

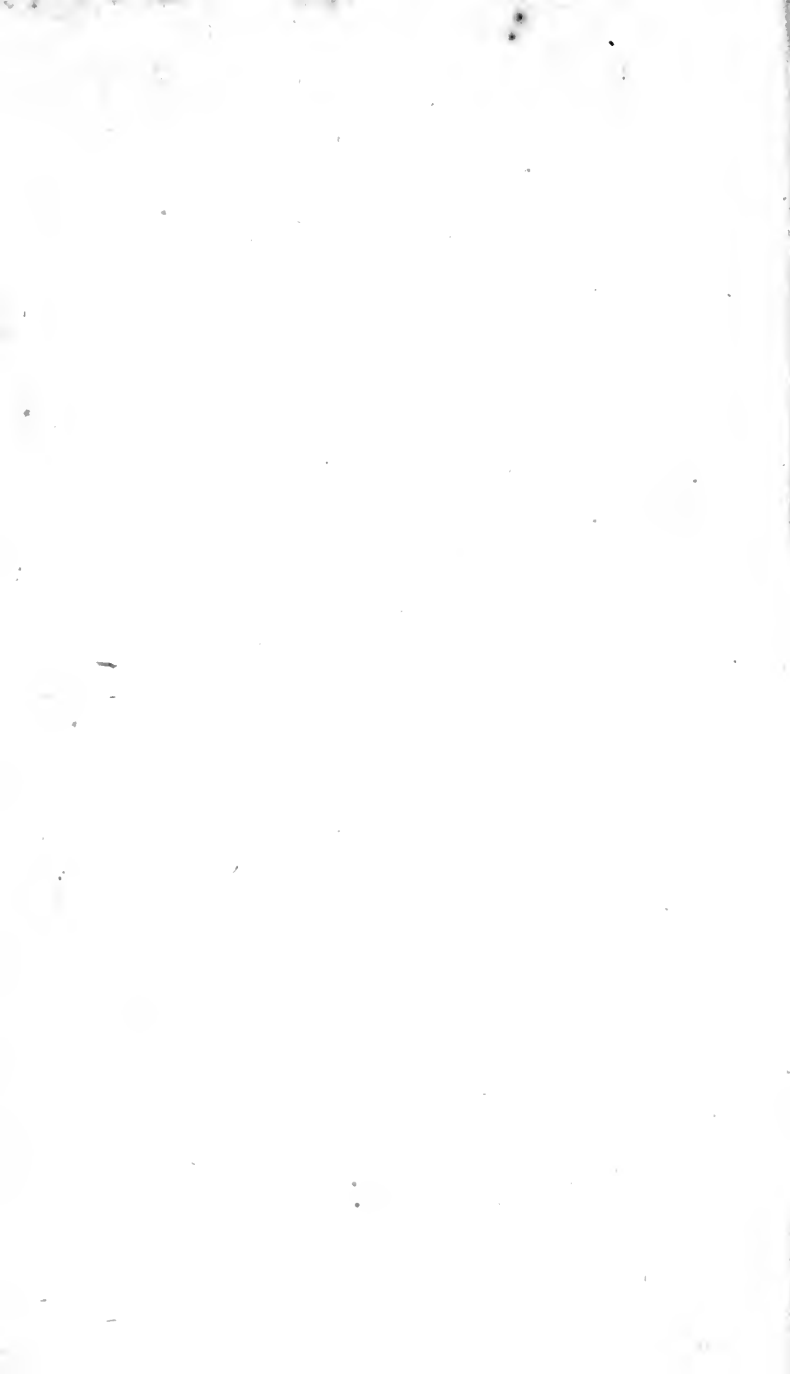
P. Asborn











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XVII SERMONS

ON

Several Occasions:

PARTICULARLY

*H 326 23
17. 2. 4. 5*

Of the Great Duty of Universal Love and Charity.

Of the Original of Sin and Misery.

Of the Government of Passion.

Of Election and Reprobation, being a Paraphrase on ROM. IX.

Discourses upon Occasion of the PLAGUE.

The PRESENT Life a State of PROBATION in order to a Future Life.

Of St PETER being the Rock on which CHRIST built his Church.

That CHRIST'S Admonitions to his Apostles, belong universally to all Christians.

Of the Faith of ABRAHAM.

Of CHRIST being the Bread of Life.

By SAMUEL CLARKE, D. D. Rector of
St James's Westminster.

The SECOND EDITION.

L O N D O N :

Printed by *William Botbain*, for JAMES KNAPTON,
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SERM-



*The Great Duty of Universal LOVE
and CHARITY.*

A
S E R M O N

Preach'd before the

Q U E E N,

A T


St JAMES's CHAPEL,

On Sunday *Decemb.* the 30th, 1705.

Publish'd by Her MAJESTIES Special Command.

I J O H N IV, 21.

*And this Commandment have we from
him, that he who loveth God, love
his Brother also.*

TH E true End and Design of Serm. I.
Religion, is manifestly this; 
to make Men wiser and bet-
ter; to improve, exalt, and
perfect their Nature; to teach them to
B obey,

