible,  
 that whatever any one man enjoys, would  
 leave him distressed, unless by exchanging  
 that with another, he were relieved by  
 what that other man possesseth, and him-  
 self wants. Nay, that no man may reflect  
 on God as unkind to the world, because  
 the poor are so many, its worthy our ad-  
 miration,

John xii.  
 8.

miration, that poverty itself is very conducive to the publick good; not only as it prevents much sin, but as its the greatest spur to diligence, callings, inventions, and services, which the common benefit depends upon; yea, were none poor, every man would be next to miserable, by wanting all those conveniencies which they now obtain by another person's want, or desire of wealth. Who would be servants, private soldiers, seamen, handicrafts-men, &c. if none were poor? If some would study law, physick, &c. its from few of them that their neighbours could expect the advantage of their arts. Of them who would sail to other countries, and bring back any thing of their peculiar growth, how few, if any besides themselves, should be the better for them? I wish I might not say we should have fewer preachers, and not many so eager of places in the government. But I digress too far in justifying providence in such necessities among men, as render them capable of being benefited, and consequently in giving scope to others usefulness.

2. EVERY man may be *more* or *less* useful to others; and every good man is so.

EACH may influence for benefit, tho' in different kinds, and unequal spheres: He that hath not pounds, hath his mites; and, tho' he cannot profit multitudes, may benefit some few. If you cannot instruct the

SERM. the ignorant, you can relieve the poor,  
 V. and encourage the ministry. Are you so  
 indigent, that you have nothing to give,  
 yet you may pray for many, and be exam-  
 ples of meekness and patience. Some are  
 unfit to serve the publick, in an office,  
 who yet are capable to vote for a man  
 that's fit to serve. Divine bounty hath  
 provided a supply among men for those  
 necessities to which mankind is subject:  
 But a great part of the misery of the world  
 is owing to some mens inordinate craving  
 more than they need, and to others not  
 duly laying out what they are intrusted  
 with for others: Whereas, what God hath  
 distributed among men, is a common stock  
 to benefit the body; and of the several parts  
 and sorts thereof, I may say as of those  
 spiritual gifts, *They are all given to profit  
 others with ourselves:* *Ἐἰς ὁμιλοῦσαν.* God al-  
 lows not a man in the Lord's prayer so  
 much as to ask daily bread for himself  
 alone.

TOTALLY to neglect the benefit of  
 others, argues such unfaithfulness to God,  
 and injustice, yea, cruelty, to men, that I  
 repent not of saying, every good man is  
 useful to others. To be good, and not to  
 do good, is a contradiction; as it is to do  
 good, and not to do that which is benefi-  
 cial: *A good man sheweth favour, and lend-  
 eth: A Be thou warmed,* is equally an ar-  
 gument of a bad heart, and of a *dead  
 faith.*

Pfal. cxii.

5.

Jam. ii.

16.

*faith.* That religion which lieth in mere words, tho' noisy; and in mere hopes, tho' confident, will be found vain in itself, and useles to its owners; it will not be saving to ourselves, if it be not profitable to others. SERM.  
V.

3. GOD hath render'd some men capable of *greater* and more publick service than others.

ITS true of the publick store of talents, as of our common mother the earth, *The profit of it is for all*; nevertheless some parts are a richer soil than others. So some men are far more capable of common usefulness than their neighbours are; and this by God's disposal, whatever be the just means of acquirement; yea, his permissive ordering hath place, tho' the means be unjust. Eccles. v.  
9.

CAPACITIES for service are various, according to mens offices, gifts, estates, interest, opportunities, and whatever else would render a man publickly useful, were the possessor thereof but faithful and diligent. The degrees of each of them determine to what measure a man is *capable* to be a common blessing; whether he be *actually* so or not. Vain it were for any man to pretend himself less capable to do good than in truth he is, for God keeps a just account of the place every man stands in, and the talents each man possesseth; and he hath affixed a charge of service to the extent of every man's ability. A magistrate

SERM. or minister may do more good than a private person, a rich man than a poor, one of great parts than one of lesser; a magistrate in higher place, than another in a lower; a minister eminently qualified, than one less so. Its sad that no man fails to expect regard according to his utmost pre-eminence, and yet few reckon themselves hereby under any greater capacity for service: They have no respect to that, tho' it be what God did most intend in the inequality of his gifts.

4. MEN are obliged to usefulness in *proportion* to their respective capacities for it, and call unto it.

WERE it not so, God would not appear to intend any glory to himself, or good to men, by any thing wherein the greatest excels the vulgar. The instinct in all men (yea, brutes) which sets the good of the community above one's private, would be a vain impresson, tho' the basest secretly commend it in another. But this is written with so bright a beam, that none can doubt it without a great reproach to God the governor of this world. What must you conceive him to be, that appoints magistracy, and yet leaves the magistrate at liberty to suffer the innocent subject to be exposed and injured, the people unreformed and unpreserved? That he should institute the office of the ministry, and yet allow the minister to neglect teaching the ignorant,

rant, awakening the secure, reprov-  
 ing the scandalous, opposing the heretick, com-  
 forting the humble, and edifying the weak; SERM. V.  
 especially when its so evident, that perform-  
 ing those several acts, as the end of these  
 offices, are so necessary to the benefit of  
 mankind, (which sufficiently proves the  
 offices themselves to be so). And its no  
 less evident that God hath appointed these  
 offices to those very ends, and annexed his  
 injunctions that they be so applied and ex-  
 ecuted: Can then the officers be unobliged  
 to exert that authority which the office  
 conveys, for the good of that people over  
 whom they thereby have power, yea, and  
 claim an honour from? Rom. xiii.  
 Eph. iv.  
 11, 12.

MEN, fond of such trusts, will find they  
 were not conferred as feathers for their  
 caps, or gratifications to their lusts. Hea-  
 ven's stamp was not designed to be set on  
 poor clay, to indulge our pride, covetous-  
 ness, love of dominion, or undue liberty,  
 but for a common good.

As in offices, so in other vouchsafe-  
 ments, God hath a regard to service; and  
 therefore with a charge of suitable useful-  
 ness it is, that he dispenseth riches and  
 gifts, each degree whereof is committed to  
 the possessors as *stewards*, to lay them out  
 to the uses he assigned; nor is it long be-  
 fore you will all be summoned to *give an*  
*account of your stewardship.* Then you Luke xvi.  
 2.  
 shall be convinced you were not absolute  
 proprietors,

SERM. proprietors, to reserve, or use at pleasure,  
 V. one pound of your estates, nor any degree  
 of your interest or gifts, but that a demand  
 of service increased proportionably to what  
 you did possess.

YOU may remember I mentioned a *call* to service, as well as a capacity for it; wherein I had respect to what's more peculiar to the offices of magistrates and ministers; and hereby I would prevent a mistake, as if mere gifts, which fit us for an office, if we were called to it, did oblige us to do those things which are peculiar to that office whereto we are not called, which is an usurpation, whatever usefulness men pretend. That there be magistrates God hath enjoined; how they should be qualified, and their power executed, he doth also appoint; but which particular persons shall be magistrates, and the extent of their power, he hath left to rules adjusted by the community whereto they belong; in which respect the magistrate is called a human creature, *ὑποτάγῃσι ἀνθρώπων κτίσει.*

1 Pet. ii.  
 13.

IN like manner, Christ hath enacted that there be ministers of the gospel; their qualifications, authority, and work, he hath also described, which he permits no man to alter or limit. But he hath made other ministers judges, whether this or that proposed man be so qualified, and being found so, to ordain him; and among them so approved,



approved, he hath made members of the church the ordinary electors who shall be *their* more particular minister.

SERM.  
V.

1 Tim. iii.  
4, 14. &c.

NOTHING but confusion proceeds from mens running before they are sent; and ordinarily, as a proud conceit of their own gifts, puts them out of their own place, where alone God accepts their service, and they might have been truly useful to the utmost of their gifts; so a mischief to the publick, and prejudice to their own spiritual state, proves at long-run the effect of their usurpation.

Is it needful to add, That a fit opportunity for real service, is a call both to accept of an office tendered, and to every one invested in an office, to do those acts which belong thereto? As also, that a fit opportunity is a call to every man to employ, for publick benefit, his riches, gifts, and interest, according to the place he is in; yea, and very common danger and benefit binds us to more expence and activity than would be allowable in an ordinary juncture, as, *They sold all*, when saving any thing would expose the christian cause in its tender beginnings; and this the civil weal of a nation may render as necessary. Acts iv. 34.

5. THE tendency of each man's actings to usefulness, in his generation, lies in doing the work of his day, for the benefit of others, *suitably* to the place God hath set him in.

R

THE

LXXV. THE last heads stated the degree of  
 V. mens capacities for service, and obliga-  
 ~~~~~ tion to improve them according to their  
 call thereto; this head is designed to regu-  
 late all mens endeavours, so as that a com-  
 mon good may be subserved thereby. We  
 have an example, which, if imitated by  
 every man, would result in the general  
 benefit, *Neb. iii.* Each man built and re-  
 paired the walls of *Jerusalem*, to his pro-  
 portion, in his place and order, whereby  
 the whole work was done for the common  
 defence, and every man's particular labour  
 contributed to that publick good, and was  
 found therein. Conformably whereto, a  
 national good must be promoted, if the  
 magistrate would attend to the civil go-  
 vernment, ministers of the gospel to doc-  
 trine and the administration of worship,  
 and discipline without corporal punish-  
 ments. The rich, to distribute to publick  
 and private necessities; the prudent, to  
 give advice; men of power, to execute  
 well-advised things; and high and low,  
 employed according to their station, that  
 the common good suffer not by any of  
 their neglects or usurpations. Then in-  
 deed the sad chasms in the publick would  
 be made up, new heavens and a new earth  
 in a great degree commence. Ambition  
 on the one hand, and envy on the other,  
 would be much allay'd: For who would  
 exorbitantly seek that which he foreknows  
 he

he must use for others rather than enjoy himself? What place for envy, when I see myself and others better served by every thing wherein another is advanced above me? Alas, how easy is it to commend this, and own its conduciveness to universal benefit! But the world groaneth under the contrary; every man throws off the care, labour, and charge the publick is to be served by, and intends little besides honour and profit upon the publick spoil: *Every man seeks his own things.* And this to such a degree, that the blindest cannot doubt a providence, in that the common good is served even so far as it is, when it is so little designed by most of men in any station; and that this must be by God's overruling the general selfishness to that good, which in its own nature (were it not for a superior hand) tends to the ruin of the publick, as such; especially when we find the generality of men of greatest influence most culpable in that respect, and the residue so unconcerned. O that God would awaken a more publick spirit in this age, when love to God, to his church, yea, to our country, is so extinguished by carnal selfishness; then every thing whereby each man is fitted for eminent service, would be as signally laid out, as the publick welfare did require. And few mens capacities for general benefit are contracted to one particular, but multiplied according to the

SERM.  
V.




Phil.ii.21.

SERM. variety of their talents, relations, and opportunities. It follows therefore, that a man's place for service is commensurate to that variety, and not confined to one, however eminent it be. To conclude: A tendency to publick service is then greatest, when there is a regular application of every man's several office, relation, and talent, to the common good: Yet all this must be done with a special regard to that which is the peculiar work of our day; even that which is principally designed by providence to be contributed to by our various abilities. This must not be omitted on the account of any thing more ordinary or easy: for the peculiar work of every age and place, hath the highest consequences to that age and place depending on it; by that every man's fidelity is most tried, and a mistake in that renders men most publickly hurtful, as the promoting thereof makes a man the most beneficial in his generation. Of this hereafter.

6. HE is faithful in his age, who, uprightly designing to serve God, and his generation, *diligently* employs his talents to promote a common good, in the *greatest* instances of which he is capable.

THIS is a provision against the discouragements to which persons, of a low figure, with honest minds, are subject: However, let such know, they may be faithful, tho' not eminently useful. If what  
little

little they can do, be uprightly designed, SERM.  
 and with a willing heart performed, it V.  
 findeth more acceptance with God than   
 greater things done from carnal designs,  
 tho' perhaps over-ruled by God to further  
 use than they intended. If want of ability  
 be the only restraint, God will judge us  
 by our large minds, and not our narrow  
 power, 2 *Cor.* viii. 12. A gift of two mites,  
 when our *all*, is esteemed to be more than  
 greater gifts, when disproportionable to a  
 larger stock reserved. But then you must  
 be sure, *not to look at your own things, but* Phil. ii. 4.  
*also at the things of others*, and cordially  
 employ your little, being you have no  
 more; for he is unfaithful, who, by sloth,  
 or other carnal respects, omits to be useful  
 to his utmost, because he cannot equal  
 the more eminent; greater abilities would  
 but more discover the falseness of such a  
 man. Under the law one lamb was ad-  
 mitted instead of two, but it was *when the* Lev. xiv.  
*leper was poor, and could not get so much,* 21.  
 but this one lamb must be brought; so  
 something, yea, the best we can, must be  
 performed for God's glory, and a com-  
 mon benefit, or we vainly pretend to faith-  
 fulness, and as vainly, if idleness or waste  
 are the things we indulge to make us ca-  
 pable of doing but so very little. Unuse-  
 fulness, by incapacity of our own causing,  
 is as culpable as unusefulness when we are  
 capable; nor deserves he the name of a

SERM. good man, whose laziness prevents, or lusts devour, what would qualify him for eminent service, altho' he do give and act according to what remissèr labours have gotten, or his excesses have left still in his hand. Painfulness, and decent thrift, to enable us to do great things, are most laudable, notwithstanding the silly world's reflections; and he hath the greatest soul, who despiseth these from a mind intent on greatest service.

7. THE eminently useful man, in his generation, is he whose great capacity for service, is *vigorously*, constantly, and wisely employed to do that good which is *signally* profitable in the importance, difficulty, and extensiveness thereof, in his day.

WITH the light afforded in the former heads, this gives you the whole of the character I proposed to explain.

HERE I suppose a man greatly capable of service, by power, or parts, or estate, with any such other advantages for usefulness; there remains two things constitutive of this character, as principally respecting the *eminency* of this man's usefulness.

1. THE nature of the work to which he applieth his abilities.

2. THE manner how he employs his abilities, in prosecuting what is *signally* profitable.

I. THE nature of the work to which an eminently useful person employs his abilities, which this head gives you under various epithets. SERM.  
V.

ITS that which is a *good work*, and not sinful; its a *profitable work*, not hurtful, or merely innocent, which is the highest that even the civiler part of men do aim at, no, its what benefits men. Its *signally* profitable; not in mean, low, and remiss degrees. 1. The signal profitableness thereof is in the *importance* of the good subserved, not what is trivial or inconsiderable; such as the salvation of souls, preserving mens lives, securing publick liberties and peace, supporting the esteem of useful persons, vindicating the oppressed, defending the truth, and opposing destructive errors; putting a stop to the attempts of church-dividers, propagating a gospel ministry, breeding and qualifying men for eminent service in church or state, as young scholars; and voting for, and procuring the fittest persons for offices<sup>o</sup> in church and state, employing and relieving the poor, &c. And as its signal in the importance of the work,

So, 2. in the *difficulty* of it; when its not easy, but hard; not cheap, but expensive; not safe, but dangerous; when, as oft it falls out, a man, in the doing of it, is exposed to great expences, deep studies, hard labour, displeasure of friends, vilest

SERM. reproaches, loss of estate, persecution to  
 V. imprisonment, bodily torments, yea, death  
 ~~~~~ itself. When such things attend our service, and a good work cannot be prosecuted with an exemption from such calamities, it proclaims endeavours great, and the man eminently useful; and the rather, because the good end prosecuted at so dear a rate, will be undertaken by very few; and yet these difficulties manifest its of greatest concernment that it be pursued, for otherwise Satan, and the corrupt part of men, would not so oppose. The apostle's work was signally useful in this respect; see *1 Cor. ix. 11.* Such, with all the other martyrs, were eminently useful, in that they endured so much for witnessing to the truths, and instructing and reforming the world in their day; of whom its justly said, *The world was not worthy.*

Heb. xi.  
 38.

3. BUT with the difficulty, the *extensiveness* of this good is greatly to be regarded, as what denotes it important.

THIS extensiveness regards variety of benefits, and reacheth to the greater number of objects. Its not in a few things, nor to a few persons, that eminent usefulness extends; most useful is he who can do most good to most persons (especially influencing ones). He who benefiteth the greatest number of people in whatever may be truly profitable to them, as a means of their happiness in their soul, peace, health, plenty,





plenty, freedom, credit, comfort, and the like, principally in what makes them happy for ever, next in what contributes to make them safe, easy, and useful in time. And if besides being profitable to multitudes while we live, we can also serve succeeding ages, it heightens the character: *We will shew forth thy praise to all generations.*

Pf. lxxix.  
13.

2. THE *manner* how the eminently useful employ their capacities in prosecuting what is signally profitable.

ITS not lazily, or remissly, but with *vigour*, with all his might. Diligence must be great, and the heart intently engaged in it; as our τὸ ἐργάζεσθαι, not πρὸς ἐργασίαν, our business, not diversion; to *spend, and to be spent therein.* The rule is great, *Rom. xii. 7, 8, 11.* neither must it be seldom, or by fits and starts; not late attempted, or soon deserted, but *constantly*: Happy is he who begins early, lasts long, and never ceaseth to serve his generation till God calls him off the stage: *Blessed is he, whom his master, when he cometh, finds so doing.* Nor is it to be forgotten that it must be managed *wisely*, otherwise the useful tendency of great endeavours, well designed, may be lessened, if not defeated. Prudent application of fit and just means, is needful to accomplish so highly a valuable end; of which hereafter.

2 Cor. xii.  
15.

Mat. xxiv.  
46.

SERM. 8. THE mere want of proportionable

V. success *abates* not a man's eminent usefulness, as to his own excellency or benefit, though success be greatly desirable, and gratefully to be acknowledged: *I have laboured in vain, and spent my strength for nought; yet is my work with the Lord: and tho' Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord.* This may be applied by every useful minister.

Ifa. xlix.  
45.

2 Cor. ii.  
15, 16.

Heb. vi. 3.

EVENTS are not in our hands, and therefore its not by them we shall be judged or rewarded; the faithful labourer is as well-pleasing to God, in the pains he took with them that *perish*, as them who *are saved*. If you have done great things to recover men, you'll be no loser, tho' sinners be hardened, or errors prevail. What tho' men abuse the money you bestow, and prove hurtful by the encouragement you have given; what tho' contrary events have followed your just endeavours; confusion for order, disquiet for peace, &c. this will lie at the door of such who were the culpable causes of such preposterous effects, and you'll no more be blamed than the heavens that dropped dew on *that earth which brought forth briars and thorns.*

## S E C T. II.

2. I SHALL now give an account of some things *requisite* to render a man eminently



nently useful in his generation, who is capable by his office, gifts, or estate, to be so; wherein I shall have especial regard to ministers, tho' not only them.

I SHALL distribute them under three heads.

(I.) SUCH things as are needful to *incline* them to become intently willing to employ themselves in serving a common good. Ability, without a readiness of mind to, and solicitousness for the honour of God and good of men, will never make us serviceable. To ingage your hearts herein, it is necessary,

I. THAT you have a *believing view of invisible things*; of God, as he who hath a full authority over you, to command you to this work; as he who hath an absolute propriety in you and yours, and therefore may dispose of you, and all you have, to what service he pleases; to refuse which is sacrilege in you, who have dedicated yourselves to him. Believe a judgment-day, when you must account for all; keep sight of Christ, who bought souls with his blood, and whom it cost so much to redeem you for his service; be at a certainty about the worth of souls, your own and others; and of the dreadful misery of such who die unconverted, or unfruitful; realize sinners woful state, when they cry, *Come and help us*; and thy own, if thou refuseth. <sup>Acts xvi.</sup> 9.  
Beg faith of Christ, who is the author and  
the

SERM. the finisher of it. This is that by which

V. unseen things are evident; without which evidence, we lose what must affect and move us in our service to souls: *Knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade men.* Every man's unbelief is equal to his un-serviceableness; and as our faith is, will our usefulness be.

Heb. xi.  
1.  
2 Cor. v.  
11.

2. *Love to God and man* is needful to excite us to usefulness. This constrains us to express our gratitude to God, who hath done so much for us when miserable; and to be beneficial to men, whose misery we believe and pity. Strong love will answer all those excuses which have their rise in enmity to God and men; the remains whereof govern the best man as far as he is unprofitable. By this divine passion poor endeavours will be disdained, and the most expensive be no cause of regret; yea, a pleasure riseth with the height of the performance; and God's inclining us to do so much, becomes the very matter of our praises to him; as 1 *Chron.* xxix. 14, 15. Keep then this holy fire blazing; it will always point you work, and find you strength to do it: Nay, it will put you to pain whilst unemployed, and make you solicitous that it be to purpose. This, this was it, put *Paul in travel, till Christ was*

Gal. iv. 19. *formed in those.*

3. *A publick spirit* is also needful to the same end. This is the immediate effect of love;

love; its the heart dilated by it. This is the next spring that sets all the wheels in motion, which otherwise stand still within the precincts of narrow self. How *David* became such a publick blessing, he tells you: *If I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy, let my right-hand forget her cunning.* The vastest stock is productive of little in that man's hand who is all for himself; whether self in his own person, or self in his family; yea, or self in his own party and faction.

SERM.  
V.Pf.cxxxvii  
6.

BUT a *publick spirit* will be contriving and aiming at a common benefit above his own; in this will such a one delight, and this he must pursue, because it moves as a common soul related to, and concerned in all men, well knowing God hath an interest in each, and one's self to be but a small part of the whole, and therefore to be less regarded than that wherein God's glory is infinitely more displayed, and from which a so far greater tribute of honour and service will redound. Therefore be earnest with God to enlarge thy heart, and bring it more under the power of that relation wherein thou standest to the catholic church, yea, to all men, otherwise thou wilt be apt, with *Cain*, to say of thy very brother, *Am I his keeper?* Own thyself, with *St. Paul*, *a debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Jews, to the wise, and to the unwise.* A narrow spirit is a common

Gen. iv. 9.

Rom. i.

14.

mon

SERM. mon plague; abhor and deprecate it as unchristian and inhuman; while it prevails:

~~~~~  
 V. I can hardly hope thou canst get to heaven, but all may freely say, its no matter how soon it be that thou wert there. Look  
 2 Cor. viii. at Christ, who *made himself poor that he*  
 9. *might make many rich*; and blush that thou wearest his name, whilst thy money rusts, and so many poor do starve. But happy is that publick spirit that can scarce relish his own felicity, when he sees so many miserable, but is *bound with them that are in*  
 Heb. xiii. *bonds*. By this spirit a man is bent for God, and a publick good; and without it all beyond self, (that cursed self) is as nothing to him: He is a mere *Galio*, caring for neither God nor souls, church nor state. You see, that to encline you to eminent usefulness, you must get, improve, and exercise faith and love with a publick spirit; these will employ your abilities for service.

(2.) If you would be eminently useful, you must get such things as will fix and relieve you against those *difficulties* which attend eminent usefulness. Good inclinations and resolves will be tried in a course of publick service; and as the trials will be different, our preservatives and supports should be as various. Indeed, faith, love, and a publick spirit, which excite a man to great attempts for a publick good, do also yield relief against discouragement in the prosecution

profecution of them. Yea, faith derives supporting strength from Christ, as he is our head of influence as well as conduct. But, besides these,

I. *Be truly humble.* The proud heart will scorn to stoop to many things which publick service requires, nor endure the debasements which it will expose to, and so the work will be half done at first, and forsaken at last, as too grating on a proud spirit, which formeth projects more agreeable to an aspiring mind. But, if you are cloathed with humility, you'll be fitted to stoop chearfully to whatever your work calls you to condescend, and with easiness of mind to endure the contempt which you'll meet with from such you design to be useful to. Can you, without great humility, use such plain words as the ignorant understand, inculcate the same thing often, admit a familiar freedom to the poor and mean, go into nasty cottages, hear much weakness and nonsense, without discouraging the silly from saying any more? Can you, and not be humble, *become all things to all men, that you may win some; and be a servant to all, that you may gain the more?* Yea, you may meet with affronts and scorns, with slanders and reproach, from the very poor whom you endeavour to benefit in soul and body too; pride will soon disdain all such work, but so must not you, unless you cease to be a publick blessing.

SERM.  
V.



1 Cor. ix.  
19, 21.

SERM. sing. Be humble, *i. e.* look at your selves,  
 V. vile dust and ashes, as bad by nature as  
 the most wicked you would reform, and  
 worthy to be as poor as the most indigent you relieve, and not too good to be employed by your redeemer in the meanest services, but greatly honoured to be used in such as this. When pride stirs, and this seems hard work, as too debasing, ask, may not *that mind* better fit me *which was in Christ Jesus my Lord, who made*  
 Phil. ii. 5. *himself of no reputation?*

2. *Be weaned from the world, mortified to all in it, and well content with what God hath reserved in heaven for you.* What you make your portion, that will prescribe your work. If your happiness is confined to flesh and time, you'll soon quit what seldom contributes to it, and is daily exposing it to hazard, yea, oft to ruin. Even publick-spirited men, for their country, venture all in common danger, yet, after success, they get the least. 'Tis oft more than so with men who are engaged for the testimony of Christ, and good of souls; worldly affections can never drive this trade; covetousness, effeminateness, fondness of relations, excessive love of life, ease and pleasure, will obstruct you when the expences, losses, pains and dangers of eminent undertakings, present themselves.



THEREFORE be crucified to the world, SERM. if ever you would be useful in it ; and V. let it be a dead carcase in your account, if you would not be hindred by it in your best designs. Cherish heavenly affections, and with pleasure often view your chosen portion, otherwise irregular appetites will press too hard, to let you be much or long engaged in a work that's so far from gratifying it. This way *Moses* became so profitable to his people, *Heb.* xi. 25, 26, and *Paul* to *Jews* and *Gentiles*, *2 Cor.* v. 12, 15, 18.

3. Get true christian fortitude ; and this will unite, fix and steel the heart against all onsets which try your patience, courage, and resolutions, *Rev.* ii. 3. A pusillanimous man will refuse what's difficult, and forsake what's dangerous ; or, so demean himself under it, as to frustrate a good effect. The truest courage will be put to a stand. For, 1. *Satan* singlenth out the eminently useful, to level all his darts against ; his own votaries he'll employ to persecute them ; whatever in civil men is to be made use of, shall conspire to make your work difficult, and you unhappy and uneasy ; nothing shall be wanting to terrify or bribe you, to tire or distress you, *Rev.* ii. 10.

2. ENVY also still accompanieth signal usefulness, which oft renders your friends more grievous to you than your professed enemies.

SERM. enemies. In every age it's found, *the spirit within us lusteth to envy.* I wish all good men, yea, we ministers, could also find with the apostle; *but God giveth more grace.* Yet as unreasonable and devilish as envy is, you must expect it, and be prepared to endure the effects thereof, but still with a mind no more averse from your work, or indifferent to it; only to avoid all ostentation, to conceal what of your work you can; but to omit none, unless you can get it done by another hand.