The Great DUTY of

Serm. I. obey, and love, and imitate God; to
 ~~~~~ cause them to extend their Love and  
 Goodness and Charity to all their Fel-  
 low-Creatures, each in their several Sta-  
 tions, and according to the Measure of  
 their several Abilities; in like manner  
 as the universal Goodness of God, ex-  
 tends it self over all his Works through  
 the whole Creation: And to oblige them  
 to govern the Passions of their Mind, with  
 Moderation; and the Appetites of their  
 Body, with Temperance. This is plain-  
 ly the chief End and Design of true Re-  
 ligion. And whoever acts contrary to  
 all or any of these great Rules, by wil-  
 fully dishonouring God, by hating his  
 Brother, or by abusing and corrupting  
 himself; is either a false and hypocriti-  
 cal Professour of the Truth, if he does  
 these things in Contradiction to the  
 plain Rules, and in Defiance of the Laws  
 of his Religion; or else the Religion  
 which he professes, is itself a false and  
 corrupt Religion, if he does any of  
 these things in Compliance with the  
 Principles, and by Permission of the  
 Laws thereof. The Religion of the  
 Church of *Rome*, is therefore a false and  
 corrupt Religion; because, as it disho-  
 nours *God* by mixing Idolatry with Di-  
 vine Worship, and gives Men too much  
 Encou-



Encouragement to corrupt *Themselves*, Serm.I.  
 and to indulge their vicious Inclinations  
 and Habits, by allowing them, through  
 many Superstitious Rites, to reconcile a  
 wicked Life with the Hopes of Heaven ;  
 so it *particularly* permits, nay and re-  
 quires Men to hate and persecute their  
*Brethren*. And those whom, for want  
 of the Arguments of Reason and Truth,  
 they are not able to convince and bring  
 over to their Party, they endeavour by  
 all the ways of Violence and Cruelty to  
 root out and extirpate from among Men :  
 As if the Religion of Christ was intend-  
 ed to develt Men of common Human-  
 ity, and the Service and Glory of God  
 could in good earnest be promoted by  
 the Destruction of Mankind. This is  
 one of the greatest Corruptions of an  
 excellent Institution, that can be imagi-  
 ned ; when Religion itself, instead of  
 promoting the universal Peace and Hap-  
 piness and Welfare of Men, is made to  
 authorize such Practises, the Prevention  
 whereof is manifestly the chief and  
 greatest End for which Any Religion can  
 reasonably be supposed to have been in-  
 stituted at all. Particular Persons, un-  
 der the Profession of the best and purest  
 Religion in the World, may be led a-  
 way with some Degrees of this Spirit of

*The Great DUTY of*

Serm. I. Error; through a false Zeal, and a mistaken Judgment; as some of the *Apostles* themselves were for calling for Fire from Heaven upon the *Samaritans* who refused to entertain our Saviour: But the Christian Religion *it self*, the pure and uncorrupted Doctrine of our Saviour, is entirely opposite to this Spirit; and teaches us nothing but Love and Peace, Meekness and Charity, Patience and Forbearance one towards another. *If a Man say, I love God, and hateth his Brother, he is a Liar; For this Commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God, love his Brother also.*


In the following Discourse upon which Words, I shall endeavour, *First*, to show briefly the great Obligation, which lies upon all Men in general, considered as Equals, to practise this excellent Duty of Love and Meekness, Patience and Forbearance one towards another. And, *Secondly*, I shall consider some of the principal and most remarkable Variations of this Duty, arising from the different Relations and Circumstances that Men stand in, one towards another.

I. As to the Obligation which lies upon all Men in general, consider'd as Equals, to practise this great Duty of universal Love, Meekness and Charity; 'tis evident

*1<sup>st</sup>*. That, by the Original Order and Constitution of *Nature*, Men are so made and framed, that they necessarily want one another's Help and Assistance, for their mutual Support and Preservation in the World. They cannot subsist, at least they cannot enjoy any Comfort of Life, independently on each other; but are manifestly fitted by the very Frame of their Nature, to live in Communities; and Society is absolutely necessary for them; and the Bond of all Society, is mutual Love, Charity and Friendship. Now in this Respect, all Men naturally stand upon the same Level; they have All the same natural Wants and Desires; they are All in the same Need of each other's Assistance, and are equally capable of enjoying the Benefits and Advantages of Society. 'Tis manifest therefore that every Man, as he is a Man, is bound by the Law of his Nature, by common *Humanity*, to look upon himself as a Part or Member of that one universal Body or Com-

Serm. I. munity, which is made up of all Man-  
 kind; to think himself born and sent in-  
 to the World on purpose, to promote  
 the publick Good and Welfare of all his  
 Fellow-Creatures; and consequently ob-  
 liged, as the necessary and only effectual  
 Means to that End, to embrace them  
 All with universal Love, Charity, and  
 Benevolence.

And as all Men are obliged to  
 this, by the necessary *Law and Con-  
 dition* of their Being, and by all the  
 outward *Circumstances* of the present  
 State, wherein God has placed them; so  
 they are also strongly prompted to it by  
 the *natural Inclinations* of their own  
 Minds, when not corrupted by the Pra-  
 ctise of Vice. For by Nature Men are  
 plainly disposed to be kind, and friend-  
 ly, and willing to do good. Nothing  
 is naturally more agreeable and pleasant  
 to the Mind of Man, than being help-  
 ful and beneficial one to another. And,  
 did they not suffer Covetousness and  
 Revenge, and other foolish and absurd  
 Passions, unreasonably to over-rule this  
 their natural Disposition; they would  
 universally enjoy the happy Fruits and  
 Effects of it. For even in the present  
 most corrupt State of the World, as far  
 as their Vices will permit, Men still de-  
 sire

fire to keep up a general Commerce and Communication with each other; they love to increase their Dependencies, by multiplying Affinities; and to enlarge their Friendships, by mutual good Offices; and to establish Societies, by a Communication of Arts and Labour and Industry. The only possible Means of preserving which Societies in any tolerable and durable Manner, being the Practice of mutual Love and universal Charity and Benevolence; shows plainly what the Direction and Tendency of uncorrupted Nature is. 

No Man therefore can, without transgressing both the plain *Law* of his Being, and also acting contrary to the Reason of his own Mind and the natural *Inclination* of his uncorrupted Affections, do willingly any Hurt or Mischief to any Man: But every one is obliged for the publick Benefit, to endeavour to do good to All, and to love all Men even as himself. And, upon what Occasion soever any Misunderstandings or Provocations may happen to arise, he ought immediately to endeavour to appease with Gentleness, rather than exasperate with Retaliations; and put an End to all Differences, as soon as possibly he can. By this Means the World

## *The Great DUTY of*

Serm. I. would become as happy, as 'tis possible for Men in this present State of Imperfection to be. And nothing hinders Mankind from arriving actually at this Degree of Happiness, but most *perverse* and most *unreasonable Iniquity*.

For, in order to bring about this great and excellent End, *viz.* universal Love and Friendship, and all the happy Effects and Consequences of it; nothing further is requisite, than that Men do to Others in all Respects, what they would reasonably desire that Others should in like Circumstances do to Them. This is all that is really meant by loving others as themselves; And thus much they are manifestly obliged to, by the plainest *Equity*, and by the clearest *Reason* in the World. Every Man is desirous, and thinks it highly reasonable, that Others should deal with *Him*, according to the Rules of Equity, Humanity, and Friendship; that they should be tender of his Life, Estate, and Reputation; that in Matters of Commerce, they should treat him with Justice, Fairness and Truth; that in Things wherein he stands in Need of their Assistance, and has good Ground to expect it, they should be willing to relieve him according to their

their


their Power; that in case of Ignorance or Mistake, they should be ready to inform him; and, where he has given any Offense, to forgive him upon his Desire of Reconciliation. This every Man thinks reasonable in his *own* Case; And therefore he is undeniably bound to think it reasonable likewise, when ever it be *another Man's* Case to expect the like from *Him*. And if he does not act according to this Judgment; he is manifestly guilty of such Iniquity and Unrighteousness, as nothing but Custom in Wickedness and the Number of evil Examples could be able to support Men under, and harden them in the Practise of it, against the Shame and Self-condemnation of their own Minds. For, what is in it self fit and right to be done, every Man's own Conscience plainly tells him; And, whensoever he gives himself Time seriously to consider and review his Actions, it accordingly either applauds and commends him, and affords him great Pleasure and Satisfaction, from the Sense of his having answered the chief Ends of his Creation, and complied with the highest Obligations of his Nature, in having endeavoured to promote the universal Welfare and Happiness of Mankind, by the Practise of

Truth

Serm. I.  


Serm. I. Truth and Righteousness, Meekness, Goodness and charity; or else, on the other Side, it cannot but secretly reproach and severely condemn him, for having acted the contrary Part. Which Judgment of Conscience, though Men may indeed conceal from the World, and dissemble their Sense of the Weight of it upon their own Minds, in respect of their *own Actions*; yet it always discovers it self in the Censures they pass upon the *Actions of Others*. For, how much Wickedness, and Uncharitableness, or Pride and Contentiousness soever, Men can overlook in *themselves*; yet there is no Man, but in judging of *others*, where his own Interest and Passions are not concerned, will rightly enough distinguish concerning the Characters of Persons, and the true Value of Mens Actions; will give just Applause and Commendation to Men of meek and peaceable and quiet Spirits, Lovers of Mankind, such as delight to do good, and to make All about them as easy and happy as they can; and, on the contrary, will freely condemn the Promoters of Hatred, Animosity, and Contention. All which plainly shows, both what the Law of our Nature, and what the original Inclinations



clinations of our Affections are, when Serm. I. not corrupted with the Practise of  Vice.

2. As all Men are obliged thus by the necessary *Circumstances and Condition* of their Being, and also by the *original and natural Inclinations* of their own Minds, to love and to do Good to each other, according to their several Powers and Abilities: So they are still further and more strictly obliged to the Practise of the same Duty, in *Imitation* of the *Nature*, and in *Obedience* to the *Will and Law* of God. God himself is <sup>1</sup> John iv, *Love*, as the Apostle stiles him; an infinite and inexhaustible Fountain of never-failing Goodness: Who, being infinitely and eternally happy in the enjoyment of his own unspeakable Perfections, could have no other Motive to create things at first, but only that he might communicate his Goodness and Happiness to his Creatures; and continues to preserve them for no other Reason, but that he may still continue to do good to them. He *maketh his* <sup>Matt. v,</sup> *Sun to rise on the Evil and on the Good,* <sup>45.</sup> *and sendeth Rain on the Just and on the Unjust: Giving us from Heaven fruitful Seasons, and filling our Hearts with* <sup>Acts xiv,</sup> *Food and Gladness.* <sup>17.</sup> Now for the same reason

## *The Great DUTY of*

Serm. I. reason that God does *Himself* continually delight in doing Good, and seems always to take especial Pleasure in describing himself by that particular Attribute of Love and Goodness; for the same reason it must necessarily be his Will, that all reasonable Creatures should imitate him in that excellent Perfection; and, by the Practise of mutual Love and Charity, permit and assist each other to enjoy in particular the several Effects and Blessings of the Divine universal Goodness. God cannot but be pleased with Such, who endeavour to conform themselves to the Likeness of his Divine Nature, and make it their Business, according to the Extent of their Power, and the Measure of their several Abilities, to promote the Welfare and Happiness of all their Fellow-creatures; in like manner as the Love and Goodness and Mercy of God extends itself universally over all his Works through the Whole Creation. He has given us noble Powers and Faculties on Purpose, to enable us to imitate him in the Exercise of these excellent Attributes. He has endued us with Reason and Understanding for that very End, that we might be able to discern between Good and Evil, and learn to choose

choose

choose the One and avoid the Other. Sermon. I.  
 He has implanted in our Minds such Affections and Dispositions, as naturally incline us to be *kind* and *friendly* and *charitable* one towards another. He has so framed and constituted our Nature, and so ordered the Circumstances of our present State, as to make Society and Friendship necessary to the Support and Comfort of Life; on Purpose that Men might be continually exercised in the Practise of these divine Vertues. He has interwoven the Interests of Men, and made the Happiness of every particular Person depend upon the Welfare of the Publick; that each one, from the Sense of his own Wants and Exigencies, might see the Reasonableness and Necessity of making it his principal Business to do good to others. In fine; he has given us no other Way of expressing so acceptably our Love and Gratitude to Himself, whom we *have not seen*; as by Loving and doing good to our Brethren, whom *we have seen*. For *no Man hath seen God at any Time*; But if *we love one another, hereby we know that God, tho' invisible, yet really dwelleth in us, and that his Love is perfected in us, and that we dwell in him and he in us, because we are Imitators of his Nature and Partakers*

Joh. iv. 21.

1 Joh. iv. 12 & 13.

kers


Serm. I. *kers of his Spirit.* And thus much is clear  
 even from the bare Light of Nature it self.

But then, 3<sup>dly</sup>, The *Christian* Religion carries our Obligation to the Practise of this Excellent Duty, still much higher. We are *Now* obliged to love and to do good to one another, not only by the Ties of common Humanity, as we are Men, and Partakers of the same common Nature; but we are further to look upon our selves as *Brethren* in a more peculiar and eminent Manner, being All the Children of God in Christ, all Members of the same Body, all Partakers of the same Spirit, all Heirs of the same blessed Hope of Immortality.

Eph. iv, 4. *There is one Body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one Hope of your Calling; One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you*

Eph. iv, 1. *all.* Wherefore I beseech you, saith the Apostle, *that ye walk worthy of the Vocation wherewith ye are called; With all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavouring to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace.*

Again: We Christians, have not only the *Example* of God's Love and Goodness in general proposed to our Imitation,

tion, as these excellent Attributes of the Sermon. L  
 Divine Nature are made known to Us   
 by right Reason, and by the Light of  
 Nature, and by our continual Experi-  
 ence of that good Providence, which  
 presides over all, and does good to all,  
 and manifests it self daily in all the  
 Works of God through the whole Cre-  
 ation: But we have moreover the *Exam-*  
*ple* of God's Goodness and Loving-kind-  
 ness manifested to us in a more *particu-*  
*lar* and extraordinary Manner, in that  
 singular Instance of the Redemption of  
 Mankind by the Death of his Son: Of  
 which exceeding great and undeserved  
 Mercy, we being all Partakers, and ha-  
 ving all our Hopes of Happiness founded  
 upon it, are consequently under the  
 strongest Obligation possible, to be in  
 our proportion kind and merciful and  
 charitable to our *Brethren*, as God has  
 been infinitely good and merciful to  
*Us*. This Argument is strongly urged  
 by the Apostle St Paul, Col. iii, 12.  
*Put on therefore, as the elect of God,*  
*holy and beloved, bowels of mercy,*  
*kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness*  
*long-suffering; Forbearing one another,*  
*and forgiving one another, if any Man*  
*has a Quarrel against any; even as*  
*Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And*  
*above*

The Great DUTY of

Serm. I. *above all these things, put on Charity; which is the bond of perfectness; and let the Peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one Body.*

Lastly; As we are Christians, we are obliged to love and to do good to each other; not only by our knowing *in general*, from the consideration of the Divine Nature and Attributes, that it must needs be agreeable to the Will of God that we should do so; but by having moreover received it, with singular Inforcement, as the *peculiar* Law and Command of our *Saviour*, on which he insists particularly, and seems to recommend it above all others, as the most absolutely necessary and indispensable Qualification of a sincere Christian. *A new Commandment*, saith he, *I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another; Joh. xiii, 34.* And he makes it as it were the distinguishing Mark and Badge of his Disciples: *By this shall all Men know that ye are my Disciples, if ye have love one towards another.* He himself, whilst he was here upon Earth, *went continually about, doing good;* and in so doing he has set us an Example, wherein he indispensably requires that we should follow his Steps.

Steps. And accordingly we find the A-  
 postles every where declaring, that uni-  
 versal Love and *Charity, is the End of*  
*the Commandment,* the principal Aim  
 and Design of our whole Religion, 1  
*Tim. i, 5. That he that loveth his Neigh-*  
*bour, hath fulfilled the Law; For that*  
*all the Commandments are briefly compre-*  
*hended in this Saying, Thou shalt love*  
*thy Neighbour as thy self,* Rom. xiii, 8.  
 And again; that *all the Law is fulfil-*  
*led in one Word, even in this, Thou shalt*  
*love thy Neighbour as thy self,* Gal. v,  
 14. Infomuch that whosoever wants  
 this excellent Virtue; all his other Preten-  
 ses of Religion whatsoever, and of  
 Zeal for the Service of God, are decla-  
 red to be vain and of no value. *If a*  
*Man say, I love God, and hateth his*  
*Brother, he is a Lyar,* 1 Joh. iv, 20. And  
*St Paul* in like manner: *Though I speak,*  
 saith he, *with the Tongues of Men and*  
*Angels, and have not Charity; I am*  
*become as sounding Brass, or a tinkling*  
*Cymbal;* That is, all my Pretences to  
 Religion are false and empty. *And*  
*though I have the Gift of Prophecy, and*  
*understand all Mysteries and all Know-*  
*ledge; and though I have all Faith, so*  
*that I could remove Mountains, and*  
*have no Charity; I am nothing. And*  
 C *though*

*The Great DUTY of*

Serm. I. *though I bestow all my Goods to feed the Poor, and though I give my Body to be burned; and have not Charity; it profiteth me nothing; 1 Cor. xiii, 1.*

And the Reason why so particular a Stress is laid upon the Practise of this great Duty of universal Love and Charity, is plain. Namely, because it is That Temper and Disposition of Mind, which is the highest possible Improvement and Perfection of our rational Nature. 'Tis that which makes our Souls like unto God, who is Goodness itself. 'Tis That which, in the Nature of the thing itself, is of the last and utmost Importance, as being naturally and necessarily the Condition and Ground both of our present Happiness and of that which is to come. 'Tis a Qualification of Mind absolutely necessary, to make us capable of the *Sight* of God, and of the *Happiness* of Heaven. For we must be *like* God, if we will *see him as he is*: And we must first attain that Disposition of Mind, wherein the Happiness of Heaven essentially consists; if we will hope to be Partakers of that Happiness. In a Word; That Frame of Mind which inclines us to do good, and to take Delight in doing it, is itself the Temper and Disposition of Happiness; And without this,

'tis



'tis no more possible for a rational Serm.I.  
 Creature to be made Happy, than it is to alter the Nature and Essences, the necessary and eternal Reason and Proportion of Things. This is the plain and necessary Reason, why Love and Charity and Goodness, are constantly preferred before all other Virtues; as being the ultimate End and Design of Religion, and themselves a principal and necessary Ingredient of the Joys of Heaven. Almost all *other* Virtues, or Gifts and Excellencies whatsoever, are but as Means to this End; and to be *done away*, when that which is perfect is come. *Hope*, is but the present Expectation, and *Faith* the firm Belief, of those Things which shall be made manifest hereafter. And when That comes to pass, then These Virtues, and all other Gifts which are in Order to these, must necessarily and of Course cease. *Whether there be Prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be Tongues, they shall cease; whether there be Knowledge, it shall vanish away.* But *Charity* and *Goodness*, *never fail.* These are Dispositions of Mind which are begun in the *Virtues* of *this* Life, and compleated in the *Glory* of the *next*; Which will grow up with the Improvements of our



1 Cor. xiii, 8.

Serm. I. Knowledge and Virtue here, to a perfect and unspeakable Happiness in the Enjoyments of the World to come.

And now, could any Man, who seriously considered these Things, and was unacquainted with the Practise of the World, believe it possible, that Men who professed that holy Religion which so plainly teaches this Doctrine of Peace, should yet, so directly contrary to the whole End and Design of the Religion of Christ, (as is too plainly the Practise of the chief Propagators of the *Romish* Faith,) indulge their Passions, their Pride, their Covetousness, their Ambition so far, as not only to be the Cause of Envyings, Strifes and Contentions, but even to make

Jam. iv, 1. *Wars and Fightings* necessary among Christians? to the infinite Scandal of our most holy Religion, in the sight of *Jews* and *Turks* and *Pagans*; among whom *the Name of God is blasphemed through Us, as it is written; Rom. ii, 24.* Could such a one believe it possible, if it was not too manifest in Experience; that Men who call themselves Christians, should oppress and *bite and devour one another*, and not be afraid of the Apostles threatening, that they should

Gal. v, 15. *be consumed one of another?* And is it not still

still *much more* absurd, that Religion *it self*, that the Religion of Christ, the Religion of Peace and Love, which was intended to reconcile Men to God and to each other, should it self be made the Occasion of Hatred, Animositics and Contentions; nay, of the greatest Oppressions and most inhumane Cruelties? In a Word, that Pretenses of Religion *it self*, should produce in Men That Spirit, for the preventing whereof All Religion was principally and ultimately intended? I shall conclude this Head with those remarkable Words of the Apostle St James, *Jam. iii, 13. Who is a wise Man, and endued with Knowledge amongst you? Let him shew out of a good conversation his Works with meekness of Wisdom. But if ye have bitter envyings and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the Truth. This Wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish; For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. But the Wisdom that is from above, is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easie to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits; &c.*

Serm. I.



II. It remains that I proceed in the 2<sup>d</sup> place to consider briefly some of the principal *Variations* of this great Duty, arising from the different Relations and Circumstances which Men stand in One towards another.

And here the Practise of this Duty is *diversified* as many ways, as there are different Stations, or different Circumstances and Conditions of Men in the World. I shall only mention These following; from which all the rest may easily be deduced.

1<sup>st</sup>. What this great Duty of Love and Charity obliges us to, in respect of our Behaviour towards *Superiours and Inferiours*.

2<sup>dly</sup>. How it obliges us to behave our selves towards our *Enemies*, or those who have done us any particular Injury. And

3<sup>dly</sup>. How it obliges good Men to behave themselves towards Those, who are either *neglecters or despisers of Religion* in general, or so unhappy as to be involved in some particular *great and pernicious Errors*.

1<sup>st</sup>. In Respect of our Behaviour towards *Superiours*; The Duty of *universal Love* is to show forth it self in hearty,

ty, willing and cheerful Obedience to the Commands of those whom God has set over us: In delighting to promote their Honour, and to increase amongst Men That Duty and Respect, which is due to Authority: In thinking Them that *Rule well, worthy of double Honour*: And (because all Government is a Burden, as well as an Honour; therefore) this Duty particularly obliges us to endeavour to make That Burden as light and easy as we can, by a careful and diligent and conscientious Discharge of our several Duties, each in our respective Stations; so as unanimously to promote all the Ends and Designs of good Government, the Execution of wise and wholesome Laws, and the Peace and Prosperity of the Publick.


In respect of our Behaviour towards *Inferiors*; The Duty of Christian *Love*, is to show forth itself in just and righteous and merciful Dealings; in readily relieving the Necessities of those that want; in delivering and vindicating the Oppressed; in instructing the Ignorant and those that are in Errour; in reproving the Wicked, and, by good Example as well as good Advice, perswading and bringing them to a better Mind: In a word, doing all the Good we can, both to the Souls

*The Great DUTY of*

Serm. I. and Bodies of Men; in imitation of our Saviour, *who went about doing good.*

Now by how much the greater any Man's Power or Riches, Interest or Authority is, and by how much the higher his Station is in the World; by so much the greater is his Power of doing good, and by so much the more glorious is his exercising and imploying his Power to that excellent and noble End. And here is the true and immortal Glory of wise and good Princes, that as they represent God in the Exercise of Power and Authority in the World, so they resemble him also in the application of That Power to serve the Ends of Virtue and Goodness in promoting the publick Happiness of Mankind. Power, is not desirable for its own sake, any more than Wisdom and Knowledge; but only for the sake of that greater Good, which it enables Men to do in the World. And to abuse Power to the enslaving and destroying of Mankind, and to the serving such Purposes, the preventing whereof is indeed the only good Reason for which Power is truly desirable; is the greatest Weakness and Absurdity in the World. To employ great Power and Riches, in conquering and subduing many Nations, in causelessly

lessly oppressing Multitudes of People, and subverting the common Rights and Liberties of Men; is the greatest Folly, as well as the greatest Wickedness, imaginable: And nothing can be more weak and contrary to Reason, than to call That Ambition by the Name of Glory and Greatness, which is really the most inglorious and the most dishonourable thing in Nature. God is the Supreme Governour of the World, possessed entirely of absolute and uncontrollable Power: Yet he makes use of that Power to no other End, but to preserve and support and do good to all his Creatures, according to their several Natures and Capacities. He *is good*, and *does good*; and esteems Goodness his greatest Glory and Perfection, the Title which he most delights to be described by. True Greatness therefore, is to imitate God in this most glorious Perfection of Goodness. And those whom he has endued with Power and Authority to represent him on Earth, are then most truly and illustriously his Vice-gerents, when they look upon a large Extent of Power, to be only a greater Compass of doing Good; when they imitate God, in being Lovers and Preservers of Mankind, and making Government a Protection and Security to all that

Serm. I. that live under it. And if beyond this,  they be still further enabled to restrain the Fury of Oppressors abroad, and to be Vindicators of the common Rights and Liberties of Nations; this is still a higher degree of true Honour and Greatness, and a becoming really the Praise and Glory of the whole Earth. How unspeakably happy is that People, on whom God has vouchsafed to bestow so inestimable a Blessing! And how thankful ought we to be, that the Description of such Felicity, is at This Time the exact Description of our own Case!

2dly. In respect of our Behaviour towards our *Enemies*, or those who have done us any particular Injury; the Duty of universal Love and Charity, is to show forth itself in a willing and ready Disposition to forgive them upon their Repentance and desire of Reconciliation. *If thy Brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him: And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him,* Luk. xvii, 3. This, we Christians are in a particular manner obliged to, by the Example of God's much greater Goodness and Compassion towards

wards




wards *Us*. Since God has forgiven us All, *Serm. I.*  
our *ten thousand Talents*; nothing can  
be more reasonable in the nature of the  
thing itself, than that We should be moved  
by that Example, to forgive one another  
*freely our hundred Pence*; and to have  
compassion each on *our fellow-servants*,  
as God has had pity on *Us*. But besides  
the reasonableness of the thing itself,  
God has moreover made it the express  
Condition of our own enjoying the be-  
nefit of *His* gracious Pardon: For, *so*  
*likewise*, saith our Saviour, *shall my*  
*heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye*  
*from your hearts forgive not every one*  
*his Brother their Trespases*, Matt. xviii,  
35. And accordingly we are directed  
even in our daily Prayer, to ask Forgive-  
ness at the Hands of God; only upon  
such Condition, and in such Manner, as  
We forgive one another Our Trespases.  
And This, is upon Supposition of our  
Enemies repenting: But if they do *not*  
repent, yet even still we are obliged to  
*love and bless them, to pray* for them,  
and take all Opportunities of *doing good*  
to them; after the Example of our hea-  
venly Father, who doth good even to the  
Evil and to the Unthankful. Neverthe-  
less, all that is said upon this Head, is to  
be

Matt.  
xviii, 24.

Serm. I. be understood of *private*, not of *the* *publick* Enemies; Against whom neither the Laws of Nature nor of Christianity, have provided any other way of securing our selves, than by endeavouring to deprive them of the *Power* of hurting *Us*.

*Lastly*, in respect of the behaviour of Good Men towards those who are either neglecters and despisers of Religion in general, or so unhappy as to be involved in some particular great and pernicious Errors; The Duty of universal Love and Charity, obliges us to endeavour by all the ways of Gentleness, Instruction and Reproof, to bring them to Repentance and a better Mind. Magistrates indeed, and those who are placed in Authority, may and ought to make use of Punishment and Severity, towards those who are guilty of such Crimes, as are destructive of humane Society; And the strict Execution of Good Laws, is in That Case an instance of the greatest Love and Charity to the Publick. But otherwise, 'tis the Duty of *a Servant of the Lord*, not to strive, but to be gentle unto all Men, apt to teach, patient; In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them Repentance to the acknowledging of the Truth,

*Truth.* For, *the Wrath of Man, worketh not the Righteousness of God*: And our Saviour himself severely condemns That Spirit, which some of his Disciples discovered, when they desired to call for Fire from Heaven, upon the *Samaritans* who refused to give him reception. Such persons as are not yet come to have a right Sense of Religion *in general*, 'tis our Duty to perswade by Reason and Arguments; to convince them of the Being, Attributes and Providence of God; of the necessity and infinite importance of Religion; of the unalterable difference of Good and Evil; of the reasonableness excellency, and positive Evidence of the Christian Revelation. And those who are so unhappy as to be involved in any *particular* pernicious Errors, 'tis our Duty to inform, instruct, reprove, and by all Christian means endeavour to bring them back to the acknowledgment of the Truth: Taking care above all things, to show them by our good Examples, and by the influence of the Truth upon our own Lives; that we have no other design in endeavouring to convince Them, but theirs and our own Salvation. In promoting which Ends, we shall do well to have always imprinted on our Minds those

Serm. I.  
  
 Jam. i, 20.

Serm. I. those excellent Words, wherewith *St*  
James concludes his Epistle: *Brethren,*  
if any of you do err from the truth, and  
one convert him; let him know, that he  
which converteth the Sinner from the  
error of his way, shall save a Soul from  
death, and shall hide a multitude of  
Sins.



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A

# S E R M O N

Preach'd at the FUNERAL of  
*MARY* Lady *COOKE*,

Late WIFE of

Sir *John Cooke*, of *Doctor's-Com-*  
*mons, London*, Knight, Do-  
ctor of *L A W S, &c.*

On Tuesday, *October 11. 1709.*

---

2 C O R. V. 8.


*We are confident, I say, and willing  
rather to be absent from the Body,  
and to be present with the Lord.*

**T**HE Apostle in the foregoing Chapter declares at large how the Assurance of a Resurrection from the Dead, not only enabled him to perform cheerfully all the Duties of a Christian Life, but supported him also, so as not to faint under the severest Persecutions, which continually threatned him even with Death

Serm.  
II.



Serm. Death it self: *Therefore as we have received Mercy, saith he, we faint not, ver. 1.*

II.  *We are troubled on every side, yet not distress'd; we are perplex'd, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed ver. 8, 9. The Ground of which Comfort and Support, he expresses, v. 10. Always bearing about in the Body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the Life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal Flesh; for we which live, are always delivered unto Death for Jesus sake, that the Life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal Flesh. And more clearly, v. 13, 14. Having the same Spirit of Faith-----, and knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus, shall raise up Us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you. After which, he returns to the Inference he began with in the first Verse; v. 16. For which Cause we faint not, but tho' our outward Man perish, yet the inward Man is renewed day by day; For our light Affliction which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory; while we look not at the Things which are seen, but at the Things which are not seen; For the Things which are seen, are Temporal;*

ral; but the Things which are not seen, are Eternal. Serm. II.

From this general Consideration of the Certainty of a *future* Life, as a ground of Support and Comfort under the Troubles of the *present*; he proceeds in the beginning of the fifth Chapter, to consider the particular Nature of *that Body* we shall be clothed withal at the Resurrection; and of that intermediate State, the Soul will find it self in, between Death and Judgment. As to the Nature of our future *Body*, he tells us, v. 1. that whereas our present Body is an *earthly House*, a Building fram'd out of the most perishable Materials, and of a Texture most frail and brittle; a *Tabernacle* tending perpetually in its own Nature by a gradual decay towards a *Dissolution*, and, during that short Period which it is capable of continuing, being every moment liable to be destroy'd by sudden Violence, by the Power of Men, and by the Assaults of acute Diseases: the Body we shall have hereafter, shall on the contrary be a *Building of God*, an *House not made with Hands*, eternal in the *Heavens*; a Body, fram'd immediately by God himself, made capable of induring for ever, and fitted to the Circumstances and Injoyments of that Place,

D which

Serm. which God has provided for it in the Hea-  
II. vens.



The frequent Meditation upon which happy State, causes good Men to *grone earnestly*, v. 2. *desiring to be clothed upon with our House which is from Heaven; if so be that being clothed, we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this Tabernacle do grone, being burdened; not for that we would be un-clothed, but clothed upon, that Mortality might be swallowed up of Life.* This Passage some understand to refer to what the same Apostle informs us of, in the 15th Chapter of his foregoing Epistle, concerning those who shall be found alive at our Lord's second Coming; that they shall not *die*, but be *changed*; not be *uncloth'd* of this mortal Body, but *cloth'd upon* with their heavenly Habitation; And that the Apostle here expresses a desire of escaping Death, and of being found among those, who, without becoming *naked*, without being *separated* from the Body at all, shall *in a moment, in the twinkling of an Eye, be changed, or clothed upon* with an immortal and incorruptable Body. But there is no need of interpreting the Words to this Sense. For when the Apostle affirms that we are desirous, not to be *unclothed*,  
but




but to be *clothed upon*; not to be found *naked*, but to be *clothed upon with our House which is from Heaven*; he does indeed prefer our *State after the Resurrection*, to the *State of Separation*; and represents good Men wishing to be deliver'd from the Burden of the Flesh, not merely for the sake of being separate from the Body, but chiefly and principally in hopes of being clothed with a better and more glorious one. But yet it does not therefore follow, that he meant to extend this Desire so far as to the escaping of Death wholly, and the avoiding to enter into the separate State at all; or that he thought this peculiar Circumstance of those who shall be found alive at the Lord's second Coming, could possibly be the Case of those who lived so early as in his own Time. Nay rather the contrary seems clearly to follow from the 6th Verse, and from the Words of the Text; where he speaks of *being absent from the Body*, as of a thing that would certainly happen to them, and which was truly desirable to good Men; and the Expectation whereof was a Ground of *Confidence* and Support under the Troubles of Life, and against the Fears of Death: Because though the State after

Serm.  
II.



Serm. the Resurrection, when we shall be

II.  clothed with incorruptible and immortal Bodies like unto our Saviour's glorious Body, shall be much more happy and desirable, than the State of Separation; yet That State of Separation it self, that imperfect and incomplete State, is far superiour to our Condition in this World, and more eligible than the Burden of the present Flesh. *Therefore we are always confident, says he; knowing that whilst we are at home in the Body, we are absent from the Lord; (for we walk by Faith, not by Sight;) we are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the Body, and to be present with the Lord.*

The Words are not well rendred, *whilst we are at home in the Body.* For this Body is not our proper *Home*; we are only *Strangers* and *Pilgrims* in the present World; and our Life is by St *Peter* justly call'd, *The Time of our sojourning here.* But, whilst *we dwell in the Body,* (so the Words ought rather to be rendred,) or (as the same Word is translated in the following Verse,) *whilst we are present in the Body;* whilst we continue in this World; we are *absent* from the Fountain of Life and Happiness: We are at a Distance  
from

from the heavenly *Jerusalem*, which is our proper Country; *we are absent from the Lord*; and *live by Faith* only, *not by Sight*. But, God having *given unto us the earnest* of his Holy Spirit, *we are confident* and have full Assurance of the Truth of these Things: We wean our selves therefore from the sensual Injoyments of the present World; We support and comfort our selves with these Meditations, under the Troubles of Life, and against the Fears of Death; We are *willing rather to be absent from the Body*, (whensoever it shall please God to release us;) *and to be present with the Lord*, which is far better.

Serm.  
II.



In the Words, and in the Context, we may observe the following Particulars plainly implied.

1<sup>st</sup>, That we must all shortly be *absent* or separate from this Body.

2<sup>dly</sup>, That this State of Separation, is not a State of absolute Insensibility.

3<sup>dly</sup>, That, to good Men, it is a State of great Happiness, a being *present with the Lord*.

4<sup>thly</sup>, That the Consideration of that intermediate Happiness, is a great Comfort and Support against the Fear of

Serm. Death. *We are confident, and willing*  
 II. *rather to be absent from the Body.*

*1stly* and *Lastly*, That this intermediate State, tho' it may be a State of Happiness, yet is by no means equal to that Happiness which good Men shall be possess'd of after the Resurrection. *For we that are in this Tabernacle do groan, being burdened; not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that Mortality might be swallowed up of Life.*

*1st*, 'Tis suppos'd in the Words, that we must all shortly be *absent* or separate from this Body. 'Tis evident there is no need to *prove*, and one would think there should be no need to *re-mind* Men, that they must all die; when they have every Day such mournful Occasions as these, to excite their Consideration. Yet so it is, that even *this very Thing*, the *Frequency* of other Examples, and the indisputable *Certainty* of their own Mortality, makes them stand in need of the more earnest Exhortations, to persuade them not to forget or neglect it. For, as the strongest Objects that make perpetually an equal and continued Impression upon our Senses, are apt, by reason of their constant Presence, to affect us little more,  
 than

than if they made no Impression upon the Sense at all; And as those great *Phænomena* of Nature, which we observe to return in the constant Course of every Day, excite in us less Admiration, tho' in themselves the most wonderful of all the Works of God, than things much less remarkable, which appear but seldom: So the absolute Certainty of our own Mortality, which leaves no Room for Inquiry or Debate, makes Men almost as much lay aside the Thoughts of it, as if the Certainty were on the other side of the Question; And the Frequency of Instances which ought perpetually to remind us what we must speedily expect, does by a strange Carelessness and habitual Neglect, reconcile Men in such Manner to the Sight of Mortality in others, as if they themselves were not concern'd in the Example. They shake off the Thought of it, as if there could be no Benefit in meditating upon what cannot be prevented; and they look upon it as importune and troublesome to remind them of that, which 'tis not possible but they must already know. Yet That Knowledge, without Meditation, is like unto Ignorance; because it has no Effect, and makes no Impression. 'Tis like

Serm. the speculative Knowledge of a Truth,  
 II. which concerns us not; or like the ha-  
 bitual Understanding of a Demonstration,  
 never recollected. The Reason of this  
 great Stupidity, seems to be the Uncer-  
 tainty of the *Time* of every Man's  
 Death; which makes Men look upon  
 Life, as a long indefinite Period; and,  
 because the *Time* of their Death is *un-*  
*certain*, 'tis to them as an *Uncertainty*  
 in the *Thing it self*. To prevent this  
 Folly therefore, the Scripture is perpe-  
 tually reminding us, and putting us upon  
 considering, that *our Days on Earth*  
*are as a Shadow, and there is no abi-*  
*ding*, 1 Chron. xxix, 15; That *they are*  
*swifter than a Weaver's Shuttle*, Job  
 vii, 6; that *they are swifter than a Post*;  
 that *they flee away as the swift Ships,*  
*as the Eagle that hasteth to the Prey*,  
 Job ix, 26; that they are as *A sleep,* as a  
*Watch in the Night, as a Tale that is told*,  
 Ps. xc; 5, 4, 9; That *our Life is a Vapour,*  
*that appeareth for a little time, and then*  
*vanisheth away*, Jam. iv, 14; that *Man*  
*cometh forth like a Flower, and is cut*  
*down; he fleeth also as a Shadow, and*  
*continueth not*, Job xiv, 2. In the *Morn-*  
*ing it flourisheth and groweth up, in the*  
*Evening it is cut down and withereth*,  
 Ps. xc, 6. All which Similitudes are ele-  
 gantly

gantly summ'd up together by the Author of the Book of *Wisdom*: *Wisd.* v, 9. Serm. II.

*All these things are passed away like a Shadow, and as a Post that hasteth by; and as a Ship that passeth over the Waves of the Water, which when it is gone by, the Trace thereof cannot be found, neither the Path-way of the Keel in the Waves; Or as when a Bird has flown thro' the Air, there is no Token of her Way to be found-----; Or like as when an Arrow is shot at a Mark, it parteth the Air, which immediately cometh together again, so that a Man cannot know where it went thro'; Even so We in like manner, as soon as we were born, began to draw to our End, and have no sign of Virtue to shew.*

These Descriptions of the Vanity and Transitoriness of human Life, are too evidently true, to stand in need of any Proof. Yet the Riches, and Honours, the Pleasures and Allurements of the World, hinder Men too usually from considering them; And men act, as if they were to live here for ever. Providence therefore is very kind to us, in sending Afflictions upon us to awaken us out of this Lethargy; And we should be very Wise and Just to our selves, if we would suffer our selves to be brought to

Serm. to serious Consideration by the Troubles  
 II. and Afflictions of Others. When we  
 see others taken out of the World before us, we know their Case must in a short Time of Necessity be our own; and the Concern we always see dying Persons under, should make us endeavour without Delay in the Time of our Health and Strength, to lay the Foundation of a good Conscience against the Day of Tryal. We are sure Eternity can never be very far distant from any of us; and we are always uncertain, but it may possibly be very near. And when Death approaches, Sickness and Pain are alone a Burden sufficient; and it will require all the Helps of Reason and Religion, all the Strength of the *Spirit of a Man*, to *sustain* at that Time the *Infirmities* of Nature. But if the *Spirit* it self be wounded; if the Conscience be distracted with too just Fears; if the great Work of Religion be then *undone*, and yet impossible to be *done*; if the *Spirit* of the Man, which should *support* him under his Infirmary, does it self much more stand in need of *Comfort and Support*; *who can bear it*? This is the Time when all false Colours vanish, and the great Difference and Distinction of Men begins truly to appear. Now the Profane, the Covetous,



Covetous, the Voluptuous, the Mocker and Scoffer at Religion, begins to judge by other Measures; and *if God should require some great Thing* of him, *would he not do it?* On the contrary, the sober and pious, the righteous and just Person, reflects then with unspeakable Comfort upon his past Life; when he remembers that he has either liv'd always innocent from great Crimes; or at least that the Sins of his Youth have not been so great, as the Repentance and Obedience of his wiser Age. And when the Vail is removed by Death, which transmits these different Persons to that State, where they are to wait for the final Sentence of the unerring Judgment of God; they themselves will judge still more and more clearly concerning the true Nature of Things, and of their own Deserts. For Death is not a total Extinction of the Man, but a Separation only of the Soul from the Body for a Time. Which was the next particular I propos'd to discourse of. And here, for Brevity sake, I shall put the

*Second* and *Third* Particulars into One: *viz.* that the state of Separation, is not a state of absolute Insensibility, but, to good Men, a state of great Happiness, a being *present with the Lord.* All the  
*Natural*

Serm. *Natural Arguments*, (for *the Moral Arguments* indeed prove only a future State in general, by the Resurrection of the Body, or otherwise;) All the *Natural Arguments*, I say, which prove to us by Reason the Spirituality and Immortality of the Soul, seem to prove no less strongly, that the separate State is not a state of Sleep or Insensibility. For if it is a good Argument to conclude with Cicero; *When I consider*, says \* he, *with what swiftness of Thought the Soul is endued, with what a wonderful Memory of Things past, and forecast of Things to come; how many Arts, how many Sciences, how many wonderful Inventions it has found out; I am persuaded that That Nature, which is Possessor of such Faculties, cannot be Mortal*: If this, I say, be a good Argument, (and a very excellent one it is;) it seems no less just to infer with Cyrus in Xenophon: *I cannot imagine*, saith † he,

\* Quid multa? Sic mihi persuasi, sic sentio; quum tanta celeritas animorum sit, tanta memoria præteritorum, futurorum providentia, tot artes, tantæ scientiæ, tot inventa; non posse eam naturam, quæ res eas continet, esse mortalem. Cic. de senectute.

† Ουτοι ἔγωγε, ἂ καί, οὐδὲ τοῦτο πάποτε ἐπίδηλω, ὡς ἡ ψυχὴ, εἰς ἂν ἐν θνητῷ σώματι ἦ, ζῆ ὅταν ᾖ τέττα ἀπαλλαγῆ, τεδνηκεν---- Οὐδὲ γε ὅπως ἀφρων εἶσαι ἡ ψυχὴ ἐπειδὴν ἴδῃ ἀφρονὸν σώματι δόξα γίνηται, οὐδὲ τοῦτο πίπεισμαι. Ἄλλ' ὅταν ἀμράλι κῆ καθαρός ὁ νοῦς ἐκκρηθῆ, τότε εἶ φρονημώτατον εἰχθῆς αὐτὸν εἶναι. Cyrus apud Xen.

that

that the Soul, while it is in this mortal Body, lives; and that, when it is separated from it, then it should die: I cannot persuade my self, that the Soul, by being separated from this Body which is devoid of Sense, should thereupon become it self likewise devoid of Sense: On the contrary it seems to me more reasonable to believe, that when the Mind is separated from the Body, then it should become most of all sensible and intelligent. But these were only the reasonable Conjectures of wise and considering Men. The Scripture assures us with more Certainty and Authority, that *blessed are the Dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth, yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their Labours, and their Works do follow them*, Rev. xiv, 13. Which Rest, that it is not the mere Rest of utter Insensibility, may be gathered from *ch. vi, v. 9*; where 'tis said, *I saw under the Altar the Souls of them that were slain for the Word of God, and for the Testimony which they held; and they cried with a loud Voice, &c.* The same thing is intimated to us by our Saviour, in the Parable of the rich Man and *Lazarus*; where the Soul of *Lazarus* is represented as carry'd by Angels into *Abraham's Bosom*,

Serm.  
II.

and

Serm.

II.



and that he was *comforted* in that Place, *Luke* xvi; 22, 25. And more clearly yet, in his Promise to the Penitent Thief, *Luke* xxiii, 43; *Verily I say unto thee, to day shalt thou be with me in Paradise. To Day*, that is, immediately, in the state of Separation, before the Resurrection of Christ, and his Ascension into his Kingdom. St. *Paul* had such a Notion of the Happiness of That State, that tho' his *abiding in the Flesh* he knew was better for the *Church*, yet he was *in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which was far better for himself*, *Phil.* i; 23, 24. And in the Text he declares; *Therefore we are always confident, knowing that whilst we are at home in the Body, we are absent from the Lord; for we walk by Faith, not by Sight: We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the Body, and to be present with the Lord.* The present Life he calls, *walking only by Faith*; the State after Death, *walking by Sight, or being present with the Lord.* And accordingly all the best Writers in the Primitive Times, when they have occasion to mention the State of good Men departed, always speak of them as being

ing \* in the Place appointed for them with the Lord; as † beholding our Saviour in Paradise, after such a manner as they are worthy to behold him; as being in a Place of Rest, Refreshment, Comfort, and Expectation of the Completion of their Happiness at the Resurrection.

Directly contrary to the Innovations of the Church of Rome, who, without any Appearance of Reason, and without any Colour of Authority from Scripture, teach that the Souls of good Men are tormented in a Purgatory of imaginary Fire, very little differing from that of Hell it self. How much better does even a Jewish Writer express himself upon this Subject! *Wisd. iii, 1. The Souls of the Righteous are in the Hand of God, and there shall no Torment touch them. In the Sight of the Unwise they seemed to die, and their Departure is taken for Misery; and their going from us, to be utter Destruction; but they are in Peace. For tho' they be punish'd in the Sight of Men, yet is their Hope full of Immortality.*

4thly, The Consideration of the Soul's intermediate Happiness in the se-

\* Εἰς τὸ ὀφειλόμενον αὐτοῖς τόπον εἰσὶ τῷ κυρίῳ.  
Polycarpi Epist.

† Πανταχοῦ ᾧ ὁ Σωτὴρ ὁραθήσεται, καθὼς ἄξιον ἔσονται οἱ ἐρῶντες. Irenæus, lib. 5.

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parate State, is a great Comfort and Support against the Fear of Death: *Therefore we are confident*, says the Apostle, *and willing rather to be absent from the Body, and to be present with the Lord.* 'Tis some degree of Comfort against the Fear of Death, to consider that it is the Necessity of Nature, and the Appointment of God to all Men; *Heb. ix, 27, It is appointed unto Men once to die.* 'Tis some further degree of Support, to consider that Death is as it were the Haven of Rest, from the Storms and Troubles, the Calamities and Sorrows of the World: *Job iii, 17, There the Wicked cease from troubling, and there the Weary be at Rest; there the Prisoners rest together, they hear not the Voice of the Oppressor: The Small and Great are there, and the Servant is free from his Master.* But after all the Arguments of Comfort that *can* be drawn from Reason and Philosophy, Death is still the *King of Terrors* to Nature, and is become *much more so thro' Sin.* But Christ has now, to all such as repent and truly amend, taken away that *Sting*, and removed the *Fear*; having *destroyed him that had the Power of Death, that is, the Devil; and delivered Them, who thro' Fear of Death were all their Life-time subject to Bondage.*

age, Heb, ii, 15. *Death* is now abolish-  
 ed, to all good Men, 2 *Tim.* i, 10; and become nothing else but a *Passage*  
 to a glorious Immortality. And 'tis a  
 great Addition of Comfort and Support,  
 to consider that even *That Passage* it self  
 is not a *Dark Passage* thro' a state of  
 utter *Insensibility*; but a being *present*  
*with the Lord* in some degree of Com-  
 munication, and Fore-taste of a more  
 perfect Happiness.

The pious Lady, whose Death we now  
 lament, took particular Satisfaction in me-  
 ditating frequently upon this Subject; and  
 in inquiring into the full Extent and Sig-  
 nification of those Texts, which relate to  
 it. She made the Holy Scriptures her  
 daily Study and Delight, and was much  
 conversant in many other excellent  
 Books of Piety and Devotion: And the  
 Comfort such Studies administer against  
 the Fear of Death, is then truly effectual,  
 when 'tis applied by such Persons, as  
 are prepar'd to receive it by the pre-  
 ceding Course of a Holy Life. For the  
 space of two Years, wherein Providence  
 allotted me to perform the Duties of my  
 Ministry in the Parish wherein she dwelt,  
 (and wherein I receiv'd singular Favours,  
 particularly from that eminent So-  
 ciety for the Profession and Practise of

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Serm. the Civil-Law, which ought always gratefully to be acknowledged;) I was my self a Witness of her constant and never-failing Attendance upon the publick Service of God, and the Administration of the Sacrament, with the most exemplary Zeal and Devotion: And, in all the Opportunities I had of observing it, her private Conversation appear'd perfectly agreeable to her religious Behaviour in publick. Which, in a Person in the Strength and Vigour of her Age, very little exceeding 30 Years at the time of her Death, is *an Example* that may be recommended with Justice and Usefulness. But to enlarge too far upon Characters even of such truly pious persons, is neither giving any real Advantage to the Memory of the Dead, nor of so much Benefit to the Living, as the exhorting them upon these Occasions to prepare themselves for Death, which they are all hastning to, by setting before their Eyes continually the most perfect Example of Christ, and the Precepts of the Gospel; in following of which, all good and holy Men and Women who have gone before us, have obtain'd a good Report.

*stly* and *Lastly*, The intermediate State of Separation, though it may be a State of great Happiness, yet is by no means



means equal to That Happiness, which good Men shall be possess'd of after the Resurrection: *For we that are in this Tabernacle do groane, being burden'd; not for that we would be uncloth'd, but cloth'd upon, that Mortality might be swallow'd up of Life.* St Paul, tho' he knew, that when he was *absent from the Body*, he should be *present with the Lord*, in a State of Rest and Security and perfect Assurance, in a State of great Happiness and Joy unspeakable; yet tells us, that the *Crown of Righteousness* was *laid up* for him, not to be given him by the *Righteous Judge* before *That great Day*. And our Saviour himself bids the Charitable Person expect his final *Recompence, at the Resurrection of the Just*. And in the place before-cited, the Souls of the *Martyrs* themselves, which St John saw in his Vision under the Altar, are represented as in a State of Expectation only; *How long, O Lord, Holy and True, &c.* Rev. ix, 7. *And it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little Season, until their Fellow-Servants also, and their Brethren that should be killed as They were, should be fulfilled.* In a word; The Souls of the Righteous are doubtless as happy, as they can be in

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Serm. that imperfect State of Separation from  
 II. their Bodies: But 'tis after the Resur-  
 rection only, that their Happiness shall  
 be complete, and that they shall *shine  
 forth as the Sun in the Kingdom of their  
 Father*: When our Lord shall have *chan-  
 ged this vile Body, that it may be fa-  
 shion'd like unto his glorious Body; ac-  
 cording to the working, whereby he is  
 able even to subdue all Things unto him-  
 self*: That is, when *This Body*, which  
 has now in it such manifest Principles  
 of Mortality and Corruption; which  
 consists now of such brittle and tender  
 Parts, that every the least Violence di-  
 sturbs and unfits them for their Operati-  
 ons; when *This Body*, which is now  
 so weak and feeble, so dull, heavy and  
 unactive, that it clogs the Soul, and re-  
 tards and hinders its spiritual Opera-  
 tions; when *This Body*, which is now  
 subject to so many Casualties, and has  
 its Continuance depending upon the fit  
 Disposition of so many little and easily  
 disorder'd Parts, that 'tis a greater won-  
 der how we continue to live a Day,  
 than why we die after so few Years  
 Space; *shall* be perfectly refin'd and  
 purged from all the Seeds of Mortality  
 and Corruption; *shall* spring up into an  
 incorruptible and immortal Substance,  
 which

which shall be fitted to endure as long as the Soul to which it is to be united, even to all Eternity; *shall* become so Strong and Powerful, so Active and Vigorous, as even to be assisting to the most spiritual Motions of the Soul, to become every way a fit Organ and Instrument of its most exalted Operations; and *shall* continue in this perfect Health, Strength and Vigour for ever. *For God shall wipe away all Tears from their Eyes, and there shall be no more Death, neither Sorrow nor Crying, neither shall there be any more Pain; for the former Things are passed away.*

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To which happy State, that we may all arrive, God of his infinite Mercy grant, &c.



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A  
S E R M O N

Preach'd before the *Honourable House of Commons*, at the Church of St *Margaret Westminster*: On *Tuesday, Nov. 22, 1709*. Being the Day of Thanksgiving for the Signal and Glorious Victory obtained near *Mons*, and for the other Great Successes of Her Majesties Arms, this last Year, under the Command of the Duke of *Malborough*.

P S A L M L, 23.

*Who so offereth Praise, glorifies me; and to him that ordereth his Conversation aright, will I shew the Salvation of God.*

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**T**H E R E is no Nation under Heaven, since the Times of God's governing the *Jews* by an immediate Theocracy, that has seen  
more

more and clearer instances of the interposition of Providence on their behalf, or has had greater Blessings and Means of publick Prosperity put into their Hands; than we of this Nation have had. As *the Hills stand about Jerusalem*, said the Psalmist, (Psal. cxxv. 2.) *even so standeth the Lord round about his People*: As the *Seas encompass our Land*, may *We* no less justly say, even so does the Protection of *Providence* surround *Us on all Sides*. We have enjoyed a long and uninterrupted Succession of the Blessings of Heaven from above, and of the Earth beneath; of fruitful Seasons, and a large and plentiful Increase. We have lived under a secure Establishment of all our private Rights and just Liberties, in a wise and well-constituted Government, and in the regular Execution of good and wholesome Laws. We have had the free Exercise of our Religion continued almost to *Us alone*, when so many of those about us have been deprived of that inestimable Liberty. We have had Deliverances little less than miraculous, frequently vouchsafed us; and have seen many visible interpositions of Providence, in causing such Concurrences of Circumstances

Serm. for our Advantage, as no humane Wisdom could either foresee, direct, or over-rule,

Deut.  
xxxii, 15.

When, after a long Establishment of our Peace and Prosperity, we, like *Jeshurun*, waxed fat and kicked; When our Prosperity made us wanton, and we forgot God who *poured* these *Benefits upon us*; When Corruption of Manners prevailed over the Purity of our Religion, and we grew cool in our Zeal for the Service of God, and for the Honour of his Laws; Then did it please God to *threaten* us with the Rod of arbitrary Power, and with the Fears of Popish Slavery; to awaken us out of our careless neglect of Religion, and to compose our little Differences and unchristian Animosities among ourselves. Yet did he *threaten* us only with these Judgments, and *show* us the Terrour of them as it were at a distance, but did not suffer them to prevail over us; removing them from us by an unparalleled Deliverance, almost as soon as they approached, and that we began to feel the smart of them. And from the Time of that wonderful Deliverance, even unto this Day, has God continued to bless us with *Success Abroad* under victorious Armies, and with *Peace and Plenty at Home,*

*Home*, under pious and religious Princes. Serm.  
 A great and almost perpetual Series of III.  
 Successes has attended *our Arms*, through   
 the various Events and Hazards of a  
 long, bloody, and expensive War; a-  
 gainst the deep Counsels, and formi-  
 dable Strength, of a cunning, potent,  
 and formerly long-successful Enemy.  
 And at the same time, *we our selves*  
 sit every Man *under his Vine, and under*  
*his Fig-tree*, in the secure and peaceable  
 enjoyment of whatever each one has a  
 Right to possess. We enjoy almost all  
 the Happiness and Blessings of *Peace*,  
 even in the midst of a vigorous and  
 bloody *War*; while the Sword and Fire  
 consume round about us, and other fruit-  
 ful Countries are ravaged and destroyed;  
 while *Thousands fall beside us, and*  
*Ten Thousands at our Right-hand*, and  
 yet Providence protects us, that it *comes*  
*not nigh us*; while Want and Famine  
 spreads Desolation among our Neigh-  
 bours, and Pestilence at a Distance  
 threatens still severer Judgments of God.  
 We are not liable to be perpetually  
 spoiled, by the Violence of Arbitrary  
 Power; and to be daily bereaved of our  
 nearest and most valuable Rights, at  
 the mere Will and Pleasure of a lawless  
 Oppressor: But under the happy Influ-  
ences

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ences of a mild and most auspicious Government, and under the Protection of wise and good Laws, we enjoy as much Liberty as can be desired by Any, who aim not at the Confusions of unlimited Licentiousness. And to complete this Happiness, we are *not only allowed* the free Exercise of the Reformed Religion, (which under some Governments, who call themselves *Christian*, is persecuted even unto Death; and which we all remember the time, when we had great reason to apprehend we should have been deprived of it;) but the *Profession* of it is moreover encouraged by *Law*, and the *Practice* of it recommended not only by the *Command*, but (which is of greater Influence) by the hearty *Example* also, of our pious and most religious Queen; who *in every Work that She begins in the Service of the House of God, and in the Law, and in the Commandments, to seek her God, She does it with all her Heart, and prospers*, 2 Chron. xxxi, 21.

If these be things which are the proper Subjects of Praise and Thanksgiving, and call for the heartiest Expressions of our Gratitude to *Him who redeemeth our Life from Destruction, and crowneth us with Mercy and Loving-kindness*;



*ness*; undoubtedly there is no Nation under the Sun, that has more reason this Day, than we, to say, *What shall I render unto the Lord for all his Benefits that he has done unto me? I will offer to him the Sacrifice of Thanksgiving, and will call upon the Name of the Lord.* And O! that Men would indeed, with their Mouths and from their Hearts, by the Confession of their Lips, and in the Actions of their Lives, *therefore praise the Lord for his Goodness, and declare the Wonders that he doth for the Children of Men! That they would exalt him also in the Congregation of the People, and praise him in the Seat of the Elders! That there were in All of Us such a Heart,* that, by making suitable returns of Praise and Obedience to God, for his *past and present* Benefits; we might show our selves worthy of the *Continuance* of his Favour, and secure for the future the same Blessings, to our selves and our Posterity! Could we but prevail with our selves, not to abuse that Plenty wherewith God has blessed us, by Intemperance and Debauchery: Could we in the midst of that Peace, which we enjoy even while War surrounds us, forbear unreasonable Contentions, and

Serm. III.

Pfal. cxvi,  
12, 17.

Pfal. cvii,  
8.

ver. 32.

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and lay aside our Unchristian Heats and Animosities among our selves: Could we but use that Liberty we most justly value and boast of, so as not to abuse it to Licentiousness and Wantonness: Could we but in any Measure perswade our selves to *practice* the Religion, we are so zealous to *profess*; and banish from a *Christian* and a *reformed* Nation, Infidelity, Profaneness, and Immorality: In a Word, could we but find in our Hearts to *glorifie* God worthily for his great Mercies, and offer him *Praises* suitable to the wonderful Works which he has done for us; that is, *Praises* accompanied with the Works of Righteousness, so as to *honour* him indeed; This would be truly such an *ordering our Conversation aright*, that we might with good Grounds hope to have the Promise in the Text fulfilled upon our selves; and, by the Continuance of the same, and the Addition of more Blessings, might *see* compleated in us *the Salvation of God*. *Whoso offereth Praise, glorifies me; and to him that ordereth his Conversation aright, will I shew the Salvation of God.*

In the Words we may observe these Four Things.

1. That

1. That God is to be glorified or honoured in *All our Actions.* *He glorifies me.*

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2. That, *more particularly,* upon occasion of any *great Mercy,* any *remarkable Blessing,* or *signal interposition of Providence* on our behalf; we ought to show forth his *Glory* by the most *publick Acknowledgments,* by the heartiest *Praises and Thanksgivings* to him. *Whoso offereth Praise, glorifies me.*

3. That He who will *return Thanks* to God *acceptably* for *past Mercies,* so as to *glorifie him* indeed; must for the future *live suitably* to the *Profession* he publicly makes, of his *Sense* of God's *Providence governing* the World, and of his *entire dependence* upon it. *To him that ordereth his Conversation aright.*

4. That to Them who thus *order their Conversation aright,* here is a Promise added, of still farther Blessings. *I will shew them the Salvation of God.*

1. That *God is to be glorified or honoured in All our Actions.* This is implied in those Words, *he glorifies me.* For, the declaring in what Manner, or by what Actions God is most *glorified;* and who the Persons are, that do most truly


Serm. truly *honour* him; is presupposing the  
 III. Knowledge and Obligation of the  
 ~~~~~ Duty itself, that *God is to be glorified  
 or honoured in All our Actions*: That
 is; *that* we are at all Times, and in all
 Places, to have a constant Regard to
 him, and Dependance upon him; to
 have a perpetual Sense of him upon
 our Minds, and to make continual Ac-
 knowledgments to him upon all proper
 Occasions; *that* he is the Author and
 Preserver of our Life and Being; *that*
 on him we rely, for all the good
 things we hope for; and by his Per-
 mission, by his Grace and Favour, in-
 joy whatever Good we at present pos-
 sess; *that* to him all possible Praise and
 Thanksgiving is due, for the Prosperity
 or Success we at any time meet with,
 either in our private, or in the publick
 Affairs; *that* by Him Kings reign,
 and Princes decree Justice; *that* His
 Blessing it is upon a Nation, when-
 ever pious Princes are established upon
 the Throne, and their Affairs prosper
 under a wise Administration, and Suc-
 cess accompanies their Arms *abroad*,
 and Peace and Plenty crowns their En-
 deavours *at Home*. On the contrary,
that ill Success in any of our Under-
 takings; the blasting and defeating any
 of

of our Designs; the Calamities and Afflictions, of whatever kind they be, that at any time fall upon us, are still the Strokes of the same Hand, the Appointment of the same wise Providence, the Good Pleasure of the same Supreme Governour and Director of all Things; designed for our Correction and Improvement, to withdraw our Affections from Vanity and Trust in the World, and to lead us to Repentance and Amendment. This is, according to the wise Man's Advice, *Acknowledging God in all our Ways*: This is promoting a true Sense of Religion and Piety in the World: This is *honouring* and *glorifying* God. For, *the Glory of God*, is not any thing accruing to *God himself*; 'tis not any Addition to *his* Greatness or Happiness, or any Accession to the Perfections of *his* Nature. But, as the true Glory of a *Prince*, is the *Obedience* and the *Prosperity* of his *Subjects*; so the true Notion of the *Glory of God*, is nothing else but the advancing and establishing his *Kingdom* among *Men*. And the *Kingdom of God*, saith St Paul, is, *Righteousness, Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghost*. 'Tis something *within* ourselves, as our Saviour affirms, St Luke

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Serm. xvii, 21. 'Tis the Conformity of the

III. Creature to the Nature and Life of

 God, to the Law and Happiness of Heaven, by the Obedience of the Gospel, and by the Reconciliation of their Nature to the eternal and unchangeable Law of Righteousness and Holiness.

Promoting the *Glory of God* therefore,

is nothing else but advancing the Interest of true Religion, and promoting the Practise of Virtue in the World.

For, as Irreligion and Neglect of God, Profaneness or any vitious Practise in those who pretend to believe; do

2 Sam. xii, 14. (as is said in the Case of *David*) *give great occasion to the Enemies of God to blaspheme*; and they who make

Rom. ii, 23. *their boast in the Law*, as St Paul expresses it, do, *by transgressing the Law, dishonour God*; and *the Name of God is through them blasphemed among Unbelievers*: So, on the contrary, they who, by unfeigned Piety and Regard to God in the whole Course

of their Lives, make *their Light to shine before Men*; do, by letting others see *their good Works*, cause Men to *glorifie their Father which is in Heaven*;

Mat. v. 16. That is, they bring other Men over to a true Sense of Religion, and perswade them to have a just Value and Esteem

for

for it. This is the true Notion of the *Glory of God*: This is *doing all Things* for his Honour and Glory. And in This Sense 'tis manifest it is our indispensable Duty, to *honour and glorify God in All our Actions*; by keeping up in *our own Minds* a constant Sense of him, of his Power and Greatness, of his Wisdom and Providence in governing the World, and disposing of all Events; and, as much as in us lies, exciting the same Sense of him, and dependence upon him, in the Minds of *Others* likewise.

2. As God is in some Measure to be honoured or glorified, by *all our Actions* in general; so *more particularly*, upon occasion of any *great Mercy* or *Deliverance*, upon occasion of any *remarkable Blessing* or *signal Interposition of Providence on our behalf*, we ought to show forth *his Glory* by the most *publick Acknowledgments*, by the highest Expressions of our *Gratitude*, by the heartiest *Praises* and *Thanksgivings* to him. *Whoso offereth Praise, glorifies me*; Or, as it is in the former Translation, *Whoso offereth me Thanks and Praise, he honour-eth me*. 'Tis All the Return, that weak and dependent Creatures are capable of making, to the supreme Lord and Governour of all Things; And therefore he is

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graciously pleased to accept it, as a sufficient *Reward for all the Benefits that he has done unto us.* Our *Goodness extendeth not to Him,* Psal. xvi, 2; neither can *Man be profitable to God, as he that is wise may be profitable unto himself,* Job xxii, 12. But tho' we cannot make him any Return for his Benefits, yet *thankful* to him for them we *can* be; and most inexcusable are we, if we neglect to be so. All that we are able to do, is to make humble Acknowledgments of the Mercies we receive from him; and therefore we ought to do it in the gratefullest, and in the most publick and hearty manner we can. Adversity and Afflictions, such Corrections and Chastisements as his Fatherly Hand thinks fit at any time to lay upon us, it becomes us to bear with patient Submission, and silent Resignation to his Will; as being just Reproofs for our Sins, and Calls to Reformation and Repentance: But Blessings and Instances of Mercy, especially publick and national Blessings, call for Publick Acknowledgments in such Expressions of Praise and Gratitude, as may declare to the World our being duly sensible from what Hand they come. Upon account of the Works of *Creation*, all, even inanimate Creatures, are in Scripture called upon

to

to praise the Lord; that is, to contribute Matter, and afford perpetual Occasion by the Meditation of them, to all rational Creatures to sing his Praises; *Praise him* (that is, afford continual subject-matter for his Praises,) *O ye Sun and Moon; praise him all ye Stars of Light, &c.* The Works of *Providence*, are no less great and conspicuous, than those of *Creation*; And for These Works, Men, who are chiefly and most immediately concern'd in them, and who alone are able to discern and judge of them, are in Scripture required perpetually to praise him: To Praise him *perpetually*; because the Number and Variety of them is so great, that no Tongue can worthily or sufficiently extol them: *Who can express the noble Acts of the Lord, or show forth all his Praise?* Psal. cvi. 2.

'Tis the least that any reasonable Person can do, in return for great Benefits; to make a thankful Acknowledgment of them, to *Him* from whom he receiv'd them. And yet because 'tis *All*, (as I before observ'd) that weak and dependent Creatures *can* pay to *Him* who is absolute Lord of all things; therefore, when it proceeds from a sincere Mind and hearty Affection, 'tis accepted by him as the most valuable Sacrifice. *Ver. 9,* of this 50th Psalm; *I will take no Bul-*

Serm. lock, saith God, out of thy House, nor
 III. He-goats out of thy Fold; For all the
 ~~~~~ Beasts of the Forest are mine, and so are  
 the Cattle upon a Thousand Hills: Will  
 I eat the Flesh of Bulls, or drink the  
 Blood of Goats? No: But offer unto God  
 Thanksgiving, and pay thy Vows unto  
 the most High: And call upon me in  
 the Day of Trouble; I will deliver  
 thee, and thou shalt glorifie me. Again,  
 Psal. cxvi, 12, 17. What shall I render  
 unto the Lord, for all the Benefits that  
 he has done unto me? I will offer to  
 him the Sacrifice of Thanksgiving, and  
 will call upon the Name of the Lord.  
 And Psal. lxxix; 30, 31; I will praise  
 the Name of God with a Song, and  
 will magnify him with Thanksgiving;  
 This also shall please the Lord, better  
 than a Bullock that has Horns and  
 Hoofs. The same Notion is very elegantly  
 expressed by the Prophet Hosea, ch. xiv,  
 ver. 2. *We will render the Calves of our  
 Lips*; i. e. we will return to God such  
 hearty Thanks for his Mercies, as shall  
 be more acceptable to him than the Sa-  
 crifices of Calves or Sheep. The Phrase  
 is translated by the *LXX*, the *Fruit* of  
 our Lips; And so St Paul cites it, *Heb.*  
*xiii, 15*; *Let us offer the Sacrifice of  
 Praise to God continually; that is, the  
 Fruit*

*Fruit of our Lips, giving Thanks to his Name.* Sermon. III.

The Obligation to this Duty, is so evident and so reasonable, that it is sometimes in Scripture put for the whole of Religion; and the Neglect of it, marked as a total Defection from God. Thus St Paul, *Rom. i, 21*; describing the inexcusable Corruption of the Heathen World, puts it principally upon This; *because that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were Thankful, but became vain in their Imaginations, and their foolish Heart was darkned.* They cou'd not but know God, by his Works; yet they were not *Thankful*, nor glorified him according to that Knowledge; *therefore*, says the Apostle, *they are without Excuse.* The plainer and more obvious the Duty is, and the more fully God has declared his Acceptance of it, to *Us* who enjoy the Advantage of Revelation; the more unworthy still, and the more inexcusable, is *Unthankfulness* and Neglect of him. 'Tis the perpetual Complaint of the Prophets in the Old Testament, that after all the great things that God had done for the Nation of the *Jews*, their Ingratitude was most provoking to him; *He made them ride on the high places*

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2 Kings,  
xviii; 3, 5.

*of the Earth, that they might eat the increase of the Fields, and suck Honey out of the Rock, and Oyl out of the flinty Rock:---But Jeshurun waxed fat and kicked;---he soon forsook the God which made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his Salvation, Deut. xxxii, 13. And 'tis recorded of a great and good King; one, concerning whom the Scripture testifies, that in other things he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, so that before him there was none equal to him, neither after him arose there any like him; 'tis noted of Him, even of good King Hezekiah, as a very great blemish, as a thing very unnatural and unbecoming him, and at which God was highly displeas'd; that, after the Lord had destroy'd his Enemies, by sending an Angel which cut off all the mighty Men of Valour, and the Leaders and Captains in the Camp of the King of Assyria; and after he had miraculously caused him to recover from a mortal Disease; yet he rendred not again according to the Benefit done unto him; for his heart was lifted up; therefore there was Wrath upon him, and upon Judah and Jerusalem, 2 Chron. xxxii; 21, 25.*

The many wonderful Victories that God has granted Us, over the Armies of  
a Prince

a Prince more Potent than the King of *Assyria*; and who has often thought to swallow us up more easily, than *Sennacherib* did to destroy *Jerusalem*, and overrun the Land of *Judæa*; The many wonderful Victories, I say, which God has given *Us*, and particularly the great Successes wherewith he has blessed us this present Year, and for which we are now met together to return him Thanks; are such as will set as great or greater a mark of Ingratitude upon *Us*, if our real Thankfulness be not answerable to our outward Expressions of Joy, and our consequent Behaviour suitable to both.

The Fatigue and Length of the foregoing Campaign, which had been drawn out into the very midst of Winter; the extreme Rigour of the ensuing Season, and the Backwardness of the Spring, which occasioned such a scarcity of Forage, that it was impossible to open the Campaign before the Summer was far spent; and at the same time the Artifices made use of by our Enemies to amuse us with false Appearances and deceitful Insinuations of their Desire of Peace, and to try if from thence Means might be found to create any Divisions or Jealousies among the Allies; gave some hopes to *France*, that they should have been able to avoid

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the Blow wherewith they were threatned; and that, by gaining Time, they might, at least for this Summer, have escaped the Danger to which by their former Losses they seem'd to be expos'd. But the Providence of God, directing our Counsels; the Unanimity and Steadiness of the Allies, the Prudence and Vigilance of our Generals, and the Indefatigableness of our Troops, entirely disappointed the Enemies Expectation: And the Campaign began with the taking of one of the strongest Fortresses in *Europe*; in the Fortifying of which, no Pains, no Cost had been spared, for a Trial how far it was possible to increase Strength by the Perfection of Art. To prevent further Losses of this kind, the Enemy resolv'd to hazard a Battle; yet in such Circumstances, that, according to the usual Measure and Judgment of Events in War, they thought themselves to run no *hazard*. But in the issue it appear'd, that thro' the Courage and Conduct of our Generals, whose Greatness as no History can parallel, so no Character can do Justice to; and thro' the Bravery and Intrepidity of our Troops, which as no Difficulties can withstand, so no Words can sufficiently express; those mighty Intrenchments, those double aud  
treble

treble Defences, wherein the Enemies thought themselves so secure, served only to increase the Glory of the Arms of the Allies, and to convince the Enemy how little hopes remained of their ever gaining any Advantage over those Troops upon *equal* Ground, against whom they could not defend themselves upon the *most unequal*. Nevertheless, according to their usual *Vanity*, they boasted of a Victory; Unless we will rather ascribe it to their beginning to put on some degree of *Modesty*, when they declare they esteem it the noblest Atchievement and the greatest Height of their Glory, to have been able to make a *Retreat* after being beaten, with *less Loss than usual*. But in a Matter of this Nature, 'tis not of so much Importance what *Representations*, what *artful Descriptions* may be made of the Action itself: 'Tis the *Effect*, the *Consequences* of great Actions, that afford the truest Judgment of the Greatness of the Success. And here it was sufficiently evident *on which Side*, and *to what Degree*, Victory declar'd itself; when the immediate Consequence of the Battle, was the laying Siege to another strong Town, and the taking it in a very short time, without the Enemies being in a condition so much as to *offer at any Attempt* of coming to its Relief.

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For these great and continu'd Successes, wherewith the Providence of God has vouchsafed to Bless us, let us make thankful Acknowledgment to his Divine Majesty, in the Words of *David*, 1 Chron. xxix, 11. *Thine, O Lord, is the Greatness, and the Power, and the Glory, and the Victory, and the Majesty; For all that is in the Heaven, and in the Earth, is thine; thine is the Kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as Head above all. Both Riches and Honour come of thee, and thou reignest over all, and in thine Hand is Power and Might, and in thine Hand it is to make Great, and to give Strength unto all. Now therefore, our God, we thank thee, and praise thy Glorious Name.*

To neglect acknowledging the Hand of Providence in these great Events, would be not only base *Ingratitude* and *Unworthiness*, but also the greatest and most inexcusable *Inconsiderateness*. For since *the Race is not always to the Swift, nor the Battle to the Strong*; since the Wisest Counsels do not always prosper, nor the best laid Designs constantly take Effect; but the Providence of God over-rules all Events, by secret and undiscern'd Springs; 'Tis to *his* Blessing wholly, we must thankfully acknowledge, that even the best concerted



certed Measures owe their Success. 'Tis by *his* Blessing, that *Unanimity* is preserv'd among *Allies*, that *Generals* are inspir'd with *Wisdom*, and *Troops* with *Undauntedness and Bravery*; And 'tis by the Continuance of the same Blessing, that *That Unanimity, Conduct and Courage*, are attended with Success. *Unanimity* has been, with the greatest Advantage, on our Enemies side: Their Soldiers sometimes have not been void of *Bravery*, nor their *Generals* of *Skill*. Yet have they been defeated in Battle after Battle, till the Strength of the potentest Monarch upon Earth has been almost entirely broken, and his Power reduc'd to an Extremity of Distress. *The King shall mourn, and the Prince shall be cloathed with Desolation, and the Hands of the People of the Land shall be troubled; I will do unto them after their way, and according to their Deserts will I judge them: That they may see, and know, and consider, and understand together, that the Hand of the Lord has done this, and the Holy One of Israel has created it: That they may know that this is thy Hand, and that thou, Lord, hast done it.*

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Ezek. vii.  
27.

Isa. xli, 20.

Pf. cix, 27.

Nor ought it to be omitted, that, next under *God* who is the first Author of all Victory, all due Honour and Acknowledgment

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ledgment is to be paid to the *Instruments*, by which our Successes have been accomplish'd; the Wisdom and Conduct of the Generals, and the Bravery of those who executed their Commands. For, though Providence has indeed, in the whole Course of this War, very signally interpos'd in our behalf; yet not by immediate Miracle, as in the Days of *Jehosaphat* King of *Judah*, when it was said to them by the Prophet, 2 Chron. xx, 17, *Ye shall not need to fight in this Battle; set your selves, stand ye still, and see the Salvation of the Lord.* But the Blessings of Providence are convey'd to *Us*, thro' the Wisdom and Diligence of second Causes. For as, on the one hand without the Blessing of Providence, the greatest Wisdom of Man is Folly, and his Strength Weakness; and *a Horse is counted but a vain thing to save a Man, neither shall it deliver any Man by its great Strength*: So neither on the other hand have we Now any reason to expect, that Providence will work for us direct Miracles, but only bless the Endeavours of subordinate Causes. Wherefore all due Acknowledgments ought to be made to the Instruments, by whose Means we are deliver'd from our Enemies, and by whose Hands is work'd for us *the Salvation of God*. And 'tis noted in Scripture as a great

Pf. xxxiii,  
17.

great Reproach upon the Children of *Israel*, that they were sometimes ungrateful to the Persons by whom God had work'd their Deliverance, and that they remember'd 'em not *according to all the Goodness that they had shew'd unto Israel*, *Judg. viii, 35.*

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3. He that will *return Thanks* to God acceptably for past Mercies, so as to *Glorify* him *indeed*; must for the future *live suitably* to that Profession he pretends to make, of his Sense of God's Providence in governing the World, and of his entire Dependence upon it. *To him, that ordereth his Conversation aright.* The Expressions of our present Joy, must be such as become the Gospel of Christ; And the following Part of our Lives must show, that our Praises proceed not out of feigned Lips. Publick Praises and Thanksgivings are acceptable to God, as Part of our Religious Worship and Adoration of him; But 'tis Then only so, when the Declarations of our Mouths are the real Significations of the Intentions of our Hearts, and our Designs are not to abuse those Mercies which we thank him for. We must so return our Thanks for past Mercies, as that, by their having a due Influence upon us, we may show our selves worthy of the Continuance of them, and of God's bestowing

Serm. stowing still more upon us; and then our

III. Praise will be indeed an acceptable Sacrifice.

☞ *Rejoice in the Lord, ye RIGHTEOUS,* saith the Psalmist; *for it becometh well the Just to be Thankful,* Psal. xxxi, 1. But of the *Wicked* it may truly be affirm'd, that as their *Prayer*, so their *Praise* also is an *Abomination to the Lord*.

Prov.  
xxviii, 9

4. To them who thus *order their Conversation aright*, here is a Promise added of yet farther Blessings: *I will shew them the Salvation of God*. They who worthily express their Thanks for *past Mercies*, not by debauch'd and unseemly Mirth, but by truly honouring and fearing God, may reasonably hope for *more* occasions of praising him. If ye be *Willing and Obedient*, ye shall *eat the Fat of the Land*; and the Lord will *delight to do you good*. Our Praises and Thanksgivings for *past Victories*, if accompany'd with sincere Obedience, will be, like the lifting up of *Moses's Hands* upon the Mount, a certain Evidence of future Success. God has already blest the Endeavours of our Pious Queen with so great Prosperity, that we may justly say with the Psalmist, *Psal. xx, 6; Now know I that the Lord helpeth his Anointed, and will hear him from his Holy Heaven, even with the wholesome Strength of his Right hand. Some put their*

Isa. i, 19.

Exod.  
xvii, 11.

*their Trust in Chariots, and some in Horses, but we will remember the Name of the Lord our God: They are brought down and fallen, but we are risen and stand upright.* Nay, we have reasonable Grounds to apply to our Enemies the Prophet *Nabum's* Lamentation over the King of *Assyria*, *ch. iii, v. 19.* *There is no healing of thy Bruise, thy Wound is grievous; All that hear the Bruit of thee, shall clap their Hands over thee; for upon whom has not thy Wickedness pass'd continually? Or That of the Prophet *Isaiah*, *ch. xiv, v. 16.* *They that see thee, shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the Man that made the Earth to tremble? That did shake Kingdoms? That made the World as a Wilderness, and destroy'd the Cities thereof? That open'd not the House of his Prisoners?* The sudden breaking of so great a Power, shows how easily Providence, if we prove ungrateful to him, can even yet disappoint our most probable Hopes, and, after all our Successes, bring us to Confusion. But the Example of Piety set us from the Throne, will, we hope, so effectually discourage all Immorality and Profaneness, and, by spreading its Influence afar, excite in the Nation such a Spirit of Virtue and true Religion, that God may be intreated*

of

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Serm. of us *to continue* to bless us with Success,  
 III. till the present bloody and expensive War  
 terminates in such a Peace, as may establish  
 upon a lasting Foot the Liberties of Eu-  
 rope. *The humble shall see this, and be  
 glad: And their Heart shall live, that  
 seek God. For God will save Sion, and  
 build the Cities of Judah, that Men may  
 dwell there, and have it in possession: The  
 Posterity also of his Servants shall inherit  
 it; and they that love his Name, shall  
 dwell therein.*

Pf. xxxiv,  
 2.  
 P.sal. lxiix,  
 35.

I add only a Word of Exhortation, and so conclude.

The Ground of our rejoycing, and returning Thanks to God for the Successes of the present War, is, that those Successes tend to secure to us the Ends, for which the War was at first undertaken; *viz.* the *procuring a safe and lasting Peace, the Support and Establishment of the present Constitution of our Government, the maintaining the Rights and Liberties of our selves and all Europe, and the Preservation of the Protestant Religion among us.*

*First* therefore, if we will show ourselves truly Thankful for the Successes of the *War*, let us endeavour to maintain such Unanimity among ourselves, as may convince our Enemies they can have no  
 Hopes

Hopes of putting an end to the War, but by consenting to such a *Peace*, as may be *safe and lasting*. And let us so lay aside all unreasonable Divisions and private Animositics, that whensoever it shall please God to put a successful End to *the War abroad*, we may enjoy the blessed Effects of *Peace and Charity*, of *mutual Confidence and Agreement at home*.

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*Secondly*, Let us heartily endeavour to promote the Interest of *that Government*, the Support and Establishment whereof is one principal Effect of the Successes for which we publicly return Thanks to God. Let us contribute our utmost, each in our proper Stations, to support a Government so happily establish'd; and to make the executive part of it as easy, and as little burdensome as possible, in the Hands wherein it is lodg'd. *To seek the Peace of the City or Country* wherein we dwell, and in *the Peace thereof* to expect *Peace*, is Men's Duty and Interest even under *bad Governments*: How much more, under the best and most wisely constituted Government in the World, under the easiest and gentlest Administration, under a Government wherein nothing else is design'd but the preserving the Publick Welfare and Happiness, the Security and Establishment of the Protestant Religion, the maintain-

Jer. xix;

7.

Serm. ing the Rights and Liberties both of Na-  
 III. tions and of private Persons against Ty-  
 ~~~~~ ranny and Oppression; How much more,  
 I say, in This case, must all such be
 utterly inexcusable, who, under any Pre-
 tentences whatever, foment Divisions and
 Animosities, Jealousies and groundless Su-
 suspicions, to weaken the Hands of the Go-
 vernment, and prevent the perfecting and
 securing upon a lasting Foot the fore-men-
 tion'd great and excellent Ends! We have
 been rescu'd by wonderful Deliverances,
 from the Rod of Arbitrary Power, from
 the Follies of Enthusiasm, and from the
 Superstitions of Popery: *Should we again*
grow weary of our own Happiness, and
despise the Liberty wherewith God has
blest'd us; should we again desire to joyn
in Affinity with the People of these Abo-
minations; would it not be just with God
to suffer them still to become Thorns in
our Sides, and their Gods to be a Snare
unto us, and that he should be angry with
us till he had consumed us? Ezra. ix, 12.

Thirdly, Let us take great Heed, lest by
 running into lawless and ungovernable Li-
 centiousness, we abuse and destroy those
Rights and Liberties, which have long
 been so earnestly and so justly contended
 for; and which the Successes we are now
 returning Thanks for, are the Means of
 se-

securing to us upon a solid Foundation. God has bless'd us with great and glorious Success against our *Foreign* Enemies; which we hope he will continue to us, till the *Liberties of Europe* be establish'd by a firm and lasting Peace. Let us not, after *That*, become Enemies to *Ourselves*, by a Licentiousness impatient of the most necessary Restraints; Lest by our own Unthankfulness and *Intestine* Confusions, we deprive ourselves of the Benefit of a Blessing purchas'd with so much Blood and Treasure; and provoke God to suffer us to destroy ourselves, by losing our *Liberty* wholly, while we affect more of it than is just and reasonable, or consistent with good Order and Government and the Publick Safety. For as, on the one hand, the Abuse of Arbitrary Power in *Governors*, has generally been the Occasion of putting People upon recovering the Liberties they had lost; so, on the other hand, Licentiousness or Abuse of Liberty in the *People*, tends always to such confusions, as terminate usually in Arbitrary Power again.

Fourthly, And above all, let us take care to *Practise* the Religion we *Profess*, and for the Preservation whereof we are so highly concern'd. One of the Principal Benefits of all the glorious Successes God has bless'd us with, is the securing the Re-

Serm. form'd Religion amongst us, against the
 III. Attempts of Popish Superstition. But what
 will it profit us, to bear the Name and
 Profession of a *Reform'd Religion*, if in
 our Practice and in Reality we have *no Religion at all*? Of what Use will it be to us, to be secur'd from the Vanities and Superstitions of Popery; if on the contrary we run into Atheism, Irreligion and Profaneness?

Christianity itself, our Saviour assures us, is of no Advantage to those who do not obey *the Will of his Father which is in Heaven*; But their Portion will be among *Unbelievers*. In like manner neither can any particular *Reformation of Religion* from the grossest Corruptions that have crept into it, be of any Benefit to those, whose *Manners* are not *reform'd* together with their Profession.

2 Cor. iv;
 4, 6. God, *who commandeth the Light to shine out of Darkness*, grant that *the Light of the Glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the Image of God*, may so shine in our *Hearts*, as that we may bring forth Fruit worthy of that *Light of the Knowledge of the Glory of God, in the Face of Jesus Christ*.

A
S E R M O N

Preach'd before the

Q U E E N,

At St. James's Chapel, on *Wednesday* the 8th of *March*,
1709-10. being the Anniverfary of Her Majesty's Happy Ac-
ceffion to the Throne.

Publish'd by Her MAJESTIES Special Command.

2 C H R O N. XXXI, 21.

And in every Work that he began in the Service of the House of God, and in the Law, and in the Commandments to seek his God, he did it with all his Heart, and prospered.

THERE is fo neceffary a Con-
nexion between the Happinefs of
Governors, and that of the Peo-
ple committed to their Charge; that as
there lies an indifpenfable Obligation upon

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Serm. Princes and all that are in Authority, to
 IV. govern in the Ways of Piety and Righte-
 ousness, in order to the Welfare and Pro-
 sperity of the Publick, as well as upon ac-
 count of their own private Duty to God ;
 so the People have always great Reason to
 be very thankful to God, when under the
 Administration of pious and religious
 Princes, they enjoy both in the natural
 course of things, the unspeakable Advan-
 tages of Peace and good Government, and
 have moreover a particular Title to the ex-
 traordinary Blessings of Providence, and
 to all the Promises God has made in Scrip-
 ture to the Righteous, of national Pro-
 sperity.

God, who is perfect Goodness, and who
 communicates to all his Creatures such
 proportions of Happiness, as is suitable to
 the Original or improved Capacities of
 their Natures ; has so framed and consti-
 tuted the Nature of Man in this present
 State, that as *every particular Person*, with
 regard to the Temper of his own Mind,
 is in great measure either Happy or Mife-
 rable within himself, in proportion as his
 Passions are more or less subject to the Di-
 rection and Government of right Reason ;
 so *Numbers of Men in Societies* likewise,
 do proportionably either promote or de-
 stroy each other's Happiness, as their Deal-
 ings

ings One with Another are either just and righteous, equitable and charitable, honourable and publick-spirited; or, on the contrary, base and malicious, deceitful and unrighteous, violent and oppressive. The Happiness which Mankind would enjoy even here upon Earth, if all mens Passions were kept subject to Reason, and every private Interest made subservient to the publick; is greater than can be expressed in Words, or than can easily be conceived in the Imagination. And to preserve that Happiness constant and perpetual, among Persons of such a Disposition; there would be wanting little other *Government*, but that of Right Reason; and few other *Laws*, than only the Dictates of Conscience, which are the Law of the Most High. But this being the State, not of *Earth*, but of *Heaven*; not of the *present* World, but of the *New Heavens and New Earth*, wherein is to dwell universal Righteousness; That which in the next place is most desirable, and which is the highest degree of Happiness that can in Fact be attained to by Mankind here upon Earth; is, that the Practise of Righteousness and true Virtue may be established and encouraged by *Human Laws*; that the *Execution* of those Laws be intrusted in Just and Wise Hands;

Serm. and that Governors, both Supreme and sub-
 IV. ordinate, at the same time that they im-
 partially administer Justice to others, be
 themselves *Examples* of that Virtue and
 Goodness, which the Design of all good
 Laws is to promote the Practise of. That
 so, those who *fear not God*, nor *love Righteousness*,
 may yet either thro' *Shame*, or
the Fear of Men, be in some measure re-
 strained within the Bounds of their Duty ;
 And, if they will not, out of a Sense of
 Religion, endeavour to do *Good* in the
 World ; yet at least, by the Coercion of
 wise Laws, they may be prevented from
 being able to do much *Mischief* in it.

As the *greatest Calamity* that can befall
 Mankind, is to be left in a State of *absolute Anarchy and Confusion*, to devour
 each other like wild Beasts ; in a State,
 wherein Force gives Right to all manner
 of Oppression, and Fraud and Violence
 are practis'd with all Impunity and with-
 out Restraint : And the *Next* to this ex-
 treme Calamity, is *bad Government* ;
 wherein either Laws promote the Mischiefs
 they ought to prevent ; or Governors, a-
 gainst Law, encourage those very Practises
 which 'tis the whole Intention of their Of-
 fice to restrain ; and Princes become Ter-
 rors to their Neighbours, and Destroyers
 of their own Subjects ; and the Oppressed
 cry

cry, and no Man delivers them; and Violence fits in the Seat of Judgment, and Extortion and Rapine are established as it were by a Law: As such *bad Government*, I say, is the Next great Calamity to having *no Government at all*; So, on the contrary, *next* to that Angelical State, that *State of Paradise*, wherein there would be little need of any other Laws or Authority than the Fear of God; the *next great Blessing* Mankind is capable of, is *Good Government*: Government, which truly answers the design of its establishment; which, in real Effects, represents the Divine Authority; which, by the whole Exercise of its Power, promotes the Honour of God in the World, and the publick Welfare and Happiness of Mankind.

Accordingly, the principal Instruments which God generally makes use of, either in conveying his greatest Temporal Blessings to Mankind, or in inflicting his severest Punishments on any Nation or People, are *Good or Bad Princes*.

'Tis remarkable in the History of the Jewish Nation, that when *they rejected the Lord, that he should not reign over them*, 1 Sam. viii, 7; the Threatning wherewith the Prophet was commanded to endeavour to deter them from their disobedient Purpose, was This; *ver. 9. Protest*

Serm. *test solemnly unto them, and show them*
 IV. *the Manner of the King that shall reign*
 ~~~~~ *over them.---He will take your Sons, and*  
*appoint them for himself, for his Chariots,*  
*and to be his Horsemen; and some shall*  
*run before his Chariots: And he---will*  
*set them to ear his ground, and to reap*  
*his Harvest, and to make his instruments*  
*of War, and instruments of his Chari-*  
*ots; And he will take your Fields and*  
*your Vineyards and Oliveyards, even*  
*the best of them, and give them to*  
*his Servants.----And ye shall cry out in*  
*that day, and the Lord will not hear you.*

There have been some so unreasonable, as to interpret this Passage, not as a threatening of Punishment express'd in the Character of a bad Government, but as a Delegation of that Power which God intend'd All Governors should have a Right to exercise. But the whole Scope and Connexion of the Words, evidently shows the contrary. And the Histories of the Eastern Nations of the World, who have long lived under the Exercise of such absolute Arbitrary Dominion, shows how inexpressibly great a Calamity such Governments are to Mankind. And the Experience even of a neighbouring Nation alone, which from one of the potentest and most flourishing Kingdoms upon Earth, has



has been reduced even to the extremest degree of Misery; is a sufficient evidence of this Truth. Most reasonably therefore, and as a most proper Argument to deter the *Jews* from continuing in their wanton Disposition of rebelling against God's Government, might the Prophet threaten them with being made subject to such a Dominion.

On the contrary, in those Passages of Scripture, wherein are promised the greatest Temporal Blessings that God ever bestows on any Nation or People, such Promises are frequently and most emphatically express'd under descriptions of mild and gentle Governments; of Governments wherein Justice is establish'd by wise Laws, or administer'd by the Will of Righteous Princes. In the lxxii<sup>d</sup> *Psalms*, the Description of a Prince, the Greatness and Prosperity of whose Government was to be a Type of the Blessedness of the Kingdom of the *Messiah*; is this. *He shall judge the People according unto Right, and defend the Poor:---He shall keep the simple folk by their Right, defend the Children of the Poor, and punish the Wrong Doer:---He shall come down like the Rain into a Fleece of Wool, even as the drops that water the Earth; In his time shall the Righteous flourish, yea and abundance of Peace*



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*Peace so long as the Moon endureth:-----  
He shall deliver the Poor when he crieth,  
the Needy also, and him that hath no  
Helper: He shall be favourable to the  
Simple and Needy, and shall preserve the  
Souls of the Poor.* And in the Lx. Chap-  
ter of *Isaiab*, the final restoration of *Je-  
rusalem*, which perhaps is no other than a  
Description of the Happiness of the *Hea-  
venly State* it self; because a nobler and  
loftier Figure could not be borrow'd from  
any thing to be found on Earth, is express'd  
by This Similitude: *ver. 17. I will make  
thy Officers Peace, and thine Exaētors  
Righteousness: Violence shall no more be  
heard in thy Land, wasting nor destruction  
within thy Borders; but thou shalt call  
thy Walls Salvation, and thy Gates  
Praise:-----Thy people also shall be all  
righteous.*

Some Proportions of this Blessedness,  
both by the natural Consequence of things,  
and by the positive direction and interposi-  
tion of Providence, do, even in this pre-  
sent mixt and uncertain State of things,  
always attend any Nation; when Unright-  
eousness and Debauchery are in any mea-  
sure discourag'd by the good Disposition of  
the People, or by the pious Indcavours of  
a Wise and Religious Governor. We of  
this Nation have (thanks be to God) experi-  
enci'd

rienc'd good and very great Effects of this Kind: And, was it not for our Unthankfulness and Unworthy Returns for God's Blessings, we might have reason still to expect more. The Jewish Nation, whose History was written for our Example, was always blessed with singular Prosperity, when under any pious Prince they lived in remarkable Obedience to the Law of God; and never in a more conspicuous manner, than in the days of that excellent Person, of whom it is recorded in the Words of the Text, that *in every Work that he began in the Service of the House of God, and in the Law, and in the Commandments to seek his God, he did it with all his Heart, and Prospered.*

The Words are part of the Character of that pious Prince *Hezekiah* King of *Judah*, of whom the Scripture tells us, that *he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that David his Father had done*; and that he kept such a Passover, as *had not been kept before, from the days of David unto that Day*; and that he *wrought that which was good and right and truth, before the Lord his God*; and *in every work that he began in the Service of the House of God, and in the Law, and in the Commandments to seek his God, he did it with all his*

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Serm. *his Heart*: And the Text adds, that he  
 IV. *Prospered*; and that God blessed him according to his singular Piety. For when *Sennacharib* King of *Assyria* came up against him and against *Jerusalem* with a mighty Host to take it, the *Lord sent an Angel*, (2 Chr. xxxii, 21.) *which cut off all the mighty Men of valour, and the Leaders and Captains in the Camp of the King of Assyria, so that he returned with shame of face to his own Land*; And the *Lord saved Hezekiah and guided him on every side, and he was magnified in the sight of all Nations from thenceforth, v. 23.* We cannot in this profane and licentious Age, apply to our selves the Zeal wherewith the Inhabitants of *Jerusalem* assisted their pious King in his earnest Endeavours to restore among them the Religion and Piety of their Ancestors: Neither, if we could, had we any warrant to expect such *miraculous* interpositions of the immediate hand of God on our behalf, as his peculiar People then experienc'd. But the endeavours of that pious Prince whom God has now set over us, to discourage all Immorality, Debauchery and Profaneness, and to promote the practise of true Religion and Piety in this Nation; are not inferior to the good Dispositions of any of the pious Kings of *Judah*; Nor  
 are

are the Successes wherewith the Providence of God has blest'd us in this Auspicious Reign, against the common Enemies of our Religion and Liberties ; much less remarkable, than the Deliverances work'd formerly by direct Miracle for the Children of *Israel*.

In the Words we may observe,

1. That the first and principal care of good Princes, is to promote the interest of true *Religion and Virtue among the People* committed to their charge. *In every work that he began in the Service of the House of God, and in the Law and in the Commandments, to seek his God ; he did it with all his Heart.* Princes are the Vicegerents of God upon Earth ; intrusted with Power from him for the Government of Men in Societies, and for the maintenance of Peace and Justice and good Order in the World. This Power is vested in different Hands, and limited with different Regulations, and exercised in different Manners, according to the Laws and Customs of different Nations ; But the Power itself is of Divine Original and Appointment, being the Ordinance and Constitution of God ; For which reason Governors, both Supreme and Subordinate, are stiled in Scripture, *Gods*, and the immediate Ministers of God. Having therefore this Power by  
Di-

Serm. Divine Appointment, and representing  
 IV. God in the Exercise of it; 'tis manifest their  
 first and chiefest Care ought to be, to im-  
 ploy it in advancing *his* Honour and Glory,  
 from whom they received it. Power with-  
 out Goodness, and Wisdom not employed  
 in the promoting of Righteousness, is the  
 justest Object of Mens Fear and Aversion:  
 But when those who are the Ministers of  
 God in the exercise of Power, imitate  
 him also in that more lovely Perfection of  
 Goodness; and make it their principal Bu-  
 siness to encourage that universal Virtue,  
 the Establishment of which in the World,  
 is in the most acceptable manner fulfilling  
 the Will of God, and promoting his Ho-  
 nor and Glory; then do they most emi-  
 nently verify that Character the Scripture  
 gives of them, *I have said ye are Gods,  
 and ye are all the Children of the Most  
 High.* The Instructions upon this Head,  
 given by *David* in his dying Words, are  
 very remarkable, 2 *Sam.* xxiii, 1. *These  
 be the last Words of David: David the  
 Son of Jesse said; and the Man who was  
 raised up on high, the Anointed of the  
 God of Jacob, and the sweet Psalmist  
 of Israel said; The Spirit of the Lord  
 spake by me, and his Word was in my  
 Tongue; The God of Israel said, the Rock  
 of Israel spake to me: He that ruleth*  
 over

over Men must be just, ruling in the Fear of God. He must *Himself* rule in the Fear of God ; and he must make it his chief and principal Care, to cause *Others* to fear him likewise. Accordingly we find the principal part of the Character of all the good Kings of *Judah*, whose History is related in Scripture ; taken from their Zeal to promote the Service and Worship of God, and the Establishment of true Religion in their Kingdom. Many of the Methods they used, agreeable to the then present State and Circumstances of Things, and to the extraordinary Commissions they had ; are by no means indeed to be imitated under the Gospel-State, or drawn into Example by the practise of Christian Princes, who have no such special and immediate Warrants from God : But in general 'tis still their Duty, by all wise and Christian Methods, by all Methods suitable to the Nature and Design of the Gospel, to employ the Power and Authority God has given them, in promoting the Interest of true Religion, in encouraging Virtue and discouraging Vice. It is still true, that *a wise King scattereth the Wicked, and bringeth the Wheel over them*, Prov. xx, 26. 'Tis still true, that *Rulers are not a Terror to good Works, but to the Evil* ; that the Magistrate, su-

Serm. preme or subordinate, *beareth not the*  
 IV. *Sword in vain; for he is the Minister of*  
 ~~~~~ *God, a Revenger to execute Wrath upon*  
him that doth Evil, Rom. xiii, 4; that
he is sent of God for the Punishment of
evildoers, and for the Praise of them that
do well, 1 Pet. ii, 14.

The only Caution here necessary to be us'd, is; that true Religion, in the promoting whereof the principal Care of good Princes is to be employed, be always understood to consist; not in Matters of Notion, Speculation, and Dispute; not in Questions of Controversie, and uncertain Opinions; not in Matters of mere Humane and Temporary Authority; but in Obedience to the plain Precepts of the Gospel of Christ; in the great and Fundamental Duties of Piety towards God, Righteousness towards Men, and Temperance in the Government of ourselves; on the Practise of which, depends the Happiness of this Life, and of that which is to come: And that the things to be principally discouraged by them, are Profaneness and Impiety, Unrighteousness and Iniquity, Debauchery and all Immorality.

Now as the *Nature and Derivation* of their Authority itself, so likewise *the End and Design* of all Government, obliges
 good

good Princes to make the promoting of Religion and Virtue among the People, their principal and greatest Care. For the ultimate End and Design of all Government, is the Peace and Safety, the Welfare and Prosperity of the Publick, of the Society or Community united under such a Form of Government. Now 'tis manifest that nothing promotes this great End, so much as the practise of Religion and true Virtue. For Virtue and a true sense of Religion, obliges every Subject, every Member of the Society, in whom it is found; it obliges him *beforehand*, by a much stronger and securer Tie, to do all the same things *freely and willingly, heartily and sincerely, in publick and in private*; which the best and wisest Laws can but compel those who want such a Sense of Religion, to do *unwillingly, slightly and superficially, in publick appearance only, and in the sight of Men*. Religion therefore and true Virtue, if they prevailed in the World, would obtain the same End *fully and effectually*, which the best and wisest Laws can do but *in part*; And Laws are made only to supply, in the best manner they can, the want of true Religion and Virtue among Men. *The Law is not made for a Righteous Man, but for the Lawless and Disobedi-*

Serm. ent, for the Ungodly and for Sinners, for
IV. the Unholy and the Profane, 1 Tim. i, 9.