~~~~~  
Jam. iv. 5.

(3.) IF you are called to serve your generation, by opposing the errors, or church-dividing practices, of any considerable sects, pretending to zeal for truth, (tho' never so falsely) and to a purer form of administration, (tho' in all that highly superstitious) you'll find those violent and base *methods* to asperse and sink you, which very *Pagans* would abhor to use. Yet this must not abate your testimony, nor incline you in the least to betray the truth, or to seem to approve of their unchristian attempts against the common good; neither suffer your spirit to be infected and debased, to a resemblance of theirs, in malice, rancour, wrath, rage, or revengefulness, which is so contrary to the spirit of Christ, as to make you justly suspect you were no appointed advocate for his truth and interest. And alike careful must you be,

be, that the highest provocations prevail not with you, to vindicate yourself by ways that (all things duly considered) appear a greater damage to the publick good, than the single interest of your person can countervail.

SERM.  
V.  
~~~~~


I HAVE given you some hints of the exercise which you ought to provide against, lest a surprize cause you to quit, or disserve the blessed work you are called to.

(4.) YET, 'tis true, it may prove more creditable, safe and easy, if it be only beneficial to men's *bodies* or *estates*; for against that sort, Satan and the world make less resistance, unless it affect the publick in somewhat wherein factions are concerned. Yea, it may be less hazardous and grievous, if it profit men's souls, if it be only in points which Christ hath gained a reputation to, and that you have many to assist you in the defence of, especially if your motion be but equal with those many, because such things are familiarised; or have obtained a greater interest in the consciences of men, and the remaining stream of opposition is divided.

(5.) BUT the most eminent usefulness is much determined to those points which are *difficult*, as still deciding, and wherein the interest of Christ, in your day and place, is the subject of a present contest between Christ with his instruments on

SERM. the one side, and Satan with his on the  
 V. other. In such cases there will be great  
 ~~~~~ opposition, as far as Satan can influence  
 any, either by their ignorance, malignity,  
 worldly considerations, pride or custom,  
 &c. And generally the contenders on  
 Christ's part are at first but few, espe-  
 cially the more eminent ones; and there-  
 fore it necessarily follows that such must  
 be exposed. It were easy to instance all  
 this in the case of introducing the gospel  
 where it was not before; in the reforma-  
 tion of worship or discipline, where they  
 have been corrupted; in opposing and de-  
 tecting false doctrines which many have  
 imbibed, and long entertained; in re-  
 claiming a degenerate people, from evil  
 practices much indulged; in resisting en-  
 croaching errors and disorders, abetted by  
 a considerable number of great zealots,  
 especially if they have some plausible pre-  
 tensions, suited to the disposition of sober  
 ignorant people; and that some more than  
 common spirit and fervour do attend the  
 seducers, which is very usual. But this is  
 less needful, having cautioned you as  
 to the snares, and fore-warned you of the  
 danger.

(6.) THEREFORE may not I with rea-  
 son ask you? Can a *feeble* mind, or un-  
 fortified heart, *persist* in great endeavours,  
 and in the face of such difficulties steady-  
 ly pursue his glorious end? No; he must  
 succumb,

fuccumb, and will quit the plainest and SERM.  
 most important truth or duty. The in- V.  
 terest of Christ will say of these as in   
*Paul's case ; no man stood with me, all* 2 Tim. iv.  
*(these) men forsook me.* 16. Therefore watch  
 against all declinings in holy christian  
 courage (merely natural will not serve,  
 tho' its a good preparative) pray with hope  
 for renewed vigour, that you may find, as  
*Psalms lxix. 32. your heart shall live that*  
*seek God ; and that he is the strength of*  
*your heart, when all else fails you, Psalm*  
*lxxiii. 26.* When the onset is vigorous,  
 and begins to impress, be then *strong in* Matthew  
*the Lord, and in the power of his might.* xxviii. 20.  
 To that end, remember whose cause you  
 plead, and who employs you : Read oft  
 your commission, where you will find a  
 promise fit to revive your very fainting  
 spirit : *Lo, I am with you to the end of* Ephes. vi.  
*the world.* 10. One less faithful and compas-  
 sionate than our saviour is (if possessed of  
 power) would not suffer any servant he  
 employed to sink, in a business wherein  
 he himself hath the greatest concernment.  
 If your hearts be upright, and you have  
 God's work in hand, the more eminent-  
 ly you are employed, the greater supports  
 you'll find ; and in the most difficult en-  
 terprize he is careful to give the greatest  
 assurance, *Jer. i. 7. viii. 18. Ezek. v. 8, 9.*  
 One promise he can so spirit and fill with  
 power, that it shall set thy soul above all

SERM. fears ; and cause strength to advance to  
 V. thy own feeling in very extremity, above  
 what it appeared in the easiest of thy  
 ways : Trust then in him with thy whole  
 heart. And because what repels our fears  
 tends to encourage us, 'tis not improper  
 oft seriously to think what far greater mis-  
 chiefs we escape, by not drawing back, or  
 doing the work of the Lord deceitfully,  
 than what can attend a faithful discharge  
 of our work, which hath so great a re-  
 ward when finished, *Heb. x. 58. Rev.*  
*iii. 5.*

HEREWITH I have finished an account  
 of what's necessary to support us under  
 the difficulties attending publick useful-  
 ness, *viz.* humility, mortifiedness to the  
 world, and christian fortitude.

3. SEVERAL things are needful as tend-  
 ing to secure, or at least facilitate the *suc-*  
*cess* of your work persisted in.

HEREIN we should be solicitous that,  
 as much as in us lies, the *end* we propose  
 may not be defeated, but that those re-  
 ceive that profit, which we sincerely con-  
 duce to, by our endeavours ; whereby we  
 may eventually prove blessings to them.  
 To this end,

(I.) You must duly *address* your selves  
 to God, to engage his help. Be much in  
 prayer to, and dependance on God, thro'  
 Christ our mediator. Look to him for  
 direction, that you may not mistake your  
 work,

work, nor the best way to perform it : SERM.  
 Seek to him for abundant *anointings*, that V.  
 you may not be unqualified in proportion  
 to your undertaking. His constant assist-  
 ance and blessing must be fervently im-  
 plored, *Neb. i. 11.* without which your  
 most probable attempts will be vain, yea  
 turn to your reproach and shame. And  
 that you may be in the likelier posture  
 for a gracious return, keep all clear be-  
 tween God and your own consciences ;  
 regard no iniquity in your heart, *Psal. lxvi.*  
 18. Rely on Christ's merits and interces-  
 sion, and be always ready to ascribe to  
 God the entire glory of all your service-  
 ableness and success ; for he is a jealous  
 God, and generally blasteth that wherein  
 he is not acknowledged : We must make  
*God all in all*, if we would signify any  
 thing.


(2.) BE careful of your own *behaviour*  
 before those to whom you endeavour to  
 be profitable ; that it conduce to, and do  
 not hinder your usefulness. Prevent all  
 prejudices, gain their affection and esteem ;  
 possess them with a sense of your kind-  
 ness to them, good designs towards them,  
 and your own belief of, and earnestness  
 of soul for the matters you call them to  
 entertain, and submit to ; exercise great  
 patience, meekness and tenderness ; and  
 see that your whole behaviour be circum-  
 spect, and your life exemplary, *1 Pet. v. 3.*

SERM. that they may find no just exception against  
 V. your doctrine or endeavours. If they take  
 ~~~~~ occasion unjustly, or that by wicked persons you are falsely slandered, you may better hope God will prevent the unprofitableness of your labours, or at least accept them. Neither is it unfit to be cautious how you dispute with them concerning secular interests; avoid also fondness of external respect, and yet be as jealous that you forfeit not an internal reverence, nor prostitute your authority, as you are Christ's ambassadors, *Rom. xi. 13, 14.*

(3.) LABOUR to attain and use true *wisdom* in the ordering of your endeavours, that they may be apt to real publick usefulness.

I. I CALL it *true wisdom*, not only to oppose it to folly and indiscretion, but also to all *knaveish* craftiness. God's cause needs no base tricks; upright men abhor the use of them. Christ seldom prospereth such to serve his interest; but if he over-rule them to any common good, as sometimes he doth other pieces of wickedness, yet he will never justify or accept such methods, but condemn those ways, and them who use them. But, indeed, as base tricks consist not with sincere designs of a publick good, so they are never used with that intention. No, no, let mens pretences be never so sacred, its to serve a carnal selfish turn, to propagate or uphold some private  
 faction,



faction, in opposition to the true extensive SERM.  
interests of Christ in the world. The emi- V.  
nently useful could not die in peace, if   
they must not say, with the apostle, *Our* 2 Cor. i.  
*rejoicing is this, the testimony of our con-* 12.  
*science, that in simplicity and godly sincerity,*  
*not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of*  
*God, we have had our conversation in the*  
*world.* They were wiser than to think  
that will be accounted a service to Christ  
in life, for which, without repentance, he  
will cast them into hell at their death.  
This text may assure us, that *Paul's guile,* 2 Cor. xii.  
*with which he caught these very people,* 16.  
was not any thing contrary to *godly since-*  
*riety,* which in this epistle, in the forecited  
place, he had with more than usual care  
instanced towards them; it was therefore  
no other than honest wisdom, or godly  
prudence, even that which I have said is  
so needful to advantage the success of your  
well-designed labour; it was an instance of  
his self-denial, not his self-seeking. He  
used his sparing their purses as a help to  
save their souls, upon finding their temper  
such, that the gospel was like to be less  
profitable to them, if he subsisted by it.  
This was far enough from any misrepres-  
enting, and undermining, cheating, divi-  
ding, imposing, ensnaring, and intangling  
arts or methods; ways so abominable in  
the most ordinary affairs between man and  
man, that you should tremble at a thought  
of

SERM. of using them in matters enstamped with  
 V. the name of God; yea, tho' it were but  
 ~~~~~ in defending a publick good, and your-  
 self from the dangerous attempts of such  
 as practise them.

2. YET true wisdom and prudence are very needful to *direct* your just endeavours in the greatest aptness to succeed with all those whom you design to benefit. A true judgment of persons and seasons, with a direct regard to the end, and an exquisite understanding of the nature of the various lawful means, will qualify you to chuse the fittest means to that end with those persons. God's word, prayer, consideration, and experience, must be your helps to arrive to wisdom, and be sure to exercise and apply to all your endeavours the utmost wisdom God vouchsafes you, a neglect whereof will aggravate your disappointment, as well as conduce thereto.

BUT my chief design, under this head, is to convince you of the necessity of wisdom in the whole course of publick usefulness, that so you may become more earnest with God for this, and careful to excite your souls to the constant exercise of it. Without wisdom you cannot rightly judge of the work of your generation; a mistake wherein is dangerous to your great end; its so, tho' it should be no other mistake than to overlook one of the more principal parts of it, and take up with  
 what

what is next to it, as plainer, easier, or safer; yea, if it lies in several things, and you neglect but the least. How needful is wisdom to discern which is our present duty, and what the greatest good, when several appear in competition? Yea, often there's need of exquisite skill in an affair of publick consequence, to determine what will do more good than hurt. He hath not well observed, that thinks it always easy to judge what's the most proper duty in each company, and wherein they need most to be benefited, especially the fittest seasons, opportunities, and methods, to apply suitable means to effect that good which they severally stand in greatest need of, and are most capable of receiving. Its hard to accommodate yourselves to the various tempers and circumstances of your very acquaintance, and know whom, when, and how to reprove, encourage, examine, exhort, or relieve, so as to be most beneficial to each within the limits of your power, and according to your different obligations, tho' to the extent of it.

GREAT discretion is necessary to judge of obstacles, and to demean yourselves under them, as may most conduce to your publick usefulness; to know when, and how, to strive to remove or oppose them, when its best to connive and be silent: How to avoid the imputation of rashness and foolish zeal in the former, and of lukewarm-

SERM. lukewarmness and cowardize in the latter;  
 V. for publick usefulness will be affected by  
 both.

IN like manner there is use of wisdom towards such as drive on the same good design with you, as well as towards them who oppose; if you are younger, that the elder may not, by envy or suspicion, be tempted to divert you from your work, or give you disquiet in it. To avoid which, *serve with them in humility, as sons with a father.* If you be elder, that the younger's rashness, unfixedness, and less experience, give not Satan an advantage; to prevent which, do not discourage or despise, but assist and countenance them. But be they inferiors, equals or superiors, who do contribute to a common good; he that will be eminently useful, and give up himself to it, had need of greatest wisdom to govern himself towards each; for a little acquaintance with the world, will discover in most men so much of either humour, pride, envy, selfishness, covetousness, suspicion, cowardliness, unconcernedness for the publick, unfixedness, sloth, ignorance, credulousness, or aptness to be imposed on by designing men, as will force the observing to fix this conclusion, and govern themselves by it.

THEY that will be most useful in their generation, must spend, do, adventure, and suffer most, and yet must resolve to allow,  
 intreat,

intreat, connive, yield, thank, forbear, forgive, deny themselves, and endure most, whatever persons they have to deal with; and thus make the best use of all for a common good. SERM.  
V.

WHO is sufficient for these things? But with thee, O Lord (who employest whom thou wilt) nothing is impossible. A stammering *Moses*, a suspicious *Gideon*, a childish *Jeremiah*, did succeed in that whereto thou didst appoint them. Surely by all this you are induced to seek earnestly for wisdom: *Ask it daily of God thro' Christ, who giveth liberally* (for direction to do as well as suffer) *and upbraideth not.* James i. 5.  
 pendingly hope, *He will guide me by his counsel, and afterwards bring me to glory.* Pf. lxxiii. 24.

I HAVE finished the second general head, *viz.* An account of what's needful to bring a man to eminent usefulness, who is capable of it; under which you have heard, that his soul must be excited to undertake it by faith, love, and a publick spirit. 2. Be relieved against the difficulties attending it, which is by humility, mortifiedness to the world, and christian fortitude. 3. He must facilitate his success by prayer to God, a due behaviour before men, and true wisdom in the management of all his endeavours.

III. I SHALL evidence the excellency of this character. To be an eminently useful man, is no empty title without real worth. God approves of it, angels and good men highly esteem it; yea, there's that in every man, which now secretly, and in time will publickly, allow this man to be the best, the wisest, and the greatest.

EMINENT usefulness greatly differeth from its *counterfeits*. This is no pragmatical business in other mens matters, but a faithful discharge of our obligations to God and our fellow creatures.

NEITHER is it a pharisaical *profeliting* to a sect, which doth narrow and weaken Christ's interest (proving oft as fatal to the church, yea, to mens selves, as their walking at large in the world would be.) No, its an intentness to promote mere christianity, and unaffected godliness, which reforms the world, edifies the church, and saves the souls of sinners in proportion to its success. Its what advanceth men above the rank of ordinary christians, who are babes to these grown men, shrubs to these cedars, very cyphers (if not blemishes and burdens) compared with these men of name, these common blessings, these witnessess to a divine life, and ornaments of religion, who bear up the pillars of the church,

church, yea, of the earth; to each of whom we weaklings may say, as they to *David*, *Thou art worth ten thousand of us.* This will appear, if you consider,

SERM.  
V.  
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(1.) ITs an extraordinary *honour* to be singled out by God eminently to serve our generation. What can be more glorious than to be singled out, as *David*, from among his brethren, to effect God's benign purposes to multitudes, when most men are useles, yea, hurtful; their names are registered among the *worthies* of *Israel*, and *famous in Betlehem*, Ruth iv. 11. *This is that Moses*, Acts vii. 37. Being publick blessings, they, with *Jabez*, are more *honourable than their brethren*. No office reflects honour but with respect to that usefulness to which it obligeth, and for which it capacitates.

1 Chron.  
iv. 9.

(2.) IT argues a most *godlike* and excellent spirit: *He is good, and doth good.* He is *καλὸν ἀγαθόν*, which was visibly instanced in our Lord Jesus: *He went about doing good* to souls and bodies. In whom is this so exemplified as in the signally useful, whose activity, fixedness, labours, designs, and beneficence, correspond to Christ's, allowing for our contracted capacities? In such a man many graces and virtues are associated; nay, which can be wanting, yea, or weak in the constitution of this person? He also must be greatly cleansed from those dregs, which debase, divert,  
and

Pf. cxix.  
68.

Acts x.  
38.

SERM. and deaden the less useful. He seems to  
 V. breathe in another air, to be of another  
 ~~~~~ make, and governed by contrary inclina-  
 tions and rules than most of mankind are  
 (I had like to have said christians;) hence  
 he is too often branded as less prudent,  
 because he walks by rules so much above  
 what poor and narrow souls embrace, and  
 postponeth those things beyond which a  
 vulgar spirit cannot derive a motive. Let  
 us remark a few scripture instances, lest all  
 appears a mere speculation. Behold queen  
*Esther* taking her life in her hand to save  
 her people; did not she then love her peo-  
 ple above her life? *Esth.* iv. 16. *Moses*  
 neglected God's offer to advance his fa-  
 mily, and intercedeth for the nation's safe-  
 ty, as if he had hated his own house,  
*Numb.* xiv. 12, 17. What dominion over  
 covetousness, selfishness, and cowardice,  
 did *Nehemiah* manifest, whilst by acting  
 their contraries he repaired *Jerusalem*, esta-  
 blished God's worship among the captives  
 restored by his means. Without ostenta-  
 tion he might say, *Should such a one as I*  
*Neh. vi.* *die?* *Mordecai's* mind was well ballasted,  
 11. that under such advancement retained such  
*Esth. x. 3.* goodness and meekness, as still to *seek the*  
*weal of his people, and speak peace to all his*  
*seed.* How could *Caleb* and *Joshua* refuse  
 to frame their account to the humour  
 of the multitudes, but that they had a  
 more excellent spirit than the other spies?

*Numb.*



*Numb.* xiv. 24. Oh the magnanimity, zeal for God, love to souls, contempt of the world, and unwearied vigour and largeness of heart, which governed *Paul* to his extensive usefulness! which might be instanced in the other apostles and martyrs; yea, those illustriously shine in every eminently useful christian. Its the excellency of their spirit which forms such vast designs, and enables to the unwearied pursuits thereof. Divine influence inspires them, and keeps their minds above what's mean and selfish, beyond what's narrow and fordid; yea, so widens and enflames them, that their spheres prescribe the only limit to their attempts: How far would they relieve, reform, and improve the church, the nation, yea, the world, were it but in their power? Judge the spirit by the use others make of the same abilities, how useless, how hurtful?

(3.) THE eminently useful have more manifest grounds for a comfortable death than others can expect. Death makes a great discovery of the true value of things; whatever renders this safe and easy, we ought highly to esteem, as men assured its our passage into eternity, and puts a period to our preparations for it: *In the grave* Eccles. ix. *there's no work nor device to change our* <sup>10.</sup> state, or improve our meetness for an unseen world: Therefore whatever is the best evidence of our title to eternal life, and

SERM. the greatest meetness for it, that must afford ground of highest comfort, when self-love, and the nearness of eternity, gives death an awakening power.

1. I SHALL prefix a caution.

2. PROVE what I assert.

1. FOR caution. The mistakes of weakly-designing men, necessitate me to acquaint you, its Christ only who *procured* a safe and comfortable death, by meriting our pardon, and a right to eternal glory, with a happy resurrection. Its by *faith* only, that a regenerate penitent looks to, relies on, and receives Christ as our atoning Saviour for pardon and life, according to his promises in the gospel; which promises, with the included benefits, are purchased only by Christ's obedience, and applied as an effect thereof, whenever they are applied. The qualifications which the gospel appoints in him whom the promises invest in its benefits, are no causes of those benefits, nor any part of the righteousness which procured them: But Christ using his gospel as an instrument in the governing and saving of sinners, and pleading with them his purchased benefits for motives to their obedience to the gospel, as a rule of judgment. Its not sufficient to our comfortable death, that we believe that Christ obeyed and died to procure pardon, and a right to salvation for penitent believers; but it must appear to us that we are partakers



partakers of that pardon and right to life, which must be by the evidence of our regeneration, repentance, and faith, not one without the other; nor either (when we come to die) without their genuine necessary effects, and each persevered in. They are vain hopes if we totally want whatever the gospel-promises make indispensably needful to our obtaining eternal glory; and the contrary whereto the gospel threatneth with an exclusion from heaven, *John* iii. 3, 36. *Luke* xiii. 3. *Heb.* xii. 14. x. 38. He is fool-hardy that dares die, not knowing but that his faith was the faith of an unregenerate impenitent heart; yea, or satisfies himself with having thought he once at first had such a true faith, but is not sure that he persevereth therein; that regards not any conformity to Christ. Universal obedience, sincere holiness, and fidelity to God, and improvement of his talents, are things which the gospel so insists on, as being fitter to give evidence, than things more obscure or remote can be; *Mat.* x. 33. xxv. 30. *2 Cor.* xiii. 5. *Ephes.* v. 6.

2. I SHALL *prove* that the eminently useful, have more manifest grounds for a comfortable death than others can expect; for which end, it will be sufficient that I evidence; That eminent faithful usefulness is a most plain and infallible evidence of our title to eternal life, and that it also argueth a very great meetness for heaven;

SERM. whence it will follow, that the eminently faithful useful man, hath more manifest grounds for a comfortable death than others can expect, and consequently his character is excellent. It tends to a comfortable death; as,

(1.) IT is a most plain and infallible *evidence* of our title to eternal life. Faithful eminent usefulness, is not only an evidence considered abstractedly, but it gives evidence to the sincerity of all, or most other graces; yea, and receives it from them: for by the in-being and activity of such graces it subsisted, and in it each of them expressed their vital power and sincerity, and that not darkly, but clearly; not doubtfully, but to full conviction; so that the eminently useful man, hath the concurrent testimony of every grace, in a light to which each contributes. And it answers any just challenge that can be made to his having those several graces, and that in reality; so that if faith, repentance, love to God, a new birth, or perseverance, have life promised to them, and the sincerity thereof being evident to a man, must yield strong consolation; then the eminently useful man hath very abundant reasons of comfort, as to his interest in eternal life. I shall evidence this by three things:

I. CAN he doubt the *truth* of his several graces? Not of his *faith*, because he hath been thus signally excited by his *assent*  
to

to what Christ, as *prophet*, hath revealed; and encouraged, by *trusting* in his *Saviour's* merits, strength, and testament; and governed by the commands of Christ his *received Lord*, and that in so faithful an execution of his own covenant *consent* and vows? Yea, his union to Christ is attested as well as his faith by which he is united, for his truly devoted fruitful life, could proceed from, and subsist by nothing lower, than those vital influences and supplies which came from Christ his head and root, *Gal. ii. 20. Phil. i. 19, 20, 21.*

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V.  
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His *repentance* also is unsuspected, when he beholds his lusts so *subdued* as not to hinder his living to God entirely as his end; his heart so *altered* in its purposes, resolves and relishes, that he could not live to carnal self, but a common good, wherein he delighted and spent himself. He knows his former evil course is duly *bewailed* when so directly changed, and that sin was truly *hateful*, being he hath not only endeavoured the utter mortification of it in himself, but greatly laboured to rescue all others from the dominion and effects thereof.

HE is sure of his *new birth*, when he reflects that nothing less could make my aims, my temper and course, to be so far conformed to Christ's, as my devotedness to God's glory, and to the benefit of saints and sinners doth attest, 1 *Joh. iv.*

SERM. 17. Yea more, a lower principle than  
 V. what was formed in regeneration, would  
 never have lasted thus long, and carried  
 me thus far, *Job. iv. 14.*

2. THIS eminently useful man's stated course and contrivances, *repel* a jealousy, that his love to God or man, or appearing zeal, was a *painted* fire; his faith, hope, or other graces, a *dead* image, because all these have vitally concurred, to direct, fix, and strengthen his labours, to lay out his talents, drive a constant trade, and spend his life for Christ, *Job. xiv. 21.* I *Job. iii. 16, 17.* *Rom. xii. 11, 12, 13.* And there is as little ground to question his *perseverance*, when he knows he was not taken off from publick serviceableness, by his sloth, fear, weariness, selfishness, or change of purpose or designs; yea, that now he feels his soul solicitous for, and prepared unto a publick good, were he but capable to contribute to it.

3. BESIDES this testimony from the evidence of such graces as life is promised to, the useful man is in a way likelier for comfort than others, because the *Spirit* of God doth not usually forbear to cast a light upon the graces of such when they come to die, but (and that not rarely) he makes them to behold his face, and experience some foretastes of the approaching glory; so that with *Moses* they die at the mouth of God; with *Stephen*,  
*Act. vii.*



*Act. vii. 57.* as *David*, *2 Sam. xxiii. 5.* Yea, besides this, the useful man is encouraged by the great things that passed between God and his soul, in bending him for, and carrying him through those attempts and employments wherein he hath served the will of God in his generation. Many answers of prayer, eminent deliverances from evil, supports when fainting, revivings and enlargements when tempted to remissness, frequent views of Christ and heaven for renewal of strength, (and the like) which he hath oft experienced, have so familiarised God and Christ to him, and so fixed his trust in his goodness, truth and word, that he can quietly commit his spirit to him. And so, from all put together, *having now fought a good fight, finished his course, and kept the faith,* <sup>2 Tim. iv. 8.</sup> he beholds *that crown of righteousness* hanging over his head, which he knows *his God will give him:* And he hath *an abundant enterance into God's kingdom.* <sup>2 Pet. i. 11.</sup>

(2.) THIS eminent usefulness argues a *meetness* for heaven. He can easily quit all worldly enjoyments, who valued life itself but as a means for service, and consecrated all he had as subservient to it. This man is not called off before his work is done; for *his course is finished*, and the end of his being on earth so fully answered, *Acts xiii. 25.* Heaven must be a real *rest* to him after so much labour;

SERM. and very *suitable* in the nature of it to  
 V. one of so agreeable a disposition. What  
 welcome company are *perfected* happy  
 souls, when the contrary made the saving  
 and healing of miserable sinners to en-  
 gage his thoughts, and command his  
 strength whilst he lived on earth? His  
 soul that was so enlarged by grace for pub-  
 lick use, will be very *receptive* of those ful-  
 ler streams of heavenly joys.

How will he be *satisfied* with more of  
*God's likeness* there, when it will be but  
 the perfection of what he judged so love-  
 ly as to strive so much to propagate it  
 here? *Psal. xvii. 14, 15.* This publick  
 spirit will be ravished in contemplating  
 and adoring a blessed God, when he be-  
 holds how *universal a good* he is; yea,  
 and ever hath been, by the records of his  
 beneficence there published and explained.  
 Whatever employment heaven allots (for  
 it's no place of idleness) he is greatly pre-  
 pared for it; who did heartily perform  
 so much under the great disadvantages of  
 this present state, which did arise both  
 from his works and himself, yea, and such  
 as he had to deal with. So that this man  
 is gathered when ripe; he is even here a  
 vessel of glory, being so meet for his mas-  
 ter's use.

<sup>2</sup> Tim. ii.  
21.

Now how comfortable will death be  
 to a man thus well *assured* of eternal hap-  
 piness, and *prepared* for that wherein it  
 will



will consist? It cannot endanger nor hurt him; he must rather desire than abhor or fear it, when only a sense of present serviceableness (where it is more needful) hath reconciled useful saints to a longer life, *Phil. i. 23, 24.* To such useful ones as *Paul* it belonged to triumph over death, rather than be afraid, and welcome its approaches to enjoy that, a regard whereto had made him so laborious; *1 Cor. xv. 57, 58.*

THUS I have represented the grounds on which a very useful man may die comfortably. But can there be the like for an unuseful person? I am sure, where a life unprofitably spent (through sloth, negligence, self-seeking and unfaithfulness to God) doth stare a man in the face, 'tis a just challenge to his hopes, it justifies his fears, and he vainly expects advantage by death, or safety in dying.

YEA, a man who hath been useful in lesser degrees, through remissness and narrowness of heart, cannot but feel greater jealousy of his condition than the eminently useful; yea, he must make bitter reflections upon his past life, wherein he finds so many neglects and baulks. So little work done in so long a time, and with so great a stock; and being self-conscious of the much greater things he might have performed for a common good; sure he cannot, without grief, behold his season

SERM. feason over, whilst the blood of souls, the  
 V. groans of a dying church, or a sinking  
 nation testify against his departing soul,  
 that omitted relieving them to his power.  
 What work for shame, and sorrow, ay,  
 and fear too, will this make, compared  
 with a vigorously useful life?

(4.) THE future *rewards* of an eminent-  
 ly useful man will be greater than others:  
 His crown will weigh in proportion to his  
 Dan. xii. 3. service: *They that turn many to righteous-*  
*ness, shall shine as the stars in the firma-*  
*ment, for ever and ever.* He that gained  
 the ten talents, was made a ruler over ten  
 cities; he that gained two, was made ru-  
 ler but over five.

THESE wider vessels shall be filled as  
 well as the lesser; but being larger, they  
 contain the more. O then, happy he who  
 was most abundant in labours; no degree  
 1 Cor. xv. 58. Gal. vi. 9. 10. whereof *shall be in vain.* Their works  
 shall follow them as a retinue, adding to  
 their grandeur; and rivers shall be more  
 acknowledged by our blessed God, when  
 he will come to reward the very drops.

THESE mens place in the body will be  
 more noble, their thrones higher, perhaps  
 their services more eminent in a heavenly  
 estate, as much in proportion as they had  
 been on earth. And tho' all faithful ones  
 Luk. xx. 3. *shall be as angels*; yet among these there  
 are degrees, wherein there will be a cor-  
 respondence as to those. Every generous  
 design,

design, tear, labour, hardship, expence, loss and hazard, will be found in a proportioned glory: *He that soweth bountifully shall reap bountifully.*

SERM.

V.

2 Cor. ix.  
6.

WHENCE its easily inferred, how excellent a character of a believer it is, that he was an eminently useful person in his age. Its a title will found in the very heavens, and be honourably acknowledged by Christ upon his throne; he will say, *Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.* Which yet is no reflection on his own merits; for in the vertue thereof the most useful saints inherit those further additions, according to his promise, as well as the less useful possess the lesser degrees. True, *its all his own*, and he *may do what he will with his own*; but if he is pleased to foretell us how he'll dispense this *his own* to men, therupon his veracity commands our assured expectations; and if he also use those *higher* measures of glory, as motives to *greater* labours, we, in being *very* laborious, cannot be disappointed of those higher measures any more than of the least; yea, we frustrate his end in publishing such promises, if we are not excited to more abundant labours by the benefits promised, and upon such labours expect those benefits.

Mat. xxv.  
21.

I HAVE offered what I hope will convince you of the truth of the third general

ral

SERM. ral head, *viz.* That to be eminently useful in one's generation, is an excellent character; for to be so employed, is an honour put upon that man by the infinite God. The spirit of such a man is excellent and God-like: He hath the greatest grounds for a comfortable death, both from the evidence of his title to eternal life, and his meetness for it. And lastly, his future glory will be greater than that of others.

#### S E C T. IV.

I SHALL proceed to the application of this doctrine by some inferences.

1st *Inference.* To be a publick *plague*, is a great reproach. What can be said worse of a man when dead? That one did no good in an eminent station; that he hid his talent, which should have been employed in view, are infamous scars: but that any man should influence to publick mischief, this leaves his memorial accursed; better never have been born; his gifts, his estate, powers and offices, are become a snare to himself, and a mischief to the publick. The more active, the greater detriment; the longer he lived, the more lasting curse hath this man been; and the further hath he contributed to the woe of others, as well as to his own damnation. He will be signally marked in another

other world, for the harm he did in this; receiving his torments with remarkable notice, when they do groan to themselves, who sinned only against themselves. Will the powers or riches he had on earth, guard him against the forest vengeance for the hurt he did? No, no. Of this abhorred sort are the wasters of countries, tyrannical princes, propagators of heresies, perverters of justice, great oppressors of the poor, wasters of God's vineyards, betrayers of their countries, silencers of useful preachers, enemies to the ministry, and calumniators of ministers, and the like. Happy multitudes, if such had never been; and next, happy that they are soon taken away; see *Jer.* xxii. 17, 18. Such will wish they had been idiots and beggars, or any thing else, which could have more incapacitated them from doing mischief.

2d *Inf.* THIS may convince us of the mischief of a narrow sectarian spirit, and consonant principles, wherever they prevail.

By such a narrow spirit, I mean a spirit that *confineth* charity to a sect distinguished from other christians, by customs or opinions that are not essential to true godliness, and is embittered and enraged against all who differ from such usages and opinions. This is the spirit of *popery*; (which is a sect, tho' a great one) yea,

SERM. yea, it is the worst of popery ; and where-  
 V. ever it rules, the most diabolical part of  
 ~~~~~ anti-christianism is undestroy'd. All the

persecutions and impositions of that beast proceed from this very spirit, and from principles both ministring to it, and formed by it (for their influence is mutual.) There's scarce any thing more opposite to publick usefulness, or less consistent with the precepts, design and true spirit of christianity ; the former is that which my subject so calls me to demonstrate, and testify against, that without doing so, I cannot faithfully handle this doctrine. But who can doubt the destructiveness of this spirit to publick benefit and service, if you observe the way and behaviour of all sorts of persons who are acted by it ? For under its impulse it is, that

I. MEN confine their *usefulness* to their own faction, as if they were indebted to seek the good of none beyond it ; nay, as if conscience obliged them against all attempts for benefits more common and extensive. They judge all men out of their herd, unworthy of their love, concern, or labour ; what's the publick to them, further than as things affect their own ? Let the ship sink, so their cabin can be saved. They'll obstruct all settlement in church or state, if it be any other than a provision for their sect, or managed by any besides themselves ; yea scruple not  
 to

to advance their party upon the ruins of the publick, as men see from age to age. SERM. V.

2. WHAT is it to such bigots, if true *christianity* prevail with men, or converts be multiplied, unless they become their profelytes? Alas! they judge no man religious, or good, out of their own garb; they surmise him carnal, who cannot pronounce their *Sbibboleth*, and do as good as say, they are all in a damnable state who at all oppose them. Hence such people are far more industrious to bring men to a compliance with their fond peculiarities, than to a subjection to the great and most undoubted precepts of the gospel, *Mat. xxiii. 15.* which is a publick mischief, as in other respects so also in this. Men hereby waste that time, strength, and labour, upon an unprofitable (if not hurtful) trifle, which, by a publick spirit, would be employed in subserviency to what is really advantagious, *viz.* To make men holier and safer for eternity. Yet,

3. As if this effect of such a spirit were not harmful enough to the publick, it further prompts men to *malign* the most useful, to obstruct the most prosperous successes of the gospel, to blast the most profitable ministers, and overturn flourishing churches, by dividing and defaming methods, with lies, violence and basest artifice, as if they thought justice, kindness, and truth, were due only to men of their  
own

SERM. own opinion ; and cruelty, tricking, and  
 V. falshood, were warranted, if not required  
 towards all who differ, *Gal. v. 10. and vi.*  
 10, 12, 15, 16. Yea, it stops not here ;  
 what poverty, silencings, imprisonments,  
 tortures and bloodshed, both by persecution  
 and wars, do men, so spirited, greedily in-  
 flict, and bring upon mankind? neigh-  
 bour nations, yea, our own proclaim. Such  
 actings indicate this narrow spirit to pre-  
 vail ; such a spirit prevailing, will produce  
 all those fruits, if there be but power. It  
 may obtain under very different forms, but  
 is not the more innocent for any of them,  
 tho' it reigns in some of most. The best  
 cause will not hallow such a frame ; the  
 worst cause generally hath most of it, and  
 very oft it is a sign thereof. But where-  
 ever it is Christ will not own it, his in-  
 terest, in a common good, is sure to lose  
 by it ; it springs from carnal selfishness,  
 it's acted and excited by the devil, what-  
 ever is pretended for its justification, and  
 it tends to publick hurt of the highest  
 kind. Surely it's no part of, nor joined  
 with that *wisdom which is from above,*  
*which is first pure, then peaceable, gentle,*  
*easy to be intreated, full of mercy and*  
*good fruits, without injuring, and without*  
*hypocrisy :* No, it's from what is *earthly,*  
*sensual, and devilish.*

Jam. iii.  
 15, 17.

LET us all watch then against the in-  
 fection of such a temper ; for it's too nat-  
 ural





tural to our unrenewed part to allow security, yea, tho' our opinions be most orthodox. Satan will delude you to it under the name of zeal, for he knows that zeal must degenerate into hellish fire when it blazeth in the former instances ; yea, when it moves thereto. The quenching of such a spirit, in others, is our duty, or, at least, resisting it, that it prevail not to a publick mischief ; nor is he worthy of the name of a man, publickly useful, that dare not venture all to oppose it ; and the rather, because its as much worse than brutish, as the devil is worse than a brute, and in many respects gives that wound to religion, and a publick good, which open profaneness is not capable of giving. Nothing but a true publick christian spirit can expel it, and without that there will be no aptness to contribute to that progress of the gospel in the world, which we daily pray for ; nor a possibility to maintain, or improve such a mercy, by walking in unity, love, and peace, to common edification. To all which, this narrow spirit of a *party* is so irreconcilable and destructive, that giving way thereto, will no more allay it than pouring oil into a fire. Happy times, when divine light and love will so abound, that self-seekers can serve no turn by such a spirit, and the honest-minded shall neither be endangered, nor

SERM. infected by it; then, and not till then, will  
 V. a publick good be generally pursued.

3 *Inf.* WE see one great reason why  
*self-denial* is so proposed by Christ to all  
 his disciples.

THIS is the first article to which all his  
 followers are to submit, *If any man will*  
 Mat. xvi. *be my disciple, let him deny himself, take up*  
 24. *his cross, and follow me.* The two last are  
 impossible to such, as agree not to the  
 first. But besides the necessity thereof to  
 these, self-denial is absolutely requisite to  
 those services, which Christ designeth by  
 his disciples, to each other, and to the  
 world; as *salt* they are to season a cor-  
 rupt world, as *lights* to enlighten a blind  
 world, *Mat. v. 13, 14.* Wisdom is to be  
 Pet. ii. 9. *justified* by them, *Luke vii. 35.* *The virtues*  
*of God to be published.* They are to pro-  
 pagate the interests of our blessed redeem-  
 er, &c. But which of these can we sub-  
 serve, if *self* be not denied? All impedi-  
 ments to attempt such a work, and most  
 of our unfitness to accomplish it, do a-  
 rise from carnal *selfishness*; where this is  
 subdued, men are ready and prepared to  
 be common blessings, as opportunity is  
 afforded. Then sloth will not delay, fear  
 shall not discourage, ambitious or covetous  
 aims must not divert from any labours  
 that others may be benefited by; whereas  
 carnal self must have our ease indulged,  
 our humour gratified, and safety, credit,  
 and

and worldly advantages provided for, what-  
 ever becomes of Christ's interests, or a pub-  
 lick weal. He that denieth himself most,  
 will be most beneficial; he that cannot do  
 this at all, will rarely attempt, infallibly  
 spoil, and easily quit any publick service.  
 A *self-seeking* man will not propose, or  
 prosecute, a common good, farther than  
 his own present interests do invite. A *self-  
 indulging* man will manage his endeavours  
 so, as that the obstacles to his success, by  
 his own behaviour, will exceed the utmost  
 he contributes to it. A *self-confident* man  
 will over-look the good he might do, at-  
 tempt what he is unfit for, and, as a just  
 rebuke from God, discover his own weak-  
 ness, instead of being prospered in what  
 he doth foolishly enterprize in his own  
 strength.

SERM.

V.



DID you strictly examine your hearts  
 and ways, it would appear, most mens  
 unusefulness proceeds from their selfish-  
 ness; this locks your coffers, that you can-  
 not give; this benums your powers, that  
 you will not act; this spieth the lion in  
 the way, that you dare not go; this feels  
 the burden, counts the charge, and resents  
 the inconveniencies of service, as too great  
 to be endured for it. Whereas, in all emi-  
 nent usefulness, we do neglect the counsel,  
 counter-act the projects, and offer violence  
 to the inclinations of self, *Gal. i. 16.* and  
 therein we must act not only as such who

SERM. are not their own, but as those who have  
 V. no will of their own to obey, no selfish  
 turn to serve, nor humour to gratify. When therefore selfishness is so certain an obstructor of the uses Christ designed his members to, how fit was it to make our denial of it a prime part of true christianity, and try his genuine followers by their consent thereto, especially when all publick mischiefs do as truly spring from self-indulged, as publick benefits do from this denied? Miserable man! since his lusts are become himself, and rational self-love become a stranger. Happy christian! who best consults his own true interests, by trampling on his lusts, restraining his irregular desires, and rejecting an undue concern for body, and earthly affairs, that he may live to Christ, and a common good. This man knows he shall find his truest self most gratified, secured, and provided for, in renouncing and opposing this his greatest enemy, tho' called *self*.

I SHALL, in the next place, *exhort* you and myself, according to the nature of this truth which I have explained.

I. LET us be *ashamed*, and duly *hum- bled*, for our unusefulness in our generation.

WHO of us falls not under the charge of this fault? And, surely, blushings and grief, are very proper where the charge is true. But knowing how loth we are to  
 acknow-

acknowledge our fault, and as backward to be affected with the sense of it, when its two plain to be denied, I shall endeavour,

SERM.  
V.

(1.) To *convince* you of your unusefulness in your generation, that so we may not plead we are ignorant, if we are guilty.

(2.) To *excite* you to shame and sorrow for your unusefulness, when under conviction of the guilt.

(1.) FOR *conviction* of the guilty. To this end review your talents, and the improvements of them, for publick good; admit, yea, excite your consciences, to compare your distributions with your stock, your labour with your strength, and your publick services with your time, gifts, and opportunities. Deal herein as in the sight of Christ, whose *eyes are as a flame of fire*, Rev. i. 14. and be not unconcerned whether you find out your sin or not, for your ignorance prevents not your guilt, if the charge be true, tho' it will hinder your repentance, whereby your punishment becomes unavoidable. O then let each of us ask ourselves such questions as these: Have I ever proposed to live to God's honour, in the good of others, as the great end of life? or have not I utterly disregarded it? Have I done good to as many persons as I had a call to, and opportunity for? Or have not I wilfully exempted very many, to whom I stood obliged? Hath the good

SERM. that I have done in the world, been in proportion to my utmost ability? or hath it been very little, and inconsiderable, compared with what I could have done? Did I begin to be useful as soon as I was capable; and do I continue so to this time; or was I not far in years before I began; or have I not deserted it, after I made some hopeful beginnings? Am I seriously concerned to see so many sinners posting to hell? Doth my heart bleed at the miserable condition of the poor and distressed? Am I very solicitous for the church's welfare, and the nation's happiness, so as to set myself to redress evil, and help the good of each in my place, and this to the extent of my power? Or, am not I one that slight the wickedness the world lies in, want bowels to the distressed? If I abound, seldom think or care what becomes of the church or nation, so that I and my friends be but safe and thrive; and accordingly I employ and spare my estate, labour, gifts, and power.

WHAT answer doth an awakened conscience give to these questions? Doth it not accuse you? Must it not present to you a sad account of great omissions and many neglects? Have you no such secret misgivings as these? I fear I have been a dry tree, and barren soil; few have cause to bless God for my life. Oh, the little good I have ever as yet attempted to do to others!



others! What *fruit* I have born hath been *to myself*, with unfruitful *Ephraim*, Hof. x. 1. If any have been benefited by any thing I have given or done, it hath been by God's over-ruling it, and seldom with any design or good-will of mine; or, at best, I have less intended the good of others thereby, than my own private advantage; for my heart tells me, I coldly attempted the most promising enterprize from which I expected not applause or profit: And soon gave it over when I had a prospect of reproach, or loss thereby. Oh that you would be faithful to your own souls, and acknowledge your guilt; especially, if it be notorious! Great instances cannot be overlooked, unless you wilfully shut your eyes. What trade you have driven in the world must be known to you, tho' some diversions may be forgotten. Hath publick service for God been your business in any measure? or, have you made the very worship of God, and your most seeming obedience, to subserve carnal ends? Have you spent your estate on your lusts, or on the publick interests, and poor members of Christ, next to the supply of your own and family's true necessities? What projects have had the chief room in your heads? What matters have sat closest to your hearts? Were they serving your generation, and saving your own soul? or, were they the perishing

SERM. fairs of life? Rest not till you make a  
 V. true answer; nor till that, as past all doubt,  
 be assented to; that so if unusefulness is  
 imputed to you by the all-seeing God, you  
 may cry, I am guilty: *Being convinced of  
 all, and judged of all.*

1 Cor. xiv.  
 24.

(2.) IF you are guilty, be *ashamed* and  
 grieved.

HIS heart is obdurate, if not atheistical, that owneth his unprofitableness without *shame*, seeing its a thing so *indecent* and unbecoming; or without afflicting *sorrow*, it being a thing so sinful in itself, so unjust toward God, so injurious to others, and hurtful to your own souls. Give way to some thoughts that ought to strike your secure unconcerned minds.

1. GOD keeps a *register* of his gifts committed to you, and of your neglects and abuses in the employing of them. He knows what thou hast done, and what thou mightest have done; what you have laid out by his rules, and what under the conduct of your own lusts; nothing of either did escape his view, or slip his memory. The account of both are as full and exact as if enter'd in a book, *Rev. xx. 12.* and shortly the whole will be read by thyself, in a light which cannot be refused; yea, transcribed on thy very conscience, so as not to be blotted out. Anticipate this by serious reflections, and sure it must fill you with *shame* and *sorrow*, to  
 see



see so much received, and so little restored, by applying it to the appointed uses, yea, so much employed to very contrary purposes; so great an estate, with little or nothing to promote the gospel, or relieve the poor, but a very great sum wasted on thy lusts, or hoarded to look upon. Will it not affect you to find your names among magistrates or ministers, capable for, and called to the respective duties of such offices, for a common good, and over-against your names thus written, This *magistrate* was no *terror* to evil-doers, no *praise* to such as did well? Nay, instead of reforming others, he corrupted them by his countenance and example; instead of relieving the injured, he oppressed the poor, perverted justice, and persecuted my servants. This *minister* did not reprove sin impartially and boldly, especially if the offenders were such as he expected benefit by; he declared not my whole counsel, but minced and chose what was safest to himself, and most pleasing to others; he accommodated not his labours to the real benefit of all, but to the humours of some; disdaining plain speech, affecting levity, frothy or amusing discourses: He was more solicitous to know how he was praised, than how others did profit. He let truth sink, and errors gain ground, when he found his name or incomes should suffer by opposing the last, or abetting the first; such a time he dealt

treach-

SERM. treacherously with such and such souls,

V. he obstructed a publick good for his private advantage; he excused himself from preaching, pleading, or speaking, tho' he saw my interest and the real benefit of others required it. How formal and cold in his performances, prayerless and slothful in his preparations; partial and careless in discipline, and unexemplary in walking. Notions he took up for truths, without search or other enquiry, than, Is this the opinion of a man eminent with the party I hope to live by? and will it suit with the fancies of these men? I might proceed herein, and annex the particular cases of others; but this may suffice to mind you what a blush should it raise, what an anguish should it cause, to see your names thus underwritten in the records of heaven; and know, the devil keeps also an account, as full as he can, that he may become your accuser.

2. You can make no *apology* for your unusefulness, but what's fit to aggravate your shame and sorrow. A vain mind, and a feared conscience, will suggest excuses, and take up with them, however false and frivolous they be: But enquiries there will be, which will pierce into the nature and truth of things, and minister such an awakening light, as shall render the most careless and confident person *speechless*, Matt. xxii. 12. It were our  
mercy

mercy that we allowed nothing as a sufficient plea now, but what will be approved of at the judgment-bar. Examine therefore the true reasons why you have not served your generations as well as others.

*Object.* YOU will pretend your utter incapacity for service.

*Ans. 1.* THAT is a good apology, if true, for God expects not *to reap where he hath not sown*; he is *no such hard master*.<sup>Mat. xxv. 26.</sup> None shall have ground to affix that character to him. But is this excuse true? Can your consciences, as drowsy as they are, offer this plea, and abide by it? *viz.* The only reason why we were not publick blessings, was because we had no gift, no opportunity, estate or power to be so. If conscience upon a serious pause dare not stick to this excuse, but condemns thee, how much more *will God condemn thee*,<sup>2 John iii. 33.</sup> *who is greater and knoweth all things?* But if still you verily believe that the objection states your case;


*Ans. 2.* LET me ask you, have you really *pitied* the distressed whom you could not relieve? Have you avoided being *hurtful* to others, tho' you could not profit them? Have you earnestly *prayed* for the church of God, and the good of the miserable world, bewailing the sorrows of the first, and the misery of the last? Do you *rejoice* in, and bless God for those  
who

SERM. who are useful, without envying the most  
 V. eminent ? When you desire an estate or  
 gift, and bewail the want of them, is the  
 latter mostly because you cannot be use-  
 ful, and the former that you may be so ?  
 Do you take all due *pains*, and use all  
 good thrift, that you may have somewhat  
 to enable you to be profitable ? And if  
 you are poor, and have the help of others,  
 do you make conscience not to ask it *till*  
 you need ; nor ask or take *more* than you  
 need, that the relief of the more necessitous  
 may not be hindred ? If your hearts can-  
 not honestly say, These things answer my  
 case, its thus with me ; then you have  
 not a temper of mind, to be useful if you  
 had abilities ; and its most probable you  
 are more able to do good, than you have  
 been faithful to do it.

BUT if indeed your consciences do just-  
 ly witness, that you can so answer to the  
 above questions, as that incapacity is the  
 very reason your generation is not more  
 served by you than by your prayers and  
 good example ; then you are not the  
 persons to whom my reproof is directed,  
 so that you do that little you can.

*Ans.* 3. BUT such of you as are able to  
 serve your generation, and neglect it, should  
 be *more* ashamed and grieved when you  
 consider the *true causes* of your unprofita-  
 bleness.

YOUR

YOUR hinderances to service, are from SERM.  
 your selves ; your lusts have the great V.  
 hand in affigning the governing reason :   
 Look at the baulks you have made, and  
 the opportunities you have pass'd unuse-  
 fully over ; and ask thy conscience, whence  
 was it that I neglected this ? Can you be  
 unaffected when you receive this answer ?  
 My covetousness, my pride, my sloth, my  
 fear, my unbelief, or my unconcernedness  
 for God's honour, and the publick good,  
 did hinder me ; these made me unwilling  
 and averse, these diverted my abilities to  
 another channel, and would not suffer me  
 to be useful and faithful in my trust.  
 Were not you governed by one or other  
 of these whenever you shut your ears to  
 the cry of an afflicted church, of starved  
 ministers, of a sinking nation, of diseased  
 souls, and the distressed poor ?

IF it be so, as indeed it will be found,  
 you have cause to be ashamed and mourn.  
 Doth it become men to be under the con-  
 duct of such base guides ? In this respect  
 God hath called you to *shew your selves*  
*men*, *Isa. xlvii. 8.* But much more unbe-  
 coming is this, to you that wear the name  
 of *christians* ; you are called and redeemed  
 to be *zealous of good works*, *Titus ii. 14.*  
 Is this to be so ? Is this to imitate or obey  
 Christ, whom you own for your Lord, and  
 whose livery you have put on ? Follow  
 the channel to the fountain head ; be led  
 by

SERM. by your actings to the posture and frame  
 V. of your hearts; and judge what vile spi-  
 ~~~~~ rits act you, what a dominion have these  
 lusts in your soul, that thus command  
 your talents, and determine the scope of  
 your lives in opposition to the loudest  
 calls. Oh blush and weep, that with all  
 thy light and helps, under all thy christian  
 profession and hopes, thy heart is so earth-  
 ly and carnal, so sensual and devilish; so  
 full of hatred to God and man, as the au-  
 thority of these lusts import; and thy  
 unusefulness doth testify in the clearest  
 light, the holy spirit hath made no saving  
 change, if you are altogether useless; the  
 change at most is very imperfect, whilst  
 your usefulness is so much hindered by  
 these unsubdued lusts. The very *unpro-  
 fitable* must be made other men, *Mat. xii.*  
*33.* and the less profitable are not very  
 good men. You have those dry leaves  
 and dead branches which may well put  
 you to the blush, and fill you with fear,  
*John xv. 2.* the *unfruitful branch* will be  
*cast out.*

3. YOUR unusefulness expresseth that  
*treachery, ingratitude* and *injustice* towards  
 God, which must cause shame and sorrow  
 in every thinking person.

THE least acquaintance with the infi-  
 nite God, as our owner, ruler, and bene-  
 factor, would strike an amazement and  
 terror in our minds, that this sort of de-

meanour towards him, should be justly ascribed to any of us; yet as far as publick unusefulness is our crime, all this base treatment of God is chargeable upon us. SERM.  
V.

(I.) ITS *treachery* towards God, as its contrary to our profession, a breach of our vows, and betraying our trust. Let's consider this in three parts.

I. WHEN you profess your selves the servants of God, the followers of Christ, inspired by his spirit, satisfied with his covenant blessings as your portion, expectants of his heavenly rewards, and acknowledgers of him as your ultimate end; do not you hereby *profess* that you are employed about his work, and serving his purposes in the world, that this is your trade and the business of your life? You who profess your selves christians, profess no less than what I have above described; but pray see how empty a profession it is? how far otherwise you do, than you pretend, and what other sort of people you are than you would seem to be; when all this while you neglect God's work, and follow your own; you overlook his designs, and serve your own turn. May not God say, they profess to serve me, *but in works they deny me: With their mouth they shew much kindness, but their heart goeth after their covetousness,* and after their pride, and after their selfish designs, Tit. i. 16.  
Ezekiel xxxiii. 31.

SERM. Do you think God will be *mocked*, or  
 V. that you can impose on him? It cannot be.