For the same reasons therefore, that 'tis very necessary for the establishment of good Government in the World, that Men should be perpetually under the restraint of wise and wholesome *Laws*; for the same reasons 'tis much more desirable, (and ought to be the great Aim and Design, the main and constant Endeavour of those in Power and Authority,) that *Religion and true Virtue* should universally prevail; the want of which only it is, that introduces the necessity of any coercive *Laws* or Penalties at all.

The *Means* by which good Princes are to promote the Practice of true Religion in the World, is not (as was before observed,) by putting difficulties upon such as are weak or erroneous, in matters of Speculation and Dispute, or in the Externals of Religion; but by securing the Foundation of Virtue and good Manners, upon which the Happiness of a Nation does most immediately depend; by maintaining the Honour of God, and keeping up a due sense and acknowledgment of his Providence, in the Minds of Men; by preserving Faithfulness and Truth, Integrity and Uncorruptness in the transacting and managing of all publick and private
Affairs;

Affairs ; and by effectually discouraging all Immorality and Debauchery, which enfeeble the Spirits, and destroy the Power and Honour of a Nation.

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This is principally done by good *Example*, and by countenancing such as are desirous to follow it. For as the Sun diffuses Heat and Vigor, together with its Rays of Light, thro' the spacious Universe ; and insensibly promotes in all things, by its powerful Influence, both Life and Growth, Motion and Action ; so the Example of a pious Prince, gives far greater countenance to Religion, than the strictest Laws ; encourages well-disposed Persons, and gives Life and Spirit to all pious Designs ; makes Vice and Immorality ashamed to show its Head ; or at least gives a check to the more open Profaneness, of such as would publicly despise and throw contempt upon Religion : Whereas, on the contrary, when the Supreme Authority of a Nation, when the *Light of the World*, is it self *Darkness* ; how great must that *Darkness* be ? When the *Head is sick* and the *whole Heart faint*, what Health and Soundness can the whole Body enjoy ?

Further : The *next* Means, by which good Princes may promote the interest of Religion, and the practise of Virtue in the World ; next to the incou-

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agement afforded by their own good Example; is by taking all fit care, that Men be not corrupted in their first Principles by Ignorance and gross Neglect, by Carelessness and want of due Instruction. 'Tis recorded of *Jehoshaphat* King of *Judah*, as a most remarkable part of his good Character, *That he sent to his Princes, and appointed Levites and Priests to teach in the Cities of Judah; and they had the Book of the Law of the Lord with them, and went about throughout all the Cities of Judah, and taught the people; 2 Chr. xvii, 7.* And in this particular, as her present Majesty has exceeded the Piety even of the best and most religious Princes among her Predecessors, by considerably augmenting out of her own Revenue the maintenance of those who by Divine Appointment are set apart to the Office of teaching and instructing Men in matters of Religion; so, That charitable disposition which seems daily to increase and spread in the Nation, of educating and instructing poor Children in the Principles of Religion, and in the Methods of Industry and honest Labour, it may reasonably be hoped will contribute in due time to the accomplishment of that Prophecy, that *the Earth shall be full of the Knowledge of the Lord, as the Waters cover the Seas.*

2. 'Tis

2. 'Tis observed in the Text, that the *Effect* of Princes making it their chief care to promote the Interest of true Religion and Virtue; is, *the Prosperity of Themselves and their People. In every Work that he began, in the service of the House of God, and in the Law, and in the Commandments, to seek his God; he did it with all his Heart, and Prosper'd.* In the parallel place, 2 *Kings* xviii, 7, the word *Prospered* is thus more largely expressed; *the Lord was with him, and he prospered, whithersoever he went forth.* We find in the Histories both of ancient and modern times, that it has *sometimes indeed* happened otherwise; and that good and pious Princes have, for the Sins and Iniquities of their People, or for other secret and wise Reasons of Providence, been very unsuccessful in their Affairs, and fallen under great Calamities. But generally speaking, and in the usual course of Providence, good and religious Princes have been blessed with Success, and great Prosperity. And of this, there are two obvious reasons. *First*, the natural Tendency of the thing itself. When Princes govern in the Fear of God, according to Law and Equity, being Ministers of God to the People for good, and having no other Interest but the Welfare

Serm. of the Publick; *Mercy and Truth* will
 IV. *preserve* their Persons, and their *Thrones*

will be *upholden by Mercy*, Prov. xx, 28.
 When *Kings* become *nursing Fathers*,
 and *Queens nursing Mothers* to the Church
 of God; and the Example of their Vir-
 tue and Piety, renders them as conspicu-
 ous as their high Station: The Hearts of
 the Subjects will naturally be filled with
 Love and Affection, with Esteem and Ve-
 neration for them, as well as with a Sense
 of Duty towards them; and the Authori-
 ty they are vested with, will be only such
 a paternal Care, in the exercise of which
 they will justly be lookt upon and ho-
 noured as *Benefactors*. This is very ele-
 gantly express'd by *David* in the place
 before-cited; where, after those Words of
 Instruction, *He that ruleth over Men*
must be just, ruling in the Fear of God,
 he immediately adds, *And he shall be as*
the Light of the Morning, when the Sun
arises, even a Morning without Clouds;
as the tender Grass springing out of the
Earth, by clear shining after Rain, 2 Sam.
 xxiii, 4. When, in consequence of this,
 the People obeys, not only for Fear, but
 also for Conscience-sake; and not for
 Conscience-sake only, but also out of
 Love and Choice, in a Sense of their
 own Happiness: When they become una-
 nimous

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nimous in their Counsels and Designs; and every one, free from all Fear of any Ineroachment upon their just Rights, their Liberties and Properties, discharges his Duty in his proper Station with Fidelity and Cheerfulness: This, in the nature of things, will establish a Government with firmness and security at home; and spread Dread and Terror, upon its *Enemies abroad*. *Righteousness*, in the natural Tendency of the thing itself, *will exalt a Nation*; as, on the contrary, *Sin* will be a *Reproach to any People*. But *Secondly*; the Providence of God, does moreover in a peculiar manner most frequently concern itself, in blessing and prospering the Designs of pious Princes: *The King that faithfully judges the Poor, his Throne shall be established for ever*, Prov, xxix, 14. Notwithstanding the greatest natural Security from second Causes, yet, *except the Lord keep the City, the Watch-man Soldier may awake in vain*. Here therefore is the establishment of the Throne of the Righteous; that it is under the sure protection of *him*, whose *Kingdom ruleth over all*. We read, 2 Chron. xvii, 10, (where is set down the good Character before-cited of *Jehoshaphat* King of *Judah*;) that the *Lord was with him, and established the Kingdom in his Hand*;

and

Serm. *and the fear of the Lord fell upon all*
 IV. *the Kingdoms of the Lands that were*
 ~~~~~ *round about Judah, so that they made*  
*no War against Jehoshaphat. And We*  
 of this Nation enjoy at this Day the happy Effects of the Blessings of Providence upon the pious Princess he has set over us; in giving Her such signal Successes against the common Enemy, as we may reasonably hope will soon terminate in a Safe, Honourable, and Lasting Peace.

3. It remains in the *Third* and last place, by way of Application, to consider briefly what the *Duty* of Subjects is, who have the Happiness of living under such Governors, as follow the Example, and answer the Character given of good King *Hezekiah* in the Text.

And 1<sup>st</sup>. 'Tis their Duty to return Thanks to God, for the Benefits they enjoy under the happy Influence of a Pious Example and a Wise Administration. 'Tis St *Paul's* Exhortation, not only to *pray*, but also to *give thanks, for Kings, and for all that are in Authority*; as being those under whose Protection *we lead a quiet and peaceable Life*, and by whose Care we are encouraged to live *in all Godliness and Honesty*. To be thankful to God, whose Instruments and Vicegerents pious Governors are; (and who is therefore



*in this respect* in a more especial manner the Principal and Supreme Cause of the Blessings conveyed to Us through Their Hands;) is *rendring unto God the things that are Gods*, at the same time that we make just acknowledgment to *Cæsar* of what is due to *Cæsar*.

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And as we must not be unthankful to God, for Blessings received; so we must take care, not to express our Joy and Gratitude in an improper manner. We must declare our Thankfulness, not by unseemly Mirth, not in Rioting and Debauchery; but by the sincere Practise of That Religion, the Preservation of which is the Conclusion of all our Prayers; and by Acts of steady Affection to That Government, the Support of which is the Foundation of all our Hopes.

2dly. 'Tis the Duty of Subjects under pious Governors, not only to acknowledge, that, *seeing by Them they enjoy great Quietness, and that very worthy Deeds are done unto the Nation by Their Providence*, therefore they *accept it al* Acts xxiv, <sup>2.</sup> *ways and in all places with all Thankfulness*; But they must show forth their real Gratitude, by imitation of the Example set them from the Throne, and by a strict Observation of the Laws against Profaneness, Debauchery and Immorality, so often

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often recommended to them from thence, as the only certain means of securing the Continuance of the Favour and Blessing of God, both upon Them and their Prince. They must show forth their Gratitude by uniting all Hearts and Hands to promote, each in their proper Station, with all Diligence and Faithfulness, the Safety and Honour of the Government; by laying aside all private Animositics and Contentions among themselves; and by putting a stop (as much as in them lies) to all groundless Jealousies and unreasonable Suspicions, which tend to abate Mens Affection towards their Governors, and to bring Difficulties upon the Administration of publick Affairs.

3dly. 'Tis the Duty of Subjects under All, and much more under Pious and Religious Governours, to offer up constantly for them, according to the Exhortation of the Apostle, *Supplications, Prayers and Intercessions*: That God would be pleas'd to give them Understanding and Knowledge, Strength and Ability, to *go in and out before a great People*; that he would enable them to bear the great Weight and Burden of Publick Business, assist them to undergo the manifold Difficulties arising from the Uncertainties of all Humane Affairs, and bless them in all their



their Just Undertakings, with Prosperity and Success. God has hitherto blessed her present Majesty with unparallel'd Success, against the Common Enemy of our Religion and Liberties: 'Tis Our Duty to pray for a Continuation of the same Success, till the War abroad shall be brought to its desired Conclusion; and that, after That, we may be made a happy People at home, by Peace and Unity, and mutual Confidence among our selves; by a firm Establishment of the wise Constitution of our Government, for a *Succession* of many Generations; by a sincere Reformation of Manners among all sorts and degrees of Men; and an universal hearty Concern for the great and weightier Matters of Religion, more than for things of Controversie and uncertain Dispute: That Humility, Love and Peaceableness, Righteousness and Equity, Diligence, Faithfulness and Truth, may possess the Hearts of Men of all Ranks and Conditions among us: That God would be pleased to inspire Her Majesty with a discerning Heart, a wise and understanding Spirit; to bless Her with Able Counsellors, with Righteous and Just Officers in all Places of Trust; with a Dutiful and Obedient People: That *the Queen may rejoice in thy Strength, O Lord, and be*

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*be exceeding glad of thy Salvation: That thou mayest give Her her Hearts Desire, and not deny Her the Request of Her Lips: That thou mayest prevent Her with the Blessings of Goodness, and make Her Honour great in thy Salvation, and crown Her with Glory and great Worship: That thou mayest give Her a long Life here, and a longer and happier hereafter, even for ever and ever.*



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A  
S E R M O N

Preach'd in the

Parish-Church of St *James's Westminster,*


On *Tuesday November 7, 1710,*

Being the Day of Thanksgiving  
for the Successes of the fore-go-  
ing Campaign.

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P S A L. CXLV, 2.

*Every day will I bless thee, and I will  
praise thy Name for ever and ever.*

**T**HE *particular* Occasion, upon Serm.  
V.  
which this Psalm was composed,  
is not known: But *in general,*   
that it was occasioned by some extraordi-  
nary Blessing, such as Success and Victory  
over powerful Enemies, or some other  
the like remarkable Interposition of Pro-  
vidence; is evident from the whole Course  
of the Psalm For the Author of it, be-  
ginning with high Expressions of Joy and  
Thankfulness, (v. 1.) *I will extoll thee,*  
O God,

Serm. *O God, my King, and will bless thy Name*  
 IV. *for ever and ever; every day will I bless*  
 thee, and I will praise thy Name for ever and ever; proceeds in the 4th Verse to declare, that the Ground of this his Joy and Thankfulness, was some mighty Act; some publick and eminent interposition of Providence in his behalf: One generation, says he, shall praise thy Works to another, and shall declare thy mighty Acts; I will speak of the glorious Honour of thy Majesty, and of thy wondrous Works; and Men shall speak of the Might of thy terrible Acts, and I will declare thy Greatness: And ver. 11, They shall speak of the Glory of thy Kingdom, and talk of thy Power; to make known to the Sons of Men his mighty Acts, and the glorious Majesty of his Kingdom. After which he goes on, from the consideration of past Mercies, to infer the reasonableness of Mens depending upon the same Providence for the continuance of his Protection in time to come; if by a religious Behaviour they approve themselves worthy of his Care and Favour. Ver. 18. The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all them that call upon him faithfully; he will fulfil the desire of them that fear him, he also will bear their Cry and will save them: The  
 Lord

*Lord preserveth all them that love him, but all the wicked will he Destroy.* And then he concludes in the last Verse, with Expressions of Joy and Thanksgiving, as he began in the first; *My Mouth shall speak the Praise of the Lord, and let all Flesh bless his holy Name for ever and ever.* Sermon V.

The Application of this Discourse of the Psalmist, to our present Occasion; is very obvious. God has done for *Us*, things no less wonderful and remarkable, than for the *Jews* of old; and it becomes *Us* to praise him after the same Pattern, which the inspired Psalmist drew up for *Their* Use. It becomes *Us every day* to give Thanks unto him, and to praise his Name for ever and ever. It concerns us to take heed that we behave ourselves worthily, upon the Mercies we have received; that we be found in the Number of those that love him, and of those that call upon him in Faithfulness and Truth. And when *this* is our Case; then it will become us with humble Confidence, to depend upon his Promise for further Protection; that he who is righteous in all his Ways, and holy in all his Works, will continue to be nigh unto us; to preserve and support us; and be always ready,

Serm. to hear and fulfil the desire of them that  
 V. fear and obey him.

The Words of the Text, consist of two Parts;

1<sup>st</sup>. A Declaration of That *Disposition of Mind*, which ought to be found in such Persons, as have received great Mercies from God; And,

2<sup>dly</sup>. An account of the *outward Effects* of that pious Disposition, in Acts of publick Praise and Thanksgiving to God.

The former, is a grateful and due *Sense* of God's Goodness. The latter, is the *Fruit and Consequence* of that just Sense of things upon the Mind; showing forth it self in external Acts of Worship, and in calling upon others to join with us in *publishing* the Praises of Him, whose Power is so conspicuous in all great Events, and whose *tender Mercies are over all his Works*.

But there is no need to insist separately upon each Part of this Distinction; because, though the things themselves are really *distinct*, yet they must always be supposed to *accompany* each other. For where the Mind is *inwardly* and deeply possessed with a just Sense of the Goodness of God, the *external Behaviour* cannot but of necessity be answerable to the *inward*



*ward Sense* and Disposition of the Mind: And where the *outward Actions* are full of proper Expressions of Gratitude, and professed Acknowledgments of the Divine Goodness; though *God only* can *know* the Heart, yet *Men* must always charitably *suppose*, that the *inward Sense* and Disposition of the *Mind*, is agreeable to the Character of the *outward Action*. There is no need therefore for *Us* to distinguish, between *Thankfulness* as 'tis a Habit and Temper of the *Mind*, or as 'tis an *Expression* of That Temper in our *Behaviour and Actions*. For these things ought always to go together, as in sincere Persons they really do: And in the unsincere, where they do not, yet to the Eye of the World, which is all *We* can judge of, they must of necessity appear to do so. *We* cannot, therefore, but treat of these things as Synonymous; and, when we exhort Men to the Duty of Thankfulness, must always understand those *external Actions*, which are the *proper Expressions*, and ought always to be the *real Significations*, of a *grateful Mind*. Wherefore, without distinguishing between these two Branches, we may look upon the Text as one single Proposition; and take the latter Part, as only an Explication of the former. *Every day will I bless thee*; or, as it is in

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Serm. the Old Translation, *Every day will I*  
 V. *give Thanks unto thee; and praise thy*  
 ~~~~~ *Name for ever and ever.*

That which is more particularly remarkable in the Words; is the Expression, *Every day*. As if *every day* of our Lives, were to be a day of Thanksgiving; and our Expressions of Gratitude, as uninterrupted as our Breath. The meaning is; that, as we are directed by the Apostle to *Pray without ceasing*; and, by our Lord, to petition our Heavenly Father constantly for the continuance of our *daily* Food, in acknowledgment of our perpetual Dependence upon Providence, for the very Breath we draw, and for the Bread we *daily* eat: so we ought to be no less constantly and habitually Thankful to God for the Benefits *we have received*, than we are importunate in our Petitions to him for the Things *we want*. In every thing giving Thanks, as St Paul expresses it, 1 *Thes.* v, 18; and *Eph.* v, 20, *Giving Thanks always for all things unto God, even the Father, in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

There are some things, which we enjoy in common with *all the Creatures* of God; Life and Breath, and the common Protection and Preservation of Providence. And for these, we are to join in that great
 and

and universal Choir, which St *John* in his Vision so elegantly describes, *Rev. v, 13*; and *iv, 11*; *Every Creature which is in Heaven and on the Earth, and under the Earth, and such as are in the Sea, and all that are in them, heard I, saying;-----Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive Glory and Honour and Power; for thou hast created all Things, and for thy Pleasure they are, and were created.*

There are other Gifts, peculiar to *Men*; Understanding and Knowledge, Reason and the Use of Speech, a Capacity of Searching out and Meditating upon the Works of God. And for These Faculties, we are to express our Gratitude, by employing them in his Service; by promoting his Glory; and by so behaving our selves in the exercise of our Dominion over the inferior Creation, that *all the Works* of God, over which he has made *Man* the Lord, may with *Our Tongues praise him, and magnify him for ever.*

There are other Blessings peculiar to particular *Nations*: And for these we are to glorify God, by a particular Thankful Acknowledgment, and by the proper Use of such respective Blessings.

If the Providence of God has planted us in a *fruitful* Country, and his Goodness successively crowns our Years with a

Serm. perpetual *Increase*; we are then to express
 V. our Thankfulness by Temperance and So-
 briety, by Charity and Works of Mercy
 to the Poor, by taking great Care to pre-
 vent Luxury and Debauchery, Pride and
 Vanity, Sloth and Forgetfulness of God;
 which are the Vices too apt to spring up
 out of Prosperity and Plenty. *When thou
 hast eaten and art full*, said *Moses* in his
 last and wise Exhortation to the *Israelites*;
*then thou shalt bless the Lord thy God
 for the good Land which he hath given
 thee. Beware that thou forget not the
 Lord thy God, in not keeping his Com-
 mandments, and his Judgments and his
 Statutes, which I command thee this
 Day; Lest when thou hast eaten and art
 full, and hast built goodly Houses, and
 dwelt therein;-----and thy Silver and
 thy Gold,-----and all that thou hast, is
 multiplied; then thine Heart be lifted
 up, and thou forget the Lord thy God,
 &c. Deut. viii, 10.*

If God has indued us with *Learning*
 and *Wisdom*, with Understanding and
 Knowledge, above other Nations of our
 Fellow-creatures; whom we are too apt
 to despise under the Name of *Barbarians*;
 tyrannizing over their Weakness, and
 insulting over their Ignorance; not con-
 sidering who it is that has taught Any of

us more than the Beasts of the Field, and made us Wiser than the Fowls of Heaven: The proper way wherein our Gratitude should show forth itself for *these* things, is in applying Learning to the Advantage of Religion, and to the promoting of the Glory of God in the World; by increasing *real Knowledge*, and not perplexing it with *imaginary Subtilties*; by discovering *Truth*, and not colouring over *Errors*; by propagating what is *Certain*, and not contending for *disputable Opinions*.

If God has vouchsafed us *the glorious Light of the Gospel*, and the *Knowledge of his Son our Saviour Jesus Christ*; while many other Nations lie yet in the Darkneſs of Heatheniſm, and have not the Knowledge of the Laws of God: The beſt and moſt acceptable Method of returning our Thanks for ſo ineffimable a Bleſſing; is, that we endeavour to propagate the Chriſtian Knowledge with Simplicity to *Others*; and that we take care above all things to obey the Truth *ourſelves*, in the Love and in the Purity thereof.

If God has not only placed us under the Light of the Gospel, but bleſſed us alſo yet further with greater *Purity* of Religion, by a *Reformation* from the

Serm. *grossest* Errors and idolatrous Superstitions, wherewith even the Christian World itself had been almost universally overspread, thro' the Corruption of that *Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth, which hath made all Nations to drink of the Wine of her Fornication, and in whom is found the Blood of the Prophets and Saints and of all that are slain upon the Earth*: If God, I say, has blessed us with a *Reformation* from these grossest of Corruptions; the most suitable Return of Thankfulness for such an Advantage, is to pursue the *Spirit and Design* of that Reformation; and to take great Care, that we be not deluded insensibly to fall back again, and *join in affinity with the people of these Abominations*; but that we stedfastly take more and more heed, without regard to any *Human Authority* whatsoever, and without *calling any Man Father or Master upon Earth*, to adhere to the Divine Authority of the *Scriptures* only, as the Adequate Rule of Faith and Manners; which is the sole Foundation of the *Protestant* Religion, and the only effectual means of preventing all *Differences* among those who sincerely desire to understand and practise the Truth.

Rev. xvii,
5, 14. viii,
18, 24.

Ezra ix, 14.

Mat. xxiii,
9.

If God has preserved unto Us our *Lawful Liberties* and *Properties*, under a mild and well-constituted Government; when almost all other Nations upon Earth, are subject to Arbitrary and illegal Dominion; which is That Form of Government, wherewith God threatned to punish the *Israelites* for their Rebellion against him, when he declared unto them by the Prophet *Samuel* the *Manner of the King that should reign over them*: Our Thankfulness for the continuance of such a Blessing, can by no other way be so properly expressed, as by making it our chief Care to *use* that Liberty which we so justly boast of, and which we have thought worth the defending almost with infinite Blood and Treasure, *so* as not to *abuse* it to Licentiousness and Wantonness: To *use* our Liberty so, as not to run into the contrary extreme of Lawlessness and Confusion; To *use* it so, as not to break through the Obligations of regular Government and legal Restraints.

Lastly, If God has crowned all our other Blessings, with that which is the Security and Preservation of them all; a constant Series of unparallell'd *Successes*, and *Victories* beyond Example great and complete, against the Potentest Enemy that ever yet attempted to enslave the
World;

Serm.
V.1 Sam.
viii, 9.

Serm. World; *What shall we render unto the*


V. *Lord for These his Benefits,* and what Returns shall we make him for such a Blessing as This? The Answer to this Question, is of great importance; And the serious Consideration of it, is That without which our Religious Assemblies would be but mere Hypocrisie, and our Prayers no better than a mocking of God.

1st Therefore, if we will make worthy Returns to God, for these his Benefits, in giving us such Victories and Success; we must in the first place be careful to make ourselves truly sensible, from *what Hand* these Blessings do *really come*. We must be fully perswaded, that 'tis *God* that gives Victory in the Day of Battle, and that Success is owing to the Protection of the Almighty; that 'tis He that *breaketh the Bow, and knappeth the Spear in sunder, and burneth the Chariots in the Fire*. That which is apt to deceive Men in this Matter, is their observing things to depend upon *Second Causes*, and to be brought about by the Operation of *Natural Agents*. But What are *Second Causes*, and What are *Natural Agents*, but mere *Instruments* in the Hand of him who *ruleth over All*? All other things, excepting *Men* only who are Free Agents, have no pretense to be esteemed *Causes* in Any Sense

Sense at all; but are meerly as *Instruments* in the Hand of the Workman. Serm. V.

And by these things, the Counsels and Designs even of *Men* themselves, of the wisest Men and of the strongest Forces, are perpetually over-ruled to quite different Events, than They intended or could possibly foresee. So that the Issues of all great Actions, and the main Turns of all worldly Affairs, depend intirely upon such Accidents, as are wholly in the Hand of God to direct. Which Accidents, tho' they be indeed what we vulgarly call *Natural Causes*, yet this is really nothing else but an impropriety of Speech; to call That a *Cause*, which, being Unintelligent, is in Truth nothing more than an *Instrument* in the Hand of him who is truly the efficient Cause. And this is evidently the Case, in all Unintelligent Natural Agents. Whatever *They* seem to effect, is not in reality done by *Them*, but by the *Providence of God*. That the Sun *runs* its Course *every Day*, is no less strictly and properly the Hand of God, than that it *stood* still *one Day*: Nor is there any other Ground, why the *One* is by all men readily ascribed to God, and *the other* they vulgarly fancy is done naturally without Him; but only This One foolish Reason, that What God does *once*, they see and acknowledge is done by *Him*; but what he does always, they there.

Serm. therefore think 'tis not *He* does it *at all*.

V.  The Scripture, (and Reason also,) teaches us more justly, to *acknowledge God in all our Ways*; and to be sensible who it is, that, being the Author and Director of Nature, and of all those Accidents which we can neither foresee nor prevent, does thereby dispose and order, as he pleases, the Events of all Humane Affairs. *There are many Devices in Mans Heart; but the Counsel of the Lord, That shall stand,* Prov. xix, 21.

2dly. We must not only in a meer *Speculative* manner, be convinced that 'tis the Hand of God which bringeth about all great Events, and crowns us with Victory and Success; but we must so consider it and meditate upon it in a *Practical* manner, as to be truly Thankful to him for the Advantages we reap thereby. The *Jews* in *Moses's* time *knew* very well *who* it was, that *made them ride on the high places of the Earth, and-----to suck Honey out of the Rock, and Oyl out of the flinty Rock*; *who* it was, that *led them in the Wilderness like Sheep, and kept them as the Apple of his Eye*; that *suffered no Man to do them wrong, but reprov'd even Kings for their sake*. Yet even of these very Persons, who *knew* all these things so perfectly, and had seen them

them with their own Eyes; did that holy Man complain, *Deut. xxxii, 15*, that *Jeshurun waxed fat and kicked*; that he *forsook the God which made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his Salvation*. King *Hezekiah*, knew very well who it was that *gave him a Sign*, and recovered him when he was *sick unto Death*, and delivered him out of the hand of the *King of Babylon* by a *Miracle*: Yet even of Him, the Scripture complains, that he *rendered not again, according to the Benefit done unto him*; for his *Heart was lifted up*; therefore there was *Wrath upon him, and upon Judah and Jerusalem*. Even so *We* also, how well soever we apprehend in a *Metaphysical and Speculative* manner, that God is the Disposer of the Events of all Human Affairs; yet What are we the better, if it does not affect us *Morally*, in filling our *Hearts* with *Gratitude*, and our *Mouths* with *Praises*, and our *Lives* with Acts of *Obedience* to him, after all the great Things that he has done for us? This is the only Return, that frail and dependent Creatures are capable of making, to the supreme Lord and Governour of all things. *For our Goodness extendeth not to Him*; neither can Man be profitable unto God, as he that is wise, may be profitable unto him-

Serm.
V.2 Chron.
xxxii, 25.

Job xxii, 27

Serm. *himself*. But *Thankful* and *Obedient* to
 V. him, we *can* be; and most inexcusable
 ~~~~~ and base is our Ingratitude, if his Mercies  
 do not so affect us. Yet most prone is  
 our corrupt Nature, to become thus forgetful  
 of our supreme Benefactor: And the very  
*Frequency* of great and unexpected Blessings,  
 is itself, to careless and profane Persons,  
 an occasion of neglecting those things as  
 common, which, if they had more rarely  
 happened, would have been more carefully  
 observed. In the Course of this great and  
 bloody War, almost *every Campaign* has  
 afforded as much matter of Thanksgiving,  
 as at other times the whole Series even of  
 a successful War has been used to furnish.  
 And for this very reason, because we have  
 been obliged to return Thanks *so often*,  
 unthinking and careless persons have little  
 or no Disposition to be truly Thankful  
 and Devout *at all*. The proper Remedy  
 against this Evil; is to consider seriously  
 and distinctly, what it is that we have  
 hitherto been delivered from, by those  
 Successes, for which we have so often  
 and with so much reason been commanded  
 to return publick Thanks. The War,  
 wherein we are now engaged, seems to be  
 the last Struggle for the *Two* things,  
 which alone are valuable in human Life;  
*Liberty*, and  
 Re-

*Religion*: In opposition to *arbitrary Power*, which destroys all Property; and in opposition to *humane Authority and Infallibility sitting in the Seat of God*, which is totally inconsistent with all true Religion. Had it pleased God to permit our Enemies to have been as successful against *Us*, as we have hitherto been victorious over *Them*; we had long since been Slaves, deprived of all legal Right to our temporal Possessions; and, for our Religion, had been worshipping Stocks and Stones, and Souls of Men departed, instead of *Him that made the Heavens* Rev. xiv, *and the Earth and the Sea, and all things that are therein*. Or, had Providence permitted us to have been deluded, with the pretences of a false and deceitful *Peace*; the Effects of such an ill-grounded and insecure Agreement, might possibly have been much more fatal, than the continuance 'even of the bloodiest and most expensive *War*. And the growing Mischiefs of one disadvantageous *Treaty*, might have been more difficult to retrieve, than the transient Miseries even of many unprosperous and unsuccessful *Campaigns*. For we have to deal with an Enemy, with whom no Peace is to be had longer, than we have Power to enforce it: An Enemy, whose Character

Serm.  
V.

Rev. xiv,

Serm. racter is exactly given by the Prophet *Daniel*, *ch. viii, v. 23*; *A King of fierce countenance,-----who shall destroy wonderfully ;-----and through his policy also he shall cause Craft to prosper,---and he shall magnifie himself in his Heart ; and by Peace shall he destroy many.*

3dly. That our Thanksgiving may become truly acceptable ; it must be accompanied with such *Circumstances*, and followed with such *Behaviour*, as may show the *Words* of our *Mouths* to be real Expressions of the *Thoughts* of our *Hearts*, and that our Praises proceed not *out of feigned Lips*. Our Joy must express itself, not in Rioting and Drunkenness, not in Frenzy and Debauchery ; but in Praises and Thanksgivings accompanied with Sobriety and Purity, with Modesty and Humility ; such as becomes those who mean to honour God with Piety and sincere Devotion in the practise of that Religion, the Preservation of which from being over-run with the Tyranny and Superstition of Popery, is one of the principal Grounds of our rejoicing for that Success wherewith God has hitherto blessed us. For it becomes us *Christians* to rejoice, not in *Ravage* and *Bloodshed*, not in the *Misery* and *Destruction* even of our Enemies themselves : It becomes us  
to

to rejoice, not upon the Increase of our *Power* for *Dominion's* Sake; not upon the enlarging our *Territories*, and aggrandizing the *Honour* of our *Arms*; but in being enabled to rescue the oppress'd *Liberties* of Nations; to restore the common *Rights* of Human Nature; and to secure That *Freedom of Religion*, in the denying of which consists the very Essence of *Antichristian* Iniquity. *All* Nations, after their Fashion, return their Thanks to the Almighty, for Victory and Success over their Enemies; And the greatest Tyrants and Oppressors of Mankind, pretend to praise God, whenever their Arms, by the Permission of Providence, and for the Punishment of the World, prevail over the Weakness of their neighbouring Nations: But These their *Thanksgivings* are *Profaneness*; And to presume to offer Praises to God, for the Increase of *Power* for Power's sake, and for the setting up *Arbitrary* and *Tyrannical Dominion*, is no better than affronting of God, and making a mockery of Religion. *Christians* are to desire, and to rejoice at the obtaining such Victories only, as tend to establish the *Rights* and *Properties* of Mankind, and the common *Liberties* of Nations: And our *Joy* must express itself in such manner, and be at-

K tended

Serm.  
V.



Serm. tended with such consequent Behaviour  
 V. as is becoming the Purity of the Gospel  
 of Christ. For, as the *Wisdom* which is  
 from above, so the *Joy* also of those who  
 are possess'd of that *Wisdom*, is *first pure,*  
*then peaceable, gentle and easy to be in-*  
*treated, full of Mercy and good Fruits.*  
 It becomes us to rejoice for Success in  
*War* for no other Reason, but because 'tis  
 the necessary and only Means of arriving  
 at a safe and secure *Peace*. With which  
 Blessing when it shall please God to com-  
 plete and crown all our past Successes;  
 then will it highly behove us to approve  
 our selves indeed the *Children of Peace,*  
 by laying aside all those unchristian  
*Divisions and Animosities* among our  
 selves, which are kept up by mutual  
 Accusations, full (as we may reasonably  
 hope) of more *Uncharitableness* than  
*Truth*. The means of causing all which  
 to be forgotten, is first to *unite* heartily in  
 pursuing the Things wherein we all agree;  
 and then to wait with *Charity* in those  
 wherein we differ, till even in *these* also  
*God shall reveal the Truth unto us.* Let  
 us consider, that *Force and Violence,* with-  
 out regard to Right and Equity, are the  
 Means by which our *Adversaries* propa-  
 gate their *Power,* and (as they are pleas'd  
 to call it) their *Religion* also: For which

Rea-





Reason principally, their *Power* is a *Publick Enemy* to Mankind, and their *Religion* properly *Antichristian*. But *We* profess to make *War*, not for the Sake of *Conquest*, but only to obtain to our selves a secure *Peace*. And our *Religion* teaches us, as to *desire* the *publick*, so to *maintain* (as far as possible) *private* Peace also among ourselves; by mutual Love, Charity and Good-Will; as becomes those who profess the *Gospel of Peace*.

Let us therefore endeavour to *understand* rightly, the full *Nature and Design* of the Religion we *profess*. Which consists mainly in these *Two* Things. 1<sup>st</sup>, That the *Scripture* (as I before observ'd) is the *only Rule* of our *Faith*. Which, if duly attended to, would speedily put an End to all *Differences* and *Contentions*, among those who consider what they mean when they make *that Profession*. And 2<sup>dly</sup>, That the *Commandments of God* are infinitely of more Importance, than any *Speculative Notions* or *Opinions* of Men. Which thing, if seriously consider'd, would as effectually regulate our *Practise* in the Conduct of *Life*, as the adhering steadfastly to the only true Rule of *Faith*, would at once cut off all *Disputes* in the Matter of our *Belief*. Our *Lusts* and *Follies*, our *Debauchery* and *Profaneness*, our

Serm. unreasonable and unchristian *Uncharitableness* and *Divisions* among *our selves*; are worse and more dangerous *Enemies*, than those we fight with *abroad*. And unless we speedily reform these Abuses, and cease to provoke God by the continu'd Corruption of our Manners; the same Divine Providence, which has hitherto wonderfully fought for us against the potentest Monarch that ever yet aim'd at the Empire of the World; can as easily, if he pleases, turn back our Successes speedily to our entire Destruction; and in a Moment bring upon us, after all our Victories, the very same *Event* as would have been the Effect of a continually unsuccessful *War*; at the time when we are just flattering ourselves with the Hopes of being put into secure Possession, of the Blessings of a safe and lasting *Peace*.



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*The Government of Passion.*

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A

S E R M O N

Preach'd before the

Q U E E N,

At St James's Chapel, on *Sunday*  
the 7th of *January*, 1710-11.

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E P H E S. IV, 26.

*Be ye Angry, and Sin not.*

**S** I N C E in the ordinary Conduct of Human Life, and in the *Common Affairs* of the World, *Natural Wisdom* teaches us, that the only sure and effectual means of avoiding *great Evils*, is the preventing of *small ones*; and that the *Beginnings* of Mischief are much more easily prevented, than the *Progress* of

Serm.  
VI.

Serm. them stopped, or the *Consequences* of them  
VI. remedied:

Since under the improvements of *Philosophy* in the Heathen World, the principal and most useful Precepts given men for the Government of their Passions, was *to watch continually, and guard themselves against the first Emotions* of Passion rising up in opposition to Reason; *to stop the first breaking out of a silent Stream, which by Neglect would swell into an overflowing Torrent; to extinguish the first Spark of a scarce discernable Fire, which by degrees would prevail into a destroying Conflagration:*

Since by the still purer and more refined Precepts of the *Doctrine of Christ*, we are obliged to govern even our very *Thoughts* and *Desires*; to pray against the *Temptations* and *first Occasions* of Sin; to lay the Ax to the Root of the Tree, by *suppressing* all corrupt *Affections*, by *restraining* all inordinate *Appetites*, by *moderating* and keeping even a strict Hand over *innocent Inclinations*; by *plucking out, if need be, even a right Eye, and cutting off a right Hand:*

Since these things (I say) are so; It may well seem strange, to any one that is not versed in the Jewish manner of speaking, how St *Paul* should come to express him-

himself after such a sort, as if he intended to indulge men in letting loose the Reins to their Passions, as far as was consistent with Innocency; and thought it safe to permit Men to allow themselves in the gratification of their Anger, provided they did but just keep themselves without the Borders of Sin: *Be ye Angry, and Sin not.* As if the Bounds between what is excusable and criminal, were marked with so distinct a limit, that men might be trusted to discern with Ease, *when* they were at the utmost extent of their lawful Liberty; or that it could be supposed Men had so perfect a Command of themselves, as to be able to stop suddenly at an appointed Mark in a swift Career, and say (when they please) to their Passion, *hitherto shalt thou go, and no further.*

Our Saviour, in his Divine Sermon upon the Mount, makes it in almost every Instance, his peculiar Improvement of Moral Obligations under the Gospel, to warn men against the *Approaches* and *Tendencies* towards those Sins, whereof only the *gross Acts* were forbidden under the Law.

*Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit Adultery: But I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a Woman to lust after her, has already committed Adultery with*

Serm.  
VI.



Serm. *her in his Heart. Ye have heard it has*  
 VI. *been said by them of old, Thou shalt not*  
 ~~~~~ *for swear thy self; but I say unto you,*  
Swear not at all. Ye have heard it has
been said, An Eye for an Eye, and a
Tooth for a Tooth: But I say unto you,
that ye resist not Evil. Ye have heard
it has been said, Thou shalt love thy
Neighbour, and hate thine Enemy; But
I say unto you, Love your Enemies. And
in the Case before us, of Wrath and An-
ger: Ye have heard, says he, that it has
been said by them of old time, Thou shalt
not kill: But I say unto you, that who-
soever is angry with his Brother without
a Cause, shall be in danger of the Judg-
ment;---and whosoever shall say, Thou
Fool, shall be in danger of Hell-Fire.
 Nay, in some of the antientest Copies of
 this Gospel, those Words of Restriction,
 (*without Cause,*) whosoever shall be An-
 gry *without Cause,* are omitted; and the
 Declaration is made in the most general
 Terms, *Whosoever is Angry with his*
Brother, shall be in danger of the Judg-
ment: Men being apt enough of them-
 selves, to put in such restrictions as may
 be equitably presumed; and there being
 no need, in the Body of the Law itself,
 to express such excepted Cases or such
 Limitations, to which in all reason and
 equity

equity it may however be supposed the Law cannot extend. This makes it still the more worthy of enquiry, whence it might come to pass, that St *Paul* expresses himself upon this Subject in such a manner, as may seem to give some *Indulgence* to such *Degrees* of Passion as are not directly sinful; (*Be ye angry, and Sin not*;) when yet both by Experience and the Reason of Things, and by our Saviour's express Caution in all matters of this Nature, 'tis evident that Passions indulged to the utmost Bounds of Innocency, are much harder to restrain from entering into sinful degrees, than it was to prevent their beginnings or their arising at first.

Now the True Account of this Matter, seems plainly to be this. The Words, *Be ye Angry*, are not a Permission, as they may seem to be when taken alone; but, according to the Nature and Use of the Jewish Language, they are Part of a *Single* Proposition with those that follow. *Beye Angry, and Sin not*; that is, *Take heed and beware of* sinful Anger. *Indulge not Anger, lest ye fall into Sin.* Or, *If at any time ye be provoked, then take particular Care that ye fall not into Sin.* For such is the Idiom of the Jewish Language; to express That in *Two* distinct Propositions, which ought *so* to be understood,

Serm. stood, as if they were put in *One*. There
 VI. are many other Texts in Scripture, which
 will confirm this Interpretation; And the
 comparing them with this, will reciprocally afford much Light, towards the True Understanding of several of those Passages.


In the Old Testament; *Mal. i; 2, 3. Jacob have I loved, saith God, and Esau have I hated.* The Propositions are not to be understood asunder, but to be taken together as *One*; *Jacob have I loved, more than Esau.* For, God did not intend to express *Hatred* towards *Esau*, but only to love *Jacob* comparatively, with a *great Love*. *Nahum iii, 14, Fortify thy strong holds,---there---shall the Sword cut thee off:* The intention is not to exhort *Nineveh* to fortify herself; but to declare, how much soever she *does* fortify herself, yet shall the *Sword* cut her off. And so *Isai viii, 9. Gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in Pieces;* i. e. how much soever ye strengthen your selves, yet shall ye be broken. Again; *Ecclus. xxx, 9. Cocker thy Child, and he shall make thee afraid; play with him, and he will bring thee to Heaviness:* The Proposition is but *One*; *If thou indulge thy Child, he will bring thee to Sorrow.* *Jer. vii, 22. I spake Not unto your Fathers, nor commanded*

manded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning Burnt-offerings or Sacrifices; But this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my Voice: The two Parts of this Sentence of the Prophet, are not to be taken separately, as if he affirmed that God did *not* require Burnt-offerings *at all*; (for 'tis certain he *did* command them in most *express* words in the Law;) but the whole is to be understood together, that God did not *insist* upon Burnt-offerings *so much*, as upon Obedience to the Commandments of the *Moral Law*. There is a like expression, *Hos. vi, 6; I desired Mercy, and Not Sacrifice*: The meaning is not, that God did *not* require Sacrifice; but that he desired Mercy, *rather* than Sacrifice; and (as it follows in the very next Words) *the knowledge of the Lord, more than Burnt-offerings*. And thus also must be understood That passage in *Ezekiel, chap. xx, 25; I gave them also statutes that were NOT good, and judgments by which they should not live*: The meaning is *not*, Evil Statutes; God forbid: But Statutes, which *comparatively* were not good; and Judgments which were not *so* profitable, as moral ones, to cause them to live.

 Serm.
VI.
 

Serm. In the *New Testament*, the same manner of expression, agreeable to the nature of the Jewish Language, is likewise frequently used; and it is necessary to be taken notice of, in order to the true understanding of several Passages. *I am not sent*, saith our Saviour himself, discoursing with the Woman of Canaan, *but to the lost Sheep of the House of Israel*; St Mat. xv, 24. His meaning is not absolute, (as might seem from the first part of the Sentence,) that he was *not sent at all* to any others than the Jews only; but that he was not sent so *soon*, so *immediately*, so *principally*; his Mission was not to be made known so *early*, to any other Nation, as to the *lost Sheep of the House of Israel*. For that he *was* also, in process of *Time*, to be a Light to lighten the *Gentiles*, as well as to be the Glory of his People *Israel*, the Scripture of the Prophets expressly enough declared; and our Saviour himself in this very place sufficiently intimates, when immediately after that seeming refusal, yet he effectually granted this Stranger's request, by healing the Infirmary of her Daughter. And in his Instructions to his Disciples, *chap. x, 5*, he speaks with less obscurity; *Go not into the way of the Gentiles;-----but go rather to the lost Sheep of the House of Israel.*

Which

Which afterwards was still *more clearly* Serm.
 expressed by the Apostles, *Acts* xiii, 46; VI.
It was necessary that the Word of God 
should first be spoken to the Jews; but
afterwards to the Gentiles. But, not to
 mention any other places, there is one
 Expression of St. *Paul*, of this nature,
 more remarkable to the present purpose,
 than any other Passage in the whole Scrip-
 ture. In the vi. Chapter of his Epistle to
 the *Romans*, at the 17th Verse; *God be*
thanked, saith he, *that ye were the Ser-*
vants of Sin: but ye have obeyed from
the Heart That Form of Doctrine, which
was delivered you. *God be thanked*, that
ye were the Servants of Sin: It may
 seem a very strange and unusual Expres-
 sion, according to the manner of speak-
 ing in modern Languages: But in the
Jewish Idiom it was very intelligible,
 that the two parts of the Sentence should
 be taken as One; *God be thanked*, for
 that *ye*, who once were *the Servants of*
Sin, have since obeyed *from the Heart*
That Form of Doctrine, which was de-
livered you.

And thus likewise in the Words of the
 Text; *Be ye angry, and Sin not.* That
 is; *Take heed and beware of sinful An-*
ger; Indulge not Anger, lest ye fall into
Sin; Or, If at any time ye be provoked,
then

Serm. *then take particular care that ye fall not*
 VI. *into Sin.*

It is the same Caution, as in the Government of all *other* Passions or Desires. So *use* the World, as not *abusing* it; So *rejoice*, as though ye *rejoiced not*; So *weep*, as those that *wept not*; So *be angry*, as that ye *Sin not*. The meaning of the Words, being thus explain'd: That which remains, is; *1st*, that I endeavour, in a practical manner, to represent unto you, what the *Kind* or *Degree* of that Anger is, which must be charged as Sinful. And *2dly*, that I briefly set before you some of the *Mischiefs* and *Inconveniences*, of allowing our Passion to arise to such a sinful Degree.

Before I enter upon which Heads, it may be proper to premise two Things. *1st*, that What shall be said concerning the Nature of *Anger* in particular, may with little Variation be easily applied in general to the Government of *all other* Passions whatsoever. So that though the present Subject of my Discourse be *particular*, yet, by serious Meditation, it may without Difficulty be made *universally* useful, towards regulating the Conduct of Humane Life. And *2dly*, that Those things which Scholastick Writers upon this Subject, have made burdensom to
 the

the Memory, and intricate to the Understanding, by numerous Definitions, and more nice than necessary Distinctions; I shall endeavour to reduce under one single Head, that, What to Persons of all *Capacities* is their Duty to *practise*, may, without affording Matter for Dispute or Subtilty, be by all Persons equally *understood*.

I. These things being premised; I proceed *1st* to inquire, what the *Kind* or *Degree* of that Anger is, which must be charged as Sinful. And This will best be understood, by considering briefly what the Nature and Use of our Passions is, and for what Intent they were implanted in us by our All-wise Creator.

Where *Reason* and Understanding are *perfect*; there is no room for any *Passion* or *Commotion*. And therefore in the most perfect Being, there is *no* Passion. In *God*, there is, properly speaking, neither Anger nor Complacency, neither Love nor Hatred, neither Joy nor Sorrow. In Him, there is no such Thing as Desire or Aversion; no such Commotion, as either Hope or Fear. But his Actions are determined always by perfect and unmixed Reason, by eternal and unchangeable Equity; Which, in the Supreme Mind, is an uninterrupted Calmness, like the
Se-

Serm. Serenity of the Highest Heavens. For,
 VI. though the Scripture does indeed represent to *Us* the Divine Actions, as proceeding from Passions like to Ours; yet this is *not* representing them what they are really in *Him*, but only in Condescension to the Weakness of *our* Apprehensions, or with regard to their Effects upon *Us*. And as, in the same Scripture, *Hands* and *Feet* and *Eyes* are figuratively ascribed to Him, who, in reality, without Shape or Figure, is in all places every where alike present; so by the like *Analogy only* it is, that to God are sometimes ascribed *Passions*, for which there is no Place in a Mind where Reason and Understanding are perfect.

On the contrary, where there is *no Reason* nor proper Understanding *at all*; as in Creatures inferiour to *Us*; there, *Passions and Appetites* are the *only* Springs of Action; and by *Them* are *irrational Creatures* naturally and unavoidably directed.

Men, who (like *Beasts*) are formed out of the *Dust of the Earth*, and yet (like *Angels*) made *after the Image of God*; are of a *middle* Nature between these two States, between perfect *Reason* and mere irrational *Appetites*: Being indued with *Appetites and Passions*, to excite and stir them

them up to Action, where their bare abstract *Understanding* would leave them too *remiss*; and at the same time indued with *Reason* also, to govern and *restrain* themselves, where *mere Appetites* and *Passions* would hurry them on to things exorbitant and unreasonable. Herein therefore particularly lies the principal Duty of *Man*; in keeping his *Passions* subject to *Reason*, and in governing his *Appetites* by That *Understanding*, wherewith God has distinguished him from the inferior Creation.

The *Affections* and *Passions* are not in themselves *Evil*, (as some of the Antient Philosophers vainly imagined;) but were implanted in us by the Wise Author of all things, for excellent Ends and very useful Purposes: That We, whose mixt Nature of Body and Spirit, would otherwise have made us too *remiss*, in pursuing the Ends to which bare abstract *Reason* directed us; might by the *Affections* and *Passions*, under the regulation of *Reason*, and subservient to it, *i. e.* by reasonable *Fears* and *Hopes*, by *Love* or *Hatred*, by *Anger* or *Complacency*, be pushed on and *excited* to be more earnest and vigorous, more constant and diligent in all those *Actions* of Life, which *Reason* *directs*, and the *Affections* *execute*.

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But

Serm.
VI.

Serm. VI. But now, when the Passions, instead of *obeying* Reason, over-rule and govern it; when they prevail *against* Reason, so as to put Men upon doing things which the Reason of their Minds at the same time forbids; or, (which is much the same thing,) when they become so violent as to abridge Men of their Liberty, and put them *beside* their Reason; so as to leave them no room or time to judge, whether the thing they are doing be reasonable or no; *Then* it is, that the Passions become truly Sinful. And *Man*, who when *Reason* governs him, is the Image of *God*; degenerates, by the Dominion of *Passion*, even below the Nature of a *Beast*. For those inferior Creatures, when they obey their Appetites, follow their *Nature*: But the Nature of *Man*, is to obey a higher Principle, even *Reason* and the *Law of God*; to which, He who is governed by *Passion*, is not Subject, neither indeed can be; and therefore degenerates below his proper Nature. Which is a Folly, whereof inferiour Beings are not guilty.

From hence it becomes very evident, (which was the *first* thing proposed,) what the *Kind* or *Degree* of that *Anger* is, which must be charged as Sinful: Namely that it is *Then* such, when it either puts
Mer

Men *besides* the Use of their Reason, or upon acting in any sort *contrary* to it. Serm. VI.

The Rule is *One*, and may without Difficulty be universally understood by *All* Men; But the Application is *infinite*, and must be made by *every One* for his own *Particular*. Every Person knows, when he considers seriously with himself; that his Anger becomes *Then* a sinful Passion, when it is stirred up *without just Cause*, or upon *any Cause* vents itself in *undecent Effects*; when it spoils his Temper by *frequent Returns*, or by its *Violence* exposes him to unseemly *Transports*, or by † its *Continuance* degenerates into Hatred and Malice; when its *Height* is disproportionate to the *Occasion* that raised it, or unbecoming the *Character* of the Person provoked; or the *Circumstances* be in any wise contrary to right Reason and Religion. Which Cases though they are indeed *infinitely various*, and therefore cannot be expressed in any Methodical Direction; yet because the Rule (as was said) is but *One* and unchangeably the same, therefore the Application in Practise is always *Easy*: *Easy* (I mean) *to be understood*, that a Man is *then* always to look

† *Let not the Sun go down upon your Wrath*: The Words immediately following the Text.

Serm. upon his Passion as Sinful, when it either
 VI. puts him *beside* the Use of his Reason,
 or upon acting any thing *contrary* to it:
 But not always so *Easy* to be *Practis'd*:
 Because habitual Passions, are very apt to
 surprize Men; and will not be prevented,
 but by a *constant Guard*. Yet, because
 'tis a *necessary Duty*, so to prevent and
 guard against them; therefore in order to
 perswade Men to set about the Practice of
 what is so indispensable and of so great
 importance, 'tis proper that I proceed
 now in the

II. *Second* place, to consider some of
 the *Mischiefs* and *Inconveniencies*, of al-
 lowing our Passions to prevail, in any of
 the forementioned *Kinds* or *Degrees*.

And here we cannot but take notice,
 that even the *Heathen* Moralists them-
 selves, have filled their Discourses with
 Arguments against irregular and disorder-
 ly Passions; drawn from the *Indecency*
 and *Unseemliness*, of the *Thing itself*;
 from the *Shame and Indignity*, of a *rea-
 sonable Creature's* being subject to such
unreasonable Slavery: from the *Uneasi-
 ness* of it, to *Ourselves*; from the *Inju-
 riousness* of it, to *Others*; and from ma-
 ny other Considerations, which prove a
 Man, who is governed by his Passion, to
 be incapable even of true *Philosophy*,
 inca-

incapable of coming up to so much as the Moral Improvements even of a Wise Heathen.

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And the *Scripture* itself sometimes makes use of such *Natural Arguments*. From the *Folly* of the *thing itself*, Eccles. vii, 9; *Be not hasty in thy Spirit to be Angry; For Anger resteth in the Bosom of Fools.* Prov. xii, 16; *A Fools Wrath is presently known, but a prudent Man covereth Shame;* and chap. xiv, ver. 17, 29, *He that is slow to Wrath, is of great Understanding; but he that is soon Angry, dealeth Foolishly; and he that is hasty of Spirit, exalteth Folly.* Again; From the *Contempt* it draws upon Men, who are observed to be guilty of this Weakness; Prov. xxv, 28, *He that hath no Rule over his own Spirit, is like a City that is broken down, and without Walls.* From the frequent *Mischiefs* and *Damages* it brings upon them; Prov. xix, 19, *A Man of great Wrath, shall suffer Punishment; For if thou deliver him, yet thou must do it again:* And Job v, 2, *Wrath killeth the foolish Man, and Envy slayeth the silly One.* Also, from the *natural Excellency* of the contrary Practice; Prov. xvi, 32, *He that is slow to Anger, is better than the Migh-*

Serm. *ty; and he that ruleth his Spirit, than*
 VI. *he that taketh a City.*

But to *Us Christians*, there are still higher Arguments to convince us of the Mischief of being governed by our Passions; and to perswade us of the Necessity, of restraining them within due Bounds. For *Us*, to indulge our Passions; is to deprive our selves wholly of that Temper, that Frame and Disposition of Mind, which is the peculiar Character and Obligation of a Christian. If a *Philosopher*, if a *Wise Heathen*, upon the common Principles of Reason and Morality; If a *Man*, upon the bare consideration of the Dignity of his *Nature* above the Beasts that perish; is under Obligation to subdue his Appetites and Passions to Reason: How much more is a *Christian* bound, to keep himself still under stricter and more severe restraints?

For when a *Christian* indulges his Passion, let him consider *Who* it is, that acts so unworthily, and behaves himself so unseemly. A Man indued with *Reason* and Understanding: A Man, whose Reason is *improved*, not by *Philosophy* only, but moreover by the Knowledge of the *revealed Will* of God: A Man, for whom *Christ* dyed; to whom *God* has been freely reconciled, and, out
 of

of mere Mercy and undeserved Compassion, vouchsafed to turn away his Anger from him.

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And against *Whom* does this person direct the Violence of his Passion? Against a *Man* like himself; against his *Friend* or his *Brother*, Bone of his Bone, and Flesh of his Flesh; one for *whom* Christ dyed as well as for *himself*, and by his own Blood redem'd them *Both* from Death.

And *What* is it *for*, that one Christian Man, is fiercely angry against another? Perhaps for a *careless Word*, for an *undesigned Provocation*, for a *difference in Opinion*; possibly for retaining a *good-Conscience*, and not daring to do what the other expects of him; At most, for some slight and trivial *Offence*; for not being able to repay him his Hundred *Pence*, when God has forgiven them Both their Ten Thousand *Talents*.

Not that one Christian may not, in a just and legal manner, *compel* another to do what is right and equitable: Much less, that Superiors should not by their Authority *oblige* Inferiors, to perform the proper Duties of their respective Stations: But that in these, and all other Cases, *Religion and Equity* be the *Ground*; and *Reason*, not *Passion*, the *Measure* of the *Compulsion*.

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If any thing in the World could make exorbitant Passion excusable; it should seem to be when *Vice* is the Object of the Displeasure; and Concern for the *Honour of God*, the Cause of the Commotion. Nevertheless, even in *this* Case, our Saviour himself, when he was not only reviled, but was reviled also with *Blasphemy* against *God* himself; yet reviled not again. And *Michael the Archangel*, when contending with the *Devil*, yet did not bring against him a railing *Accusation*, but said, *The Lord rebuke thee*; Jude ix. And the Scripture accordingly directs, that a *Servant of God* must not strive, but be gentle unto all Men, apt to teach, patient; In meekness instructing them that oppose themselves, if *God* peradventure will give them *Repentance* to the acknowledging of the *Truth*. For the *Wisdom* that is from above, is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of *Mercy* and good *Fruits*, St *Jam.* iii, 17. And St *Paul* exhorts, *Eph.* iv, 31, *Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and evil-speaking be put away from you, with all malice; And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted; forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven you.*

There

There is a remarkable History to this purpose in the Book of *Jonah*; where, upon God's repenting to execute his Threatnings upon *Nineveh*, *Jonah* was displeas'd at it exceedingly, and he was very Angry; and persisted in it, that he did well to be Angry, even unto Death. But God reprov'd him by the similitude of a Gourd, at which *Jonah* was griev'd when it perished suddenly; And the Lord said unto him, *Thou hadst pity on the Gourd, which came up in a Night, and perished in a Night; and should not I spare Nineveh, that great City?*

When once a Man, whatever the Occasion be, gives himself up to his *Passion*; he is then out of the Use of his *Reason*, and he can never tell to what degree of *Unreasonableness* he may be pusht on. *An angry Man stirreth up strife, and a furious person will abound in Transgression*, Prov. xxix, 22. As *Cain's causeless Displeasure* against his Brother, increased by degrees beyond limit, till it ended in Murder; so *Passion* let loose even upon the most just *Provocation*, is like a Torrent breaking thro' a Bank; which will hardly be prevented from swelling, till it leads us into Sin. *My beloved*, saith St *James*, let every Man be---slow to Wrath; For the Wrath of Man, (even though it be against what

Serm. what it *Evil*, yet *worketh not the righteousness of God*.

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The *Cause* of such disorderly Passions, is always *Carelessness* and want of *Seriousness*: The *Remedy* is, *Consideration*, *Attention*, and frequent *Examination* of a Man's self; so as to keep a constant Guard and Watchfulness over his Spirit. To be able *perfectly* to cure his Temper, to conquer himself *wholly*, and change his Disposition; is what no One ought to expect in *this World*; nor to be disappointed or discouraged, if he finds even the *moderating it* to be a Work of Difficulty and Time. But to *indeavour* to amend it *daily*, is his indispensable Duty. And he who considers how easily and suddenly he can restrain himself, at the coming in of a *Superiour* whom he reveres among *Men*; must not pretend it impossible for him to govern his Passions, with the Thoughts of the perpetual Presence of *God*.

There have been some, who have alledged in Excuse for themselves, That Passage in Scripture, that the Apostles Themselves were *Men of like Passions with us*, Acts xiv, 15. But the intent of That passage is much misunderstood, through an improper Translation. For the intention of *St Paul* and *Barnabas* speaking in that manner to the Men of *Lystra*, was not

not to say that they were Men of *like Passions*, in the Sense we now usually understand the Word; but that they were Men of *like Infirmities*, mortal Men like themselves, subject to *Diseases*, *Casualties* and *Death*; and therefore, not to be worshipped as *Gods*. So *Jam. v, 17*, *Elias was a Man subject to like Passions as we are*: The meaning is not, that he was a *passionate*, but that he was a *mortal* Man like one of us, and yet interceded effectually with God. But if the meaning was literal, that the Apostles and Prophets had the same *Passions* with *Us*, (as undoubtedly they naturally had,) yet This is no excuse for *Us*, unless, like *Them*, we govern them also by the rules of Reason and Religion. *Be ye Angry, and Sin not.*

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Now unto the only Wise God, &c.



A
S E R M O N

Preach'd in the

Parish-Church of *St James's Westminster*, Decem. 16, 1720. being the Day of *Fasting and Humiliation*, for beseeching God to preserve us from the *Plague*.

ISAIAH XXVI, 9, latter part.

*When thy judgments are in the Earth,
the Inhabitants of the World will
learn Righteousness.*

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BESIDES the general Evidences of the Being and Providence of God, which appear in the Fabrick of the Universe, in the Contrivance and wise Disposition of all the Works of Nature, and in the Great Providential Events which to the several Nations of the Earth declare in some degree his Government over Mankind: I say, Besides these *general* Evidences of Providence, the Scripture has moreover given us a *particular* and standing Example of it, in the History of the Jew-

Jewish Nation. *That People*, in a *singular* manner, did God deliver out of the Egyptian Bondage, by Signs and Wonders and Mighty Works. *Them* did he lead through the Wilderness like a Flock of Sheep, and with an out-stretched Arm brought them through innumerable Dangers to the Borders of his Promised Land. Before *Them* did he drive out many Potent People, and planted Them in the room of those idolatrous Nations. Upon *Them*, when they corrupted themselves and departed from his Ways, did he frequently inflict very severe Judgments, by way of exemplary Correction, raising them up new Enemies round about them: And when they returned unto him again, he forgave their misdeeds, and destroyed them not, but delivered them again out of the hands of their Enemies. The *Effects* these various dispensations of Providence had upon *particular Persons* among That people, were very different, according to the Temper and Disposition of the Persons. Those of them, who were very corrupt; who loved the idolatrous Rites of the Nations that surrounded them, and the Debaucheries that attended those idolatrous Practices; became more and more corrupt in the times of *Prosperity*, and in the days of *Adversity* they har-

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Serm. VII. *hardened their Hearts against God. When the Wrath of God came upon them, and slew the wealthiest of them, and smote down the chosen men that were in Israel: For all This they sinned yet more, and believed not his wondrous Works, Psal. Ixxviii, 32. And when God worked for them miraculous Deliverances, still they kept not the Covenant of God, and would not walk in his Law: But forgot what he had done, and the wonderful Works that he had shewed for them, Ver. 12.*

The mighty Signs and Wonders they continually saw, grew familiar unto them; and by degrees made *no more impression* upon them, than the Works of *Nature*, which are indeed continual Miracles, make *Now* upon Atheistical and Profane Minds. But *Others* amongst them, *observed* the Works of God, and the Dispensations of his Providence, and laid up all these things in their Minds; and were influenced thereby to obey his Commandments, and to serve him with an upright Heart. And *Some*, who in the days of Prosperity forgot themselves, and were carried away with the Stream of a degenerate and corrupt World; yet, when the *Judgments* of God appeared, their *Heart was tender*, and their Conscience *smote them*, and they returned and repented

pented of their Evil ways, and amended their Lives, and gave glory to God who ruleth over all. Of *This* kind, were the persons whom the prophet introduces in this Chapter, and in the words of the Text, making their just acknowledgements to God. *Ver. 5, He bringeth down them that dwell on High; the lofty city he layeth it low, even to the ground, he bringeth it even to the dust.-----In the way of thy Judgments, O Lord, have we waited for thee; the Desire of our Soul is to thy Name, and to the remembrance of thee. With my Soul have I desired thee in the Night, yea, with my Spirit within me will I seek thee early. For when thy Judgments are in the Earth, the Inhabitants of the World will learn Righteousness.*

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The *Doctrinal Proposition* plainly contained in the words, and which will therefore be the Subject of the following Discourse, is This: That the Design and the Proper Effect of the Judgments of God in This World, is to awaken Sinners, and to bring them by Repentance to the Practise of Righteousness. *When thy Judgments are in the Earth, the Inhabitants of the World will learn Righteousness.*

Righteousness is the Practise of that which is in itself Right and Fit to be done.

And

Serm. And, were there no Rewards or Punish-
 VII. ments annexed either by God or Man, other
 than what essentially arise from the Good
 or Evil Actions themselves; yet That which
 is Right, would still always be reasonable to
 be done; and the nature of Wickedness
 would be still always what it is. Upon
 This ground it is, that *God*, who is infi-
 nitely above all Hope or Fear; to whose
 Happiness nothing can be added, and no-
 thing diminished from it; yet essentially
 loves Righteousness and Truth, and sted-
 dily and unalterably chooses always to do
 what is Just and Good. *Inferiour* ratio-
 nal Beings, *so far* as they are influenced
 by *Reason*, do the same; and see, and
 esteem, and judge of things, as they
 really are. But *all finite Beings* are,
 in their several Proportions and degrees,
fallible. And the Reason which is in
Men, is Weak; liable to be darkened by
Ignorance, to be blinded by *Prejudices*,
 to be seduced by *Appetites*, to be over-
 ruled by *Passions* and unreasonable *Af-*
fections. These are the Springs of Wick-
 edness among Men. To prevent the ill
 Effects whereof, God has been pleased to
add Weight on the side of Virtue and
 Righteousness, by the Sanction of *Re-*
wards and *Punishments*. The *Rewards*
 which God has annexed to the Practise of
 Vir-

Virtue, either in This life or the next, are of such a Nature; that the having *REGARD to those Rewards*, does not destroy the intrinsic Excellency of Virtue, or make the Practise of it at all *mercenary*; Because, the Idea of God being the Notion of a Being infinitely Holy, Righteous and Good; the Love of *Him*, and the Desire of continuing in *His Favour* and of being *Blessed* by *Him*, is either in effect the same thing, or at least is coincident with, the Love of Virtue and Goodness itself. *Punishments* likewise, when considered as coming from *God*, are of such a Nature, that Good Actions arising from the *Fear* of *His* Displeasure, do not lose the nature of *True Virtue*; Because, God being infinitely removed from all possibility of Error, Arbitrariness, or Any Evil disposition whatsoever; men cannot possibly by the Fear or Sense of *His* Anger, be excited or moved to do Any action, but what at the same time they must of necessity be convinced in their Own minds, is Fit and Right and Reasonable for them to do. And Punishments inflicted by *Men*; were they always faithfully and righteously applied, that is, were they never, except in cases of Necessary *Self-Defence*, made use of to any other purpose, than, upon the Foundation of the

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Serm. acknowledged Difference between Good
 VII. and Evil, to *compel* men to do what
 they themselves well know is their *Du-
 ty* to do ; Were This (I say) constant-
 ly the Case, Punishment from *Men* would
 then be of the same Nature, and have
 proportionably the same Effect, as Punish-
 ment from the Hand of *Providence*. But
 the Errours and Passions of Mankind, ha-
 ving too frequently brought great Confusi-
 on into *Their* manner of dealing with each
 other ; the right Use therefore and Ap-
 plication of mens *Hopes* and *Fears* to the
 Purposes of Religion, is to turn them to-
 wards their most proper Object, the *Favour*
 or *Displeasure* of *God*. Now *Fear* being
 the *stronger* and more powerful Affection,
 than Hope ; hence the *Judgments* of God,
 either *seen* or *felt*, either inflicted upon
ourselves, or observed on *Others*, are apt
 to work upon men more effectually to
 bring them to Repentance, than the Ob-
 servation of numerous Instances of the
 Divine Mercy and Goodness. In the words
 immediately following my Text,* and as
 a confirmation of the Truth of the Pro-
 position therein contained, that *When
 God's JUDGMENTS are in the
 Earth the Inhabitants of the World will
 learn Righteousness* : In confirmation of
 This Truth, *Let FAVOUR* (says the
 Pro-

Prophet) *be shown to the Wicked, yet will he not learn Righteousness; in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the Majesty of the Lord: Lord, when thy hand is lifted up, they will not see; but they SHALL see, and be ashamed:* The Terrours of the Lord will force them to see, and they *Shall be ashamed.* The *Greatest* of all the *Temporal* Terrours of the Lord, is *Death:* Death, which puts an End to all Worldly Considerations, and consigns men over to an unalterable Eternity. When *This* Messenger of the Divine Judicature apparently approaches; there is no man so void of Sense, as not to begin *Then at least* to be seriously solicitous, what the Event of That Judgment will be, to which he perceives himself going without delay. The *reason why* he should be thus solicitous, is the same at all *other* times. For, near or far off, still Death is equally certain; *and after That, the Judgment.* And how distant soever Death may at any time seem to be from any particular person, yet, even at that *greatest* seeming distance, it *must of necessity* be very near, it *may* be nearer than can be conceived. But men are careless and stupid; And the Heat of Passions corrupts their Sense, the Deceitfulness of Riches blinds their Eyes, the

Serm. Pleasures of Life steal from them their
 VII. Understandings; and they willingly suffer the thinnest Mist to hide from them the clearest Light, and the meanest Trifle to divert them from the Thoughts of their Eternal Interest. This is the Lethargy, which, in time of Health and Prosperity, is apt to *stifle* the general Notices which God has given men of Himself in the standing Use both of Reason and Revelation. To awaken men therefore from this state of insensibility, God is pleas'd *sometimes* to *strengthen* these *general* Notices, by more *particular* and more *immediately affecting* Warnings; by *Threatnings* of impending Judgments upon *Ourselves*, or by *Examples* of his inflicting them upon *Others*. By These, he excites mens consideration and attention, quells the eagerness of ungoverned Passions, and lays open to them the Folly of Ambition and Covetousness. By These, as 'tis elegantly express'd in the Book of *Job*, *ch. xxxiii, 16*; by These *he openeth the Ears of Men, and sealeth their instruction; That he may withdraw Man from his Purpose, and hide pride from Man.* And *ch. xxxvi, 8*, *If they be bound in Fetters, and held in cords of affliction; then God sheweth them their work, and their transgression, that they have*

have exceeded: He openeth also their Ear to discipline, and commandeth that they return from their iniquity. All

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Temporal Judgments therefore whatsoever, are properly of a medicinal Nature, and mercifully intended for our Benefit:

All of them without exception, for the Benefit of such as shall take Warning from them in *Others*; and All Those of them which are short of Death, for the Benefit even of the *persons Themselves* on whom they fall. *It is good for me,*

says the Psalmist, *that I have been afflicted: For, before I was afflicted, I went astray; but Now I have learnt thy Precepts.* The gentle Admonitions of

Afflictions sent upon *particular* persons, are the *still Voice* of the Divine Patience, calling Sinners to Repentance: And the severest Calamities even of *publick* and *national* Desolations, Fire and Sword, Dearth and Famines, Plagues and Pestilences, are yet of the *same* nature; being the *louder Calls*, and as it were the *Thunder* of the Almighty's Threatnings, *necessary* sometimes, and even *These* not always sufficient, to rowse up the Senses of a hard and stupid, of a vitious and debauched World. 'Tis *No pleasure* to the

Almighty, to grieve the children of Men: And 'tis with the Highest Eloquence of

Serm. VII. *affectionate* expressions, that the Scripture constantly sets forth to us, how *unwilling* God is to execute his severer Threatnings, how *ready* always to remove his Judgments upon mens true Repentance, and how he *searches* as it were for *every* argument, and *every* Motive of Compassion: *Shall I not spare Niniveh, that Great City, wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons, that know not their right hand from their left? Nay, shall I not spare Sodom,* does the Scripture represent him saying within himself; shall I not spare it for the sake of *Ten Righteous*, if so many can be found therein? But that the *severest* of the divine *Judgments*, are sometimes *absolutely Necessary*; and that the corruption of the World, were it to be always in a *continued* and *uninterrupted Prosperity*, would be *altogether intolerable*; is apparent from hence, that even *these Judgments themselves, seen* inflicted upon *Others*, nay even *felt* inflicted upon mens *selves*, even *These* very frequently prove *ineffectual*. How often, when we see Great Calamities befall our Neighbours; instead of being warned thereby to amend our *own* Lives, do we turn it only into an occasion of Uncharitableness in censuring *Others!* Which