~~~~~ Blush then at your own falshood; whilst  
 your heads are so seldom projecting, how  
 shall we best honour our God, and serve  
 his interests: and if you are satisfied with an  
 empty noise, or theatrical shew; fear,  
 lest Christ apply himself to you as to *Ju-*  
 Luk.xxiii. *das, Betrayest thou me with a kiss?* Do you  
 48. profess all this, that you may be exempted  
 from promoting my concerns in the  
 world? Yea, that you may disserve me  
 the more, in betraying my cause by your  
 connivance and neglects? Oh! let us mourn  
 that our very profession testifies against  
 us.

2. UNUSEFULNESS is a breach of your  
*vows*, made to the living God.

YOUR baptismal vow includes a solemn  
*dedication* of your selves and all you have  
 to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, with an  
 engagement of living to God, and not  
 to his rivals, be they the world, flesh, or  
 devil. Consider your unusefulness, and see,  
 is that a performance of this engagement,  
 or consistent with it? Sure by your beha-  
 viour you think *it was an error* that you  
 made this vow, *Eccles. v. 6.* but know they  
 are no christians who consent not to it;  
 and having engaged, you cannot think  
 that meer *making* this vow was principal-  
 ly designed in Christ's institution; no, it  
 was ordained to be *made*, that you might



be more sensibly obliged to *execute* it, especially in so principal a part of it. How ever light you make of your great and wilful unserviceableness in your day, you are therein no less than perfidious and perjured in breaking your oaths, and those oft renewed before the Lord at his table, oft it may be in sickness; besides the oaths you have taken as magistrates or ministers.

To your perfidiousness you have added *sacrilege* against your self-dedication, of which hereafter. Ought not our souls to bleed to think, I gave up myself and my all to God, to serve and honour him, to plead Christ's cause, and advance his interests, to live for him, and not for myself; yea, I have signed his covenant to do this, and vowed it upon the memorials of his death, and in several extremities when conscience represented my dangerous neglects, and yet notwithstanding all, I employ my estate, my time, my gifts, my power, as if at full liberty to use them as I please; as if Christ had no interest to be served by me, or I were under no obligation to spend or adventure any thing for his service.

3. You have *betrayed* that trust which God committed to you.

WHOEVER is a minister of Christ, is a *steward* to whom the truths and institutions of Christ are entrusted to maintain,

SERM. dispense, and defend. 1 *Cor.* iv, 1, 2. He is  
 V. a *pastor*, to whose care the flock of Christ  
 is committed, 1 *Pet.* v. 2. In becoming mi-  
 nisters we undertake this trust. The *life*  
 of souls is very much committed to us as  
 watch-men, *Ezek.* xxxiii. 8. It cannot be  
 denied then that a careless selfish unfaith-  
 ful minister betrays his trust; he dis-  
 chargeth not what he hath undertaken,  
 but deals falsely and treacherously with our  
 faithful Lord.

*Magistrates* are entrusted with God's  
 sword, and *subjects* committed to their care  
 to the degree of power which they have  
 over them; doth not that magistrate then  
 deal treacherously with God in betraying  
 this trust, when he preserveth not the in-  
 nocent, but defends the guilty &c? Yea,  
 all the talents any man hath, is put into  
 his hands to lay out as God directs for a  
 common good; and every one whom we  
 ought to benefit by that talent, is commit-  
 ted to our trust, as far as his welfare de-  
 pends upon that supply.

YEA, Christ hath intrusted every *chri-  
 stian* with his honour, with his interests,  
 and with the advancement of his kingdom  
 in this world. We are intrusted as his  
 witnesses, his soldiers &c. but let us blush and  
 mourn, that as far as we have neglected to  
 serve our generation, we have betrayed all  
 his publick concerns in this world; all that  
 he hath put into our hands. Ah! had  
 none

none been more faithful than we, his gospel, his ministry, his members had been in a condition more deplorable than they be. O that my eyes were waters! treachery is a vile blot; treachery towards God is the worst sort: And yet this have you been guilty of; yea, in saddest instances, *viz.* belying your profession, breaking your vows, and betraying your trust. May it not well fill you with confusion?

SERM.  
V.  
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2. By your unusefulness you have dealt *ungratefully* with God.

*Ingratitude* is a monstrous crime, and becomes more so, as he deserveth well at our hands against whom we are ungrateful. Where there is any ingenuity there will be relentings, to think how God hath deserved our utmost service, and what a base requital we have made by our great neglects. He *bath not spared his own son*, but gave him to be a sacrifice for us when enemies; and we have grudged a few pounds, murmured at a little labour, or hazard, in serving him, who is our best friend, and daily benefactor: *It is more blessed to give than to receive.* Act. xx. 35 God hath made us able to give, and others in need to receive, when he might have put them in our case, and us in theirs; yet we basely refuse to obey him, in giving out of our abundance to such as want it. How unthankful are we to the giver of all our gifts?

SERM.

V.



gifts? That we refuse to honour him, by instructing the ignorant, and reclaiming transgressors, when he could as easily have qualified them to instruct us, and left us in a greater need of their assistance, than they are of ours. Whatever we are, have, or hope for, are the fruits of his mere bounty, and distinguishing favour to us; that we are capable to do him any service, or others any good, are endowments he dispensed to us by name, and that these shall not be used at all for him, is high ingratitude. In mercy he hath long tried us, he hath spared us again and again, after that our *barrenness* hath provoked him to cut us off, as well as others whom he hath cast out, *Luk. xiii. 8.* and still we abuse his patience, and persist to cumber the ground, and be little profitable to any. By great rewards he invites us, by great assistances he encourageth us to that which he might bind us to, at our peril, by his mere command; yet, as base wretches, we loyter, yea, refuse his work; we wave what's hard, and think too much of what is easiest; we cast off all that we can tolerably rid our selves of.

ought not it to be for a lamentation, and the more so if you can but discern the *malignity* and *contempt* you have expressed towards God in your unthankful returns? What's the language of your refusing to serve your generation hitherto?

No



No kinder, no more expressive of gratitude, for all his favours, than this; God deserves not my pains, my estate would be foolishly laid out for him; what is he to me, that I should disturb my ease, hazard my name, displease my friends, or suffer any thing for a common good? For my part, so that all will be of my mind, let Christ the redeemer have none to honour him, let Satan carry away the whole spoil, let the gospel of Christ have no place, let his ministers and members perish as well as need, let heaven have no tribute from this world but blasphemies, let God be reproached, by intrusting such a one as I am, with what might benefit the community, let this earth of the Lord's be a hell for misery and sin; so let all be, rather than I'll run any danger, sustain any labour, or be at any expence or trouble. Yet this hath been the language of your unprofitable behaviour, as far as you have allowed it, and God doth so interpret it, however partial you are towards yourselves.

Is not this horrid ingratitude to our blessed Lord? And do dry eyes, or a face lifted up agree hereto? We may deservedly take up those words, *We are ashamed and* Jer. xxxi. *confounded, because we bear the reproach of* <sup>19.</sup> *our past times.* It's time to blush when all his special favours do thus reproach us,

SERM. and our returns have breathed such gross  
V. ingratitude.

3. YOUR unusefulness hath been the highest *injustice* against God.

WHILST you have refused to be profitable according to your ability, you have denied to render to God that which is his own; you have defrauded, and *sacrilegiously* withheld and misapplied that which was his and not yours. Whose are you yourselves? Whose are all your gifts and estates which you have thus grudged? They are the Lord's. Of every *talent* he may justly say, *Its my own*, Mat. xxv. 27.

Pfal. l. 1. *The cattle upon a thousand hills are mine.*

Pfal. xxiv. *The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof.* Hence he fastens injury on ido-

Ezek. xvi. *latrous Israel, Thou didst take thy jewels of my gold and my silver, and thou hast set my oil and my incense before thy idols, and my meat, &c.* But especially bethink yourselves how many ways *you*, even *you*, unuseful ones, are his. You are the *work* of his hands, he gave you a being, or you had never existed; he gave you to be what you are, even rational creatures; which he was no more necessitated to make you, than crawling toads, *Job xxxiii. 6.*

HE *sustains* you in being, and in your capacity for service: *In him we live, and move, and have our being.* By his bounty are you *provided* for, and by his watchful  
eye

eye preserved every moment, Gen. xlvi. SERM.  
15, 16. V.

YOU were redeemed by the blood of Christ; he bought you into a capacity for service, when you were fetter'd in prison in order to eternal vengeance, Zeck. ix. 11. Luke i. 74.

YOU have solemnly owned the claim of God in Christ to you, by offering up yourselves, and all you possess, to this glorious One; answerably to Rom. xii. 1. whereby thou art his also by self-dedication. Seeing then his claims to you are thus various and universal, how much have you wronged him, in denying him the use of his own, and done your utmost to defeat him in the end for which he created and redeemed you? Did not he create all things for himself? to bring him glory, and do him service, to the degree whereof they were capable, Prov. xvi. 4. Col. i. 16. Christ died and rose, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living. Was not this that he might rule all, dispose of all, and be served by all? How unrighteous then have you been, as far as unusefulness is your fault; you have carried it as if he could not do with his own as he pleased. You his creatures have refused to go on his errand, or work in his vineyard; you, his purchased ones, have not agreed to serve him with your bodies and spirits, which are his. His money you have refused

Rom. xiv.  
9.

Mat. xxi.  
29, 30.

1 Cor. vi.  
20.

SERM. fed to give as he directs; his office and  
 V. power you have neglected to apply to the  
 ends, and by the rules which he prescribes; his gifts have been sacrilegiously taken away from the service to which he allotted them. Have not your ways been in all this unequal? and can you own it without blushings, and renting your very hearts? Our unusefulness ought not to be lightly esteemed by us, when its so full of treachery, ingratitude, and injustice towards the Lord our God. *Paul* knew service went with God's title; *That God whose I am, and whom I serve.*

ACTSxxvii.  
 23.

4. You should be ashamed and grieved for your unusefulness, because it hath been very *injurious* to all persons whom you have neglected to be profitable to. They have a joint charge of wrong against you, in that you have defrauded them of what was theirs in right, though you detained it. We are *debtors* to as many as God hath appointed us to be useful to, *Rom. i. 14.* God directed to them, by you, whatever help or benefit he requires you to confer on them, and therefore you have acted the part of a fraudulent messenger in disowning their claim, and withholding what's their due,

THE *church* of God may complain, This was he who owed me great service, but he never render'd it to me in my ministers, or my members; he did nothing  
 for



for my defence, enlargement, or improvement. SERM.  
V.

*YOUR country* may exclaim, This man enjoyed my defence, plenty, and conveniencies, and was capable, by his prayers, votes, purse and gifts, to have contributed to my welfare; but he hath wickedly fought himself, and served himself of me, but I am no way benefited by him in my reformation, safety, or liberty, &c.

*YOUR families* have a right to godly education, as well as other benefits; but they do testify against you as injurious, in not instructing, persuading, and striving with them, to rescue them from the power of the devil, and to become devoted to the Lord.

*THE poors* cries go up to heaven against you, for keeping back their portion of your substance, and denying that advice and help whereby you might have made them useful and comfortable. Such just complaints may well touch their hearts against whom they are directed; perhaps you would hate to defraud any man in what the laws of the land declare unjust; but is not the law of nature, and the positive laws of God, as sufficient to determine what's just or unjust, as human laws can be? And these do accuse you to be injurious to men in your wilful unprofitableness.

BUT

SERM. BUT besides all this, it may be many are  
 V. exclaiming against you among the *damm'd*  
 already, as accessary to their miseries, by  
 your neglects, as well as otherwise. They  
 are dead in their sin for want of thy re-  
 proof, and thy slackness in pulling them  
 out as brands out of the burnings. If our  
 hearts have any tenderness under a sense of  
 so many and manifest injuries, we must  
 feel this wickedness much embittered to  
 us.

5. YOU should blush at, and bewail  
 your unusefulness as it is a great *hurt* to  
 yourselves.

UNPROFITABLE persons govern them-  
 selves by a great mistake, in that they fall  
 into mischief the way they think to escape  
 it; to avoid self-hurt, they refrain being  
 useful to others, but you'll find that there-  
 by you incur a far greater damage. For  
 fear of loss, you keep from others what  
 you ought to have laid out for their relief,  
 and you think its so much saved for your  
 own benefit; but God will so order mat-  
 ters, that all *such riches were kept to your  
 own hurt*. Whenever power is misapplied,  
 or not exerted for common benefit, that's  
*the time wherein a man ruleth over another  
 to his own hurt*.

FOLLY, when detected, is cause of  
 shame; mischief, when perceived, forceth  
 sorrow in him on whom it falleth. It is  
 your blindness and infidelity, that you now  
 find

find not, in your great unusefulness, the plainest evidence of both; but what unbelief will not now discern, experience shortly will force the securest of you to acknowledge, and that to the filling of you with shame and grief. Oh that you *would consider your latter end*; that you would consider what this (selfish barren) course will come to, what it will end in. I can by good warrant assure you, it will not be either so comfortable, nor gainful, as to justify your neglects. You, perhaps, will say, With what I save by not relieving the poor, or promoting any good design, I shall *get an inheritance the more hastily* by so much. Is it so? Take God's word for an answer, *But the end thereof shall not be blessed*. Write that as a prophecy upon whatever of your estates God hath forbidden you to lay up, by his call to lay it out. The same is applicable to all that strength, safety, credit, or interest, you think you secure, by neglecting to serve your generation; *the end thereof shall not be blessed*.

SERM.  
V.

Deut.  
xxxii. 29.

Prov. xx.  
21.

To evidence this, and thereby further convince you that unusefulness yields reason of shame and sorrow; of shame, by your folly in it; of sorrow, by the mischief of it. Consider,

(1.) You can *keep* nothing with a blessing, which you have gotten or saved by unusefulness. Very often God even disappoints men of getting what they propose to get, by

SERM. by their unfaithfulness to him, and unusefulness to others; with *Balaam* they miss of what they so greedily desire, and some way or other God signally defeats them in the danger they thought to prevent, and the benefit they expected; so that they are forced to say, even at present, I have neither saved, nor gotten any thing, by refusing to serve my generation; I am as poor as if I had laid out for God what I covetously withheld, *Prov. xi. 24.* I am as much reproached, and as little esteemed, by these men, for fear of whose tongues, or dislike, I, betrayed the truth, as if I had faithfully adhered to it.

BUT upon supposition you have made some present advantage, yet you may not long keep it, God may soon blast it to the terror of others. *Judas* soon parted with the silver he got by betraying Christ, *Mat. xxvii. 34.* Some have been burnt in their house, by God's hand, who refuse to burn for the truth's sake. *Ananias* soon lost the use of what he reserved from publick service, and his life to the bargain. Oh! how many remarkable instances are upon record, of the ruined families of such as acquired estates by unfaithfulness to God, and uncharitableness to men? Their children could not keep what their parents perfidiously heaped: Nay, examples are very many, of those that did not keep, for their own time,

time, the wealth or reputation which they secured at the price of a common harm, but became beggarly and infamous.

SERM.  
V.

GOD hath made many mens parts to wither, and their health to decay, whose sloth made their gifts and strength unuseful to the publick. Such a method God took with *Israel*, when they disregarded God's house, and over-regarded their own: *Ye looked for much, and it came to little; and when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it. Why, saith the Lord of hosts; Because of mine house that lies waste, and ye run every man into his own house.* What advantage they got was small, and that soon turned to no account, because of God's blast; it was presently reduced to nothing.

BUT supposing God, for wise ends, suffer you to keep what you have gotten or saved, yet I am sure you cannot keep it *with a blessing*. If you are ungodly, it is your *snare*, which is the worst of curses: If you have serious spirits, you must uneasily enjoy it, and use it with bitter reflections, as what you hold not with God's good-will. 'Tis a defecrated accursed thing, that hazardeth and curseth the rest, which without this, might have been possess'd comfortably and safely; yea, and have been employed to blessed uses: whereas now God disdains to accept, or succeed the residue to his service, but he embittereth it to your disquiet,

SERM. disquiet, as well as emptieth it to your  
 V. dissatisfaction.

~~~~~ (2.) You shall be great *losers* by your  
 unusefulness, notwithstanding all you can  
 get or save thereby.

No profit, by deceitfulness towards God,  
 will countervail the loss you will sustain.  
 Bethink you whether you *have not lost al-*  
*ready* more than that amounts to: Do you  
 enjoy that peace you once had? Have you  
 that free access into his presence as some-  
 times you found? Doth he afford you that  
 communion with himself, and tokens of  
 his favour, in which you were accustomed  
 to relish the highest delight? Have you  
 not less composure and fixedness of heart,  
 when dangers threaten you? Do you ex-  
 pect the same returns of prayer, or use  
 you to meet with them as formerly? Are  
 not you more left to yourselves in duties  
 and temptations too? Have you not less  
 supports when afflictions befall you? Have  
 not your graces abated in their strength  
 and exercise? Have not you less of God  
 in every ordinance, and less success in your  
 performances? In such things thou dost  
 more than *vomit up the morsel thou hast*  
*eaten, and lose thy sweet words.*

Prov.  
 xxiii. 8.

BUT if thy gross neglects be impeni-  
 tently persisted in, thy losses will be far  
 greater, not only in further degrees of  
 what's above-mentioned, but thou shalt  
 lose all *the good* thou hast seemed to do.

*John*

*John* ii. 8. All shall be taken from thee which thou appeareth to have, yea, or really hast, *Mat.* xxv. 28, 29. Thou shalt lose all thy *hopes*, however great or confident; thou shalt lose that *life* which thou did so over-fondly love, *John* xii. 25. thou shalt lose thy *own soul*, which the gain of the whole world cannot recompence, *Luke* ix. 24. You shall not find the good promised to the merciful and righteous, which is no less than *life, righteousness, and honour*. You shall forfeit all the *higher degrees* of glory promised to the eminently useful; yea, and the lesser degrees promised to the faithfully useful, tho' not so eminent. You shall neither be ruler of *ten cities*, nor of *five*; no *entrance into the joy of your Lord* shall be admitted you. The rivers of God's pleasure you shall never taste; that beatifick vision you shall never experience; the crown of glory you shall not wear; for these God hath confined to the faithful labourer. Can you that never attempted, or soon fainted in serving God in your generation, hope to reap as they *who fainted not in well-doing*? Shall you who *laid up nothing in store, no treasure in heaven*, expect to be *rich* there, as they who did? Its in vain, and forest disappointment will attend it: For the utterly unfruitful will have no interest in any of that glory; the less useful will miss of the higher degrees of it. O compute your gain

SERM.

V.

Prov. xxi.

21.

Luke xix.

Matt. xxv.

21.

Gal. vi. 9.

Luke xii.

33.

1 Tim. vi.

19.

SERM. gain and loss! and what idiot could have  
 V. made a weaker choice, or taken a more  
 ~~~~~ foolish course than you have done? Folly  
 will put you to the blush, to see how  
 vainly you refused to *be rich towards God*  
 by publick service, that you might get a  
*treasure for yourself* by your *layings up*, in  
 a neglect of common usefulness, *Luke xii.*  
*18, 19, 21.* He was branded as a *fool* in  
*bestowing all* his goods in his barns, and  
 laying out nothing that he might be *rich*  
*towards God*: And so will all be marked  
 who imitate him.

(3.) You shall endure great *punishments*  
 for your unusefulness.

BESIDES a privation of good, God will  
 sensibly imbitter this sin: He often doth  
 testify against it in the posterity of the un-  
 profitable, who, by being so, *trouble their*  
 Prov. xi. 29. *own house*. There are many curses lying  
 on the head of such as with-hold relief from  
 the poor, assist not in a common danger,  
 and contribute not to publick good when  
 capacitated for it, *Prov. xi. 26. Judg. v.*  
*23.* all which you stand exposed to by  
 your unusefulness. Have not you already  
 met with some remembrances, that God  
 dislikes your selfish ways and narrow spirits?  
 Hath not he emptied your mercies, em-  
 bittered your comforts, filled your souls  
 with terrors, and encounter'd you with a  
 frowning countenance? Hath not he let  
 satan loose upon you or yours?

BUT



BUT these are but the *beginnings of sorrows*, and prefaces of greater woes, unless you repent; he will *cut thee down as a barren fig-tree*, for thy great leaves *without fruit*, for thy *cumbring the ground* where thou mightest be useful, *Luke xiii. 5, 6.* How full of terrors will death present itself, when God will force thy conscience to reflect on thy many neglects, with a clear view of the hateful causes of them, and the miserable effects thereof? With anguish thou wilt then bemoan thyself, and vainly wish for the past opportunities of service, and that thou hadst a heart to have improved them better.

DEATH, thus full of stings, will lodge thee in the unseen state; but, alas! how unprovided and ill-prepared? The face of thy judge will be terrible, when he shall demand an *account of thy stewardship*, and reckon with thee about his *talents*, and thy occupation of them, *Mat. xxv. 19.* It will be in vain to deny or diminish your trust; and what answer can you find that can satisfy him, or please yourselves? If you hope his merits may be pleadable by you; he'll answer, they are not applied but according to my promises. You may as well expect they shall be imputed without faith, as to a dead faith; a faith that did not invigorate to holy fruitfulness and fidelity in my service, was a dead faith, and so no faith in gospel estimate,

SERM. mate, and therefore cannot *save*, James ii.

V. 14, 20.



To plead your idleness, fear or covetousness, will be to proclaim the provoking causes of your approaching ruin. What a heart-cutting charge will you find drawn against you, with a sentence pursuant thereto: Thou wert ashamed of me before men, now I am *ashamed* of thee before my father, *Mark* viii. 38. Thou didst deny me in the other world, now I *deny* thee in this world, *Mat.* x. 33. *When I was an hungry, thou didst not feed me; when I was in prison, thou didst not visit me: depart therefore from me, thou cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.* Thou didst *hide* my talent, (yea talents) therefore *cast this unprofitable servant into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.* What mind can conceive the misery included in a condition made up of all the woes these several expressions import? Were they believed thoroughly, what we may now conceive of them, would overwhelm a man that but seems in danger of enduring this misery; and being that these several places describe the sentence pronounced against the unprofitable, who have neglected a common good (as well as their own souls) and betrayed the publick interests of Christ in their day, it follows that whatever in each place aggravates their

Mat. xxv.  
41.

Mat. xxv.  
50.

their misery, must be put together to give us a just account thereof. Can your heart endure but the supposing yourself the person whom Christ singleth out in the view of angels and men, and thus speaks to from his tribunal, Thou selfish, false, and useless wretch, so vile, that without reproach to my perfections, to my holy word and glory, I can shew no favour to thee (which is Christ's being *ashamed* of him) I do here reject all thy pretensions to my image, merits, covenant and service; and do declare thou art no living member, follower, servant or witness of mine, nor is my honour, truth or fulness concerned at all in thy being happy (which is Christ's *denying him*.) Thou art now fallen into my hands, and the time of my vengeance is come: I pronounce thee guilty of perfidioufness to my name and interests, and unprofitable to others and thyself, in not rightly employing my talents for common benefit, as well as thine own. For this I now effectually and irrevocably adjudge thee to the *loss* of all felicity, glory, grace and joy, which my presence doth afford, and this without any future *hopes* from any further strivings with thee, or offers to thee; and be thou now sealed and *separated* to the height of misery (that is, *depart from me, you cursed*) a misery in its nature and degree *so great*, as what's fitted to torment those capital enemies of

SERM. mine, *the devil and his angels*, who shall

V. be thy companions, because they were thy  
 rulers ; *so painful to thy body as the hottest fire*, and not less to thy soul, else it were not fitted to torment the *devils*, who are spirits ; so full of *horror* as darkness is, yea a darkness as remote and free from light as can be, (that is, *outer darkness*) and all so *resented, felt, and afflictive*, as to cause the extremest sorrow, anguish and fretting against God, thy companions and thyself (*there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*) And as for *duration* ; its *everlasting* fire, its for ever that this sentence shall take hold of, and be executed upon thee ; which is confirmed by another place that declareth the continuance of the misery of unuseful men, under the emblem of *chaff*, as opposed to useful *wheat* ; *the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire* ; which is the same with those words, *their worm dieth not, and their fire is not quenched.* There's no hopes of an alteration of their estate, unless words cannot express the eternity of hell-torments ; yea, unless sinners may be reclaimed when *expelled* from all the gracious influences of the divine presence (implied in *depart from me.*) Yea, unless there be a more *valuable sacrifice* for sinners, than the son of God was ; for this will not relieve them, *Heb.* ix. 26. Yea, if there be not an administration for reducing sinners, *after, and fitter*

Luke iii.  
17.

Mark ix.  
46.

*fitter than the kingdom of Christ* ; for this will be *delivered up*, when his sentence passeth the first time on sinners found then solemnly upon the departed and living, and executed upon devils, who till then are prisoners, *1 Cor. xv. 23, 24, 26, 28. 2 Pet. ii. 4.* compared with *Mat. viii. 29.* Ought not you to tremble at this prospect of eternal misery ? Yet if you are these unfaithful and unprofitable sinners during life, you will be thus found guilty and sentenced when you die. Consider again and again what thou must hear, feel and endure, for thy unprofitableness ; add this to the great things thou lovest by it, and also that what now thou seemest to get or save through unusefulness, cannot at present be kept with a blessing ; when thou hast done thus in a serious manner, I will appeal to thyself, whether thy folly is not gross enough to make thee ashamed, and thy misery great enough to fill thee with terror, that unusefulness in thy age hath been allowed by thee ? Yea, I dare give you leave to put all the loss, charge, labour and danger of publick service, with all the ease, safety, and benefit of unserviceableness ; and set them all against the fore-mentioned mischiefs which attend the unprofitable ; and if thou believest the certainty of these, be then affected at thy barrenness, as the cause appears to thyself ; nay, were there but a

SERM.  
V.  
~~~~~

SERM. probability, nay, but a possibility that these  
 V. fruits of unprofitableness were true, it  
 were sufficient to make thee ashamed and  
 grieved for it.

*Obj.* THO' I must agree that its folly to become liable to these mischiefs, yet are *all* who are unuseful subject to endure them? For if so, who shall escape? Supposing a capacity to service; I shall briefly answer.

*Ans.* THERE is, 1. A degree of unusefulness, which through weakness and temptation may oft befall a godly man, which indeed shall not bring eternal misery upon him; tho' God usually testifies his displeasure against it in this life.

2. THERE is an unusefulness which will infallibly bring eternal misery upon whoever is guilty of it. If it be not so, you must question the plainest discoveries of the gospel of truth.

*Object.* 2. How shall I know the *kind* and *degree* of that unusefulness that will certainly bring eternal misery, from that which a godly man may be guilty of thro' weakness and temptation?

*Ans.* A full answer to this and the other objections may be gathered from what is largely insisted on in the former heads. But because some may not so easily apply that to such particular cases; I shall therefore give you these short hints.

(1.) THE usefulness of any good man is  
 such

such as doth consist with an *unfeigned* dedication, and *habitual* devotedness of himself and all he hath to God in Christ, and this persevered in. He is no believer or good christian, that is not thus devoted to God; and such unusefulness as is consistent with this, is not a mark of hell. But that unusefulness which is not consistent with unfeigned dedication, and habitual devotedness to God in Christ, is an infallible mark of eternal misery, if persisted in.

SERM.  
V.  
~~~~~

(2.) HE that shall escape eternal misery, is not unuseful in the *prevailing* scope of his life; but every son of perdition is so; the *course* of his life is unprofitable, and thence he is denominated unfruitful in his best state; the stated bent of his soul is to do more hurt than good.