Spirit, is very affectionately reprov'd by our Saviour, *Luke xiii, 2, Suppose ye that these Galileans, whose Blood Pilate had mingled with their Sacrifices, were Sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, nay; but except ye repent, ye shall All likewise perish. Or those eighteen, upon whom the Tower in Siloam fell, and slew them; think ye that they were Sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, nay; but except ye repent, ye shall All likewise perish.* Nay, how frequently do the severest of God's Judgments inflicted upon a Nation or People; the last and loudest Call to Repentance, after which there remains no Remedy against final excision; how often do *These* prove ineffectual, to awaken *even Those very persons* upon whom they are inflicted; and leave them in an incorrigible impenitency, hardened to destruction! Thus of King *Abaz* we find it recorded, *2 Chr. xxviii, 22, that in the time of his Distress, he trespassed yet more against the Lord: This is That King Abaz.* And of the whole people of *Israel*, in a most eloquent complaint by the Prophet *Amos*, ch. iv, 6; *I have given you want of bread in all your Cities;----- I have smitten you with Blasting and Mildew,*

Serm. VII. *when your Gardens and your Vineyards the Palmer-worm devoured; yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord. I have sent among you the Pestilence after the manner of Egypt, and your young men have I slain with the Sword; yet have ye not returned unto Me, saith the Lord. I have overthrown some of you, as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrha, and ye were as a Firebrand pluckt out of the Burning; yet have ye not returned unto Me, saith the Lord.*

In like manner in the New Testament, speaking of the Punishment of the Nations in the latter days, which call themselves Christians; *Rev. ix, 20, 21, The rest of the men which were not killed by these Plagues, yet repented not --- of their Murders, nor of their Sorceries, nor of their Fornication, nor of their Thefts: Of their Sorceries; that is, of all their superstitious Methods of making men fancy themselves to be religious, by what Others can do for or To them, or by what They can do for themselves, without the Practise of Rightcousness and true Virtue.*

And *Ch. xvi, 9, Men were scorched with great Heat, and blasphemed the Name of God who hath Power over these plagues; And they repented not, to give him glory; --- But blasphemed the God of Hea-*

Heaven, because of their Pains,---and repented not of their Deeds. In This Passage, (*men repented not, to give him Glory*;) 'tis worthy of Observation, by the way, *Wherein* consists the true and Scripture-Notion of the *Glory of God*. It consists, in the Obedience of the rational and moral World to the Laws of his Kingdom. That is, it consists in reasonable Creatures living, (under a due and constant Sense of the Divine Government,) according to the Rules of Reason, of everlasting Righteousness, Goodness and Truth. And *Sinners* have no other possible way of *giving Glory to God*, but by repenting of their evil Deeds; that is, amending their Lives, obeying *the Everlasting Gospel*, and forsaking those Vices which are opposite to God's Kingdom of Virtue and Righteousness. Which Observation may be of good Use, for preventing many wrong Notions concerning the Nature of true Religion, and of the *Glory of God*. But to proceed. The *Reason why* the Judgments, the severest and most awakening Judgments of God, even Those which cannot fail to convince men of the Transitoriness, and Uncertainty, and Vanity of every thing here below; do yet nevertheless very often prove *ineffectual* to cause Sinners *Thus to give Glory to God*, by bringing them to true Repen-
tance;

Serm. tance; The Reason (I say) why even *These*
 VII. Judgments often fail of This Effect, is a
 confused, uncertain, inattentive sort of
 Infidelity; which, ascribing all Calami-
 ties to *second* Causes, and lamenting them
 only as unavoidable *Natural* Disasters,
 looks not up to the Hand of the *First*
 Cause, which steers and directs the whole
 Course of Nature. *Wars* and *Desola-*
tions, we see, arise from the Passions of
 Men. *Famines*, are owing to Accidents
 of Wind and Weather. *Plagues* and
Pestilences, those great destroying Angels
 possibly *are*, or however *may be imagined*
to be, Vapours and Steams out of the Earth.
 And, because the Grounds of these things
 appear in *Nature*; therefore Weak and
 Foolish Men, intent upon the *Weapon*
 only, and not upon *Him who strikes*
 with it, regard not to give Glory to the
God of Nature. Whereas in Truth and rea-
 lity, *NATURE* is nothing but an empty
 Word; And the *Course of Nature* (as
 'tis vulgarly called,) excepting only the
 Operations of Free Agents, is merely an
Abstract Notion or Expression of the *re-*
gularity of *His* Operations, who made
 and governs all things. Even the Coun-
 sels and Designs of *Men*, are, by Inci-
 dents unforeseen to *Them*, perpetually
 over-ruled to quite different Events, than
They intended or could possibly ima-
 gine.

gine. But as to *UNINTELLIGENT Natural Causes*; whatever *They* seem to effect, is not in reality done by *Them* at all, but by the Providence of God. That the *Sun runs* its course *every day*, is no less strictly and properly the hand of God, than that it *stood still* one day. Nor is there any other Reason, why *supernatural Miracles* are by all men readily ascribed to God, when the equally Great *Miracles of Nature* are vulgarly fancied to be done without him; for This (I say) there is no other than This One foolish reason, that What God does *once*, men see and acknowledge is done by *Him*; but What he does *Always*, they *therefore* think 'tis not *He* does it *at all*. The Scripture (and Reason also) teaches us more justly, to *acknowledge God in All our Ways*. That 'tis *He*, who causes *HIS Sun to rise*, and *sends us Rain and fruitful Seasons*. That 'tis *He*, who (in the Psalmist's expression) *maketh the Grass to grow upon the Mountains*; *giving even to the BEAST his Food*, and to the young Ravens which call upon him. That, without *Him*, not a Sparrow falls to the Ground, but even the very Hairs of our Head are all *numbered*. That 'tis *He* alone, who *gives us richly all things to enjoy*; even all *those* things, which, in a vulgar and care-

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less way of speaking, we usually ascribe to *natural and inanimate Causes*. Which very same Causes, whensoever he pleases, he can make to be the Instruments of our *Punishment* as well as of our *Support*. He can (as *Moses* elegantly expresses it;) *make the Heavens over our Heads, to be Bras;* and *the Earth under our Feet, Iron*. He can punish with the *Pestilence that walketh in Darkness, and with the Sickness that destroyeth at the Noon-day*. He can scorch with *Drought*, or *drown* with moisture, or *blast* with unwholsom Winds; in order to destroy with *Famine*, and *make a fruitful Land barren, for the Wickedness of them that dwell therein*. Or, without removing the *Blessings themselves* of Nature, he can at any time withdraw the *Benefit* and the *Effects* of them. When God *with Rebukes doth chasten Man for Sin, he maketh his Beauty to consume away, as it were a Moth fretting a Garment*, Pf. xxxix, 11. So that, besides God's more *visible* Judgments upon a Nation or People, they will sometimes by a *secret* Curse insensibly decay in their Riches and their Strength. They will, they know not how, be strangely impoverished in the very midst of plenty, and weakened even by the Greatest Successes; While they

see

see not by what silent steps and imperceptible degrees (like *gray hairs* and the infirmities of old age,) Poverty and Weakness steal in upon them. By these various Methods, does the Divine Patience awaken and call men to Repentance. After which, if (in the Prophet's expression) *the people turneth not unto Him that smiteth them, neither will they seek the Lord of Hosts: If, when thou hast stricken them, they have not grieved; when thou hast consumed them, they have refused to receive correction, they have made their Faces harder than a Rock, they have refused to return: there* Then remains nothing, but That severest of all Temporal Threatnings, *Jer. ii, 19, Thine OWN WICKEDNESS shall correct thee, and thy Backslidings shall reprove thee.* Thus did God deal with the *Antient Jews*, *Pf. lxxxii, 11, My people would not hearken unto my Voice, and Israel would not obey me; So I gave them up unto their own hearts Lusts, and let them follow their own Imaginations:* And with the same people in our Saviour's time, *Matt. xxiii, 37, O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the Prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee! how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a Hen gather-*

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Serm. *eth her chickens under her Wings, and*
 VII *ye would not ! Behold, your House is left*
 ~~~~~ *unto you desolate.*

It cannot be doubted but your Thoughts have already all along prevented me, in *applying* what has been said *unto Ourselves*; For whose *Admonition* these things are *written*, and they were intended for *Examples* unto *Us*, upon whom the *Ends of the World* are come. There is no Nation upon Earth, that has had greater Experience of the Divine Goodness, than *We* have had. We have long enjoyed the inestimable Blessing of a *Free and Legal Government*, while Other Nations have groaned under the Violence of Arbitrary Oppressions. We have had the Free Use of our *Reason* and of the *Holy Scriptures* allowed us, which under Other Governments, that yet call themselves *Christian*, have, for many Ages together, been persecuted even unto Death. We have enjoyed all the Plenty and Happiness of *Peace*, even in the midst of the most vigorous and bloody Wars: While the Sword and Fire have consumed round about us, and Other fruitful Countries have been ravaged and destroyed: While *Thousands* have fallen beside us, and *ten thousands* at our right hand, and yet Providence

vidence has protected us, that *it came not nigh Us*: While Want and Famine spread Desolation among our Neighbours, and Pestilence at a distance threatned still severer Judgments of God. What *Returns* we have made to the Divine Goodness for these *Lengthnings of our Tranquillity*, appears too sadly in That Impiety and Profaneness, That Looseness and Debauchery, That Iniquity and Uncharitableness, That unrighteous and irreligious Spirit of Heat, Violence and Factiousness, which still abounds amongst us. For These things God has at several times visited this Nation, with some sharp Remembrances of his Displeasure; and has at Other times threatned us with very near Approaches, of a more Lasting and Destructive Wrath. The Sword of his destroying Angel, is *at this day* unsheathed before us; and how far his Commission may extend, God only knows. The *only certain* way of deprecating God's Wrath effectually, is to bring forth beforehand those Fruits meet for Repentance, to which All the divine Judgments, that are not finally destructive, are intended to excite us. The *First* thing is, that every *private* person would for himself seriously examine, and amend (as *Solomon* expresses it, in That Solemn Prayer of his,

Serm. his, 1 Kings viii, 38,) every man the  
 VII. *Plague of his own Heart*; that is,  
 reform his *private* and *personal Faults*,  
 whatever they be. In the *next* place,  
 with regard to the *Publick*: Since God  
 has been pleas'd to continue to us the  
 Knowledge of the *Gospel*, in a more *free*  
 and *unrestrained* Use of the *Scriptures*  
 than most Other Nations enjoy; it be-  
 hoves us, (least we provoke God to *re-*  
*move our candlestick* out of its place,)  
 to take due and constant Care that  
 we bring every thing impartially to  
 the Test of That sacred Rule; and that  
 in our Practise we continually so behave  
 ourselves, as becomes Those who have  
 always before their Eyes the uncorrupted  
 Doctrine and Precepts of Christ. And  
 since in the *Civil Government* likewise,  
 it has hitherto pleas'd God, by Many even  
 miraculous Events, to continue to us our  
 Laws and Liberties; it imports us, (as we  
 would not draw down upon our Heads  
 That greatest of All the temporal Plagues of  
 God, *Arbitrary Power*;) it imports us, e-  
 very man in his Station, to the utmost of  
 his Ability, to support and maintain a Go-  
 vernment so constituted. That the *Peo-*  
*ple*, under the uniform and steddy Pro-  
 tection of wise and equitable Laws, may  
 serve God quietly and with religious Fear.  
 And

And that the *King* may rejoice in thy *Strength*, O Lord, and be exceeding glad of thy *Salvation*: That thou mayst give him his *Hearts Desire*, and not deny him the *Request of his Lips*: That thou mayst prevent him with the *Blessings of Goodness*, and make his *Honour Great in thy Salvation*, and crown him with *Glory and great Worship*: That thou mayst give him a long *Life here*, and a longer and happier hereafter, even for ever and ever.

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VII.





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A  
S E R M O N

Preach'd in the

Parish-Church of St *James's Westminster*, Decem. 8, 1721. being the Day of *Fasting and Humiliation*, for beseeching God to preserve us from the *Plague*.

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LUKE XIII; 2, 3.

*And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galileans were Sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, Nay; but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.*

**T**IS the natural voice and judgment of Reason, in which all men who have Any Sense of God upon their mind, in all Nations and in all Ages, have agreed; that the Miseries and Calamities which befall Mankind, are all of them the *Effects* and *Consequences* of

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Serm. *Sin.* Considering the essential Goodness  
 VIII. of God, who cannot take pleasure in the  
 needful Afflictions of his Creatures; this  
 notion, in *general*, cannot but be right.  
 And, were there no other State but This; were This world the Whole of God's creation, and took in the whole period of our Being; it could not but be more-over true *in particular*, that the *proportion* of misery which befalls every single person, would be exactly correspondent to his Crimes. But *here*, there comes in a very great variety of *different* considerations. The present state being a Time of *Tryal*, and not of *Retribution*; there hence arise many wise Reasons, why God sometimes permits the greatest of Afflictions to fall upon the Best of men, and sometimes suffers the wickedest of men to go on in an uninterrupted course of Prosperity; and, in the execution of temporal judgments, very frequently involves the righteous in the same calamities which he sends upon the ungodly. The only Use therefore that *can* be made, and which Providence intends *should* be made, of the Divine Judgments here upon Earth; is to convince us of the Evil of Sin in general, to awaken us from a careless and inconsiderate temper, to wean us from,

too great a Fondness for the uncertain In-  
 joyments of this present Life; and to put  
 us continually upon mending *our Own*  
 manners, and improving *Ourselves* more  
 and more in the practise of virtue; and  
 not at all to inable us to judge concern-  
 ing *Others*, before the great day of Ac-  
 count, what *Their* State and Condition  
 is, with regard to the Final Favour or  
 Displeasure of God. This is a matter of  
 Curiosity, which concerns not *US* to  
 know; And every judgment we attempt  
 to make concerning it, has, in the pre-  
 sent State of things, even a proper and  
 natural tendency to deceive us. Every  
*Private* person, in This way of judging,  
 whenever he compares himself with O-  
 thers; 'tis odds but, according as his na-  
 tural Temper be, whether melancholy, or  
 presumptuous; he determines either *un-  
 charitably* of *Others*, or with unreasona-  
 ble *Despondency* of *Himself*; from dispen-  
 sations of Providence, which neither to  
*Him* nor *Them* are at all the proper Rule  
 of judging in that matter. But *Publick*  
 Bodies of Men; Nations, Sects, or Par-  
 ties; whenever *They* take upon them to  
 judge of each other in This method, they  
 hardly ever fail to err on the *Presumptuous*  
 Side; and to turn every judgment of  
 N 3 God,

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 VIII.  
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Serm. VIII. God, which falls upon men of *Other* denominations, into an Argument of Pride and Favour towards *Themselves*. This is what our Saviour, in the Text, warns us against. *Suppose ye, says he, that those Galileans, who fell by Pilate's cruelty in so extraordinary a manner, as that their own Blood was mingled with the blood of their Sacrifices; suppose ye that these men were Sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, Nay; but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.* The Persons who *told* our Lord of this extraordinary calamity, *ver. 1*; seem to have done it with an expectation of Curiosity, to see what Observations our Lord would make concerning the Behaviour and Circumstances and State of those men towards God, upon whom this particular misfortune fell. But He in *This*, according to his constant method in all *other* cases, disappointed their unprofitable inquisitiveness; and, instead of satisfying them about *Other* mens affairs, turns their question into an occasion of making some useful application to *Themselves*: *I tell you, says he, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.*

In discoursing upon which words, it may be useful for us to observe: *1st*, our Saviour's *General* manner; That, whenever men proposed to him any curious Question, or related to him any particular Fact or Event, in expectation of hearing his Observations upon it; he constantly turned the matter before him, into an occasion of giving some *practical* instruction, to the persons *themselves* with whom he was conversing. And *2dly*, The *Particular* doctrine contained in these words: That, though all God's temporal Judgments are inflicted upon account of Sin, yet they are not proportionable to the degrees of mens demerits; And that therefore the proper Use to be made of them, is, never from thence to form any uncharitable Judgment concerning *Others*, but to infer *for Ourselves* the necessity of Repentance.

1st. Nothing is more remarkable in the whole history of the Gospel, than our Saviour's *General* Method: That, whenever men proposed to him any curious Question, or related to him any particular Fact or Event, in expectation of hearing his Observations upon it; he con-

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stantly turned the matter before him, into an occasion of giving some *practical* instruction, to the persons *themselves* with whom he was conversing. He passes no judgment upon those unhappy *Galileans*, whose extraordinary misfortune was now reported to him. He makes no observation upon the characters of the persons, nor gives any hint of the peculiar reasons for which Providence thus distinguished them from the Bulk of Sinners. But (what was of much more Use to the persons who made the inquiry, and to all Christians in general, for whose instruction our Lord's Reply is recorded in the Gospel;) he hence takes occasion to inculcate upon *All* Sinners, the necessity of Repentance and Amendment of Life, in order to escape God's final Wrath. And This was his constant Method, upon all *other* occasions. When one asked him *ver. 23d* of This chapter, *Lord, are there Few that be saved?* instead of satisfying the person's curiosity, he exhorts both Him that asked the question, and as many Others as were present, to take care that *They themselves* be found in the number, *whatever* that *Number* be. *Strive YE to enter in at the strait gate; for Many, I say unto you,*
will



will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. When once the Master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to say, Lord, ----we have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our Streets ; He shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence you are ; depart from Me, all ye Workers of iniquity.

Again : When his Disciples asked him, *Matt. xviii, 1, Who is the Greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven?* Instead of naming, according to *their* expectation, some among Themselves, who had conversed with him most intimately here upon Earth ; (which expectation showed forth itself particularly in the Request of the Mother of *Zebedees* children, that *One of her Sons* might set on his right hand, and the *Other* on his left in his Kingdom :) Instead of This, I say, he tells them *Which* was the *Only Way*, whereby they could attain to the Kingdom of Heaven, *at all*. *Setting a little Child in the midst of them*, he said ; *Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven ; Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in*
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Serm. *the Kingdom of Heaven.* In like manner, when the Disciples asked him,

VIII.

Matt. xxiv, 3, When shall these things be? and What shall be the Sign of thy Coming, and of the end of the World?
 the Sum of his Answer is: *Watch YE, and be ye ready; for in such an hour as you think not, the Son of Man cometh.*

ver. 42.

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Luke xxi.

44

And, Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with Surfeiting and Drunkenness and Cares of this life; and so That day come upon you unawares. For as a Snare shall it come on all them, that dwell on the face of the whole Earth. Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things, and to stand before the Son of Man.

And the same Turn that he thus always gave to curious *Questions* put to him, the same he likewise constantly gave to *incidental things* said to him, or to particular *Facts and Events* taken notice of in his presence. When One prefaced a Question he was about to propose to him, with that respectful Title and Mark of Esteem, *Good Master*; he *thence* takes occasion, even from so seemingly *small* a handle, to instruct the person in that great and prime foundation of all Religion,
 that

that *God*, and *God only*, is perfectly and essentially *Good*. *Why callest thou Me, Good? There is none Good, but One; that is, God.* Again; When *Martha*, cumbered with much serving, complained to him, *Lord, dost thou not care that my Sister hath left me to serve alone?* instead of speaking to her Sister to come and help her, he takes a gentle occasion from her own Complaint, to remind her of a more important piece of Service: *Martha, Martha, Thou art careful and troubled about many things; But One thing is needful; and Mary has chosen that good Part, which shall not be taken from her.* At another time, when one of the company he was discoursing to, desired him to speak to his Brother to divide the inheritance with him; instead of making himself a Judge and Divider between them, he chose rather to take That occasion to preach to them All against Covetousness: *Take heed, and beware of Covetousness; for a man's Life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesses.* In another place, when a person in the Company to whom he was preaching, astonished at the Excellency of his Doctrine, cried out, *Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou*

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VIII.

Mat. xix,
17.

Luke x,
40, 42.

Lukexii,
15.

Serm. *thou hast suck'd*, Luke xi, 27; immediately he turns their Thoughts from the admiration of *Himself*, to that which would most effectually be profitable to *Them*: *Yea rather*, says he, *Blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it*. Upon another occasion, when his Disciples *prayed him to eat*, John iv, 31: he lets not even That opportunity slip, of reminding them how, to a rational and well-disposed Mind, there is No pleasure so great, as that of doing what is right: *I have meat*, says he, *to eat, that ye know not of;-----My Meat is to do the Will of him that sent me, and to finish his Work*. 'Twould be repeating the *Whole Gospel*, the *Whole History* of our Saviour's life; to mention *All* the Instances of his turning *every Incident* that came before him, into matter of instruction and admonition to those with whom he conversed. When some of the Pharisees advised him to *retire* out of the reach of *Herod*, who, they informed him, had a Design to *kill* him, Luke xiii, 31; Instead of being drawn, as probably *They* expected, by that seeming Friendly and Official Advice, to enter with them into the *Character* of *Herod* and *his Government*; he, in a very *extra-*
or-

ordinary and yet most *natural* manner, turns his Answer into a *severe Reproof* of *their own* incorrigibleness, and into an occasion of giving them *Warning*, how near the *final Wrath* of God was *impending* upon them: *It cannot be*, says he, *that a Prophet perish out of Jerusalem: O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the Prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her Wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.* In like manner, when his Disciples, as they were going out of the Temple, observed to him, *Master, see what manner of Stones, and what Buildings are here*, Mark xiii, 1; Instead of adding, as they seemed to expect, *his own Observations* concerning the *Sumptuousness* and *Magnificence* of the Building, and the *Grandeur* and *Riches* of the Builder; he on the contrary turns their Thoughts from all *these* considerations, to the View of that *Final Destruction* which God intended to bring upon the Whole Nation, for their continued Perverseness and Disobedience: *Seest thou* (says he to the person who desired him to take Notice of the stateliness of the

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Serm. VIII. *Fabrick; Seest thou these great Buildings? There shall not be left one Stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.*

And Thus likewise, in the words of the Text: *When some that were present, told him of the Galilæans, whose Blood Pilate had mingled with their Sacrifices; he did not, (as They, who mentioned this matter to him, seem'd to expect; he did not) hereupon enter into a Discourse concerning either the Cruelty of Pilate who murdered these Galilæans, or his Impiety and Profaneness in murdering them at the Place and Time of God's publick Worship, or concerning the unhappiness of the persons themselves who perished by so particular a misfortune, or concerning the peculiar Reasons why the Divine Providence thought fit to distinguish these particular persons by a singular Judgment: But, instead of All This, he immediately makes the Application to his Auditors then present, and to the persons Themselves who told him of the Fact; warning them of the indispensable Necessity of effectual Repentance and Amendment of Life as the only possible Means by which They Themselves could escape God's final Vengeance. Suppose ye (says he) that these Galilæans were Sinners above*



bove all the Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, Nay; but except ye repent, ye shall All likewise perish. Or those eighteen, upon whom the Tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that They were Sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay; but except ye repent, ye shall All likewise perish.

2dly. Having thus at large set forth to you our Saviour's *General* Method; that, whenever men proposed to him any curious Question, or related to him any particular Fact or Event, in expectation of hearing His Observations upon it; he constantly turned the matter before him, into an occasion of giving some practical Instruction, to the persons *themselves* with whom he was conversing: It remains now in the *second* place, that I proceed to consider the *Particular* doctrine, expressed in the words of the Text; That, though All God's Temporal Judgments are inflicted upon account of Sin, yet they are not proportionable to the degrees of mens Demerits; And that, therefore, the proper Use to be made of them, is never from thence to form any uncharitable Judgment concerning *Others*; but to infer
for

Serm. *for Ourselves* the Necessity of Repentance.

IX. That all the Temporal Judgments God at any time inflicts upon Mankind, are on the account of *Sin*, cannot indeed possibly be denied; because 'tis on the account of *Sin*, that men are at all placed in this State of *Misery* and *Mortality*. Had *Sin* never entred into the World, man had never been excluded out of *Paradise*, and from the *Tree of Life*; which was, either literally or figuratively, a Means or an Emblem of Immortality and Happiness. And at last, when *transgression shall be finished*, and *an end made of Sin*; the *Fruit* of the *Tree of Life* (as the Prophetick language expresses it) shall be again restored, and the *Leaves of the Tree* shall be for the *Healing of the Nations*. To *Sin* therefore *in general*, 'tis evident, all the Miseries of this mortal State are wholly owing. Nevertheless, since this present State is not a State of *Retribution* in *particular*, but only such a State of *Tryal* or *Probation*, as God, in consequence of *Sin's* entring into the World, thought fit to appoint men to undergo; a State, in which the righteous and the wicked, without a perpetual miraculous interposition, cannot but be frequently involved in the same Calamities together;



a State, in which the best and most innocent persons very often suffer, even the *most grievously*, by and from the Wicked; a State, wherein God himself sometimes thinks fit, by afflictions of his own more immediate appointing, (by Winds and Storms, by Floods and general Devastations, by Famines, Pestilences, and the like universal Calamities, which fall upon All promiscuously,) to try the Faith and Patience and Resignation of his Servants; and in which State we can never judge with any certainty, whether even those who are the most suddenly cut off, are cut off in Judgment or in Mercy: For these Reasons, whenever we see any extraordinary Calamity befall any particular *Person*, or any *Body* of men, or any one *Nation* in particular; we ought never from thence to form any uncharitable Judgment concerning the State of *Others* with regard to God, but only to infer for *Ourselves* the necessity of Repentance. 'Tis a very natural piece of Pride, in careless and corrupt Minds, to build an opinion of their *own* Goodness, upon the *comparative* Badness of *Others*; and, in *judging* of this *comparative* Badness of *Others*, to deceive themselves, by founding That Judgment either upon *what O-*

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thers

Serm. *thers suffer* at the hand of God, or per-
 VIII. haps upon *what Faults Others are guilty*
 of in *one particular manner*, when pos-
 sibly *They themselves* are in *some Other*
manner guilty of the very *same* Offenses.
 Thus, for instance, Christians of the *Re-*
formed Religion condemn, and very just-
 ly, those of the *Church of Rome*, as guilt-
 y of the Highest Absurdity and Irreligion,
 who in a continual Circle look upon them-
 selves as absolved from their Sins, which
 they *confess* to a *Priest*, and then *return*
 to their Sins again: And yet among *Pro-*
testants every one is really guilty of the
 very same Absurdity and Irreligion, who
 in a continual Circle looks upon himself
 as absolved from his Sins, which he *con-*
fesses to *God Almighty*, and then *returns*
 to them again. Thus men are very apt
 to deceive themselves, in comparing *O-*
ther mens *Actions* with their *Own*. And
 so they are apt to do also, in comparing
 their *Sufferings*. A false and deceitful
 Heart, (especially in Cases where *Bodies*
 of men, where *Nations* or *Sects* or *Par-*
ties are concerned,) is very ready to flat-
 ter itself with imaginations of being *itself*
more in Favour with God, when the se-
 verer sorts of the *Divine Judgments* in-
 flicted upon *Others*, fill it with unchari-
 table

table Suspicions of the *Grounds and Reasons* of those Judgments. In some few particular Cases indeed, where the *Judgment* is the immediate *Consequence* and direct *Effect* of the *Sin*; as, where the *Diseases* are the immediate *Produce* of the *Debauchery*; or where either *single Persons* or *whole Nations* do *themselves* greatly *suffer*, in the *very Attempt* of despoiling *Others* of their manifest *Right*; In these cases there is indeed no uncharitableness, in ascribing the *Judgment* to the *Sin*. But much oftner, and indeed *generally speaking*, it arises wholly from mens *Partiality* towards *themselves*, that they are so ready to throw upon *Others* the Causes of the Judgments wherewith God punishes mankind. Thus of old in the *Heathen Roman Empire*, whenever God was pleased to send among them Plagues or Famines, or Devastations by the incursion of barbarous Nations; the *Christians* immediately, as if *They* were the Causes of the Calamity, were hurried to the Prisons, to the Racks, and to the Wild Beasts. 'Tis not easy for men to see it in *themselves*; But *something* of the *same Spirit* there is in *every wicked man*, when, instead of being moved by the Judgments of God to

Serm. VIII. examine and amend his *own* Heart, his eyes are continually searching after the *real* or *imaginary* Faults of *Others*. *Who art Thou that judgest another man's Servant? To his own Master he standeth or falleth.* But if we would observe our Saviour's direction in the Text, and form our Notions of things according to *That* Rule; *herein* we could *never be deceived*. The Judgments of God, which we see abroad in the World, are a *proper* and *continual* Warning to *All* Sinners, to bring them to *Repentance* and *effectual Amendment*: Without which, they must *All* finally and inevitably perish. The *Jews*, to whom our Saviour gave the admonition in the Text, did, at the destruction of *Jerusalem*, perish in great multitudes *literally* by the *very same* calamity, which had before fallen upon the *Galileans* here mentioned. And *all Sinners* in *all Ages*, who see the Judgments of God fall *upon Others*, ought to consider, that they know not how soon the *very same* calamities may fall *upon themselves*. But whether the Punishment overtakes them at all *here*, or no; it will, without timely and effectual Amendment, certainly overtake them *hereafter*. Which is a *much more terrible* consideration. For *if these things*

things are done in the green Tree, what shall be done in the dry? If judgment begin at the House of God, what shall the End be of them that obey not the Gospel? If the temporal calamities which fall upon mixt multitudes here, of the righteous and wicked together, be so dreadful; what shall the estate be of Those, who shall be punished with EVER-LASTING destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his Majesty?

Serm.
VIII.

A
S E R M O N

Preach'd in the
Parish-Church of St *James's West-*
minster, Apr. 25, 1723. being
the Day appointed by his Ma-
jesty for a Publick *Thanksgiving*
to God, for preserving His Ma-
jesty and His Subjects from that
dreadful *Plague* with which the
Kingdom of *France* was lately
Visited ; And for putting an
End to the same.

M A T T. XXIV, 7.

*For Nation shall rise against Nation, and
Kingdom against Kingdom: And there
shall be Famines, and Pestilences, and
Earthquakes in divers Places.*

TH E S E Words are Part of the Pro-
phetical description, which Our
Saviour gives his Disciples a little
before his Death, of the State of things

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IX.

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IX.


which should be between That Time and the final Destruction of the Jewish Temple and Nation ; and, under That Type, the State of the World in general during the larger Period, until his coming to Judgment. The *Principal* thing, about which he most *distinctly and particularly* admonishes them, is the *Persecutions and Difficulties* They and their Followers must expect to meet with, more or less, in all Ages. *They shall deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you ; and ye shall be hated of all Nations for my Names Sake : And many shall be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another : And because iniquity shall abound, the Love of Many shall wax cold :* That is ; the general Corruption and Wickedness of the World, shall *discourage* Many, and weary them out, and make them lay aside all Thoughts of Religion, and give themselves up to be carried with the Stream of an unrighteous and debauched World. For there shall be *great Tribulation, such as was not since the Beginning of the World unto This Time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no Flesh be saved :* (That is, The Truth of Religion, if this State of things were

were long to continue, would be *totally* Sermon.
extinguished among Men, by the Uni- IX.
 versality of prevailing Corruptions:)

But, for the Elects sake, those days shall be shortened. This (I say) is the *Principal* Particular, upon which our Lord here *chiefly* enlarges: That, in after-Ages, men might not be *surprized*, when they should find that the *Prince of Peace came not to send Peace upon Earth, but a Sword*; and that the religion of Christ, a religion of the most perfect Simplicity and Plainness, of the completest and most extensive Charity, should be over-run with universal Confusions and Iniquity. But *besides* this *Principal* and more *especial* Aim of his Discourse, he intermixes moreover some general *Intimations* of *Other* Events which should happen in the World; and particularly of the *Judgments*, where-with the Divine Providence would from time to time punish the unrighteous Nations of the Earth. *Ye shall hear* (says he) *of Wars, and Rumors of Wars: See that ye be not troubled: For all these things must come to pass:-----For Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there shall be Famines, and Pestilences, and Earthquakes in divers places: All these are the Beginnings of Sorrows.* With

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 With regard to *Each* of these Particulars, *viz.* the *Persecutions* wherewith *good men* should be oppressed by an *unrighteous World*, and the *Judgments* wherewith the *Divine Providence* should at any time punish the *Nations of the Earth*; the Advice our Lord gives his Disciples, is, to *PRAY* constantly to God, that he would be pleas'd either to *prevent* these things coming upon them, or to *deliver* them out of them, or to *lighten* the Burden of them by Providential Supports. *Pray ye*, says he, *that your Flight be not in the Winter, neither on the Sabbath-day.* And; *Watch ye therefore, and Pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.* Now the same reason that there is, why we ought at any time to *PRAY*, that God *would* either *prevent* or *remove* from us any Calamity; the *very same* reason there is, to return him our *THANKS* and *PRAISE*, whenever he *has* been pleas'd either to *withdraw* from us any such Calamity, or the apparent *Danger* of it. The *Ground* of *Both*, is the *same*; that God, who has Power
over

over All, is the Alone Disposer of all Events; and that That Disposition of mind, which leads men to apply to *Him* for all the good things they want, and to make Acknowledgment to *Him* for all the Benefits they have received, is one of the principal of those Qualifications which recommend men to the Divine Favour, and to the more immediate Care and Protection of his good Providence. The Meaning of which is, not that even the *Best of men* can have any certain Security that they shall escape the Calamities of this present Life; nay, in Some cases, as in That of Persecution particularly, they are *for That very reason* the *most* exposed, because they are the *Best* men: But the Meaning is, that God who *created* the *material* World for the Sake of the *Moral* one, and *governs* the *former* always with a View to the *Latter*; (For the unintelligent *material* World, how exquisite soever the Fabrick of it be, is *Nothing at all* any otherwise, than as it has relation to *Intelligent* and *Rational* Beings that inhabit it :) God, I say, who *created* the *material* World merely for the Sake of the *Moral* one, and *governs* the *former* always with a View to the *Latter*, will certainly make *all things* (sooner or later) *work*

Serm.

IX.


Serm. *work together for Good to them that*
 IX. *love him, Rom. viii, 28. Even the severest Judgments that he ever sends upon the World, and which to incorrigible Sinners are the Messengers of Destruction; even These, to well-disposed Minds, are either at a distance Warnings and Admonitions to amend: Or they are Chastisements inflicted for their correction; which, though at present they cannot but be grievous, yet afterwards they yield the peaceable Fruit of Righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby: Or they are Trials of mens Faith and Patience; which being much more precious than of gold that perishes, though it be tried with Fire, will be found unto Praise and Honour and Glory at the Appearing of Jesus Christ: Or, sometimes, they are means of taking away the Righteous from greater Evils to come; so that Though They seem to be punished for a little while, yet is their Hope full of Immortality: Or, however it be, still (as the Apostle expresses it) the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of Temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished: And the Righteous have always This Security, that God is Faithful, who will not suffer them*
 to

to be tempted above that they are able; but will with the Temptation also make a way to escape, that they may be able to bear it. Nevertheless, since God only knows the Events of things, and no man can be sure of his own Strength; therefore Reason teaches, and our Lord expressly directs us, to *Pray*, that we may not be led into Temptation. And for the same reason, 'tis our duty to be *Thankful* whenever Providence has prevented any Temptation from coming upon us. And the case is the same, with regard to *Every* sort of *Affliction* or *Calamity* in Life. God is able, and will certainly cause all these things to work together for good, to Those who are truly and sincerely religious. Yet, sensible of our own Unworthiness; and knowing that these things are also sometimes Messengers of *Wrath*, and Instruments of *Destruction*; 'tis therefore our Duty to *pray* continually for the *Averting* of them, and to return *Thanks* for every *Escape of Danger* from them, and to be always ready to make a religious Use either of their being *inflicted* or *prevented*. See that ye be not troubled, says our Lord; For all these things *MUST* come to pass:---For Nation shall rise against Nation, and Kingdom against King-



Scrm. Kingdom; and there shall be Famines,
IX. and Pestilences, and Earthquakes in di-
vers Places.

The *Particulars* of this Prophecy of our Lord, *we* have seen *literally* and *remarkably* fulfilled in *our own* Days: And yet God has been graciously pleased, not to suffer *any One* of these Calamities to come nigh *Our* Dwellings. We have seen *Nation rise up against Nation*, and *Kingdom against Kingdom*: We have seen *Fire and Sword* consume round about us, and many Fruitful Countries ravaged and destroyed: Yet at the same time, *we* have sat every man *under his Vine and under his Fig-Tree*; injoying all the Blessings and Happiness of *Peace*, even in the midst of the most Bloody and destructive *Wars*. We have seen *Want and Famine* spread Desolation over different Countries, whilst *we* have been even luxurious in the Abundance of overflowing *Plenty*. We have known populous and flourishing Towns, overthrown in one day with a Storm and *Earthquake*; while *Our* Habitation has been, as the Scripture speaks, the *Munition of Rocks*: So that the Psalmist's Ground of Praise, (Ps. cxxv, 2, *As the Hills stand about Jerusalem, even so*

so standeth the Lord round about his Sermon.
People,) may very properly be applied to IX.
US: As the *Seas encompass our Land,* 
 may we no less justly say, even so has the
 Protection of *Providence* surrounded us
 on *every side*. Lastly, (which is the more
immediate and *particular* occasion of our
 meeting together at *This Time* to return
 Thanks to God;) we have seen *That De-*
stroying Angel, the *Pestilence,* executing
 in particular Places the unsearchable Judg-
 ments of God; but holding forth to *US*
 This Terror, *at a remote Distance only*; to
 admonish and warn us, (*not* to imagine that
 those particular persons, *upon whom* this
 divine judgment *fell,* were *Sinners above*
all men that dwelt on the Earth; but that
 we might take notice,) that, unless we *re-*
pent, we shall *All likewise perish*. This
 is the Proper End and Design of *All* God's
Temporal Judgments; to *warn* men to
 amend: And the *only* valuable Expression
 of *Thankfulness,* for his *having* at any
 time *Averted* from us impending Dan-
 gers; is our being thereby led to a more
 careful Obedience. There is no where in
 the whole New Testament a severer cha-
 racter given of incorrigible Sinners, than
 in those Passages where they are described
 as not only over-looking all the *general*
 Works

Serm. Works of Nature and Providence, but as
 IX. continuing moreover unmoved even at
 the most *Exemplary* Expressions of the
 Divine *Wrath*, and unthankfully insens-
 ible even of the most remarkable *Deliver-*
ances. Rev. ix, 20; xvi, 9, *The rest of*
the men which were not killed by these
Plagues, yet repented not of the Works
of their hands; but blasphemed the Name
of God which has Power over these
Plagues, and repented not to give him
Glory. To give *Glory* to God, is, to make
publick Acknowledgment of our Sense of
 God's continually *Governing the World* in
 Wisdom and Righteousness; To *profess*
 our constant *Dependance* upon him, for
 all the Good things we *hope for* in the
 Course of *Nature* which *He* has appoint-
 ed, and under the direction of his All-
 wise *Providence*; To return him *Thanks*
 for all the *Benefits* we at any time *receive*,
 and for every *Escape* or *Deliverance*
 vouchsafed us from impending Dangers;
 And to *Testify* the *Sincerity* of These Ac-
 knowledgments, by our *Obedience* to him
 in the course of a *virtuous* and *religious*
Life; that *Others* likewise, *seeing our*
good Works, may glorify our Father which
is in Heaven, and promote His King-
dom,


dom, which is the Practise of *Virtue and Righteousness* in the World. Serm. IX.

The *Things, for which* it is our Duty always to return Thanks to God, are, *in general, every good thing* we enjoy: *Life, Health, Peace, Plenty, Liberty,* and every *Blessing* whatsoever, in which consists either the Happiness of the *present World,* or the Opportunities of laying a Foundation for *that which is to come.* But as these Blessings never appear so valuable, when by a long uninterrupted enjoyment we are accustomed to esteem them *only the common* Effects of the Course of Nature; as when at any time, either by the *actual Want* of them, or by very *apparent Danger of losing* them, we are led to a juster and more considerate estimation of things, and with a more attentive View to behold the Hand from whence they all proceed; hence it is, that either after a *Deliverance* from the Weight of any severe Judgment, or after any remarkable *Escape* from the Terrour of impending Danger, we seem to be in a more *particular* manner called unto *Thankfulness*; though in reality the same Acknowledgment is no less justly due, for the constant and uniform Protection of Providence,

P

Serm. dence. The Blessing of *Peace*, generally, is justly esteem'd and valued by IX. *Those only*, who have felt the Misery and Calamities of *War*; And yet, without question, 'tis a *greater Blessing*, to have been *always* preserv'd from those Calamities. The inestimable Benefit of *Liberty*, hardly ever meets with any just Returns of Thankfulness, but from such as have lately groan'd under the cruel Bondage of *Tyranny* and *Oppression*; And yet, without all controversy, in the true estimation of things, a *greater Acknowledgment* is due from Those who have continually enjoy'd That uninterrupted Protection. The Blessing of *Health* itself, That Necessary Foundation of all other Injoyments whatsoever, very rarely meets with any just Sense of its real and intrinsic Value, except in Those who have long been afflicted with the *Want* of it; And yet, without Dispute, the continual *Preservation* of it, is a *greater Blessing* than the most unexpected *Recovery*. In like manner, in the Instance of the *Particular occasion* upon which we are assembled at This Time: Had it pleas'd God, that the devouring Pestilence had *nearly approached* our Dwellings; Had it swept away our *dearest Relations*, or our most

valuable Friends ; Or if even among Those only, for whom we had no further Concern than what arises from the *general Ties of Humanity* and the *natural Sympathies of Neighbourhood*, we had seen *thousands fall beside us, and ten thousands at our right hand* ; Who is there, that does not feel within himself, with what a *profound Sense* of the Divine Goodness, the Survivors would have expressed their *Thankfulness* for the mercy of *their own Deliverance*. And yet, in reality, how insensible soever Many of us may be of the real Value of the Blessing, a *Greater Blessing* it is (unless our own Unthankfulness makes it *to US* cease *in event* to be so ; a *Greater Blessing*, I say, it is,) to have had so severe a Judgment prevented from approaching us *at all*. For *This Instance* therefore of the *Divine Mercy* towards us, it becomes us to return in a *particular manner* our *most solemn Thanks*. And *This* Expression of our Duty, will *Then* be acceptable in the Sight of God ; if it leaves upon our minds a lasting impression, that, *except we repent, we shall still all perish*. If the *Thankfulness* of our *Mouths*, be not accompanied with the *real Sense* of our *Hearts*, and a suitable consequent

Scrm. *Obedience in our Lives and Practise*; God
 IX. can still at any time commission his *de-*
 *stroying Angel*, to smite us in a moment.
 Or, if we continue to provoke him, he
 can inflict Judgments upon us *much more*
severe than the most devouring *Pesti-*
lence; by delivering us *into the Hands of*
MEN, whose *Mercies are Cruel*. He
 can deliver us up into the *Lasting Tyran-*
ny of that *Spiritual Babylon*, in whom
 for many successive Ages has not only
 been found *the Blood of Prophets and of*
Saints and of all that were slain upon
the Earth; but by whose *RELIGIOUS*
Sorceries also, have *all Nations* been *de-*
ceived: And whose Cruelty has not been
 more destructive to the *Lives* of men,
 than pernicious to their *Souls* also, by
taking away the Key of Knowledge, and
 establishing a *Blind Implicit Ignorance*,
 utterly subversive of the very Foundations
 of all *rational Regard to God*, and of all
Truth, Justice, and Righteousness to-
 wards *Men*. *Hitherto* it has pleased God,
 to preserve us from *This* calamity also;
 from this *severest* of all the Divine Judg-
 ments; and which, of all Others, has the
most nearly and *most continually* threat-
 ned us. For *This preservation* therefore,
 ought we *likewise* continually to return
 our

our most *Solemn Thanks* to the Divine Majesty. And 'tis *the more reasonable* so to do, because the Calamity I am now speaking of, is *That very Tribulation*, in comparison of which our Saviour tells us that all the things mentioned by him in the Text, (*Nation's rising against Nation, and Kingdom against Kingdom; and Famines, and Pestilences, and Earthquakes in divers places; all these, says he,*) are but *the BEGINNING of Sorrows.*

Serm.
IX.



The *Manner*, in which *alone* we can *Acceptably* return *Thanks* to God for all his *Mercies* bestowed upon us, and for *averting These* and all *Other* his *Judgments*, whether they be such as are more immediately of his *Own* inflicting, or whether they be such as are brought upon men by the *Wickedness* and *Perverseness* of *Others*: The *only Manner*, I say, in which we can *Acceptably* return *Thanks* to the Almighty for *Any* Blessing, is by having our Minds so influenced with a *real and Lasting Sense* of the Goodness and Mercy of God in his Government of the World, as that we be thereby led effectually to *Obey his Will* in the course of a virtuous and religious Life, bringing

Serm. forth *Fruits* meet for the *Acknowledg-*
 IX. *ments* we profess to make to him. By
 ~~~~~ *This*, and *This only*, can Our *Praises* be  
 rendered an *Acceptable Sacrifice*; Ps. xxxi,  
 1, *Rejoice in the Lord, ye RIGHTE-*  
*OUS*; *for it becometh well the JUST*  
*to be Thankful*. But of the *Wicked* it  
 may truly be affirmed, that, as their  
*Prayer*, so their *Praise* also is an *Abomi-*  
*nation to the Lord*.