(3.) WHAT good he doth who shall escape hell, he usually doth it in *uprightness*, from love and obedience to God, with a believing respect to God in Christ; but the child of wrath, in whatever seeming good he doth, hath a greater regard to *carnal* considerations, and acteth not from faith, love, and obediential regard to God.

(4.) THE good man *repents* of, and bewails his unusefulness, when convinced of it, and heartily desires to know wherein he is culpably unuseful, that he may reform, as well as by faith in Christ sue out his pardon upon repenting of it. But

SERM. the ungodly is *hardened* in his unusefulness,  
 V. unwilling to know it, set against reform-  
 ing, if not insensible of his need of pardon,  
 yea oft justifies himself in his selfish un-  
 profitable course.


(5.) THE true christian is truly glad and *thankful* when God doth most incline and inlarge his heart to overcome his selfishness, and to act in the most useful serviceable manner, tho' no carnal respects of his own be served thereby ; yea, tho' loss, reproach, and suffering attend it, so God be but honoured, and a common good subserved. But the carnal man, if he hath been over-ruled to any thing which proves useful, yet if his own credit or worldly benefit be not advantaged, and much more if he comes to suffer by it ; he is grieved, and repenteth of what he hath done, whatever honour God receives, or benefit others get thereby. By these things you may know whether you are such unuseful persons as shall be pardoned and saved, or such unuseful persons as shall endure eternal misery, if you persist in this state.

*Objec.* 3. BUT tho' I continue unuseful in that manner, as the word of God declareth eternal misery will follow upon it ; yet I shall be safe if I *believe* in Christ for the pardon of it, and that I'll do, and yet not reform my course.

Mat. vi.  
 19.

*Ans.* DECEIVE not thyself with vain words, what thou sowest, that thou shalt reap.



reap. And be it known to thee, that no SERM. faith in Christ will be available to thy V. pardon, which is not *effectual* to turn  thee from that unusefulness, and which doth not include in it a dedication and prevailing habitual devotedness of *thyself* to Christ, and his service in a common good. A *living faith worketh by love*, and a dead faith will never justify; yea, itself is condemned as a false faith, if it want good Gal. v. 6. works, when opportunity for them is afforded. And that man must impose upon himself, who can imagine that the faith which is necessary to pardon, must work *by love*, and yet not work in love towards our neighbours at all; but if you grant it must work in love towards our neighbour, I ask, must it not work towards all that are designed by the word *neighbour*, whom we are to love? If so, it includes all men whatever within the reach of my ability to do good to; and if it be by love to all them that it will work, it must express itself in those works that instance the sincerity of our love to them for their benefit; and so true faith will work towards all as far as love is due to them, and do all that sincere love to them will prompt to, which is no less than serving our generation, or that publick usefulness which you neglect. Can the tempter still delude you to think, that you will have a pardon of your unusefulness, by such a  
faith

SERM. faith as doth not make you resolve to be  
 V. useful? Yea, or doth not effectually pro-  
 duce this usefulness as you are called  
 thereto? Alas! you contradict, yea, nullify  
 a justifying faith, when you say, I will  
 not reform my useless life, and yet I will  
 believe in Christ for a pardon of it; the  
 English of which is, I will believe in Christ  
 for pardon with such a faith as Christ never  
 promised pardon to, and upon which he  
 will never pardon me. This, instead of  
 mitigating thy folly in being unuseful, doth  
 greatly augment and proclaim it; it sets  
 thee no safer from endless misery, but by  
 encouraging thee in the course that cer-  
 tainly leads to it; it makes thy enduring  
 that misery the surer.

## S E C T. V.

2 *Exh.* RESOLVE henceforward to be  
 useful in your generation; yea, eminently  
 useful, if capable thereof.

ALL I have hitherto insisted on tends to  
 this, that you may resolve at last to engage  
 in this work. For this end, I have explained  
 this duty, and commended the performance  
 thereof; for this I have said so much,  
 to discover the neglects of it, and to con-  
 vince of the folly and danger of those  
 neglects: All which will be lost, if you  
 go hence unresolved to be publick blessings  
 in your day.

WHAT

WHAT avail all arguments, if they incline not our backward hearts to usefulness? They will do no more than discover our obstinateness, and aggravate our condemnation; but in hope of a better effect, I shall address myself to each of you.

THE more remis you have been hitherto, the more incumbent on you it is, now to engage your souls in this work; from this time, do what you can to serve the will of God in your generation; *devise great and liberal things.* Let nothing set bounds to your usefulness, but a natural or moral incapacity; *i. e.* somewhat impossible, or something unlawful. What's impossible God requires not; and to do, or *speake wickedly, or deceitfully for God, he will not accept.* But what's lawful, and within your power, omit not; the greater it is, the more will God be honoured, others benefited, and thy own divine temper expressed.

BE pleased with the largest opportunities of service, and faithfully answer each; trifle not, but be in earnest; move not slowly, but run *the ways of God's commandments, as one whose heart is enlarged by him.* Beat not the air, as if uncertain of the nature or tendency of thy work; its for God, it will end in glory, *1 Cor. ix. 26.* Let us each in our places say, with *Nehemiah, cap. ii. 20. The Lord will prosper us,*

SERM. *us, therefore we, his servants, will arise and*  
 V. *build.*

~ ~ ~ THAT I may more usefully urge this general exhortation, I shall direct it according to some different circumstances, which you may be in, and answerably direct and plead with you.

1. To such as are still *unwilling* to serve their generation.

EITHER you are convinced that this is your duty, or you are not; if you are persuaded its your duty, what peace or hope can you possess whilst you live in the neglect of it? If you think it is not your duty, what sense can you put upon so many plain scriptures that command it? That promise such rewards to, and assistances in it? That threaten such fore miseries to the neglecters of it? That so approve of, and praise the practice and practisers of it; and brand the name of such as accursed, who refused to do so? If these things suffice not to prove a duty, nothing can; and I am sure, God hath not excepted your names from the obligation to obey it any more than others. But whether convinced that this is your duty, or unconvinced, pray consider, as you *are men*, you are not born for yourselves, but for your country too: Nature dictates this, heathens assert it, your own hearts commend it in others, and disapprove the contrary; yea, many brutes reproach

proach you, when they'll hazard them- SERM.  
selves to defend their young, and secure V.  
each other against a common enemy or  
mischief.

As you are men *created by the living God*, you are accountable to him ; you ought to answer the ends for which he made you, which were to serve his purposes, and bring him glory. He was too wise and holy to make you lawless as to himself, or to the community of which you are members ; nor is he so remiss a governor, as not severely to animadvert on offences so publickly mischievous.

As you are called *christians* bethink yourselves, the Lord Jesus redeemed you, that you might return to a state of subjection and service, and *under that law* you are to him, *Rom. xiv. 9.* Its no small mercy that he calls you to this, considering you were condemned rebels, and that he is ready to accept it, and assist you in it. What ingratitude is it to live to yourselves, and not to him who paid so dear for your ransom ? *1 Cor. vi. 20.*

FURTHER, consider the before-described *miserics*, which you wilfully choose, and the glorious  *blessings* you certainly forfeit by your unprofitableness ; herein you are cruel to yourselves, when you fondly think it is self-indulgence ; you destroy yourselves, and yet weakly pretend  
... 's-advantage. Reflections upon your  
madness

SERM. madness herein will be a great part of  
 V. your torment.

PERHAPS you have not thought what you expect from others, tho' they must be unobliged to you, upon the same reasons as you can give for your being free from the duty of usefulness to them ; to say nothing of what you expect from the blessed God, and what every moment you receive, tho' you so ill requite him. Did not you expect your parents care, the magistrates defence, your ministers labours, your neighbours favour and help ? How would you be dealt by, if you were in the case of the poor or distressed, and they in your's ? Would you think it well done in all, or any of these, to be as unconcerned, selfish, oppressive, cruel, or useless, as you resolve to be to them, in whatever capacity or relation you stand. Our Lord's rule was approved by *Pagans*, tho' condemned by you, *Mat. vii. 12.* What would become of the interest of Christ, the welfare of the nation, the good of societies, religious or civil, if every man were as selfish and unconcerned for a common good as you resolve to be ? All safety, harmony, liberties, order, and comfort, would be expelled, and their contraries alone take place : But, if this state of things be thy abhorrence, ask thyself, why should not all others be as selfish as I am, if it be justifiable in me ? Or, why should  
 not

not I be as publick-spirited as they, if it be praise-worthy and useful in them? Are you an ill magistrate, why should any others be better? Are you an unfaithful minister, why should any others be more faithful? Are you careless of the common liberties of your country or city, why should any other, in your station be more concerned? Are you strait-handed to the poor, wherefore should others of your estate be more liberal? Are you indifferent about the truth, interest and gospel of Christ, why should any other in your circumstances more expose themselves? You must consent that all these may as justly excuse themselves from benefiting others as you can; or else you are most basely spirited, to think others should serve a common good that you may share therein; but that you must be excepted from contributing to that service, that so you may pursue your own private interest the more.

*Directions.* WEIGH these things often, and deliberately judge of thy resolves not to serve thy generation. Go and *humble* thyself before God, and earnestly *pray* to him, in Christ's name, to change thy heart, subdue thy lusts, and give thee another spirit: *Enter into covenant* with Christ, to *deny thyself*, to take up thy cross and follow him. From this time firmly engage in Christ's strength, that thou wilt not  
*consult*

SERM.  
V.  
~~~~~

SERM. *consult thy flesh* in thy undertakings, but  
 V. keep thyself from under the influence of  
 a narrow spirit, and base lusts, as being  
 very ill advisers in thy course of life, and  
 as unfit disposers of thy estate, gifts, or  
 power. Set upon doing publick good *pre-*  
*sently*, tho' it be with great reluctancy at  
 first; the less good thou hast hitherto  
 done, now attempt to do the more: And  
 the later you begin, redeem the remainder  
 of your days by the greater projects and  
 more vigorous endeavours. Pray earnestly,  
 and attend gospel means for sincere love  
 to God and man, and for a believing sight  
 of invisible things; and keep your con-  
 sciences under a tender, lively sense of God's  
 authority, and the day of judgment.

2. To such as are unfeignedly *willing*  
 to serve their generation, and account it a  
 greater mercy than the greatest estates or  
 abilities with a narrow soul, which thereby  
 would be a snare, Abhor a suggestion as  
 if God dealt hardly by you, in making  
 service your duty, or inclining you to it;  
 for, in the first, God's wisdom and good-  
 ness in the government of this world ap-  
 pears: In the last, he hath honoured  
 and benefited you, in anointing you his  
 instruments. Our Lord Jesus was wont  
 to say, *It is more blessed to give than to re-*  
*ceive.* Which the apostle useth as a mo-  
 tive to mens labouring, that they *might*  
*support the weak, relieve the needy, &c.*

Act. xx. 35

We



We imitate God as far as we are benefi- SERM.  
cent, for he is the fountain whence all V.  
wants are supplied, tho' he is benefited  
by none; and yet, for our encouragement  
in doing good, he is pleased to account  
himself a borrower; *He that bath pity on* Prov. xix.  
*the poor, lendeth to the Lord.* Not that 17.  
you can give what is not his already, but  
that he is as sure to repay, as if you lent  
it to him.

BUT this head being too general to ad-  
mit so distinct an application, as the fe-  
veral sorts and conditions of such who  
are truly willing to serve their generation  
requires; I shall address myself to them  
in these several instances, which distinguish  
their cases, and give suitable directions.

I. To such as are capable of no *very*  
*great* service to their generation; as be-  
ing of small estates, low parts, and the  
like.

SERVE you your generation as you can  
in your lower place: To which end, *beg*  
*God's direction* that you may not mistake  
your place or work; nor be left to your  
self in the meanest service. *Go not out of*  
*your own calling*, for God will neither ac-  
cept nor bless encroachments on other  
mens work, nor your usurpation of power  
of your own heads; no, nor at their  
pleasure who are not authorised to give it.  
*Do not presumptuously attempt what is a-* 1 Cor. vii:  
*bove your ability*; for that's not your duty, 20.  
and Levit. x. 1.

SERM. and it may turn to publick detriment.

V. Take care that you *pretend* not publick usefulness as a *cover* to an idle neglect of your callings, or pragmatik business in what belongs not to you : For this discovers your corruption, and will end in hurt and scandal. Be sure that what you give to good uses *be your own*, and not what is another man's : For this is fraud and not charity ; and instead of being liberal, you will be unjust. And yet be conscientiously ready and vigorous to do *all the good* you can ; your lesser ability must be as faithfully used as if it were greater ; nor will your having no more, excuse your unprofitableness with what you have. *Instruct your family*, tho' you are not preachers ; pray for, and be affected with the state of the *church* of God and the nation, if you can do no more ; *vote* for good men into office ; *encourage* faithful ministers as you are able ; *give* to what poor you can, and acquaint others with the case of such you cannot relieve yourselves. What little good you can do, let it be done *cheerfully*, and from love. See that you use diligence, and avoid all waste in your persons and families, that you may be capable of doing the greater good. Be favourable in discourse, exemplary in life, and ready to help those who know less than yourselves. And, lastly, do not *envy* others, nor murmur that you

you are in no higher station than you are, for God knew what place of service you were fittest for: if you be faithful in that, he will accept and reward it; and if fit, he will capacitate you for higher work. Nay, you may prove of far greater use in this station, than you can now perceive: Who knows what success God may give to thy advice, or other endeavours? To thy children, servants, &c. and how eminent they may prove?

SERM.  
V.  
~~~~~

2. To such as are capable of *eminent* service to their generation, and willing to it; keep a *humble* sense of your unworthiness, that God should make you able and willing to do him greater service than others, and answerably praise him for it as the sovereign bestower both of ability and willingness. Be *watchful* over your hearts, that your ends be upright in whatever service you perform, and abhor an opinion of meriting from God by the most you do; in all which you have *David* for a lively example: *We thank thee, and bless thy glorious name: But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? For all things come of thee; all this store cometh of thine hand, and is all thine own. I know also, my God, that thou triest the heart, and hast pleasure in uprightness, &c.* Do not judge it enough that you perform as great services as others, when you

1 Chron.  
xxix. 10  
---17.

SERM. are capable of, and called to more; nor  
 V. let the less useful (however many) of your  
 ~~~~~ station, prescribe to you, for they will not  
 justify your neglects. Let not mere difficulty,  
 danger, nor expence, cause you to conclude,  
 yea, or to suspect, you are not called to this  
 or that eminent service, for your call must be  
 adjusted by other rules (of which before). Where  
 opportunity for great things offer, *delay* not, lest  
 that being lost, it may not be recalled, or more  
 hinderances intervene. Judge of usefulness and  
 incumbent service, by what your *consciences* suggest  
 in great dangers (as on a sick-bed) and in the  
 liveliest frame by fullest communion with God  
 (as after the Lord's-supper, &c.) for these are  
 seasons to make the truest judgment in what  
 concerneth eminent usefulness. Never make your  
 abilities or activeness serve a *faction* as distinguished  
 from, much less as opposed to a publick interest;  
 for hereby you act selfishly, and not as christians,  
 and will be more hurtful to the publick concerns  
 of Christ, than if you did nothing at all; and be  
 the more guarded against this, because the heads  
 of factions will sollicit such as you, and satan  
 will set in with your misguided zeal, as knowing  
 he can make no other use of you, now that you  
 are honestly willing to be serviceable. If you  
 are persons eminently useful, do not hastily govern  
 your activity  
 by

by the *opinion* of others; if weak men misinterpret your well-adjusted attempts, be you resolved; should many good men blame you never so much for your performance, adhere to, and still pursue it whilst you have good ground to believe its the fittest means to prevent a publick mischief, or produce a general benefit. The reasons of this direction are these; the opinion and censures of most men are very weak and misguided; satan hath access to the imagination of good men, and often employs such to obstruct great designs, *Matt. xvi. 23.* And men entirely devoted to God in the service of their generation, after some time of faithfully acquitting themselves therein, they stand more in God's secret, and by experience are fitter to judge of publick good and hurt than other good men be.

WHATSOEVER offers as your present work, do, not thinking lesser things needless, when you have not greater things at present to undertake; for you know not what great good a seemingly small endeavour may do (as advice to a child). This is your present work; the most of your time is not filled with opportunities of very great services, these lesser attempts being very frequent, as taking up so much of our time, will amount together to great service, a very great part of our lives will

SERM. be unprofitably spent, if we neglect these  
 V. lower endeavours, and most mens unuse-  
 fulness is greatly owing to a disregard to  
 these. But yet see the greatest services are  
 still preferred to lesser when in competi-  
 tion. Keep a jealous watch over your-  
 selves, that no *lusts* prescribe your work,  
 be admitted into it, or nourished by it;  
 Phil. ii. 3. to which end, see that you do *nothing*  
*through strife or vain-glory*, or for cove-  
 tous ends. *Despise* not others who cannot  
 equal your service, or do need it; think  
 not your great services give you an allow-  
 ance in any way of sin, or that they are a  
 compensation for it, or will be accepted in  
 commutation for the opposite duties, &c.  
 I give this direction, because satan's wiles  
 are deep, and his attempts on the emi-  
 nently useful are many, various, and un-  
 wearied; the remains of corruption are  
 great in the best, lusts are deceitful, and  
 signal service is an apt occasion to be im-  
 proved.

LOOK to *Christ* for strength and fea-  
 vour, for fresh anointings, and continual  
 conduct, that you may omit nothing which  
 God assigneth you to do in your generation,  
 nor take up with any excuse which he will  
 not approve of when he comes to judge the  
 Phil. iv. secrets of all hearts; because *of ourselves*  
 13. *we can do nothing*; *by his strength we can*  
*do all*. We need new supplies in every  
 new business, and the more as its impor-  
 tance

tance is; and by dependance we shall and must receive it. SERM.  
V.

3. To useful persons under *discouragements* in their service.

STILL persist in your work; for the greater opposition you meet with in it, the more likely it is to be subservient to Christ's present designs, and to produce the greater effects in a common good, since satan is so active to obstruct thee: *Gird up the loins of your mind, and hope to the end.* 1 Pet. i. 13.

Whatever is a plain duty, will bring with it sufficient fitness, and not want success in due time; no rightly directed labour in the work Christ hath upon the wheel will be lost, tho' success may be delayed, and the work seem dead for a season, that so the world may be prepared to submit to it, and Christ's victory may appear the greater, as it baffleth the confidence of satan and his instruments. When ready to faint, tell thy soul, *I must not be weary in well-doing, for I shall reap if I faint not.* You have God as eminently concerned for you, and in you, as you can be engaged for him; his perfections will uphold you in all that which his authority sets you upon; and he allows you to place to his account the losses, reproaches, and hardships you sustain in his cause, neither shall you lose thereby, *Mark x. 29, 30.* Search lest there be any *sin* unrepented of which interrupt his supporting comforts,

SERM. or that you have too much *confided* in your  
 V. own abilities, or ascribed the honour of  
 ~~~~~ past successes or performances to your-  
 selves. *Pour* out your complaints, and  
 your apprehensions of your own weak-  
 ness, before the Lord, who is full of pity  
 2 Cor. xii. and faithful, and whose *strength is manifest*  
 8, 9. *in our weakness*. Be much in the contem-  
 plations of *heaven*; review your own ex-  
 periences of seasonable sufficient supports,  
 when your fears were as great as at pre-  
 sent, and attentively think its but a little  
 while and my work is over: *He that shall*  
*come, will come, and will not tarry*; and all  
 the *promises* of perseverance were made to  
 souls in eminent service by doing and suf-  
 fering, which you may safely apply to  
 yourselves, expecting those greater conso-  
 lations and supplies which God will not  
 disappoint you in.

4. To useful persons inclining to *re-  
 missness* in the service of their generation.

THE greatest part of this discourse be-  
 ing so much directed to your case, I shall  
 only advise you to renew your *covenant*  
 with God in Christ. Reflect on your-  
 selves, what you found when vigorously  
 useful, and what you feel now in this de-  
 clining frame: Enquire what forfeitures  
 you have made of the Spirit's quickening  
 influences, or what lust begins to invade  
 your souls, or what carnal thing is setting  
 up for an idol. Pray earnestly for exciting  
 grace,



grace, and be much in such foliloquies as these, *Am not I a redeemed sinner? and shall I neglect the interests of my Redeemer? Shall I disregard the end of my being, break my vows, be false to my trust?* Is it not in *well-doing* that I grow weary? Are my talents less accountable for than they were? or have I now more reason to think that my abilities were not given for publick use? Where shall I stop, if I recover not? What shall I be doing the residue of my time, if I cease to be useful? What may I meet with to awaken me out of this slothful sleep? Do others less need my help, or have I the leave of God to be remiss? Can I think Christ a worse master than before, or heaven less worthy of my pains? Dare I commend the unprofitable part of mankind, that I am thus about to justify; or condemn the eminently useful, whom now I seem resolved to censure? Must not I shortly, on a death-bed, reflect on what a barren life I am going to live, and the blessed courses I put a stop too? Have I done more already than Christ deserves at my hands, who died for me? or would I be content he should now more remissly intercede in my behalf? Plead such things closely and frequently with your hearts, and force a deliberate answer, that all may issue in fresh resolves to be more vigorous than ever, and in shame and grief that you could be inclinable to remissness in publick service.

I SHALL

SERM. I SHALL conclude the whole with  
 V. three cautions, to all who are willing to  
 ~~~~~ serve their generation.

I. EQUAL nothing with the publick which is short thereof, especially yourselves. Let every thing have its due regard, and no more. Our esteem of things should be according to their value, and our concern is irregular, if dissonant from our just esteem. *Moses's words, If not, blot me out of thy book* ; and *St. Paul's, For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren*, were not absolute desires, but the regular indications of a publick spirit adjusting things as compared together : A common good is above a particular, and the more common still the more estimable. The very reason why divine worship is proper to God, is, because he is author of all, above all, and infinitely more than the whole creation ; yea, and we cannot but most intend his glory in our undertakings, as our regards are most extensive ; and make every thing a selfish idol, as we postpone what's more publick to it. Nevertheless, the true order is generally inverted : Most men do not account a mischief or benefit to be greater or less, as they affect the publick, but as they affect themselves ; we begin and end at the wrong point, and erect a false standard when our main concern is, how will such publick affairs profit or damage

damage first, my own person, then my own family, then my own party, then my own nation (if at all it will reach so far.)

SERM.  
V.

Be warned against this preposterous course; look at yourselves but as small parts of the whole, and to signify no more than as the publick is advantaged by you. Acknowledge the interest all have in you according to their true order, and your capacity, and obligation to be serviceable to each. Be uniform in your course, and let God in a common good (as such) be your governing end. Fill up each place and relation you stand in; let each have a due regard, and no more: Your own families, the particular church you belong to, and the Catholick church above that; also your own city and nation, and the world; let all these have their due, and this in just order and proportion, not exclusively of each other. Your prayers must reach the world, your mental communion the catholick church, occasional communion must extend to other churches, besides that wherein you are stated members, (tho' in many things they differ from you.) In short, confine not your care, estate, or advice, below, or otherwise than that mind will dictate, which accounts the body more valuable than a member, and a common good than a particular. If you are ministers, abhor a thought  
that

SERM. that your office obligeth you to mind

V. no more souls than your own flocks.

2. NEGLECT not *yourselves* whilst you mind the publick.

Do not disregard your own soul, no nor body neither; keep the last in a fitness for service, and be ever watchful that the first be in a meetness for glory, and improving for it: *Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. Receive yourselves the Christ and mercy you offer to others; look not so abroad, as to forget you have a home; yea, labour to affect and profit your own souls, by all your endeavours to profit others; to walk in the light you give, and to grow in grace by doing all the good you can. If you are ministers, oft think of, I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a cast-away.*

3. DISREGARD not the first or least *declinings*, in those graces that are the springs of publick service; but be intent to get their *vigorous* exercise restored as soon as you perceive abatement.

VERY *imperfect* *actings* will follow decaying graces, and *strengthening* the last is the way to perfect the first, *Rev. iii. 2.* As *Ephesus* decayed in her first love, she abated her first works, which were labours and sufferings for publick use, *ver. 3.* Unbelief, enmity to God and man, and a narrow

narrow spirit grow, as faith, love, and a publick spirit weaken; and those will as much obstruct your usefulness, as these contribute to it; they will pervert your judgment, abate your delight, aggravate your difficulties, frame excuses, find diversions, enervate motives, and many other ways lessen your service; and as they grow, they tend to still further abatements in the opposite graces. Oh! where will these declensions stop, if you allow them? And every day you will be less able and disposed to recover your former strength; and consequently be less sure and fit to serve your generation.

## S E C T. VI.

2 *Obs.* THE usefullest persons *die*.

DAVID fell asleep. Shall I represent this as a warning, or as an encouragement to service? It hath something of both, and in each respect its a strong motive to serve our generation.

I. IT is a *warning* to be useful whilst you live; for work, or loyter you, death is daily making its approaches, and when it seizeth, it will be in vain to wish to be spared for greater use, or resolve to do what you hitherto neglected. Death sets a period to our endeavours to benefit the church or nation, our friends or relations; they can expect no further advantage by us.

SERM. us. Therefore in a sense of your own  
 V. frailty, and the certainty of dying with-  
 in a short while, resolve with our blessed

Joh.ix.4. Saviour, *I must work the works of him that sent me while it is day, the night cometh when no man can work.* Its a mercy to have nothing undone which God gave us life for, and to be finishing it when the arrest of death is felt.

2. Its an *encouragement* to such as faithfully serve their generation. The usefulest fall asleep ; not, indeed, if it were such a sleep as rendered the separated soul unactive, for continued service here would be more pleasing and profitable to them, than such a sleep as that ; but its a rest from labour, tho' not from work ; from pain, but not from pleasure to the departed soul, which will be with Christ ; and tho' seperated for a while, is sure to be re-united to the body at the resurrection. Its a woe to the unprofited world, that eminently useful men are dead, for you can hope for no further help, nor expect any benefit by them ; they left you barren and miserable after all their labours, and must be terrible witnesses against you. Its a loss to the church and nation, that such eminently useful men must die ; the defence, glory, and blessing of a people are removed ; what an open breach is made ? The earth is endangered by removal of such pillars. These are the *chariots of*  
*Israel,*

*Israel*, and the *horsemen thereof*. There SERM.  
 be but few such among the multitude of V.  
 christians, and their loss is not easily made up; but to the faithful eminently useful  
 saint, its a privilege that he shall die, (being all such are not to be translated.) He  
*would not live always*: For by death he Job vii. 16.  
 goes into better company; he'll be free'd  
 from a weight that clogg'd him tho' he  
 moved so fast; the sin and sorrow he felt  
 he is to feel no more; he shall enjoy  
 Christ in another manner, relish pleasures  
 in a higher way, and possess what he hoped  
 and waited for. Death must be his  
 great advantage, to whom faithful and publick  
 service is his very business and trade  
 whilst he liveth: *To me to live is Christ,  
 and to die is gain.*

INSTEAD of the application of this doctrine, I shall turn my discourse to the occasion of our present meeting, the death of your pastor Dr. SAMUEL ANNESLEY, in whom we have the whole text exemplified; *He served his generation, and he is fallen asleep.*

IN the last part, a just cause of mourning is presented, with respect to many more than ourselves; in the former, a lively example is proposed for our imitation; as to both, here's a convincing instance. We see its possible for men in our age to serve their generation, and yet the greatest usefulness prevents not death;  
 for

SERM. for he, who was so eminently useful, lies  
 V. now dead. He began early, he continued  
 ~~~~~ long, and never ceas'd to serve his genera-  
 tion, until by death he was allowed to rest  
 from his labours.

HE was born of very godly parents at *Kellingworth* near *Warwick*, Anno 1620. and their only child. The name *Samuel* was appointed for him by his eminently pious grandmother, who died before his birth, and gave this reason for her desire that he should be so called, *I can say I have asked him of God*. His infancy was as strangely impressed with the thoughts of being a minister, (to which his parents dedicated him from the womb) which so transported him from five or six years old, as to engage him to unusual industry in what improv'd him in order to it; then it was he took up a custom which he always observed, *viz.* reading twenty chapters in the bible every day. Our God, to whom the end is known from the beginning, was as provident in forming him for great service, as he was forward in those indications that he should be employed therein; this appeared in the hale and hardy constitution of his body, which was such, as to endure the coldest weather without hat, gloves, or fire. For many years he seldom drank any thing besides water; his sight so strong, that to his death he read the smallest print  
 without



without spectacles, and in a life lengthen'd to his seventy-seventh year. He was rarely sick; his natural capacity was good, and his temper vigorous and warm which his grace over-ruled (mostly) to undertake those excessive labours, and sustain the difficulties, which, without a body and mind so fashioned, had been impossible, in so long a course of service. And this vigour he so retained to his very death, as if God would give an instance, that the fervour of some mens souls in his work, were either independent on the body, or their bodies (with *Moses*) were still repaired even to old age, when he designeth extraordinary services by them.

SERM.  
V.



BUT which was more, he was (not only thus separated) but also *sanctified* from the womb; often since declaring, *He never knew the time he was not converted.*

ABOUT fifteen years of age he went to *Oxford*, where he gave such instances of his piety and diligence, as would engage a recital, if I resolv'd not to omit these, with all other things, (tho' very laudable) except his usefulness; his ripe fruits, which fed so many, my regard is to.

A HEART so naturally bent for God's glory, and the good of souls, could admit no longer delays from work, than what a due fitness for it, and a regular call unto it, made necessary; yet so long, conscience obliged him to desist, he well knowing

SERM. that the strongest desires of ministerial  
 V. work, in the unqualified and uncalled,  
 will not justify their usurpation of the  
 office, nor prevent disorders and damage  
 to the church and themselves, by their  
 publick performances.

HE began to cast his net as chaplain to  
 the earl of *Warwick* (then *admiral*) and  
 thence removed to *Cliff* in *Kent*, where  
 he met with a storm more tempestuous  
 than at sea; for the people of that place  
 being fond of their ejected minister, as  
 greatly pleasing them by his company at  
 their dancing, drinking, and merriments  
 on the Lord's-day, they were so prejudic'd  
 against this his successor, as to rise against  
 him with spits, forks and stones, threaten-  
 ing his death at his first coming; a hard  
 province for a divine not much above  
 twenty-two years of age! But here God  
 gave him room for his intense zeal, fit  
 objects to direct and engage his ministry  
 to conversion work, and an early speci-  
 men of his own resolvedness in God's  
 work, as well as experience of the good  
 God designed by him, and care he had of  
 him; for having some prospect of doing  
 good among that people, (who tho' igno-  
 rant and profane, yet not hardned by re-  
 sisting gospel light) he told them, *Let*  
*them use him how they would, he was re-*  
*solved to continue with them, till God had*  
*fitted them by his ministry to entertain a*  
*better,*

better, who should succeed him; but yet solemnly declared, that when they became so prepared, he would leave that place. Here his labours were unwearied, and such efficacy accompanied the word preached, and his winning behaviour, that in a few years the people were greatly reformed, their enmity changed into a passionate kindness, which appear'd, as in many other instances, so in their loud cries and many tears, when he let them know he judged himself obliged to remove, according to his former declaration, (not to decide whether such a promise was obligatory or no.) His tender concern lest any seeming lightness of his might prove a scandal to his young converts, so governed him, that he left this place with 400*l.* per annum; but divine providence had great purposes to serve hereby.

CLIFF was not a stage large enough for the uses God designed by this active soul, nor a hill high enough for the notice of one so exemplary. Having procured a successor fit to build on the foundation, so prosperously laid by him, he resigns himself to divine disposal, to be employed wherever his call should point with the clearest evidence. A very signal providence directed him to a settlement in *London*, anno 1652. by the unanimous choice of the inhabitants of *John* the apostle; soon after he is made lecturer at *Paul's*.

SERM. And in 1658, *Cripplegate* was made happy  
 V. by his settlement there. In this place he  
 continued a most laborious faithful preacher (tho' removed from his lecture in the year 1660) till that twice unhappy *Bartholomew-day*, 1662. the first by the *Parisian* massacre, this last by the *silencing* of about 2000 faithful ministers in this kingdom, where their labours were far more necessary than the ends pretended for their ejection were valuable. His abode hath been ever since in this city, where he finished his course, *December 31. Anno 1696.*

HAVING briefly represented the sphere wherein he moved with respect to his office and places of abode, &c. it remaineth that I give some hints of the nature and manner of his motion therein. Where shall I begin, when so many things present themselves? Its hard reducing them into order, when such a variety of great things meet; its not easy to judge which most contributed to his just character, *viz.* an eminently useful man in his generation. In most things he was a pattern worthy to be imitated: In many things it will be difficult for most I know to resemble him. And in what few things he came short of some, yet his integrity, zeal, and publick spirit, render'd him in extensive usefulness more than equal. In ministerial labours he was abundant; where was

a more constant preacher? Very oft, before his silencing, thrice a day; in the late troubles almost every day; since this liberty, twice every Lord's-day, (too long) even to his last sickness; being dissuaded from the last sermon, because of his illness after the morning's, he was unpersuadable, saying, *I must work whilst it's day.* Whoever knew him, from his very youth, refuse to preach in any place when asked? Few, if any, so ready to assist in fasts and lectures. The sick were sure of assistance if they sent to him; doubting souls never were denied access, or found discouragement, harshness, or treachery, when they made their cases known. Did his many labours abate their substance and tendency to common good? No, he so redeemed time, that his sermons were not raw, but well studied and substantial; his utterance not remiss, but earnest, as one concerned to profit others, being himself affected, and having something that very peculiarly expressed his *heartiness* in all he said. By his very often reading over the scriptures from his childhood, he became a great textuary; and by aptly produced texts, he oft surprised eminent ministers; as his solution of cases of conscience (which his sermons much consisted of) did instruct and satisfy them.

HIS care and toil extended to every place where he might be profitable: Of

SERM. whom in an equal station can it be so  
 V. truly said, On him was the care of all  
 the churches? When any place wanted a  
 minister, he set himself to get them one;  
 when any minister was oppressed by poverty,  
 he soon employed himself for his relief. O,  
 how many places had sate in darkness,  
 how many ministers had been starved, if  
 Dr. *Annesley* had died thirty-four years  
 since! The gospel he even forced into se-  
 veral ignorant places; and was the chief  
 (oft the sole) instrument in the education,  
 as well as subsistence, of several ministers.

*The Morning-lecture* (so profitable to ma-  
 ny) he alone supported; I wish it die not  
 with him: For what one man hath zeal  
 and interest enough (with leisure) to keep  
 it up? It was by him the meetings of mi-  
 nisters, before this liberty, were kept up;  
 and since the union, in his place and to  
 his expence, they have been continued.  
 What a multitude of all sorts were sup-  
 plied by his care! Bibles, catechisms, and  
 all profitable books, dispersed far and near.

THE sick, the widows, the orphans were  
 innumerable, whom he relieved and set-  
 tled. By the poor he was crowded as a  
 common father. You may well ask, how  
 could all this be done by him? I answer,  
 of all gifts, salary and incomes, he always  
 laid aside the tenths for charity, even be-  
 fore any were spent by him; which is the  
 greater instance of his bountiful mind,

considering his numerous family, many  
 offes and great streights : Thus his light  
 directed ; and then he would be faithful  
 to it, whatever expence or hardship follow-  
 ed. And being satisfied it was just to do  
 so, his fervent love to God and man pre-  
 vented all repinings, and made him a most  
 chearful giver. But this, since he was fi-  
 lenced, bearing no proportion to the great  
 things he constantly undertook, to supply  
 it he was the faithful almoner of many ;  
 and so importunate a petitioner for chari-  
 table uses, that few could escape or deny  
 him ; and most of his own people he had  
 instilled his own charitable disposition into  
 (who are apt to be of the same spirit with  
 their admired pastors.)

SERM.  
 V.  
 ~~~~~

THESE assiduous labours, and extensive  
 beneficence were accompanied with several  
 excellencies which sustained them, and  
 tended to make him a successful blessing,  
 or his heart and hands had failed.

HE was a man of great *uprightness*, he  
 squared not his profession by his secu-  
 lar interest, tho' he had a large family ;  
 yet he quitted a full maintenance rather  
 than sin against God by conformity. Be-  
 fore then he was turned out of his lec-  
 ture, and kept out a while, because he  
 could not comply with some extravaganc-  
 ies of the late times ; and since hath he  
 suffered, because he must witness for the  
 old truth against *antinomianism*. His in-

SERM. integrity made him a stranger to all tricks,  
 V. and sometimes his charity betrayed him to  
 be impos'd on by such as use them.

His *humility* was signal, he seem'd to have the meanest opinion of his own gifts, and labours, highly esteeming others, and envying none; no, not the acceptance of our promising young ministers. He might say, with *David*, *I pray*; as if made up of that. Every day he prayed twice in his family, to the last moment that he was capable. His usual way was to pray three or four times a day in his study. Upon every extraordinary occurrence in his house he kept a fast. Under every affliction, before he would speak of it, or pitch on means to redress it, he spread it still before God in prayer; which brought him, tho' a most affectionate husband, to bear the news of his wife's death with that composure, as calmly to say, *the Lord gave, the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord*. And after the greatest losses, he us'd to speak of them with an unconcernedness, as if another's, not his own. In prayer he was mighty, and the returns remarkable and frequent. He could trust God with all, and was still resign'd to his will. His solicitous concern was, that God might not be dishonour'd. When he lay sick, this was oft repeated, *Oh! that I may not dishonour God in my last moments, whom, in my poor manner, I made it the business*



*business of my life to honour. Oh ! that I* SERM.  
*may not dishonour my God by my impatience.* V.

Being one night under exceeding torture, he called his daughter, then present, and charged her not to entertain one hard thought of God, by any thing he felt, but be assured he is infinitely merciful, and none are happy but those that serve him ; he gives peace of conscience, that's beyond all the world can give ; none can die cheerfully but a christian ; he shines on my soul through Christ. God and heaven were so habituated to him, that in some disorder in his head, by his distemper fixing there, he still kept the same favour, breathed the same spirit, and spake of divine matters most consistently. His head was not free of those projects for God, which in health it was ever full of. I'll end this with Mr. Baxter's account of him (who knew not how to flatter or fear any man) *Dr. Annelley is a most sincere, godly, humble man, totally devoted to God.* (Mr. B's life.)

HAVING hinted some things that respect the excellency of this person, some may whisper, But what tokens of God's favour had this useful man more than others, he had many troubles and exercises ? God testified his favour to him in instances which he most esteemed, and pursued above all things ; yea, he despised and renounced all compared therewith ; which is enough to testify him a happy man, what-

SERM. whatever he endured or wanted ; God  
 V. kept him faithful in his work to the last ;  
 ~~~~~ for which he thus thanked God on his  
 death-bed ; Blessed be God, I can say, I  
 have been faithful in the work of the mi-  
 nistry above fifty-five years. He had great  
 success in his work ; many called him fa-  
 ther, as the instrument of their conversion ;  
 the worthy Mr. *Brand* was one ; many  
 called him comforter.

IN all his sufferings he found supports  
 which kept him as chearful as his office  
 and age allowed under all ; yea, in seven-  
 teen weeks pain he was without a discon-  
 tented word or thought. Signal returns of  
 prayer he frequently had ; and very close  
 communion with God in Christ. His  
 charity and care wanted not comfortable  
 effects. How many whom he contributed  
 to the education of, are useful ministers ?  
 In how many places doth religion flourish  
 by his means ? God gave him a great in-  
 terest in the hearts of most ministers and  
 serious people. How oft and long did  
 they pray for his life, as a publick blessing ?  
 And how generally is his death lamented ?  
 He thankfully owned God in all. He sig-  
 nally witnessed for him in his judgments on  
 several of his persecutors. One died sign-  
 ing a warrant to apprehend him. Many  
 might be instanced, but its fit we cover  
 such in acknowledgment of present quiet.

HE

HE had uninterrupted peace and assurance of God's covenant-love for above thirty years last past. Its true, he walked in darkness for several years before that, which is common to those who are converted in childhood, their change not being remarkable, and so apter to be questioned; and they often make up, in a long time, by frequent returns, the sad hours that others have pressing in at once. But God had a further design, *viz.* the fitting and enclining him to relieve wounded consciences by his ministry and discourse, wherein he was so eminent, that most troubled souls resorted to him. He used to say, that this made him unable to preach a sermon without some word to them.

THIS assurance had not one cloud in all his disease. He often said, I've no doubt, nor shadow of doubt; all is clear between God and my soul; he chains up satan, he cannot trouble me.

To conclude all, *He had an abundant entrance into God's kingdom.* He was reconciled to death, yea, so desirous of it, as hardly induced him to have his life prayed for. But hearing some ministers had been fervently praying for his life, he replied, I am then more reconciled to life than ever, for I am confident God will not give a life so eminently, in answer of prayer,

SERM. as mine must be, if he would not use it to  
 V. greater purposes than ever before.

YET some little time before his change, his desires of death appeared strong, and his soul filled with the foretastes of glory, often saying, Come my dearest Jesus, the nearer the more precious, the more welcome. Another time his joy was so great, that in an extasy he cried out, I cannot contain it; what manner of love is this to a poor worm? I cannot express the thousandth part of what praise is due to thee; we know not what we do when we offer at praising God for his mercies; its but little I can give, but, Lord, help me to give thee my all. I will die praising thee, and rejoice that others can praise thee better. I shall be satisfied with thy likeness; satisfied, satisfied! Oh my dearest Jesus, I come.

Now do not you think Christ is worth the faithfullest service which ends in this manner? To you of this congregation, (for whose salvation he was so concerned) shall I say, bewail the loss of him, when you are so sensible? Yet that's but just. Bless God for your enjoying his faithful labours so long; see that none of you perish, after such pains to save you; be established in the truths you have heard, which you see governed his life to such great purposes, and helped him to die with sure triumph: Shew your regard to his memory by kindness to his family, and by not  
 breaking

breaking off from this church, that he may not be reflected on by your giddiness, as if he taught you no better, or established you no more, than to be deluded to serve a carnal turn, in pretence of greater purity. You, his children, live your father's advice and example, or what a witness will he be against you? Let us all go hence with a due sense of it. The world hath lost a blessing, the church hath lost a pillar, the nation hath lost a wrestler with God, the poor have lost a benefactor: You, his people, have lost a faithful pastor; his children, a tender father; we, in the ministry, an exemplary fellow labourer.

SERM.  
V.  
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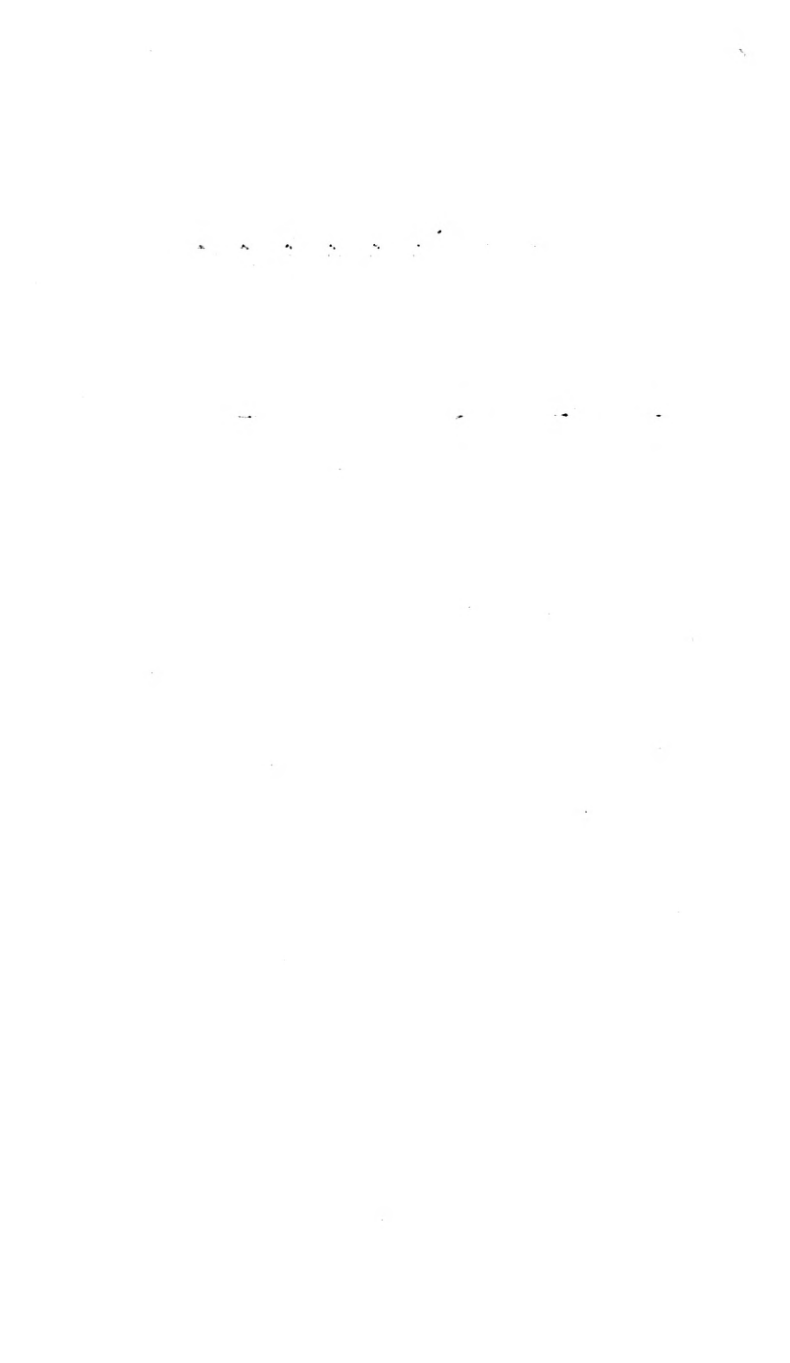
A  
SERMON

PREACHED TO THE  
SOCIETIES

FOR

*Reformation of* MANNERS,  
May 16. 1698.









TO THE  
**SOCIETIES**

FOR THE  
 Reformation of Manners,  
 In the CITIES of  
*London and Westminster.*



*WHEN first desired by you to preach the ensuing sermon, my compliance would have been more difficultly obtained, had I taken time to consider, that it came within the number of the discourses that were to be printed at your request; yea, to be the last of them. A subject exhausted by eleven divines of so great name*

B b and

*and worth, can receive little advantage by the succeeding attempts of a head so barren, and a heart so cold as mine. However, my promise being given, I intreated his assistance whose cause I plead; and the event I commit to him.*

*If I have insisted on any thing said by others (as its scarce possible to avoid) its not borrowed from them; for I consulted none of the former sermons in preparing this.*

*The medium which runs through this discourse is very fit, I'm sure, to inforce what is said before, and notwithstanding the defects of my management, I can say, I believe what I deliver, and approve heartily of your good design, and what's better urged by others to promote it.*

*Its matter of deepest sorrow, when villainies of all sorts abound, when men declare their sins with Sodom's insolency, when our settlement is thereby so exposed, and a  
probable*

*probable safety from the awfullest woes, is held by a thread so tender as the life of his Majesty King WILLIAM; that yet some persons of note require other motives to espouse this work of reformation; and many magistrates shift off the execution of the laws, tho' the oath of God be upon them.*

*How rare is a zealous Nehemiah? Nay, symptoms of our condition were less dangerous, if all who served at God's altar admitted Phineas for a pattern of concernedness in resisting sin as they are capable, tho' he is not to be imitated in the manner of his execution.*

*But amidst great causes of fears and lamentation, let us not ungratefully neglect to adore God's undeserved goodness, that our constitution retains so many good laws against gross enormities: The parliament hath made an address, and the king pursuant thereto, published*

*a proclamation, so excellently acknowledging the dueness, necessity, and value of reformation, with resolves of promoting it to the utmost. It were very afflictive, as well as uncharitable, to think a stop could be made here, and the execution of the laws suspended as formerly; for this would turn to the nation's reproach, and be an aggravation of its guilt, by rendring the forecited instances, a mere testimony against future neglects, and a cause of severer judgments.*

*Nor is it an inconsiderable presage of good, as well as a probable means of England's amendment, that you have formed yourselves into societies for the reformation of manners, a title becoming a christian name, an enterprize alike owing to flagrant zeal, and amazing courage; an ordinary spirit under common assistances had been overwhelmed with the very view of the strength of  
that*

*that tide of uncontrouled wickedness, which was at first to be stemm'd by so very few.*

*How soon did divinely inspir'd minds coalesce in this undertaking? --- And easily made it evident, that there is no such difference between the members of the established church, and the dissenters, that will not be overlook'd by all serious persons, when the undoubted concernments of Christ and practical godliness are in danger.*

*By an union founded on a bottom, and designed to ends so truly christian, your numbers were soon increased; very many magistrates and persons of eminent figure gave up themselves to this undertaking, fit rules were adjusted, and the strange successies which encourag'd your early attempts, do still grow more and more amazing, being as much beyond the hopes of your timorous friends, as the expectations of surprized offenders, (who as such*

*only, can be ill-willers to this design.) Nay, men strong in faith, are as in a dream, to see the work of reformation advanced thus far, in so short a time; and induced to hope this to be the dawning of that season, wherein reforming attempts shall succeed to those higher degrees of purity which are prophesied of; altho' awful dispensations may shake the frame of things to introduce it.*

*Besides, it is no mean effect of your successful example, that men of the same temper in other places in this nation, are awakened to exert their united strength in pleading the cause of Christ against profaneness.*

*Yea, Ireland, as if blushing at engaging so late, when their distress and deliverance had been so astonishing---do even exceed your fervour, and Protestants of every communion in Dublin, account reformation their greatest business.*

*May not we hope that your influencing president may in time extend*

*to all other Protestant countries ; that none called reformed, as to their faith, may wear the reproach of neglecting a reformation in their manners. They owe the same love to their neighbour as you do, their municipal laws against vice, are a talent for which they are as accountable as you for yours : Gross sins will be as dangerous to every nation which has equal light, as they are to England, and the heart wherein a divine principle reigneth, will naturally prompt to the same zeal against sin, as they shall hear to be now at work in your societies.*

*But let the happy issue of your undertakings be more or less extensive ; bless you the merciful God for inclining your hearts to this work, and giving you the present opportunity to express your good intentions, and not denying you such encouraging success.*

*Be conscientious in observing the directions given you in the sermons*

*of all those ministers invited to your assistance, and neglect not to apply their encouragements, that you may be strong and faithful in what respecteth your own duty in this glorious attempt; so you will die in peace, in a review of upright vigorous endeavours to serve your generation.*

*That this discourse may among the rest, contribute somewhat to your good designs, is the prayer of,*

Your Servant in the Gospel,

*Daniel Williams.*





MATTH. xii. 30.

*He that is not with me, is against me ; and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth abroad.*



O understand this text in its aptness to excite your promoting a reformation of manners ; we must consider the occasion of these words, which you'll find in the foregoing verses, v. 22. Christ *healed* a man possessed with a devil, who had deprived him of both sight and speech. The hand of that enemy is sometimes great in bodily diseases, and when they come by his immediate agency upon any person delivered up by God to endure stately such effects of his power ; so far, and so long, that person is said to be *possessed* with the devil, who is commissioned thus to vex and hurt him. In this condition the man was brought to Christ, who not only removed the

SERM.  
VI.