But *more particularly*: If we will be-  
 have ourselves worthily, as those who have  
*really a Thankful Sense* of the Divine  
 Goodness in averting the Judgments which  
 have sometimes threatned us; we must,  
 in the

1st place, as *Believers* in God, seri-  
 ously and sincerely make use of our *Rea-*  
*son*, in banishing from among us That  
*Atheistical Spirit* prevailing among some  
 men, who, whenever things are seen to  
 proceed from *Natural Causes*, immedi-  
 ately thereupon they endeavour to exclude  
 all consideration of God. As if the ab-  
 stract word, *Nature*, was a *real intelli-*  
*gent Agent*; or meant any thing more,  
 than the *usual and ordinary Method* of  
 God's governing the World. Which  
 Foolish

Foolish Mistake arises merely, from mens Serm. IX,  
 not distinguishing the *NECESSARY* Nature of things, from That *AP-POINTED* Course or Order of Nature, which is nothing but the *Will of God* and the *Law of his Creation*. For Instance: That *Two and Two should make Four*, or that *a Body should be only in One place at once*, is the *NECESSARY* Nature of things; and *could not* have been otherwise. But when we say, 'tis the *Nature of Corn*, to *grow*; or, 'tis the *Nature of Food*, to *Nourish*; or, 'tis the *Nature of Pestilential Vapours*, to *destroy*: In These and the like Expressions, *Nature* is Nothing but the *voluntary Appointment of God*: And *natural Causes* Here, do really no more exclude consideration of *God*, than any one's affirming that 'tis the *Nature of a Sword* to *kill*, would be a reasonable and satisfactory Ground to forbear any further Inquiry *by what hand* that Instrument of Death was moved. When the Inquiry is concerning the *Efficient Agency*, by *what Power* Plants and Animals are formed, by *what Power* Corn grows, or Food nourishes, and the like: To answer in This case, that 'tis *their NATURE*, or that 'tis *natural* for them, so to do; is exactly the same thing,

Serm. as if a man being asked *How* and by  
 IX. *what Architect* a *Palace* was built, should  
 answer, it was *the Nature of it* to be  
 built of *such a Form and Bigness*.

2dly. As *Christians*; 'tis our Duty, not only *in general* to attend to the Hand of *God* in all the Dispensations of Providence, but *moreover* to observe *distinctly* how all the Great Events that happen in the World, are the *Accomplishment* of those things whereof *our Lord admonished* his Disciples from the Beginning; when, in order to wean them from the Vanities of this present World, and to raise their Thoughts to a Better, he foretold them of the *great Calamities* which should fall upon the *Earth* by the *righteous Judgment of God*, and the *much greater Calamities* which should be brought upon *THEM* in particular by the *Malice of unrighteous Men*. See (says he) *that ye be not troubled, for all these things must come to pass,-----: For Nation shall rise against Nation, and Kingdom against Kingdom; and there shall be Famines and Pestilences and Earthquakes in divers places: All these are the Beginning of Sorrows. Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you; and ye shall be*

*be hated of all Nations for my Sake.* Serm.  
 The Application he makes to them of IX.  
 the Whole, is, (Luke xxi, 34,) *Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted Worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.* 

3dly. If we look upon ourselves still more particularly, as Professors of the Reformed Religion; the Consideration of every Blessing we receive from the hand of Providence, whether *temporal* or *spiritual*, will naturally remind us to express our *Thankfulness to God*, in ways *suitable* to the *Purity* of the Religion we profess, and to the *Knowledge* he has been pleased to vouchsafe us of his *Truth*. We must express our *real Sense* of his Goodness towards us, by sincerely endeavouring to *obey his Will*; by departing from every *Kind*, and from every *Degree*, of *Superstition*; by laying aside all unchristian *Heats* and *Animosities* among ourselves; by promoting universal *Peace* and *Good Will* among Men; In a word, by showing that we place our Religion, not in fantastical *Notions* or in empty *Forms*, but in a constant rational *Acknowledgment* of *God*, in an impartial *Love* of *Truth*,

Serm. *Truth*, and in the habitual *Practice* of  
 X. *true Virtue*, of *Sobriety*, *Righteousness*  
 and *universal Charity*. This if we do;  
 the Prophecy in the 91<sup>st</sup> Psalm, we may  
 (not without reason) *hope*, even in the  
*first* and *literal* sense; but in the *spiritual*  
 and *final* sense *Certainly*, it shall be  
 fulfilled to *US*. *Whoso dwelleth under*  
*the defence of the most High*, shall abide  
*under the shadow of the Almighty*: He  
 shall deliver thee from the *Snare of the*  
*Hunter*, and from the *noisom Pestilence*:  
*Thou shalt not be afraid for any Terror*  
*by Night*, nor for the *arrow that flieth*  
*by day*: For the *Pestilence that walketh*  
*in darkness*, nor for the *Sickness that de-*  
*stroyeth in the Noon-day*; *A thousand*  
*shall fall beside thee*, and *ten thousand*  
*at thy right hand*, but it shall not come  
*nigh Thee*: *There shall no Evil happen*  
*unto thee*, neither shall any *Plague come*  
*nigh thy Dwelling*.



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A

S E R M O N

Preach'd in the

PARISH-CHURCH

O F

*St James's Westminster,*

*On Sunday, March 31, 1717.*


---

M A T T. XVI, 18.

*And I say also unto thee, that Thou art Peter; and upon This Rock I will build my Church, and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it.*

**T**HE Occasion and Connexion of these Words, is This. Our Saviour, examining his Disciples how far they *understood* the Doctrine they had been taught; asks them, *ver. 13, Whom do men say, that I, the Son of Man, am?* The very character he here and elsewhere

Serm. X.



Sern. where gives himself, *I the Son of Man*,  
 X. was a sufficiently plain intimation *Who* he  
 was. For the phrase, *THE Son of man*, necessarily signifies one who is so styled by way of Eminence or Distinction; And, in Discourse with persons who had been educated *Jews*, it could not but be understood to refer to the Use of That Title or Character somewhere in the *Old Testament*. Now the Passage where 'tis mentioned in the most remarkable and distinguishing manner, is in the Prophecy of *Daniel*, ch. vii, 13, *Behold, one like the Son of Man, came with the Clouds of Heaven; (The Son of Man, which is in Heaven, as our Saviour styles himself in the Gospel, John iii, 13;) and came to the Antient of Days, and they brought him near before him: And there was given him Dominion and Glory and a Kingdom, that all people, nations and languages, should serve him: His Dominion is an everlasting Dominion, which shall not pass away; and his Kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.* The *Jews* all very well knew, that this was a plain Prophecy and Character of the *Messiah*. And therefore our Saviour, by taking upon himself That Title by way of Eminence, *THE Son of Man*; clearly enough  
 inti-

intimated, *Whom* he professed himself to be. However, in order to put his Disciples upon a more distinct declaration *how far* they had hitherto understood him; and thereby to introduce a new occasion of giving them further and more particular instructions; he asks them, *ver. 13, Whom do men say that I am?* The Disciples answered; *Some say that thou art John the Baptist, some Elias, and Others Jeremias, or one of the Prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say Ye that I am? Simon Peter answered, Thou art Christ the Son of the Living God.* Then said Jesus unto him, *Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in Heaven.* That is; The Confession you have made, is not a bare human conjecture or Opinion; as the Jews had guessed him to be either *Elias*, or *John the Baptist*, or one of the old Prophets risen from the Dead: but *Your* confession (says he,) is the *Very Truth*; which God has enabled you to discover. *And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter,* *ver. 18: Thou Simon the Son of Jonah, shalt for the future be known by the Name of Peter, which signifies a Rock; a firm and constant,*


Serm. stant, an unshaken and immoveable, Pro-  
 X. fessor of the Truth. 'Tis very Usual in  
 ~~~~~ Scripture, to give men in this manner *Em-  
 phatical* and *significant* Names. Thus
*Gen. xvii, 5, Thy Name shall be Abra-
 ham; for a Father of many Nations*
 (so the word *Abraham* signifies in the Ori-
 ginal,) *a Father of many Nations have*
I made thee. Again; *Gen. xxxii, 28,*
Thy name shall be called Israel; for as a
Prince hast thou power with God and
with men, and hast prevailed. So here
 likewise, *Thou art Peter, that is, a Rock;*
 a firm and constant, a faithful and un-
 shaken Witness, Support, and Defender
 of the Truth. *And upon This Rock,* up-
 on this Firmness and Steddingness of yours
 in professing and preaching the great Truths
 of the Gospel, upon This *will I build*
my Church; and the Gates of Hell shall
not prevail against it. And I will give
unto thee the keys of the Kingdom of
Heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind
on Earth, shall be bound in Heaven; and
whatsoever thou shalt loose on Earth,
shall be loosed in Heaven.


In order to the fuller and clearer under-
 standing of which whole Discourse of our
 Saviour; it will be necessary to explain
 from

from the Beginning, the nature and meaning, the ground and reason, of that Metaphor or figure of speaking, which in numberless other places of Scripture, as well as in this Text, is used with great Propriety and Elegance in the Description of the Church of Christ. 'Tis to be observed therefore, that God having antiently placed his Name in *Jerusalem*, that is, having appointed it to be the Seat of his Throne and Worship, the Place of confluence of the Worshippers of the One True God; and thereby made it by way of eminence *The City of the Great King, The Holy City*; it from thence became, in the prophetick Style and Language, a Type of *Heaven*. From hence, in the New Testament, the *State of Heaven* is figuratively stiled, *Jerusalem which is Above*, Gal. iv, 26: *Mount Sion, the heavenly Jerusalem*, Heb. xii, 22. And in the *Revelation* particularly, 'tis described at large, under the Notion of a glorious and happy City; *ch. xxi, 10, He shewed me that great City, the Holy Jerusalem, descending out of Heaven from God; Having the Glory of God, and her Light was like unto a Stone most precious:---And the City was pure Gold; ---and the foundations were garnished with*

Serm.
X.



Scrm. *with all manner of precious Stones. To*
 X. *which description, the Apostle plainly*
 *alludes, Heb. xi, 16, He hath prepared*
 ver. 16. *for them a City: And again in the same*
 ver. 10. *Chapter, They desire (says he) a better*
country, that is, an heavenly: And, A-
braham looked for a City which hath
Foundations, (in the original it is, THE
City which hath THE Foundations,)
whose Builder and Maker is God. Hence
still further, in pursuance of the same Si-
militude, the Church of God even here
upon EARTH, is stiled The City, the
Temple, and the House of God. The
City of God: Ps. xlvi, 4, The Streams
thereof, shall make glad the CITT of God.
Heb. xii, 22, Ye are come unto---the CITT of
the living God,---the general Assembly and
Church of the first-born whose Names
are written in Heaven. Also the Tem-
ple of God: 1 Cor. iii, 16, Ye are the
TEMPLE of God; And 2 Cor. vi, 16,
Ye are the TEMPLE of the Living
God. Eph. ii, 19, Ye are fellow-citizens
with the Saints, and of the household of
God; And are built upon the Founda-
tion of the Apostles and Prophets, Je-
sus Christ himself being the chief corner
stone; In whom the whole building fitly
framed together, groweth into an Holy
 T E M-

TEMPLE in the Lord; In whom Serni.
 You also are builded together, for an habi- X.
 tation of God through the Spirit. And 
 2 Thes. ii, 3, That Man of Sin, -----sit-
 ting in the TEMPLE of God; That is,
 a general Apostacy and Love of Worldly
 Power, overspreading the Visible Church
 Lastly, 'tis stiled likewise The HOUSE
 of God: 1 Tim. iii, 15, The HOUSE
 of God, which is the Church. Heb. iii, 6,
 whose HOUSE are We. 1 Cor. iii, 9,
 Ye are God's BUILDING. 1 Pet. ii, 5,
 Ye also as Lively Stones, are built up a
 spiritual HOUSE unto God. And ch.
 iv, 17, Judgment must begin at the
 HOUSE of God.

Now the Church of God being thus
 usually, (upon the occasion and for the
 reasons already explained,) represented in
 Scripture under the figurative Notion of
 a Holy City, or Temple, or House of
 God; the several Parts of it likewise, in
 pursuance of the same Metaphor, are de-
 scribed proportionably under the like cha-
 racters, and with the like figures of Speech,
 as the Whole. Hence the word, Founda-
 tion, as denoting the most material part
 and Support of the whole Building, is ele-
 gantly made use of to signify either such Men

Serm. or *Things*, such *Persons* or *Doctrines*,
 X. upon which the whole of Religion main-
 ly relies, and by which it is principally
 supported.

Sometimes it is applied to *Doctrines*: To denote those *great*, those *primary*, those *necessary and essential* doctrines of religion; upon which, all other true doctrines are built; without which, religion cannot subsist; and of which, no Christian can innocently or excusably be ignorant. These are stiled, *Heb. v, 12, The first Principles of the Oracles of God*; and *Heb. vi, 1, The Principles of the doctrine of Christ*, and *The Foundation*. In modern language, they are usually called *The Fundamentals* of religion; the *Doctrines*, wherein *Christianity itself* consists; in opposition to those, which distinguish from each other the several *Sects* or *Parties* of Christians. In the *former*, consists all true Virtue and Piety: The *Latter*, are the Occasions of never-ceasing Contentions, Schisms and Uncharitableness. *What* these Fundamental Doctrines in particular *are*, (though *St Paul* has given us an express Catalogue of them, *Heb. vi; 1, 2,*) seldom Any Sect or Party of Christians are willing to define;
 be-

because by so doing they would plainly discover, that the things about which they generally most fiercely contend, are indeed no necessary parts of religion *at all*. But in the *Scripture itself*, these fundamental Doctrines are perpetually insisted on; and inculcated, as those on which in reality *the Whole* of Religion depends. And the teaching or preaching of these Doctrines, is what St *Paul* calls *Laying the Foundation*, (Heb. vi, 1; And 1 Cor. iii, 10,) *According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master-builder I have laid the FOUNDATION.* But let every man (says he) take heed how he buildeth thereupon: For other Foundation can no man lay, than That is laid, which is *Jesus Christ*.

The meaning is; No man can make any thing else to be *fundamental* in religion, besides what Christ himself has made to be so. *If any man build upon this Foundation, gold, silver, precious Stones; if he preaches the true doctrine of the Gospel, and builds thereupon Virtuous Practice; he shall receive a reward, ver. 14.* If he corrupts the doctrine of Christ in its essentials, and teaches men any vicious Practice; he shall be punished very severely. If he builds *wood, hay, stubble; that*

Serm. is, if he teaches needles and useles, tho'
 X. not vitious doctrines; *he shall suffer Loss,*
 he shall in great part lose his Reward:
 Nevertheless, for the Sincerity of his In-
 tention, *he himself shall be saved, yet so*
as by Fire, ver. 15. The sense is, *He shall*
be saved DIFFICULTLY, as it were
out of the Fire; According to the like
 expression in *St Jude,* ver. 22, *Of some*
have compassion, making a difference; and
Others save with Fear, pulling them out
of the Fire.

But further: The word, *Foundation,*
 as it is thus sometimes applied figura-
 tively to *Doctrines* fundamental; so, at
 Other times, it is in a proportionable
 Sense, applied likewise to *Persons.* Thus
 (in the passage before-cited,) *Eph. ii, 20,*
Ye are built upon the FOUNDATION
of the APOSTLES and PRO-
PHETS. From whence is derived
 That elegant and lively description, *Rev.*
xxi, 14, The Wall of the City had twelve
Foundations, and in Them the Names of
the twelve Apostles of the Lamb. Je-
sus Christ himself, is the Chief corner-
stone: The Apostles and Prophets, are
the Foundation: And the Church or en-
tire Body of good Men through all Ages,
 are

are the whole *Building* or spiritual *Temple* of God ; *in which Ye also*, saith the Apostle, (*ye also, as living Stones*, 1 Pet. ii, 5,) *are builded together, for an habitation of God through the Spirit*. And Such persons as, after the first preaching of the Gospel, were, in a more eminent and illustrious manner, Promoters of true Religion ; are, by continuing the same Similitude, aptly called *Pillars*, Gal. ii, 19, *James, Cephas and John, who seemed to be PILLARS*: And Rev. iii, 12, *Him that overcometh, will I make a PILLAR in the Temple of my God*. Which Passages, by the way, teach us to rectify a Mistake in the vulgar interpretation of that noted Text of St Paul, 1 Tim. iii, 15, *That thou mayst know how to behave thy self in the House of God, which is the Church of the Living God, the PILLAR and Ground of Truth*. That St Paul in one and the same Sentence, wherein he calls the *Church* the *HOUSE of God*, should at the same time stile it also a *PILLAR*, which is a *Part* of that house ; is very hard to conceive. From the fore-cited places therefore, and others of the like import, where the same word is always applied to *single PERSONS* ; it seems very probable, that


Serm.
X.1 ph. ii,
22.

Serm. *Here also* it ought to be understood, not
 X. of the *whole Church*, but of *one person*
 only, even of *Timothy* himself: *That*
 thou mayst know how thou oughtest to be-
 have thyself in the house of God, which
 is the Church of the Living God; that
 thou mayst know how to behave thyself
 therein in such manner, (*as being*, or) as
 that Thou mayst be a *Pillar* and an emi-
 nent *Support of the Truth*. The sense
 is much more reasonable, and agreeable
 to other places of Scripture; and removes
 a difficult expression, much abused and
 perverted by Popish Writers to support
 their absurd Doctrine of the Infallibility
 of the Church.

Having thus fully and at large explained
 from its first original, the nature and mean-
 ing, the ground and reason, of that Meta-
 phor or Figure of speaking, which in num-
 berless other places of Scripture, as well as
 in my Text, is used with great Propriety
 and Elegance in the Description of the
 Church of Christ; It from hence be-
 comes very easy to understand the true
 sense of these words of our Saviour, *Thou*
art Peter, Thou art (as thy Name signi-
 fies) a *Rock*; and upon this *Rock* will I
 build my Church. The Church, is the
 City,

City, the Temple, the House or Building of God. In this spiritual Temple of God, *Jesus Christ himself is the chief corner-stone, in whom the whole Building is fitly framed together. And the Apostles and Prophets, are the Foundation.* Among These, St Peter having, with a particular Forwardness and Zeal, made confession of his believing Christ to be the Messias; was accordingly approved by his Master, and receives the following Answer. *Thou shalt be, (says our Lord,) one principal Foundation-stone in my Building. By thy firmness and steddiness, by thy Courage, Constancy and Zeal in this confession, thou shalt become an Eminent Founder of my Church, a most successful Preacher of my Doctrine to the World, in the first Age of the Gospel. Thou art Peter, Thou art a Rock; and upon this Rock I will build my Church.*

It follows; *And the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it.* That is; Opposition and Persecution, even unto *Death itself*, shall never be able to stop the Progress of my Gospel. The word, which we here render *Hell*, signifies in the Original, not *The State of the damned*, (for *That* is always in the Greek expressed

Serm. pressed by a very different word;) But
 X. the word *Here* used, signifies always *That*
 *invisible state in general only*, to which
Death is the *Gate* or *Passage*. So that
 This Phrase in the Text, is exactly of the
 same import with those expressions in the
 Old Testament: *The Gates of the Grave*,
The Chambers of Death, and *The Gates*
of Death. II. xxxviii, 10, *I shall go to the*
Gates of the Grave. Prov. vii, 27, *The way*
to Hell, Going down to the Chambers of
Death. Job xxxviii, 17, *Have the Gates of*
Death been opened unto thee? Ps. ix, 13,
Thou liftest me up from the Gates of
Death: And Ps. cvii, 18, *They draw near*
unto the Gates of Death. When therefore
 our Saviour promises that the *Gates of Hell*,
 that is, of *Death*; (for the word *Hell*, as
 I now observed, when it means *The State*
of the Damned, is always in the origi-
 nal quite another Word :) When, I say,
 our Saviour promises that the *Gates of*
Hell, that is, of *Death*, *shall not prevail*
against his Church; his Meaning plainly
 is the same, as in those other Promises,
Matt. xxviii, 20, Lo, I am with you al-
ways, even unto the End of the World;
 your mortality shall not put an end to the
 preaching of my Gospel. And *ch. xviii,*
20, Where two or three, (wheresoever
 or

or whensoever, in what *place* or at what *time* soever in Any Age of the World, *two or three*) are gathered together in my Name; there am I in the midst of them.

Serm.

X.

Lastly, our Saviour adds in the *next* words, immediately following the Text: *And I will give unto THEE the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven: And whatsoever THOU shalt bind on Earth, shall be bound in Heaven; and whatsoever THOU shalt loose on Earth, shall be loosed in Heaven.* The sense is; Thou shalt first *open* the Kingdom of the Messiah, and make the *first publication* of the Gospel to the Gentiles; (which we read was accordingly fulfilled, in the *2d*, *10th*, and *15th* chapters of the *Acts*.) And by the Terms of *That Doctrine* which I commission you to preach on Earth, shall every man's Sentence be finally and judicially determined of God in Heaven.

And now, having distinctly explained the full meaning of our Saviour, in this whole Discourse of his to St Peter; it will be very obvious to raise from thence the following Observations.

1st, I

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X.



1st, I observe, that according to the true explication of the word, it makes no real Difference at all in the Sense, whether by the *Rock* upon which our Saviour here promises to build his Church, be meant (as *Protestant* Expositors generally understand it) the *CONFESSSION* of *St Peter*, or (as the *Romish* Writers contend) the *PERSON* of *St Peter*. I say, it makes no difference at all, as to the true Sense of the Words. For, if this *Rock* be the *CONFESSSION* of *St Peter*; yet the application of the phrase to *Him* in so particular a manner, must needs be with regard to his *Personal* Firmness and Steadiness in that confession. And if it be the *PERSON* of *St Peter*, that is here stiled a *Rock*; 'tis still with regard to his Firmness in That *Confession*. From whence nothing can be collected to the Advantage of the cause of the Church of *Rome*. For

2^{dly}, I observe, that the word *Rock*, the *Foundation-stone* of a Building, a strong or well-laid Support, is not at all (as the Church of *Rome* ridiculously supposes) an Emblem of *Authority*, *Power* or *Dominion*; but it signifies *firm* and
con-

constant, effectual and successful, Preaching of the Gospel at the Beginning: Which was the *Foundation* of the Church of Christ. Which *Church*, the Scripture tells us, was built upon the *Foundation* of the *Apostles and Prophets*. And in That Foundation, *St Peter* was a *Rock*, or a firm and eminent part of it. Serm. X.

3dly. I observe, that *immediately* after the speaking of these great things to *St Peter*; our Lord, (as it were with a *particular View* that it might be left upon Record as a Guard against that extravagant Opinion, which he foreknew future Ages, for the Purposes of Tyranny and worldly Dominion, would entertain of *St Peter's Personal Authority*;) our Lord, I say, takes occasion in his very *next Discourse* with him, to rebuke him with a *sharper severity* than he ever used towards any of the rest of his Disciples. *Ver. 23, Get thee behind me, Satan; thou art an Offense unto me; For thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of Men.* And probably for the *very same reason* it is, that he was suffered to *fall* and to *deny his Master*, more shamefully than any of the Other Disciples; and that 'tis particularly recorded in

Scrip-

Serm. Scripture-history, how *St Paul* afterwards
 X. withstood him to the face, because he was
 to be blamed, Gal. ii. 11. Of the same
 Kind seems to be our Saviour's affecting
 as it were, to speak always with very small
 Respect of the *Blessed Virgin*: *Woman,*
what have I to do with thee? And,
Yea RATHER Blessed are they,
that hear the word of God, and keep
it. And again; *Who is my Mother,*
and who are my Brethren?-----*Be-*
hold, whosoever shall do the Will of
my Father which is in Heaven, the
same is my Brother and Sister and Mo-
ther.

4thly. I observe, that as the word *Rock*
 signifies nothing of *Authority* or *Dom-*
nion, but a *Stone* or *firm Part in the*
FOUNDATION on which the Church
 is built; so it is a *Character*, in which
St Peter could not possibly have *ANY*
Successors; in any other sense, than in
 That wherein *He himself* applies it to
ALL Christians in general; in his first
 epistle, ch. ii, 5, *YE also* (saith he) *as Li-*
ving Stones, are built up a spiritual
House unto God. And *St Paul* to the
Ephesians, chap. ii, 22, *You also are build-*
ed together, upon the foundation of the
 Apo-

Apostles and Prophets, into an Holy Temple, for an Habitation of God thro' the Spirit.

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sthly. I observe, that what is here said to St Peter, is elsewhere applied equally to ALL the Apostles. The City of God, saith St John, had twelve Foundations, and in them the Names of the twelve Apostles of the Lamb. The Church was built equally upon them All. And our Saviour with great expressness and earnestness charges them, that there should be no such thing as Dominion or Preheminence amongst them; but *Whosoever* (says he) *will be great among you, let him be your Servant*, Matt. xx, 27. Further: That which is here spoken to St Peter about having the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, is elsewhere expressly directed to ALL the Apostles: John xx, 23, *Whosoever Sins YE remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever Sins YE retain, they are retained.* The full meaning of which sublime expressions, is not, that even the Apostles themselves, (much less that any of their Fallible Successors,) had a discretionary Power of forgiving or retaining mens Sins; But, that they were appointed
Preach-

Serm. Preachers and Messengers of That gracious Covenant of Reconciliation, according to the *Terms and Conditions* whereof, God will either forgive mens Sins or not. God will judge men *according to OUR Gospel*; or by the Rule of That Doctrine, which *we* are commanded to preach to the World. St *Paul* expresses the Sense of This Trust, with the greatest exactness of expression, *Rom. ii, 16*; *In the day, says he, when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to MY Gospel.*



A
S E R M O N

Preach'd in the
PARISH-CHURCH
O F

St James's Westminster,

On *Sunday, March 23, 1718.*

GEN. XV, 6.

*And he Believed in the Lord, and he
counted it to him for Righteousness,*

TH E S E words are Part of the History of the Patriarch *Abraham*. Who when, in his old age, being yet childless, he had a Promise made to him, that his Posterity should be as the Stars of Heaven for multitude; notwithstanding the Natural Improbability of the Thing, yet (the Text tells us) *he Believed in the*

Serm.
XI.



Scrm. *the Lord, and the Lord counted it to him*
 XI. *for righteousness.* The Words are very
 remarkable: And they are in the *New*
Testament cited, *Three* several times. By
 the Apostle *St James*, Once: And by *St*
Paul twice; in his epistle to the *Romans*,
 and again in his epistle to the *Galatians*.
 By *St Paul* they are cited to *prove*, that
 since *Abraham's Faith* was here reckoned
 to him for righteousness, *before* the insti-
 tution of Circumcision; therefore *Justi-*
fication, or the Favour and Acceptance
 of God, *is not* confined and limited to
 the Observers of the *Works* of the *Jew-*
ish law, but extends itself to *All* men, of
 Rom. iv, *All Nations*, who *walk in the Steps of*
 12. *the Faith of Abraham.* By *St James*
 they are cited to *prove* at the same time,
 that since the *Faith of Abraham* here
 reckoned to him for Righteousness, was
 not a mere unactive *Belief*, but an *effe-*
ctual Principle of real active *Obedience*;
 therefore *Justification*, or the Favour and
 Acceptance of God, *is* confined and li-
 mited, though *not* to the Observers of
 the *Works* of the *Jewish Law*, yet *cer-*
tainly to the Practicers of the *Virtue and*
Righteousness of the *Gospel.* The *Ap-*
plication of the Words to *each* of these
 Purposes respectively, is as *natural* and
per-

pertinent as possible; And the *Inference* drawn from them, in *Each* case, is most *obvious* and *certain*. My Design is not, at This time, to enlarge any further upon the manner of reconciling *St Paul* and *St James*; (which has often been done upon *Other* occasions, and is *sufficiently evident* from the *single Observation* I now mentioned;) but to consider *what* Matter of *Instruction* may be drawn from the *words themselves*; as they lie before us in the Text; *Abraham believed in the Lord, and he counted it to him for Righteousness*.

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Faith, or Belief in God, is the Foundation and Ground of virtuous Practice. And in proportion as this Foundation is deeply and strongly laid, in the same proportion will the Superstructure be durable and permanent against the Attacks of *Worldly Temptations*. For though *Virtue is Virtue*, whether there were any *God or no*; and the doing of what is *Right*, would be unquestionably commendable, though there were no *Reward or Punishment* either here or hereafter: Yet, in That case, the Nature of things would be absurd; and the System of the *Universe* would be, in the *Whole*, an inconsistency.

Serm. sistency. For, that *That* which is *Right*
 XI. *in itself*, and necessarily *so judged to be*
 by every *Right Understanding*, and which
 by consequence lays a necessary and per-
 petual *Obligation upon All*; should yet
 not be *finally and effectually supported*;
 is really and truly as *Great an Inconsisten-*
cy in the Notion of the *Moral Universe*,
 as if in the *Natural World* any of the
 greatest and most exquisite Operations,
 were *without* any correspondent *final*
Cause. By *This Argument* therefore the
 wisest and most rational men in the *Hea-*
then World, who had no Assistance of
 Revelation at all, yet worked themselves
 up to a very strong Perswasion, both of
 the *Being* and of the *Righteous Govern-*
ment of *God*. By *the same Argument*
 the *Patriarchs*, who had *no express* Re-
 velation of a future State, yet reasoned
 themselves into such Acts of Obedience
 towards God, as overcame the strongest
 Temptations in the World. Of *Instances*
 of This kind, the whole *11th* Chapter
 of the epistle to the *Hebrews* is an af-
 fectionate Collection. And the *Applica-*
tion of *These Examples*, to *Christians*
 who profess to have a *more explicit* Know-
 ledge of a Life to come, is matter of very
 just

just and severe Reproach. That which *Alone* falls, *at this Time*, under our consideration; and is, more frequently than Any, insisted upon in many *Other* Places likewise of Holy Scripture; is the *Example* of *Abraham*. *Abraham* believed in the Lord, and he counted it to him for Righteousness.

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Faith, is *That Belief* of a God; of his *Existence*, *Perfections*, *Government* and *Promises*; *That Belief* of things *invisible*, and of things *future*; which is the proper *Motive*, whereby *Virtuous* and *Religious* Minds are *supported* in the Practice of what is *Just* and *Right*, in opposition to all the *Allurements*, and to all the *Threatnings*, laid before them at any time by an *idolatrous*, an *unrighteous*, or a *debauched* World. In proportion to the *Strength* or *Weakness* of *This Faith*, Minds sensible of the natural and intrinsic Excellency of *Virtue*, are enabled to *resist* more and greater *Temptations* of all kinds, and thereby to bear *Testimony* to the Excellency of *Virtue*, and to cause its *Light* to shine forth in the *World*: Which is promoting the *Glory* of *God*, and of His *Government*. These *Temptations*, are what the Scripture calls the

Serm. *Trial* of mens *Faith*. And *God*, when
 XII. in the Course of his Providence he per-
 mits them to be laid before men, is in
 Scripture represented as *making Tryal* of
 them thereby. Not for *his Own* infor-
 mation, who knows perfectly the Hearts
 of all men; But for *Their Own* Benefit,
 whose Minds are greatly improved there-
 by; And for the Advantage of *Others*,
 who are extremely encouraged by such
 Examples. It has therefore been the Me-
 thod of Providence from the Beginning,
 not only by the *Precepts* of *Nature* and
Reason, confirmed by repeated *Reve-*
lations of his Will, and strengthened with
 the Sanction of *Rewards* and *Punish-*
ments; but by *Example* also upon perpe-
 tual Record, of some *Nation*, *Family*,
 or very eminent *Person*, adhering singly
 to the Worship of the One True God,
 and to the Religion built upon That On-
 ly Foundation; to *enlighten* the World,
 as it were by a Light *shining in a dark*
place, and continually *reminding* them of
 the *Truth* they have departed from: Call-
 ing upon them (in the *Prophets* expres-
 sion) by a *Standard* lift up unto the *Na-*
tions, and by an *Ensign on a Hill*; or
 (according to *our Saviour's* Similitude)
 by a *City built upon a Hill*, which cannot
 be



be hid; and by a *Light set on a Candlestick, which giveth Light unto all that are in the House.* Of This kind, was a *Succession of Families* Before the Flood; and the Family of *Noah*, and of *Melchisedec* and *Job*, and perhaps some *Others* also, and the *Patriarchs* After the Flood. Of the same sort, was the Nation of the *Jews*, even notwithstanding all their particular Corruptions, *before* the Coming of Christ: And *since* That Time, such also has been the *Christian Church*; in which, notwithstanding the Greatest and most Universal Corruptions, still *the Pearl of great Price*, the *Principles of Truth and Virtue*, have always more or less shined forth, in *some* particular Places at least, as a Light appearing through a very thick *Mist*. But that which my *present Subject* confines me to, is the *single Example of Abraham*: *Abraham believed in the Lord, and he counted it to him for Righteousness.*

If it be here inquired, with regard to *This Method* in the Proceedings of Providence; *whence* it comes to pass that the *Light of Divine Truth*, and the *Manifestations* God has been pleased to make of himself to Mankind, have not been more

Serm. *general and universal*: The Answer is ;
 XI. that though in *This*, and indeed in all
 ~~~~~ *Other Cases* whatsoever, we know not  
*in particular* the manifold distinct Reasons  
 of God's Manner of acting ; as indeed  
 'tis impossible we should ; yet *in general*  
 'tis manifest, that *This* Disposition of things  
 is according to the *Analogy* of God's usual  
 Method of acting in all *Other Cases*.  
 It has seem'd good to infinite Wisdom to  
 show forth itself, as in forming an un-  
 speakable *Variety* of *Other* Beings of  
 All Kinds, so in creating particularly a  
 great *Diversity* of *Rational* Creatures,  
 of Angels and Men ; endowed with ve-  
 ry *different Capacities*, intrusted in  
 numberless Instances with very *different*  
*Talents*, instructed with very *different*  
*degrees* of *Light and Knowledge* ; so as  
 to be Each of them capable of being  
 called to *Account*, of being *judged* ac-  
 cording to their respective *Abilities*, ac-  
 cording to the *Measure* and *Degree* of  
 their respective *Knowledge*, according to  
 the Nature of their several *Stations*, and  
 of the *Talents* in innumerable different  
 Circumstances committed to their Trust.  
 The Case therefore *here* is the *very same*,  
 even in respect of *Natural Reason* itself,  
 as of other *more particular* Manifesta-  
 tions