SERM. the diseases, by restoring his sight and  
 VI. speech, which was a cure; but therein he  
 ~~~~~ overcame the resisting power of the devil,  
 and expelled him; so that he could no  
 longer have access to the person as his own  
 privileged place, to make him blind and  
 dumb; which connotes the devil's agency  
 in this disease, and Christ's conquest over  
 him in his healing the diseased person, v. 23.  
*And all the people were amazed, and said,  
 is not this the son of David?* This miracle  
 filling them with amazement, induceth  
 them to receive Christ as the promised *Mes-*  
*sias: q. d.* Who should he be, but *that*  
*rod out of the stem of Jesse*, prophesied of,  
*Isa. xi. 1. 10. Matth. xxi. 6?* Could any  
 below him perform what we have seen and  
 heard? What more miraculous can the  
*Messias* do? The power of God would  
 never work such a miracle to favour an im-  
 postor; and no power below what's divine,  
 could possibly effect it; and seeing his  
 doctrine agrees with the old testament, and  
 these his works are so plain a testimony of  
 the Spirit to his being sent of God, he must  
 be what he declares himself, *viz. the pro-*  
*mis'd Christ.*

THE *Pharisees*, not able to deny the  
 fact, attempt to enervate the inference the  
 people made therefrom, v. 24. *But when*  
*the Pharisees heard it, they said, this fel-*  
*low doth not cast out devils, but by Beelze-*  
*bub the prince of devils: q. d.* We grant  
 there

there is a power more than human, in what this man hath performed before you, but it's a *diabolical* power this work is owing to; and it's to serve the purposes of the devils, and under the conduct of their prince, that this contemptible man, unworthy of any name, is employed even in what you are so amazed at. Therefore instead of thinking him to be the *Messias*, you ought to conclude him a grand impostor, and reject him as such, and the more for these infernal assistances you see afforded to him.

SERM.  
VI.

THIS was a conclusion too malicious for an apology from meer ignorance, which, with what our Lord applieth to these men, v. 31, 32. gives a probable reason to conclude, that the *sin against the Holy Ghost* is a wilful ascribing to the power of the devil, those evident miracles wrought by the Holy Ghost in testimony to *Jesus* being the *Messias*, that so it might be concluded, *Jesus* was not the *Christ*, but an impostor.

IT'S no wonder, that it's impossible to bring such as commit this sin to repentance, and consequently to obtain pardon, because they hereby deprive themselves of the advantage of miracles to subdue their unbelief; yea, they employ them to harden themselves in infidelity against him, *who is exalted to give repentance*, and deliver the will of God to mankind.

OUR Lord *Jesus* answers this wretched assertion, by detecting its weakness, falsehood

SERM. hood and impossibility; and thereby justifies the people's conclusion, from v. 25. to 29. not to mention his reasoning, v. 27. from their childrens practice, the principal argument is thus drawn *ab impossibili*.

SATAN must be a designingly wilful destroyer of his own kingdom, if Christ did cast out devils under his conduct, and by his virtue, which was a thing of which Satan, who was such a self-lover, and had so great a reach, could not possibly be guilty. No, the devil is too wise not to understand his interest better than thus, especially in a case so obvious, and so nearly concerning himself.

OUR Saviour, to clear the force of this argument, declareth,

1. THAT God and the devil have two very distinct kingdoms, which are constituted, ruled, supported, and propagated by ways, and in a manner extremely different, v. 26. *If Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how then can his kingdom stand?* Here is one kingdom, viz. the devil's, v. 28. *But if I cast out devils, by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come among you:* This is the other kingdom, viz. God's kingdom.

2. THERE is in this world so fixed a war between these two kingdoms, that the one grows upon the other's ruins.

3. THE way of Christ, and the tendency of his doctrine, and scope of all his attempts, were

were utterly to overthrow fatan's kingdom, and advance the kingdom of God. SERM.  
VI.

4. SATAN's kingdom was effectually weakned, and the kingdom of God advanced, and enlarged by all that power which Christ had put forth in this and all other miracles.

5. WHATEVER Christ did contribute by his exerted power to the destruction of fatan's kingdom, was in a way of force and violence upon fatan, and not with his consent.

ALL these things are implied in v. 26, 28. and most expressly, v. 29. *Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods; except he first bind the strong man, and then he will spoil his house.* The sum of Christ's plea is this; it's impossible the devil, who is a being so sagacious and experienc'd, should wittingly help me to offer violence to himself, and thereby enable me to force him out of his throne, rescue the prey out of his jaws, pluck down what he hath so studiously erected, defeat his chief design, and advance God's throne and interest, upon the obstructing whereof fatan is constantly and maliciously intent. These are things so inconsistent, that without inveterate malice they cannot be surmised: Nay, I am so far from working miracles by the power of *Beelzebub*, that it must be evident to every unprejudic'd person, they are wrought by the power of God, in whose  
interest

SERM. interest I am so entirely engag'd, and  
VI. which I hereby subscribe.

## S E C T. I.

HAVING given you this account of the matter our Blessed Saviour is treating of, I shall consider the text; *He that is not with me, is against me; and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth abroad.* Herein several things seem designed.

1. AN *inforcement* of the forecited argument: *q. d.* Satan is so far from concurring with me in my design, or yielding me assistance by his power, that he would employ his skill to support what I am casting down, he would neglect no method to pull down what I am building up: And instead of favouring my attempt, his power would be engaged against it; the utmost strength possessed by him, he would be sure to exert, to obstruct mens faith in me, and not to induce them to believe; he would prove me an impostor, instead of attesting my commission. Who then can surmise that my miracles are wrought by any virtue deriv'd from him? *seeing he must be against me, if he be not for me.*

2. ANOTHER thing design'd is to assert, that the Lord Jesus is the *head* of God's kingdom in its present oeconomy.

THIS is evidenced by the alteration of the terms; for in a strict connection with  
the

the foregoing passages, the words would run thus; he that is not with God's *kingdom*, is against God's kingdom. But instead thereof, they are, *He that is not with me*, (the Christ) *is against me*; to denote, that the administration of God's kingdom is committed to Christ, God-man, the mediator: *q. d.* Legislation, dominion, judgment, the care and disposal of all persons and things which appertain to the divine kingdom in this world, I am entrusted with; to me they belong: *The government is upon my Shoulders.* I am *the King*; and the interest of the deity among mankind is lodg'd in my hands; and therefore mens adherence to God's kingdom, is determin'd by their adherence to me, to whom the authority therein is delegated.

CHRIST consider'd abstractedly as *God*, is of the same essence with the Father, and so originally possessed the kingdom of God as Creator, in the same very respects as the Father did; he had the same absolute royal dominion, and rectoral authority was essential to him without a delegation.

BUT to Christ as *Mediator*, this kingdom, which refers especially to the recovery of fallen men, and the government of them as redeemed, is given as a reward: *Jesus knowing that the Father had put all things into his hands.* For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the son: *And hath given him authority also to execute*

Isa. ix. 6.

Zech. ix. 9.

John xiii.

3.

John v.

22, 27.

SERM. *excute judgment, because he is the son of*  
 VI. *Man. All power is given me in heaven and*  
 earth.

Matthew  
 xxviii. 18.

THIS is that *kingdom* which was erected to reduce apostates to a subjection to God, against whom they had rebelled; this, as wisely, justly, faithfully, and perfectly administered by Christ, shall be delivered up after all men have been tried at this redeemer's bar, and the equity of his procedure is solemnly vindicated, 1 *Cor.* xv. 24. 2 *Thess.* i. 7, 8, 9, 10.

A due consideration of this kingdom, as in Christ's hands, and as it is his kingdom, would evince *his divinity*, as well as his mediatorial administration: For were not he truly God, he could not know, and influence so many minds; direct, inspire, uphold, defend, restrain, succeed and accommodate such a multitude of persons, in such variety of exigencies, at the same time, in different places, and judge the secrets of all men at last.

It would also force mens acknowledgment of a *Gospel Law*, without which the notion of a Gospel kingdom would be in many respects incongruous; and a judicial proceeding upon sinners, as believers, or unbelievers, penitent or impenitent, were impossible: For by the law of innocency, the penitent believing sinner would be as infallibly condemn'd, as he who is not a believing penitent.

NEITHER



NEITHER would it be such a difficulty SERM.  
to comprehend how an obedience, short of VI.  
legal perfection, is acceptable at a Redeem-  
er's bar, as a condition of a sinner's possess-  
ing the effects of that Redeemer's righteous-  
ness; for his righteousness being the sole  
meriting cause of those beneficial effects, the  
*impetration* of them is confin'd to his obe-  
dience, which was more than adequate to  
the law of innocency; and so there is no  
room left for our meriting by our obedience  
to the Gospel, which is the rule by which  
Christ only *applieth* the blessings purchas'd  
by himself. But yet if that Gospel do not  
entitle us to those blessings upon our com-  
pliance with the conditions whereupon it  
offer'd them to all sinners, and exclude not  
them who refuse to comply; then Christ's  
Gospel kingdom is a meer *physical* kingdom,  
wherein benefits are no motives to duty, nor  
danger a dissuasive from sin. Gospel plead-  
ings, persuasions, and authority, have no  
more place with, and are as improper to  
them, as to the raging sea, or hardest  
stones; the influence of consideration is to-  
tally excluded, and some are halled to hea-  
ven by meer external power, without any  
regard to their voluntary subjection to the  
Gospel; and others thrust into hell, without  
any respect to their wilful refusing of the  
remedy, and self-hardening against repeated  
calls, and the grace offered by the Redeemer.  
Such thoughts could scarce be conceiv'd

SERM. possible to one who ever read the holy Scrip-  
 VI. tures, unless an occasional obscure passage  
 must govern against the whole and plain  
 scope of the *Bible*; where a rectoral admin-  
 istration towards fallen man, in order to his  
 recovery, is so constantly expressed, and  
 our Saviour is found designedly to call this  
 so very often by the name *kingdom*.

SHOULD any sinner *object*, If I should  
 be cast into hell from under the Gospel, I  
 shall be so dealt with because the curse of  
 the law of innocency lies against me only  
 as a fallen sinner. *I answer*, That sentence  
 took hold of you as fallen sinners; but with  
 that, there shall be a *sover destruction* for  
 refusing Christ, and rejecting the mercy of  
 God, which offer'd you a freedom from that  
*first condemnation*. And that very offer of  
 deliverance upon Gospel terms, the earnest  
 pleadings of Christ with you to accept it,  
 his complaints of your refusal, his threat-  
 nings of sover punishments to excite your  
 minds, his laying your continued and ag-  
 gravated ruin upon your wilful disobedience,  
 and for that, as judge, condemning you at  
 last as unrelieved; do fully demonstrate, that  
 Christ's Gospel kingdom is a rectoral consti-  
 tution, adapted to subjects capable of moral  
 government, notwithstanding your apostacy;  
 and that by these methods, joined with  
 his assisting grace, he was treating with you  
*as such*, in order to your salvation.

3. A THIRD thing designed by the text, is a *distribution* of all persons into abettors of, and contenders for Christ's kingdom on the one side, or the devil's kingdom on the other. *q. d.* All are with me, or against me, as the head of the gospel kingdom; and he that is not for me, is against me, and for my competitors. They who *gather not with me*, i. e. they who do not under my conduct assist and propagate the divine interest, which I am managing, such *scatter abroad*, i. e. they oppose the interest of God, and in conjunction with Satan, they exalt his dominion and purpose. None are *neutrals*, each is engaged and suitably employed.

FROM the text in connexion with the foregoing verses, we have ground for these following observations.

I *Obs.* THERE are *two* kingdoms, with their several interests, in opposition and contest against each other in this lower world.

THE one is a kingdom of *light*, the other of *darkness*; the one of *truth*, the other of *error*; the one administered by *holy laws*, the other by *diabolical* and *carnal* maxims: — The one a kingdom of *love* and *peace*, the other of *enmity*, *cruelty*, and *discord*. The *encouragements* in the one are rational, spiritual, and heavenly; in the other they are vain, sensual, and earthly. As the one prevaieth, men become just, kind,

SERM. VI. temperate, humble, pious, heavenly-minded, and adorned with every grace; as the other obtaineth, men become unjust, malignant, intemperate, proud, impious, earthly-minded, void of every grace, and universally vitious. The voluntary *subjects* of the one kingdom, are men sober, regular, useful, good, and truly religious; the *subjects* of the other are all either wild, irregular, mischievous, as well as unuseful, bad, idolatrous, profane or irreligious. These kingdoms so extremely opposite, are in perpetual war, one growing upon the others decay; as the one prevaileth, the other loseth ground; peace is impossible between them, yea, a truce or cessation cannot be admitted for a moment, tho' the struggles sometimes and in some places, are more visible than in other.

2 *Obs.* THE rulers of these contending kingdoms and interests, are *Christ*, God-man, our *mediator*, on the one part; and the *devil*, consider'd collectively as the head of the apostacy, on the other part. The Lord Jesus in the human nature opposeth satan, and invades the territories he long possessed, and erects his throne where his seat had been.

THE devils severally under whatever conduct the superiority in order, power, or office among them doth adjust, do oppose Christ's attempts, secure their own conquests, defend the degeneracy introduced by

by them, promote man's hostility against heaven, closely guard their prisoners, and recover whatever of their image or dominion Christ at any time impaireth. Satan is the ruler with whom Christ stands competitor in every age.

3 *Obs.* ALL men are divided into two *parties* by their adherence to these two *opposite* rulers, in their respective interests and designs.

THE one party is for Christ, and the *purposes* he pursues; in this are included all *good men*, and whatever *good* they do, especially of a publick nature: These under the conduct of Christ, advance what he is building up, and extirpate what he came to destroy; they imbarck with him, and fight under his banner, from an approbation of his design, as very agreeable to their own renewed temper.

THE other party includes all such who yield up themselves to satan's conduct: these have an *aversion* to Christ and his interest, from their own corrupt nature, and no less a *fondness* for those things he attempteth to destroy. By this their vile disposition the devil easily actuates their faculties, and employs their powers, and so they become his ready *instruments*, tho' they see not that it is he who employeth them.

SERM. 4 *Obj.* ANY man's *neutrality* between  
 VI. these engaged parties and opposite rulers  
 ~~~~~ and designs is altogether impossible.

EVERY person is in the one kingdom, or the other. By nature all men are in satan's interests, and under his power, *Eph. ii. 2. He ruleth in the children of disobedience*: By grace we are delivered from  
 Col. i. 13. satan's power, and translated into the kingdom of our Lord Jesus. Christ by the gospel inviteth and presseth all to side with him; but until they obey his call, they remain in satan's kingdom, they continue on his side in this war, and hinder what they can the success of Christ's attempts against the devil's usurpation.

SOME please themselves with a conceit, that they are not of a party with the devil against Christ, tho' they are conscious they are not engaged on Christ's side.—But the vanity of it is apparent from this, that their very *surmized neutrality* is really their being a party with satan: for, they were originally bound to be God's *subjects*, because they were his *rational creatures*; and tho' by their rebellion they forfeited the immunities of his kingdom, yet an obligation to continue his subjects, ceased not thereby.

NAY further, Christ by his merits having procured a restoral of their forfeited *privileges*, if they will return; and offering his *assistance* to enable them to return,  
 he

he now claimeth their allegiance, both as God's *creatures*, and as his *own redeemed*. SERM.  
VI.

IF therefore, after this claim, men shall *refuse* to join actually with Christ, and to give up themselves to him, must not every man confess they continue in actual *rebellion*? Keep they not still in the enemy's camp, whilst they list not themselves in Christ's army?—Are they not there, however they *lag* or *hide*, till they come over to our Lord, whom God hath sent to bring them back to him?

ALL of you therefore have reason to assure yourselves, if you are not actually and explicitly *for* the Lord Jesus, you are *against* him; yea, the devil is your leader, you and he have the same common interest, and drive on the same design. These words, *He that is not with me, is against me*, prove what I say, and should awaken us to deep thoughts when we neglect an explicit *dedication* of ourselves to Christ; and also whenever he hath any *momentous* concern in agitation in our day.

5 *Obs.* IT is in vain for any man, to *profess* to be on Christ's side, or *harmless* to his concernments, if he do not in his place *contribute* his utmost to serve Christ in promoting his interest, and in pursuing the designs he is carrying on against Satan's kingdom in this world.

*He that gathereth not with Christ, scattereth abroad, and is not with him, but*

SERM. against him. By these words he determineth that they who are indeed with him, must be *active* in his cause, for he will use their service, tho' he do not need it: They must *gather* with him, or he deems them to be his enemies; and adjudgeth them *obstructors* of his work, if they stately neglect to *contribute* to it, according to their power. Nay, in his account, if his interest *grows* not by their labour, they are accessory to its *detriment*; and they subserve the devil's purposes, tho' they *own* it not.

SOMEWHAT all men are doing and pursuing as the scope of their lives, which fails not to be *pernicious*, if it be not *profitable*. It is our Redeemer's demand, that men be entirely and heartily devoted to his cause, which will not fail to command their *time*, and employ their *talents*, in his service. Idle intentions, and unactive wishes, are not sufficient testimonies against hypocrisy in their professed regards for him, nor fit evidences that they are sincere.

AND as vainly do men hope to escape the *odium* of being of a party with the devil, because they do not *professedly* abet his cause; or to be unhurtful to Christ's designs, if they make no direct and deliberate opposition thereto. Alas! you will find your state will be determined by more *close and substantial* indications. Our Lord,  
who



who required *Peter* to evidence the truth of his love to him *by feeding his sheep*, John xxi. 16. expects our discipleship shall be instanced in a *vigorous* advancement of his conquests. SERM.  
VI.

WE must not only cease to provoke him by our *own* enormities, but we must help on the reformation of *others*: we must *increase* his kingdom, by lessening the number of rebels; and *vindicate* it, by restraining mens profligate disobedience, as far as we are able. *This is gathering with Christ*, which, if we omit, we do one way or other promote mens rebellious disobedience, *which is scattering abroad*; whereby we make Christ's building more difficult, and less probable; we make havock in his heritage, pull down what he is so studious to erect; and disperse into the *open wastes* (where Satan presides) those whom Christ is bringing into his own *enclosures*.

THE subject would require my enlargement on each of these *observations*--- But one discourse will not admit a prosecution even of this last to its full extent. Therefore I shall satisfy myself to have laid a foundation for what may be most properly directed to your assistance, *as societies attempting the reformation of manners, by putting the laws in execution against sundry open immoralities*.

SERM. VI. WHAT can *engage* you to, or *encourage* you in, this undertaking, yea, or oblige you to *diligence* and accurate circumspection in the prosecution thereof, like this? In this your attempt, you have *Christ* for your head, and his *kingdom* and designs to promote, and this in *opposition* to *satan* and his *kingdom*: Also, that to neglect it, would *state* you on *satan's* side, and for his interests, in *opposition* to *Christ*, and his kingdom.

How forcible is any one of these *considerations*? how much more, all of them conjoined? as indeed they are in favour of your blessed enterprize. And this I hope to evidence in the following *propositions*, which are founded on what I have already spoken to, and will lead me to re-assume and improve those observations I more hastily passed over.

I *Prop.* THE *reformation of the manners of mankind*, is a considerable part of the design of Christ, as head of the divine kingdom in this world.

By *reformation of manners*, considered as the adequate design of Christ, I mean the turning of men from sin to holiness. This, I confess, is beyond a *restraint* to such flagitious open enormities which limiteth your undertaking. And therefore I shall say little of *reformation*, but under a respect to such *open evils*. Our Lord finds the world grossly depraved---*Serving*  
*divers*



*divers lusts and pleasures*, Tit. iii. 3. The gratification and fulfilling of carnal and spiritual lusts, make up the *sordid employment* of apostate sinners, and this often in open defiance of God's authority. Some are mad upon their idols; some are blaspheming the sacred name of God, from their contempt of, and enmity against him; some profaning his *sabbath* and *worship*; others destroying the harmony of this lower state, by violating the laws of those several *relations* men stand in to each other; some guilty of *blood*, others of *filthy fornication*, and *adulteries*, or *defrauding their neighbours*, or *lying*, *slandering*, and the like.

Jer. 1. 38.

Rev. ii.  
13.

THE prevalence of such crimes argueth the *devil's empire*, and as far as they obtain, *he reigneth in any place*; but when these are reformed, his seat so far is overthrown, and the kingdom of Christ gets ground.

To reform a world so corrupt, was very becoming a *holy Jesus*, but possible only to an *almighty Saviour*, when all that was in it is lust; and the whole of it is so easily, agreeably, and deeply fixed in wickedness; yea, in that wicked one, who introduced, excites, and maintains this corruption, ἐν τῷ πόνερῳ κείται, 1 John v. 19.


1 John ii.  
16.

AMONG other designs for the glory of God, and the benefit of the creation, Jesus Christ resolveth the reforming of mankind: *He came to bless us, in turning every one*  
of

SERM. of us from his iniquity : For well knowing  
 VI. impurity would make no man happy,  
 whilst his temper and course of life is  
 wicked, he will *bleſs us* by reforming us;  
 and to effect this, was a considerable part  
 of his errand. The ſame is attested, *1 John*  
*iii. 8. For this purpoſe the Son of God was*  
*manifested, that he might destroy the works*  
*of the devil; i. e. unrighteous, wicked*  
*works; theſe devilish bands wherein ſatan*  
*held men, Chriſt came to unloose.*

THE methods *Chriſt* took to reform the  
 world, are greatly adapted to this end, as  
 well as expreſſive of his *concernedneſs* to  
 accomplish it; conſider his goſpel, *That*  
 Tit. ii. 11, *teacheth us to deny ungodlineſs and worldly*  
 12. *luſts, and to live ſoberly, righteouſly, and*  
*godly in this preſent world.* And if you  
 will examine this as the *ſtandard*, it will  
 be found, that the higheſt profeſſion of  
 religion with *a bad life*, and the greateſt  
 pretences to grace, where *vices* are indul-  
 ged, make up no more than a *dead image*,  
 and will prove no other than damning *hy-*  
*pocriſy.*

THE ſame goſpel-light will convince  
 you, that the doctrinal *opinions* which  
 tend not at all to promote practical god-  
 lineſs, are but *vain notions*; the moſt *plau-*  
*ſible ſpeculations* which obſtruct it, are de-  
 ſtructive *errors*; yea, the moſt *orthodox*  
 conceptions which influence not to a ſober  
 behaviour, will eventually *increase* mens  
 condem-

condemnation. Nor can any man wisely SERM. examine whether his knowledge, faith, or VI. love, be *saving*, or *not saving*, unless he  try them by the efficacy they have upon the scope of his *practice*; for they will never prove saving in that man whom they fail to reform.

OUR blessed Lord did not only adapt his *doctrine* to our *reformation*, but he also *suffered death* to remove the obstacles to it, and to *procure* the Spirit's operations for restoring the *divine image*, and turning men from their wicked course. He spoiled the devil of his power to that degree, that he cannot *compel* men to transgress, as otherwise he had been able.

WICKEDNESS he put to the blush by his own holy *example*, and provided a *barrier* against it, by the authority *entamped* on both *magistracy* and *ministry*.

NEED I add, his continuing (if not a new implanting) such *notices* and *instincts* in fallen men, as render them *shy*, *asham'd*, and *afraid* of gross wickedness, till they are *hardned* by custom; and even by this scarce ever brought so far, as not *secretly* to disallow their own vicious courses, and approve the contrary.

NOT to mention his *providential restraints*, and sensible rebukes to flagitious evils, nor his clear explication of God's laws; let us note how full and plain an account he hath given us of *heaven* and *hell*,

SERM. *bell*, whereby sin and holiness must be  
 VI. far enough from being indifferent matters  
 ~~~~~ to immortal souls; for as either of them  
 do govern, we shall be *eternally* lodged in  
 the *one* or *other* of those two places, *Rom. ii.*  
 7, 8, 9, 10.

AND for what is this, and the rest  
 which our Lord hath done, but that  
*profaneness* and *immorality* may be *expelled*,  
 and true religion, justice, truth, love, pu-  
 rity, and temperance, might *again* prevail,  
 with an *acknowledgment of himself as the*  
*great means of all?* How happy will this  
 earth be, when his kingdom *overcomes?*  
 That is, when this designed *reformation*  
*universally prevaieth*-----The natural, as  
 well as the moral effect of it, will be a  
 stop to the *miseries*, and the improvement  
 of the *truest welfare* of mankind.

2 *Prop.* ALL they who promote the  
*reformation of the manners of mankind*,  
 are *so far* with Christ and his kingdom,  
 and against the devil and his kingdom.

THIS determineth whom they follow  
 as their leader, and what end they live to.  
 Whenever you put a stop to sin by advice,  
 reproof, or *restraints*, you are opposing  
 what Christ came to destroy; and when  
 you contribute to the advancement of pi-  
 ety and virtue, you concur with Christ  
 in what his heart is set on. You may  
 say, *We are workers together with Christ*,  
 and this in what he will own at last.



Nor need you fear opposition therein from any besides the devil, and such as he can influence. You fight under Christ's conduct, and this is the truest indication that you are his subjects and *followers*; yea, if you do it heartily, and for *right ends*, it is an infallible evidence you are his disciples in *sincerity*. To *profelyte* men to a party among *christians*, will be found no such testimony of your being for *Christ*, as this faithful endeavour to reform mens ways.

3 *Prop.* EVERY man, in his proper station, *ought* to be for Christ, in promoting the *reformation of others*. To take the sense of this, you may observe the *extent* of the obligation; its *all men*, each should do somewhat. The *measure* and limitation of mens attempts, that's to be *according to their proper station*; the *kind* and *degrees* of service in this work, must be accommodated to your abilities and opportunities. Any *neglect* is culpable, *utmost* endeavours will be accepted, and *order* must be maintained.

THIS is part of the charge that accompanies every *office* of divine appointment. *Magistrates* have their power and honour, with this affixed thereto, That *they be a terror to evil-doers, and a praise to them that do well*. The supreme magistrates should enact laws against *immoralities and profaneness*; and all in power must execute

Rom. xiii.  
3, 4

SERM. cute the established penalties *impartially*,  
VI. and conscientiously.

MINISTERS are appointed by reproof, threatnings, instructions, and censures, to dissuade from all iniquities, and prevent them what they can; and a *woe* is denounced expressly against such as omit this, *Ezek. xxxiii. 6.* It were easy to prove that *masters* are to restrain impiety and vice in their *servants*, and that its incumbent on *parents* to use all diligence to subdue transgressions, and encourage virtue in their *children*.

THIS charge is so evident, that one would think a claim to honour and duty, as by divine appointment, were disingenuous in any in these superior relations, who disregard that *reforming work*, for which God appointed the said honour and authority----Nor is it any wonder that providence often permits the inferior correlates to despise and disobey them who are over them, when superiors suffer vice in them to go unrestrained.

BUT the obligation of such superiors to reforming work, is too obvious to insist on; the scruple may appear greater among equals, and such may be ready to excuse themselves by saying, *I am a private man, without power over my neighbour, and therefore free from all obligations to endeavour their reformation.* To such *I answer*, either reforming others is not Christ's interest,



or thou according to thy station, art oblig'd to do it ; and thou mayest innocently obstruct the amendment of others, or it's thy duty to promote their amendment : For the text is thus extended, *Whoever is not for me, is against me ; and who gathers not with me, scatters abroad.*

SERM.  
VI.

TRUE, the magistrate's sword is not thine to do execution thyself, but Christ by the magistrate calls to thee, as *Exod. xxxii. 20. Who is on the Lord's side, let him come unto me.* It is the recorded fault of the common people, as well as of others, *none calleth for justice* against atrocious criminals, *Isa. lix. 4.* and you may as well say, none except the magistrate, should *help* to apprehend the flying murderer ; as that no other should assist to convict the drunkard, fornicator, sabbath-profaner, and blasphemer. If there were no *laws* to punish these offenders, thy private seasonable reproof, and forbearing their company, would be thy last relief : But when there are laws against such ; nay, when the laws expressly *encourage* private mens prosecution of such, what can be pretended to exempt you from doing so small a thing as *informing* against transgressors, that they may be reclaimed, and the *land acquitted* by their punishment ? The same providence that led thee to behold that offence, (if private reproof recover not the delinquent) dictates to thee, that thou art the person design'd to embitter his sin to him by publick punishment, and so

SERM. prevent the contagion by his indulged ex-  
VI. ample.



*The ends of good laws* are frustrated, if private men must not convict offenders; for what great use are our laws against vitious practices and prophaneness, if multitudes may offend, and none be punished, unless they perpetrate their villanies in the sight of some zealous magistrates, who are nor many? Moreover, the obligation of private persons to restrain sin as they are able, doth result from that duty of love you all owe to your neighbours: *Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart; thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him.* Thy neighbour's amendment is the end, rebuking him the means—But what is meant by this *rebuking*? No less than that just severity which is sufficient to reclaim him be used, when gentle reproof hath been tried in vain——For you may as well say, to reprove him by *word* is no duty, if you may stop at that, when you can lawfully bring him under methods *more severe*. For to rebuke him includes the *last* as well as the former—Nor is it less hatred to deny him the help of legal punishments, to affright him from them, than to grudge him the assistance of a few words of thine own.

Lev. xix.  
17.

BUT to issue this point. I put it to your consciences, is not every private person oblig'd to do all which he hath both *right* and *ability* to do, for the dethroning of Satan,

tan, advancing of Christ, serving his country, and saving his neighbour? Will any man deny this?—Now reforming others by judicially prosecuting the flagitious, tend to these good ends; and that the meanest among you have not a right and ability to convict such criminals, which is a fit means to the *reformation*, you cannot pretend. What pretence then will the obscurity of your condition yield against the convicting them, being your duty, as well as others, especially when any man's testimony for conviction, is but as a private man, and the law authorizes you therein, as much as if you were a magistrate; therefore you are as much obliged to witness, as any magistrate. And you have no plea against engaging therein, but what might command a blush; for he that *pondereth the heart*, sees, and will force yourselves to own, that you omit it, because you secretly favour *satan's* empire against Christ, you make a light account of the evil and danger of these sins, you are under a cursed indifferency for Christ's interest, and prefer your gain, ease, and safety above 'em: Nay, you hate your brother, and are well content that *satan's* depraving and destructive ways should abide and prevail.

THEREFORE lay by your excuses, and say no more, *Am I my brother's keeper?* Why should I intermeddle?

4. *Prop.* EVERY faithful Christian and follower of Christ, must and will subserve *Christ* in the work of reformation.

SERM. MY text will bear this connection, *be*

VI. *that is for me, will gather with me*: If any man be truly devoted to me as his head and leader, he will concur with me in promoting religion, truth, righteousness, temperance and purity, upon the ruins of irreligion, prophaneness, falsehood, injustice, drunkenness, and debaucheries. And, my friends, this is so far from contingency, that there is a necessity, and a certain futurity of it from the very constitution and essentials of a true Christian, even such, that he cannot be a *Christian* indeed, who stately, and altogether omits it.

FOR, I. *It is implied in our dedication to Christ.* We become Christians by our dedication to the Lord Jesus, and that dedication can amount to no less than that we do renounce the world, flesh and devil, and will fight under Christ's banner, and stand by his cause and interests against *satan* and his usurpations; which interpretatively is not only, that the devil and the flesh shall not govern me in particular, but that as far as I am able, they shall govern no other person; they shall have no place whence I can expel them; I'll adhere to Christ, and vigorously follow him in all just attempts for their restraint and extirpation.

You wear a Christian name, and you own that you yielded up yourselves unto the Lord Christ by covenant-engagement: How then is it possible, if your hearts were right, to hear his name blasphemed, see his

his day unhallowed, his laws trampled on, and what he came to destroy, maintained with defiance; and you connive at mens doing it without controul, when you have the happy advantage of *good laws* to put a stop thereto?

To reconcile this to *Christianity*, you must reckon that prophaneness and sacrilege are *part of your christian vow*; or that *hypocrisy* in vowing is allowable; or else that in giving up yourselves to Christ, you *truly intended* no more than what may be thus expressed: Oh, thou my Saviour! To thee I yield up myself, that by thee I may get safety, and life eternal; but I am not so much as to offend a wicked neighbour, or at all to expose myself in resisting *thy* enemies, avouching *thy* interests, or pleading *thy* cause: I must be *exempted* from all labour, expence, and hazard, in following thee as my leader; I will be *neutral* in thy undertaking to reform the *world*, and excepted from pursuing that design. *With these limitations*, I'm content to give up myself to thee, this is all I mean by my *Christian dedication*, and if therein thou insistest upon more service on my part, I disavow and *renounce* that dedication, and shall shew that I do so by my indifferency and neglect, whenever thou puttest me on helping forwards *the work of reformation*.

WHATEVER you may fancy, thus your *foederal* transactings with Christ must be interpreted, if you esteem yourselves *unobli-*

SERM. VI. *ged* to restrain other mens oaths and enormities. But how are you imposed on by *satan* and your own carnal minds, if you can imagine that this is to be *baptized* in (or into) the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; or that a good conscience answers to no other demands in that baptism which saveth? Read the Gospel again, and you'll soon find it condemneth such a heartless and *deceitful* sense of devotedness to Christ, a sense which every *gracious* soul must abhor; yea, common ingenuity will detest, as ungrateful and base, and too mean for a *Christian* to offer, or a Blessed Redeemer to accept. Every real saint will reckon himself *separated* to Christ, and that Christ hath thereupon an absolute *propriety* in him, and that it's by the utmost *services* this propriety is to be acknowledg'd; his language is, *the God whose I am, and whom I serve*, Acts xxvii. 23. *To me to live is Christ*, Phil. i. 21.

2. *A regenerate nature impels* a Christian to further the work of reformation.

EVERY true christian is *partaker of the divine nature*: By this he is denominated the regenerate *seed* of Christ, because he is in a degree truly conformed to Christ in his temper and inclinations, and thence he loveth and abhorreth things correspondently to what Christ doth. Upon this very account the reforming designs of Christ are *lovely* to the genuine christian, and all daring wickedness is *detested* by him; yea,



a zeal for the restraint of sin, and for promoting holiness, is become his *natural instinct*; and therefore he suffers in the criminal exorbitances, he beholds and must offer a violence to himself when he testifieth not his dislike against open wickedness, as well as his approbation of what is vertuous and becoming.

How impossible then must it be to such a man to have a prospect of reforming the flagitious, and a certainty of restraining their open and daring villainies, and yet neglect the means which are in his hand to effect these things? You must suppose the judgment, conscience, will and affections of this man altogether unactive; nay, himself to move stately against his strongest byass, and divine influences, neither to yield, nor excite any holy propensions, if sloth or carnality can reconcile him to indulge what he so abominates, and to neglect what his heart is so intensely bent for.

MOREOVER, you must conclude this man to pray in a deceitful manner, and to counter-act his own petitions; for he daily prayeth, *thy name be sanctified*, and yet suffers it to be blasphemed: *Thy kingdom come*, and yet countenanceth rebellion: *Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven*, and yet conniveth at the daring violation of God's plain commandments, and is content the earth shall be an emblem of *hell* for villany, *Mat. vi. 10.* A good man from the instinct of a holy nature saith,

SERM. Rivers of water run down mine eyes, because  
VI. they keep not thy laws. And is it possible

he should refuse labour and expence to ease himself of what he thus heartily complains. What costs him floods of tears when he cannot prevent it, must force his utmost endeavours to subdue it.

WHENEVER you determine that a regenerate person may neglect to help forwards the work of reformation, you must account him to frustrate his greatest hopes, which are, that there shall be a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. He must be reckon'd free from the impress that every nature is under the power of, viz. an abhorrence against what is destructive to it, and an aptness to propagate itself.

2 Pet. iii.  
13.

3. The reforming of the world is one great design of Christ's disciplining and gathering men into his kingdom.

THIS is the charge they receive, this is a great part of their trust; and they must be treacherous to him, and unfaithful to that trust, if they omit to enlighten, cleanse, and reform the world to the utmost of their capacity. Christ as the head of the human nature, is engaged in a war against the devil, to rescue sinners out of his power, to divide the spoil.

Isa. liii.  
12.

HE might have employed angels alone in this contest; but he will put an honour upon sinful men also in the affair. He could have furnished all the men he em-





employ'd, with the dignity, force, and authority of *princes*; but for the generality he makes use of a few mean ordinary persons, that *satan's* defeat, tho' assisted with the scepters of most kings, might be more *tormenting* to the devil, and more *honourable* to Christ. Of this number assisting Christ in this war, is every real christian reckoned, and upon his efficacious call, he *enrolls* them his subjects, and by making them christians, he lists them *soldiers*; not only to fight their *own* way to heaven, but to assist Christ's cause, and extend his conquests *as far* as they are able. 2 Tim. ii.

VERY often they bear their testimony <sup>4</sup> for Christ, by *enduring only a fight of afflictions*; and thus overcome by *dying*, *Rev. xii. 11.* The more qualified among them defend the faith by *arguments* as well as by sufferings, *1 Tim. vi. 12.* *2 Tim. iv. 7.* But the summary trust of each christian, and at all times, and by all due ways, is no less than this, *viz.* That in defence of the laws of Christ, they *strive against sin*; (which must oft be other mens sins, or their *blood* had not been in apparent danger to be shed for striving against them.) And that with the doctrine of Christ, they promote piety and virtue, which that doctrine fails not to produce, wherever it is sincerely received. Heb. x. 32, Heb. xii. 4.

AT some seasons Christ gives an advantage to his followers, by wholesome laws and godly magistrates.---And when

SERM. its so, can you think their own safety suf-  
 VI. pends their trust? Or that he who was  
 ~~~~~ to *die a martyr*, for testifying against sin,  
 must not oppose sin by endeavouring to  
 put those laws in execution which are  
 enacted against it; such a supposition ar-  
 gues their *quiet* is dangerous to the church  
 in a worse sense than it hath been as yet  
 accounted, *viz.* that it relaxeth all obliga-  
 tions on *private* christians to endeavour  
 faithfully the world's amendment.

THEY that govern themselves by this  
 notion, would scarce have been *martyrs*  
 for any concern of Christ in a day of  
 suffering; for if idleness, or a scoff be e-  
 nough to deter from *resisting* sin, surely  
 a flame, a gibbet, or loss of estate would  
 prove sufficient to make them *commit*  
 those sins, and *condemn* all holiness. Had  
 former *martyrs* lived in our days, that zeal  
 which governed them to *die* for Christ's  
 truths and laws, must have compelled  
 them now to *act* vigorously for his laws,  
 and never cease to adore that grace which  
 afforded them the protection and assistance  
 of magistrates in so acting for Christ a-  
 gainst sin and satan.

PUT these *three heads* together, and  
 judge whether he deserves a christian name,  
 who will not engage on Christ's side to  
 reform the nation, and whether there be  
 any danger that a *true Israelite* can refuse  
 it, unless his *dedication* prove a nullity, his  
*regenerate principle* lose its power, and the  
 the

the *design* of his christian calling be disappointed?

SERM.

VI.

## S E C T. II.

APPLICATION. *Infer.* I. REAL christians are *united* in the greatest things.

THEY are for Christ and his interests, against satan and sin, in the bent of their hearts and scope of their lives, *To me to live is Christ*, hath their joint consent, *Phil.* i. 21. His kingdom they endeavour to advance, his royalties they would maintain, and what oppugnes him they would overthrow, they would make the world wiser and better, and set all men free from satan's empire, which is upheld by, and expressed in the dominion of mens lusts.

UNION in these great things may well consist with *difference* in less considerable matters, and is more christian and of higher consequence than agreement in many disputed *notions*, or accord in a *ceremony*. How mean a thing and unprofitable is it to be of one faction, or party, yea, or communion among *Protestants*, compared herewith? Let men agree in *these* never so much, they are departed from Christ, and *carnally* joined together, if they are divided in a resolvedness to reform the nation. And what a pity is it, that they who are joined in Christ their head, and in this his interest and design, should be divided in lesser things, especially to mutual hatred and detractions?


AND

SERM. AND more is it to be bewailed that any  
 VI. persons who honestly aim at the promot-  
 ing of Christ's interests, and opposing of  
 sin, should by mistakes and temptation at  
 any times be *employed by the devil* in serv-  
 ing his purposes, and diserving Christ,  
 which too too often happens; and ought to  
 caution the most *confident* to try their own  
*spirits*, and examine their proceedings, e-  
 specially when vehement: *Ye know not*  
 Luke ix. 55. *what manner of spirit ye are of*, was a  
 charge against better men than us.

*Inf. 2. Encouragements* in promoting re-  
 formation work, are very great, notwith-  
 standing the greatness of the *difficulties*.

DIFFICULTIES I know are apt to de-  
 ter from *beginning*, and to discourage you  
 from *proceeding* in this work, tho' honour-  
 able; and he is unthoughtful who ac-  
 knowledgeth not the difficulties to be great.  
 Great are the struggles of *corrupt nature*;  
 violent, unwearied, and various is the op-  
 position of *satan*, that we may say, as St.  
 Eph. vi. 12 *Paul, We fight not against flesh and blood,*  
*but against principalities and powers.* In  
 our land *custom* hath heightened the tor-  
 rent of profaneness and irreligion, and  
 makes feeble means incapable to put a  
 stop thereto. Greatness and multitude still  
 too much support these, as former autho-  
 rity for unworthy designs, had a great  
 hand in introducing and making them  
 fashionable.

BUT after all, if your *eyes were open,*  
 you

you would perceive that *more are for* SERM. VI.  
*you, than can be against you*; and the ground for courage much exceeds that of despondency. For this end review a little, 

1. WHO he is that you are for, and with you. 2. What you are striving for, and against. 3. Whom you have to oppose and fight against you. 4. What present advantages in this work you have at this time.

1. WHOM you are *for*, and is *with* you.

MY text tells you it is *for Christ*; he is your head, to whom *the kingdom is given*, Eph. i. and who is *far above principalities and powers*.<sup>21, 22.</sup> You have him for your leader, who hath the security of heaven, that he shall *reign and overcome*; and of *whose kingdom there shall be no end*.<sup>Rev. xvii. 14.</sup> In the fight <sup>Dan. vii. 14.</sup> you are sure to prosper in the *proper* season, which if delayed, he will alike own and reward your faithful endeavours, as if your success were greatest. Cause of fear in this enterprize you have none, when he can protect you in the utmost danger, and hath a right to admit you into his heavenly kingdom when your work is over, both which he will infallibly do, for *he hath the keys of David*, Rev. iii. 7.

Go on then, for no faithful followers can ever be *ashamed* of this general; nor will he be ashamed of such. His eye is still upon you, and his presence ever with you, to renew your *strength*, and afford *supports*. Angels think this employment  
 for

SERM. for him to be their honour, *Rev. xxii. 9.*  
 VI. and can you disdain it? Millions of *Martyrs* have esteemed his service *safe*, even when they *suffered*, and how can you be afraid? You are for him who is *the God of the spirits of all flesh*, able to alter tempers, and change mens minds; yea, can command unexpected *success* to the poorest instruments.

2. CONSIDER what you are striving for, and against what.

'TIS for what God, and angels, and all good men approve; yea, 'tis for the interest of Christ on earth; things, that when they prevail, will make mankind happy; and they are what shall most certainly prevail against the utmost opposition of earth and hell; what you attempt to advance, will justify the greatest expence, labour and hazards.

BUT against what do you contend? Its against *profaneness and debauchery*; not things good, nay, not *disputable*, or *indifferent*; but so plainly *evil*, that the most brutish would *blush* to plead for; its against the *reproach* and *leprosy* of human nature, the *causes* of our past calamities, and what can alone *endanger* the nation for the future: These sins, themselves are the *forest plagues*. Its vice you would extirpate, which makes its abettors *cowardly*: Its what *reason*, as well as revelation, testifies against; its what few sinners like in their own children. Who would

would not be encouraged to reduce and remove such?

3. WHOM you have to *oppose* and fight against you in this enterprize of reformation.

ITS the *devil*, and such as he doth actuate, who will resist you; he is the grand leader, and they his instruments----- and even himself is *cast into chains* by the great God, 2 *Pet.* ii. 4. your leader hath trampled on him in the *upper regions*, Col. ii. 15. He hath, in a great measure, prevailed against him in *the earth* already, and will shortly chain him up from his *wonted influences* here below, *Rev.* xx. 3. Yea, at last he will entirely baffle, break him, and put him beyond any *further attempts*, *Rev.* xx. 10. Take courage, its against one who is an *usurper*, and whom his most obsequious followers are *ashamed* to own, and *afraid* to see. In a word, greater, stronger, wiser, and better is he that leads you in this work, than he whom the world follows in opposing reformation.

AND as for the *men* who engage against the attempt of suppressing vice, they can be none but the *inconsiderate* part even of *brutal* persons; and as they are at this day *restrained* by laws from doing you much open injury, so their own consciences will soon approve your attempts to better them; they'll judge them very kind if they shall reform, and as highly just when they have sinned away the season of amendment.

4. You have very encouraging *advantages* at this juncture.

SERM. THE *parliament's* address, and the *king's* proclamation thereupon, with a prospect of more *laws* pursuant thereto, are *great* things, and *good* signs; the most hopeful indications *England* for many years affordeth. You engage against evils which the *supreme authority*, in all its *constituent* parts, have testified against; magistracy is engaged and enjoined to assist you; nay, it is no other than the execution of many *excellent laws* which you subserve.

THE number of your *societies* are multiplying in the *country*, yea, your example is imitated in *Ireland* with greater success than here; the main of your *difficulty* is over, and signal *successes* have attended you; many prayers are on your side, and *invisible powers* concerned with you. By many such things *heaven* smileth on this work; and can you faint without the greatest reproach?

*Exhort.* LET me therefore *excite* and *injoin* you to proceed *vigorously* in this *glorious attempt*.

I HAVE proved it your *duty* past all dispute; that ought to remove your backwardness and sloth. I have shewn you somewhat of your *encouragements*; let that allay all *fear*. Need I tell you, you are hereby endeavouring but due *returns* from *England* for its eminent deliverance from extreamest miseries, and those unavoidable to humane view. You are *preventing* those calamities which will return with  
aggra-



aggravations, if these evils be not reformed, *Exra* ix. 13, 14. You are providing the surest way to revive our *trade*, prolong our *peace*, and recover *England's* glory. If you succeed, bodies and minds will be freed from the sad effects of the debaucheries, which are as fatal as apparent. You lay the best foundation for *peace* among the divided parties in this nation, who will, when *vertuous*, easily coalesce, and be free to take away all *unnecessary* causes of division.

YOUR very meeting together, and joint concurrence in this laudable employment, will *conciliate* your minds, and melt them down into *moderation*, which is a temper so necessary, and upon which our happiness so much depends, that I *dare* deliver this prognostick: *England can never be fixedly happy in its religious, or civil concerns, but by an UNION between the moderate churchmen, and the moderate dissenters.*

You befriend your own *children* and posterity, by preventing the infection that may ruin them. Many other arguments might be urged——Oh that these and all others made use of by the several *reverend ministers in both places* of your meetings, may by the blessing of God invigorate your minds in this attempt, and dispose *transgressors* to submit thereto.

AND surely whatever is a motive to the *physician* to endeavour the cure, is much

SERM. more forcible with the *diseas'd* to admit it:

VI. Is endeavouring the reformation of you, oh sinners! so plainly the duty of this *society*, and worth their utmost pains and charge; and can it be a light thing, whether *you* will be reformed, or no? Oh the *testimony* against you that shall arise from hence, if you be still uncleans'd!

I shall give a few cautions.

I. WITH respect to the *preliminaries* to, and the first words of my text.

STATE not *Christ's* designs which you propose to serve by your *hasty fancy*, but *his* own plain adjustment of them; you are not for *Christ* by espousing an *error*; you act not with, or for him in opposing what he *forbids not*, or violently contending for what is *indifferent*, trivial, or doubtful; his kingdom's concernment lies in what is *commanded*, *plain*, and *momentous*.

AND therefore let your endeavours be laid out in proportion to the evidence his *word* gives concerning things; and tho' it be too unusual, yet be you as earnest for what is important, and *plainly* commanded, and *against* what is flagitious, and *plainly* prohibited, as others are apt to be for trifles of *their own* inventing, or against sins of their own making.

AND withal, be *afraid*, without highest *Scripture evidence* well applied, to judge any men, or party of *protestants*, to be for or against *Christ*, in contradistinction from others: It would make a tender heart to bleed

bleed to hear *two extremes* apply that one text against men of a *duer* temper, *How long halt ye between two opinions? If God be God, follow him; but if Baal, follow him.* When more *charity* would better evidence either side to be the followers of *Christ*.

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1 Kings  
xviii. 22.

2. To you the members of the *societies*, with respect to your undertaking.

THINK not lightly as to yourselves of such sins as fall not under the edge of the *magistrate's sword*: For tho' they are not so hurtful to *human societies*, and therefore not so provided against by the law of man; yet they are as contrary to *Christianity*, and inconsistent with it, as others be. *Brutal* sins are chiefly those you have the law on your side to punish: But be you alike watchful against *devilish* sins, such as malice, envy, pride, rancour, lying, &c. Guard also against infidelity, hypocrisy, carnal selfishness, and all impurity of heart; which, with the like sins, God reserves for punishment in endless flames.

WATCH strictly that no scandalous practices of *your own* blemish or obstruct your undertaking; for you will be more observed than others, and your faults will induce a charge of hypocrisy upon all active instruments, tho' never so sincere.

LET not your endeavours be blasted by any *appearance* of pragmatism, ostentation, folly, rage, vanity, making a sport of sin, revenge, or partiality; ---but contrive things so, that the *punished* may be forced to

SERM. confess, its zeal for God, and love to them,  
VI. which entirely govern you in this attempt.

TAKE care that your ends, and the principle you act from, be approved by the *heart-searching* God; that so you may not lose your reward, nor forfeit his defence. And know, its possible for *carnal selfishness* to be the spring of actions advanced to the height of these, though so very excellent.

Go not out of your own station, neither use any unjustifiable means, lest you prove *snars* to others, or yourselves, instead of reformers.

BE tender of your neighbour's reputation, and therefore publish no man's faults, unless it be before the magistrate in order to civil punishments; or before persons authorised to inflict church-censures. *Reproachful railing* was never ordained by God or man, to be a reforming means;

Jam. iv. 11. and he who chargeth you to *speak not evil*  
Tit. iii. 2. *of one another, yea, of no man*, will require at your hands all that obstructed service, and all afflictive damage-occasion'd by your reproachful language.

ATTEMPT to convict no man of punishable crimes, where your *proof* is not *full and evident*; for thereby you'll discover your own folly and uncharitableness, baffle your great design, expose your neighbour to suspicion, and yourselves to danger.

BEGIN not with severest methods, where you hope milder will prevail: for  
its

its not *cruelty* but *reformation* is your honest aim; and the last is *best* attained, when the least of the first is needful.

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~~~~~

ADMIT nothing to *excuse* your vigorous care to restrain sin, which will not bear your *dying* thought, in a view of God's *tribunal*.

LET nothing *below* or *besides* reformation be your design; and yet be not satisfied with the mere honesty of your *intention*, but use the best and justest ways which a well-informed mind directs, as likeliest to reach that end.

TRUST not in your *own heart*, nor reckon success to be at *your own* beck; but depend on, and *pray* much to God for his conduct, defence, and blessing.

LIMIT not your resolution to persist in this blessed attempt by the *continued assistance of others*; for many, now vigorous, may cool in time, but your *obligation* will not cease by their *backslidings*.

REPENT not of beginning this attempt, if you should meet with *less success*, and *more trouble* than you at first expected: For it was not well *considered*, if you did not count your costs; and your undertaking may be well managed *on your part*, tho' great success be wanting. But however *unexpected* trouble will not lessen duty, nor disappointment as to expected success, hinder *your reward*; nor will *other mens* faultiness be charged on you.

ALLOW not your spirits to grow *lulle-*  
worn:

SERM. *warm* and *remiss* in this work, when you  
 VI. have for some time applied yourselves to  
 it, and attained some degree of *reformation* thereby. There is need of this *caution*, on these several accounts. Your endeavours will be faint, proportionably to the remissness of your *spirit*; time is apt to allay that fervour, which in the *beginning* of an enterprize is more common and natural; the need of reforming methods will *continue*, though you should find some reformation as to open impieties, for many defilements will *abide* uncleansed; *corrupt nature* will soon discover itself, when restraint diminishes, and the *more* violently, because a while kept in.

SET no bounds to the reformation you propose, *short* of what the *laws* of the land do countenance. Whatever evils they remark, do not you connive at, tho' they appear not *so gross* as those you at first encounter. Its wisdom in a very degenerate nation, *to begin* with the *greatest* crimes: — But it will be unfaithfulness, when these are somewhat amended, to overlook *the lesser*; for they are *evils*, and will, if indulged, dispose men to return to such as are more *atrocious*.

WISELY *prevent* all divisions, quarrels, and sinister dealings in your *own societies*. Should you be uneasy to each other, your *strength* is broken, and the least injustice will fully your *reputation*, which is so absolutely necessary to your usefulness. The  
 reason

reason why I caution you against *divisions*, is this: It too often happens, that forwardness in such attempts proceeds from a *natural fervour*, as well as a *pure heavenly zeal*; and as far as this *natural fire* is active, provoking insolence, and indiscretion, are *hardly* with the greatest care prevented, and what tendency the discovery of these have to quarrels and disgusts, is too obvious to insist on.

HAPPILY would this work be carried on, if a divine zeal in *sedate tempers directs* it, and every one shall *bear* as much with each other's weakness, as he would in a *profitable* concern of his *own*. As to that part of the caution which relates to *sinister dealings*, I have no ground to suggest it, but that the holiest society here, may have a *Judas*; and whilst our nature is not wholly healed, we should be warned against *satan's devices*.

Lastly, TAKE heed that your *societies degenerate not*, nor be made to serve lower, or other purposes, than this of the *reformation of manners*. *Earthly* minds may *debase* their use, and *designing* men endeavour to *pervert* them. They now are *duly* managed to ends for which they deserve this *glorious name*: Oh let that name *ever* govern all your discourses, designs, and methods. He too little knows mankind, and the history of former times, that thinks this very caution needless.

SERM. THE Lord impress these *warnings*,  
 VI. which faithfulness to Christ, and a great  
 esteem of your undertaking, compelled me  
 to deliver.

I SHALL *conclude* the whole by calling you *to lament*, with me, that the city and nation so *bate* to be reformed, that they who seriously attempt it, must bear the *scoffs* of most; and to be an *informer* against the obstinately vicious, is with them a reproachful *title*, tho' God records it for a *commendation* to men of highest rank, *ver.* 9, 12.

LET'S *bewail*, that after all God's *long* use of reforming methods, we should still have so *much need* to be reformed. That text, *Ezek. xxii. 24.* is applicable to us: *Say unto her, Thou art the land that is not cleansed.* And when we consider that the pestilence, the burning this city, the sword, loss of trade, growing poverty, and above all, the gospel means of grace, have been all so *notoriously* uneffectual to reclaim us, have we not great cause to pray that God pass not that *sentence against us*, which you find uttered by this same prophet, *chap. xxiv. 13.* *In thy filthiness is lewdness, because I have purged thee, and thou wast not purged; thou shalt not be purged from thy filthiness any more, till I have caused my fury to rest upon thee.*

*The END of the FIRST VOLUME.*