tions of the Divine Pleasure. Both the *One* and the *Other* have shined forth, only in particular *Places*, and at particular *Times*, in different *Degrees*; as *Lights* sufficient to direct such as were sincerely desirous of finding out and following the Truth; and to be a *Testimony* against *Others*, who neither liked to retain their *Natural Knowledge* of God, nor cared to be instructed in his *Will Revealed*. But This, by the way.

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The *Faith* of *Abraham*, so highly magnified in Scripture, and which (the Text tells us) was counted to him for *Righteousness*, evidenced itself principally in *Two* remarkable Instances. The *One* was, his leaving his Native Country at the Command of God, separating himself from the idolatrous Nations around him, and going into a strange Land; firmly believing that God was *Faithful*, who had promised that his posterity should inherit That Land; and that from *Him*, even when as good as dead, there should spring so many as the Stars of the Sky in multitude, and as the Sand which is by the Sea-shore innumerable, Heb. xi, 12. The *Other* Instance was, that when he was tried, he offered up his only Son, in

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whom

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whom alone seem'd to center All the Promises God had made him; Thus even *Against Hope* (as *St Paul* most elegantly expresses it,) *believing IN Hope*; and *being fully perswaded, that what God had promised, who quickneth the Dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were, he was able also to perform,* Rom. iv; 17, 18, 21. The *Excellency* of *This Faith*, in *Both These Instances*, consisted in *This*; that it was a *Principle of Virtue or Obedience to God*, built upon *This Foundation*; that God who ruleth over All, can and will certainly make good, either in the *Present* or in a *Future State*, all the *Expectations* rais'd in the *Minds* of *Virtuous and Good men*, either by the *Natural Knowledge* of his *Divine Attributes*, or by the *Revealed Declarations* of his *Will*. And *This* the *Apostle*, in *Each* of the *forementioned Cases*, *expressly* declares. In the case of *Abraham's offering up his Son*, the ground he tells us the *Patriarch* went upon, was his *Perswasion*, that *Death itself* puts not an end to the *Possibilities* of the *Divine Favour*; but that *God* was able to make good the *Promises* given to *Him* and his *Son*, even by a *Resurrection from the Dead*, *Heb. xi,*



19. In the *Other* case, That of the Patriarchs separating himself from the idolatrous Nations, and going into a strange country; the Apostle *Thus* expresses the Ground and Foundation, on which his Faith was built. *Heb. xi, 8, By Faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. And he sojourned in the Land of Promise, as in a strange Country;-----For he looked for a City which hath Foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God. And what That City was, the same Apostle distinctly explains, ver. 14, speaking of Abraham and his Posterity: They that say such things, (viz. confessing that they were Strangers and Pilgrims on the Earth,) declare plainly that they seek a Country: And truly if they had been mindful of That country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned: But Now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: Wherefore God is not ashamed to be called Their God; for he hath prepared for them a City. 'Tis evident therefore that the Faith of Abraham, was a Principle of Virtue or Obedience to God, founded upon the*  
*Ex-*

Scrm. *Expection of a Future State.* And  
 XI. because he *Thus believed God*, therefore  
 'twas counted to *HIM*; And to *All*  
 Others likewise in All Generations, who  
 shall be governed, as *He* was, by their  
*Belief in God*; to *Them* also it shall be  
 counted for *Righteousness*.

From *This* explication of the *Nature*  
 and *Excellency* of the *Faith* of *Abra-*  
*ham*, there may be drawn some very con-  
 siderable *general Observations*, of great  
 Extent and Consequence in the Notion  
 and Practise of true Religion. As

1<sup>st</sup>. From hence we may observe,  
 that *True Faith* is always founded upon  
*Reason*. *Abraham* believed, *What?*  
 why, that God would certainly make good  
 to *Him* and his *Posterity*, every thing  
 that he had promised. And *Why* did he  
 believe *This*? Why, because *Reason* told  
 him, that, whatever *Improbabilities* ap-  
 peared at present; yet God, who has  
 Power over the *Future* as well as the *Pre-*  
*sent* State, was able to fulfil his Promises  
 even by a *Resurrection from the Dead*.  
 This the Apostle *expressly* observes,  
 upon That difficult Tryal of his offer-  
 ing up his Son, *Heb. xi, 19, He ac-*  
*counted,*



counted, that God was able to raise him up, even from the Dead; from whence also he had received him in a Figure. He

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*Accounted*: The word in the Original is, (λογισάμενος,) he *Reasoned* with himself: His *Reason* satisfied him, that the Power of God could as easily raise again his Son from the Dead, as it had at first caused him to be Born from one as good as Dead. He had Before received him as it were from the Dead in a Figure, by his being born to him in an extreme old Age; And Now he doubted not, but God could literally restore him from the Dead again. This was a Faith, truly founded upon Reason. And no less Reasonable is it in US to believe Now, that the same Divine Power which at first created men into the present Life, can as easily renew them into a Life to come. In This, there is nothing contrary to the Dictates of Right Reason, or to the Analogy of Nature. How different from This, is the Practise of Those, who, under pretence of the Divine Omnipotence, require men to profess their Belief of Contradictions; such as is Transubstantiation, and the like, and all other Natural or Moral Impossibilities. For, to ascribe to the Divine Power things that are not at all the Objects

Serm. *jects of Power*, and to suppose that God  
 XI. *makes* things to be what at the same he  
 does *not make* them to be; is not *magnifying* the Power of God, but profanely making a *Mockery* of it. *True Faith* therefore, is always founded upon *Reason*. And as, in all *Other Cases*, the Strength of *every Superstructure* is proportionable to the Goodness of the *Foundation* on which it is built: So in matters of *Religion*, the *Steddiuess* of every man's *Virtue* is always proportionable to the *Firmness* of his *Belief* of the Principles he acts upon; And the *Stability* of this *Belief*, in opposition to a careless and negligent *Credulity*, will always be found, upon any difficult Tryal, to be in proportion as 'tis more or less *Reasonably* grounded. For *This cause* it is, that our Saviour so highly commends the Faith of the *Centurion*, who from the Analogy of his *own* being a *man under Authority*, and having *Soldiers under him*, reasoned himself into a Perswasion that *Jesus* also was able to heal his Servant, *without coming himself in Person* to visit him: *Verily*, says our Lord, *I have not found so great Faith, no, not in Israel*, Matt. viii, 10. And in like manner concerning the *Canaanitish* woman, who from the  
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Similitude of the *dogs eating the Crumbs that fall from their Masters Table*, argued reasonably that She, though a Stranger from the common-wealth of *Israel*, yet needed not wholly to despair of our Lord's Favour; *O woman*, says he, *great is thy Faith*, Matt. xv, 28. Upon the same ground *the Jews*, who could judge well enough about *Other* things, and argue reasonably about the Tokens of the *Sky* and the *Weather*, and make proper Observations in the course of the *Natural World*; but had no discernment at all, in matters of *Religion*; are thus reprov'd by our Lord, *Luke* xii, 57, *Why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?* On the contrary, the *Bereans*, who searched the *Scriptures* carefully, to see *what reason* there might be for their embracing the *Doctrine* preach'd by the *Apostles*; are commended thereupon, as being of a more *noble* and generous temper, *Acts* xvii, 11. And *St Paul*, arguing to the *Corinthians* concerning a very important Point of *Christian Doctrine*; *I speak* (says he) *as to Wise men, judge ye what I say*, 1 Cor. x, 15. This therefore is the *First Observation*, naturally arising from the foregoing Discourse: *viz.* that *True Faith*, is always founded upon *Reason*.

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2dly. A *second* Observation is, that *True Faith* in *God*, never leads men to the Practice of any thing, that is essentially and in its own nature *Immoral*. Of This sort are the *Idolatries* practis'd in the Church of *Rome*, fundamentally destructive of all both Natural and Revealed Notions of *God*. Of the same Kind are the *Cruelties* and *Barbarities* perpetually practis'd by them, fundamentally destructive of all Virtue towards *Men*, and of the very essential, eternal, and unalterable Differences of Good and Evil. Things established by the *mere positive Command* even of *God* himself, may, without controversy, be *changed* by the same Authority that appointed them. Further: Things contrary to *That part* even of the *Law of Nature it self*, which is founded originally in the *Will of God* and not in the *Necessary and Essential* Nature of Things; may be done, upon particular and extraordinary occasions, by the immediate and exprefs Command of *God*. But *That part* of the *Law of Nature*, which is founded, not on *Will*, but on the very *Existence of God*, and on the *essentially and eternally immutable Nature and Relation of Things*; This i

in No Circumstances capable of any Variation. For instance: That the Life of an Innocent person should be taken away by the Authority of any Power upon Earth, is contrary to the *Law of Nature*. Nevertheless, since the Right which even an Innocent person has to his life, is not founded in the *essential* Nature of Things, but merely in the *Will* and *Free Gift* of God; 'tis plain *He* may as justly appoint it to be taken away by any *Other* means he pleases, as by a *Fever* or a *Pestilence*. But had God commanded *Abraham* to forsake the Worship of *Himself*, and turn to *Idols*; Or had he commanded him to *Hate* his blameless Son, or to *take Delight* in *Cruelty*, *Barbarity*, and *Tyranny*; the Command had been, in its nature, *impossible* and *absurd*. Again: The seven wicked Nations of *Canaan* might, by a *particular* and *immediate* Command of God, as justly be extirpated by the Sword of the *Israelites*, as by an Earthquake, or (like *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*) by Lightning from Heaven. But that, *without* any *immediate* and *express* Command, and under a *general* Pretense of being Alone Possessors of the *Truth*, a *perpetual tyrannical Enmity* should be carried on against *virtuous* men of All Na-

Serm. Nations, and a Power established of changing even the *Nature of Virtue and Vice*;

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~ This is a Wickedness which never had an Equal; and subverts fundamentally even *That part* of the Law of Nature, which is founded, not on the *Will*, but on the very *Being of God*, and on the *necessary, essential, and eternal Difference of Good and Evil*.

3dly. The *Third and Last* Observation I would here make, is; that *Faith* when spoken of in Scripture as a Moral Virtue, never signifies *mere Belief*; but always includes in it a Notion of *Fidelity* or *Faithfulness*; a *Faithful and Stedfast Adherence* to such *Principles*, even in times of the greatest Danger and Difficulty, as are the *Foundation or Ground of Virtue and Obedience*. *Abraham believed God*; (he had *Faith* or *Fidelity* towards God; *adhered firmly* to his *Principles*, and *acted steddily* upon them, in matters even of the greatest Tryal and Difficulty: He *kept the Faith*, as *St Paul* speaks concerning *Himself*; or, as the same Apostle elsewhere expresses it, he *kept That which was committed to His Charge*;) *And Therefore it was counted unto him for Righteousness*: It was reckoned

reckoned to him, it was *allowed to him* Scrm. XI.  
*in his Account*, (so the word is in the O-  
 riginal;) not, *INSTEAD* of *Righteousness*, but as being *itself real Righteousness*. This matter is rightly represented by the Author of the Book of *Ecclus.* ch, xliv, 19, *Abraham was a great Father of many people; in glory was there None like unto him: Who kept the Law of the most High, and was in Covenant with him;----- and when he was proved, he was found Faithful: Therefore he assured him by an Oath, that he would bless the Nations in his Seed, and that he would multiply him as the Dust of the Earth, and exalt his Seed as the Stars, and cause them to inherit from Sea to Sea, and from the River unto the utmost part of the Land.* And from hence 'tis very evident *what* the Writers of the *New Testament* intend, when they declare to us that *Abraham*, though he was not justified by the *Works* of the *Law*, such as *circumcision* and the like, because This Testimony was given of him *before* he was circumcised; yet the *Faith* by which he *WAS* justified, was an active and steady *Principle* of *Works* of *Righteousness*: And by That *Faith* was he therefore justified, because it was a *Faith which wrought* Jam. ii. 22.  
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Serm *with his works, and by works was his*

XI. *Faith made perfect.* And the Application they make of it to *Us*, is; that *They*, and *They only*, who *walk in the steps of the Faith of Abraham*, are, in the religious estimation, *Abraham's Seed*. That is; *They only* shall finally be accepted of God, whose *Faith* is, like *His*, a *Real Principle of Virtue and Obedience*. Otherwise; it matters little, *whose Name* we are called by, or *whose religion* we profess. For, unless we *bring forth Fruits meet for Repentance*; *God is able even of these Stones*, sooner than of impenitent and incorrigible Sinners, *to raise up Children unto Abraham*; and unto *Christ*.





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A  
S E R M O N

Preach'd in the  
PARISH-CHURCH  
O F

*St James's Westminster,*

On *Sunday, May 3, 1719.*

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J O H. VI. 35.

*Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of Life. He that cometh to Me, shall never hunger; and he that believeth on Me, shall never thirst.*

**A**S in *All Discourses whatsoever*, there is no possibility of understanding the Sense of what is spoken, without understanding the Language in which That Sense is deliver'd; So in *Scripture* particularly, unless men attend to the Nature of the expressions therein used, and

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Serm. XII. consider the Figures of Speech, which at the time when those Books were written, were as common and well-known, as modern Forms of speaking are at this day: Unless This (I say) be considered, there is no Doctrine so absurd, but may be proved from the *Words* of Scripture, without regard to the *Sense*; and No doctrine so clear, but may be darkned with Scraps of Scripture-expressions, applied contrary to the Design and Connexion of the whole Discourse. Thus, for Instance, God's *granting Repentance* to Sinners, that is, *granting* them the Favour of having their Repentance and Amendment accepted instead of perfect Obedience; has sometimes been understood in such a manner, as if God *worked Repentance in or upon them*, as a *Workman* operates upon a *Machine*. Thus, God's declaring the *Christian* Church, instead of the *Jewish* Church, to be for the future his *Elect* people; has been thought a Proof of his having chosen *particular persons* absolutely and unconditionally to *Salvation*. Thus, the Promise of eternal Life to them that *believe*; though the Scripture in numberless places declares, that thereby is meant *The Obedience* which proceedeth from Faith; has yet been

been perverted to signify mere *Credulity*, a mere *Profession* of Religion, mere *Zeal* for *particular Parties*, *Doctrines* or *Opinions*. And the *Hope of Pardon* to Them that *truly Repent* and *reform their manners*, purchased by the Blood of Christ; has been turned into a *Superstitious Reliance upon the Merits of Christ*, to supply the *Want of Repentance and Amendment of Life*. Again: The Power of *Preaching the Gospel*, and the Command to *Teach all Nations* upon *What Terms* their Sins should be forgiven them; has been made a Foundation for a *Pretense* to a *Power of forgiving Sins*, upon *Other Terms* than those of true Repentance and Amendment of Life. And, to mention but One Instance more; Our Saviour's stiling himself the *Bread of Life*, giving his *Flesh for the Life of the World*, and saying concerning the Sacramental Memorial of his Death, *This is my Body*; though the *very same Figure of Speech* is used in numberless other places of Scripture; and though our Saviour himself expressly admonishes us in the Instance of *This very Figure*, Joh. vi, 63, *It is the Spirit that quickneth, the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are Spirit and they are*

Serm. *Life*; yet how often have these passages  
 XII. been alledged as Proofs of *Transubstantiation*, of the *Sacrifice of the Mass*, of the *Adoration of the Host*, and of Other monstrous *Confusions* in the Worship of God! Against This Evil, there is *No* other possible *Remedy*, but studying the *Scripture itself* carefully and sincerely; in order to find out the real *Sense and Meaning*, instead of abusing the *Words* of it. *Other* Means of discovering the Truth in these cases, there *Can be None*. *Tradition*, is but a *Fiction* and a *Spectre*. *Opinions of Men*, are *Nothing*; being infinitely *contradictory* to each other; *mutable* as the Successions of *Ages*, and *various* as the different *Climates* and *Nations* of the Earth. Only with this Difference; that at *Rome* a *tyrannical Despise of Truth*, and a *Contempt of inquiring* after it, is Greater than ever was in any other place; Greater in Degree, and Larger in Extent; more authoritative, more wicked, and more absurd. But if men would use the *Scripture* as they do other Books, studying it without prejudice, looking for the Doctrine of Christ *in* it, and not bringing with them their *Opinions before* they read it; the *Sense* of Scripture would be found within  
 itself.

itself. *Search the Scripture*, was our Saviour's Direction to the Jews, *Joh. v, 39.* And the Reason is given by *St Paul*, *2 Tim. iii, 16,* 'Tis profitable for Doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. Serm. XII.

The Discourse of our Saviour in this *Sixth* chapter of *St John*, whercof my Text is a part; is a most remarkable Instance and Proof of what I have now said. Never was any thing more unreasonable, than the Use which has sometimes been made of such of our Lord's expressions as these which follow. *Labour for That MEAT*, which endureth unto everlasting life, v. 27. *The BREAD of God*, is He which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the World, v. 33. *I am the Bread of Life*; He that cometh to Me, shall never hunger; and he that believeth on Me, shall never thirst, v. 35, *The Bread that I will give*, is my Flesh which I will give for the life of the World, v. 51. *Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man*, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you, v. 53. And, v. 58, *he that eateth of this bread*, shall live

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Serm. *for ever.* Nothing, I say, can be more  
 XII. unreasonable, than the Use which has  
 sometimes been made, and That by Great  
 Authorities too, of these Expressions of  
 our Saviour. And yet, if we look over  
 the whole Scripture, and consider the  
 Phrases of this kind, that frequently oc-  
 cur in reading; 'twill be surprizing to ob-  
 serve, in how *usual* and *frequent*, in how  
*expressive* and *elegant*, in how *natural*  
 and *obvious* a manner, the very *same* fi-  
 gure of Spheech is made use of, upon a  
*multitude* of occasions. In the following  
 Discourse therefore upon these words of  
 our Lord, (*I am the Bread of Life: He  
 that cometh to me, shall never hunger;  
 and he that believeth on Me, shall never  
 thirst:*) I shall 1<sup>st</sup> indeavour, from the  
 whole Tenour and Phrasology of Scrip-  
 ture, to explain the Doctrine here laid  
 down; and to give an account of the par-  
 ticular Figure of Speech, in which it is ex-  
 pressed. And 2<sup>dly</sup>, I shall make some  
 Observations thereupon, and Inferences  
 from it.

I. In order to explain the Doctrine here  
 laid down, and to give an account of the  
 particular Figure of Speech in which our  
 Lord has expressed it; 'tis to be observed;  
 that

that as the *Happiness of Heaven*, and the *Final Favour of God*, is by the inspired Writers represented under the character of *LIFE*, and *Everlasting Life*; so, in the present time here upon *Earth*, the *State* or *Habit of Virtue*, is the *HEALTH* of the *Soul*; And every degree of *instruction in the Knowledge of Truth*, and every *Act of righteousness*, every degree of *improvement in virtuous Practise*, is its *FOOD* and *NOURISHMENT*. On the contrary, *Sin* is in Scripture spoken of as a *Disease* or *Sickness*; *Ic. i, 4, Ah sinful Nation, a people laden with iniquity;-----the whole Head is SICK, and the whole Heart faint.* And a *HABIT of Wickedness*, is elegantly set forth as being, in a *spiritual* sense, the *DEATH* of the *Soul*; *Eph. ii, 1, You who were DEAD in trespasses and Sins.* A *Reformation* or *recovery* from such a State, is described as a *Resurrection from the dead*; *Eph. 2, 4, God who is rich in mercy, even when we were Dead in Sins, hath QUICKENED us* (that is, raised us to *Life*,) together with *Christ*. And *Every* degree of *Improvement* in the *Knowledge of Truth and Right*, is, as it were the *Support, Nourishment, and Sustenance*, of a *rational and virtuous Mind*. *Deut. xxxii, 2, My*

Serm. 2, *My Doctrine shall drop as the Rain,*  
 XII. *my Speech shall distill as the Dew; as the*  
 ~~~~~ *small rain upon the tender herb, and as*  
the showers upon the Grass. And Job
xxix, 22, Unto Me, men gave ear; -----and
my Speech dropped upon them: They
waited for me, as for the rain; and they
opened their mouth wide as for the latter
rain. To One who considers these and
 the like expressions, nothing can be more
 natural and obvious than our Saviour's
 way of speaking in the Gospel after the
 same manner: *Job. vii, 37, If any man*
thirst, let him come unto me, and drink;
 If any man has probity of mind to receive
 instruction, and is desirous to understand
 the Truth, let him attend to the Doctrine
 of the Gospel. The same invitation is
 repeated, *Rev. xxi, 6; xxii, 17, I will*
give unto him that is athirst, of the
fountain of the water of life freely. The
Spirit and the Bride say, Come; and let
him that heareth, say, Come; and let
him that is athirst, come; And who so-
ever will, let him take the Water of Life
freely. In the prophet *Isaiab, ch. lv, 1,*
 the same Figure is carried still further:
Ho, everyone that thirsteth, come ye to
the Waters; ----- come ye, buy and eat;
yea, buy wine and milk without mony,
 and

and without price;-----Hearken diligently unto Me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your Soul delight itself in Fatness: Incline your ear, and come unto Me; hear, and your Soul shall live.

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And *Prov. ix, 3; Wisdom*, (that is, the Doctrine of Virtue and true religion, of the Fear of God and the practice of Righteousness; This wisdom) *crieth upon the highest places of the City: Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither; As for him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him, Come eat of my Bread, and drink of the Wine which I have mingled; Forsake the foolish, and live; and go in the way of understanding.* There was No

Jew in the days of the old Testament, but perfectly understood the Sense of these beautiful and expressive Figures of Speech; And they are Now as obvious and as plain to be apprehended, (in all cases where Prejudice and Interest do not interpose,) as the most Modern Forms of speaking. Hence a sincere Desire of knowing and doing the Will of God, an unprejudiced Love of Truth, and an uncorrupt pursuing of what is Right; is by our Saviour called *Hungring and Thirsting after Righteousness*, *Matt. v, 6.* And the perfection of his Own Practice, is most emphatically set

Serm. set forth in the following expression, *Job.*
 XII. iv, 34, *My MEAT*, saith he, *is to do the*
 Will of him that sent me, and to finish his
 Work. In the Book of *Job* it is, *ch. xxiii, 12,*
I have not gone back from the commandment
of his Lips; I have esteemed the words of
his Mouth, more than my necessary Food.
 And in *Jeremiah*, thus; *ch. xv, 16,* *Thy*
words were found, and I did EAT them;
thy word was unto me the Joy and Re-
joicing of mine heart. On the contrary, con-
 cerning those who *delight in Wickedness*
 and *take pleasure in Unrighteousness*, 'tis
 affirmed in Scripture, that *the Soul of the*
Transgressor EATETH violence, and
DRINKETH up Scorning (or iniquity)
like water; *Job xxxiv, 7; xv, 16; Prov.*
xiii, 2. And Any peculiar extraordinary
 corruption in the *Doctrine* or general
Practise of any particular Party of men,
 is stiled *The Leaven of Those Men*, or
 of *That Vice:* *Matt. xvi; 11, 12,* *I spake*
not to you concerning BREAD, that ye
should beware of the LEAVEN of the
Pharisees,-----but of the DOCTRINE
of the Pharisees,-----which (Luke xii, 1,)
is Hypocrisy. And *1 Cor. v, 8,* *Not with*
the LEAVEN of Malice and Wicked-
ness, but with the UNLEAVENED
BREAD of Sincerity and Truth. By
 the


the same figure of Speech, the *Elements* or the first plain and fundamental *Principles* or Instructions of *Christianity*, are stiled the *sincere MILK* of the word, 1 Pet. ii, 2; and 1 Cor. iii. 2. And a *more perfect* or *improved* Knowledge in the Doctrines of the Gospel, is, according to St Paul's description, *strong MEAT*, belonging to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of Use have their Senses exercised to discern both Good and Evil, Heb. v, 14. The *imbibing*, *digesting*, and *practising* these Precepts of true Religion, is, in Our Saviour's language, the *MEAT* which indureth unto everlasting Life, Joh. vi, 27. And ch. iv, 14, 'tis the *WATER*, which whosoever drinketh of, shall never thirst; but it shall be in him a Well of Water, springing up into everlasting Life. To persons not conversant in the Scripture-language, 'tis no wonder that such Phrases as these, seem strange and not easy to be understood. But from the passages before-cited out of the Old Testament, 'tis apparent they were very *common* figures of Speech among the *Jews*; and consequently ought to be interpreted according to That Analogy. In the Book of *Ecclesiasticus* particularly, there is a Passage which gives

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Serm. singular Light to the whole Discourse of
 XII. our Saviour, whereof my Text is a part:


Ch. xxiv, 19, Wisdom is introduced, saying, Come unto me, all ye that that be desirous of me, and fill yourselves with my Fruits. For my Memorial is sweeter than Hony, and mine inheritance than the hony-Comb. They that EAT me, shall yet be hungry; and they that DRINK me, shall yet be thirsty. He that obeyeth me, shall never be confounded; and they that work by me, shall not do amiss. All these things are the Book of the covenant of the Most High God. The Phrases; they that eat me, shall yet be hungry; and they that drink me, shall yet be thirsty; signify, in a lively and most elegant manner of expression, that the Pleasure arising from the Knowledge of Truth and from the Practise of Virtue, is a Pleasure always New, always satisfying, and of which a man can never be weary. The Phrase used by our Saviour in the Text, (he that cometh to me, shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me, shall never thirst;) though it be very different in the construction, yet the Allusion is plainly the very same, and the Sense not at all unlike: Whosoever embraceth My doctrine, and obeys my instructions, shall never

never WANT any thing necessary to his Eternal Happiness; seeing he has the Means which will more certainly support him unto everlasting Life, than Meat and Drink maintains and nourishes the Body in this mortal State.

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XII.



This being once carefully observed, there remains No further difficulty in understanding our Saviour's Whole Discourse through this chapter. His calling himself the *Bread of Life* in the Text, and in *ver. 48*; the *Living Bread*, *ver. 51*; and the *Bread which cometh down from Heaven*, *ver. 50 & 58*; plainly signifies This only; that the Belief and consequent Praise of the Doctrine of the Gospel, is the Support and Preserver of the Soul unto eternal life. His saying, *ver. 57, He that EATETH me, shall live by me*; is clearly explained by the words of Wisdom, *Ecclus. xxiv, 21, They that EAT me, shall yet be hungry*: And by our Lord's own words in the Text, *He that COMETH to me, shall never hunger; and he that BELIEVETH on me, shall never thirst*: Where the words, *coming to him* and *believing on him*, appear evidently, by the words *hunger* and *thirst*, with which they are joined, to be

Serm. explicatory of what in the 57th *verse* is
 XIII. stiled *Eating*. And his explaining him-
 ~~~~~ self, *ver.* 29, 40, & 47, manifestly shows  
 the same thing: *This* (says he) *is the*  
*work of God, that ye BELIEVE on*  
*Him whom he has sent:-----This is the*  
*Will of him that sent me, that every one*  
*which seeth the Son and BELIEVETH*  
*on him, may have everlasting Life:-----*  
*Verily I say unto you, He that BE-*  
*LIEVETH on me, hath everlasting*  
*Life; I am That Bread of Life.* There  
 remains only *One phrase* more in this  
 chapter, wherein the *same figure* of Speech  
 is carried still *further*; Our Lord in the  
 51st and 53d and *following Verses*, set-  
 ting forth the *same thing* under the still  
 higher figure of *eating his Flesh* and  
*drinking his Blood*, which, in the Text,  
 and in several other verses of this Chap-  
 ter, he had *before* expressed by stiling him-  
 self *The Bread of Life*. But *This* also,  
 when that which has been already said be-  
 well understood, will have no great difficul-  
 ty in it. For as, in the 15th chapter of  
 this Gospel, our Lord expresses the spiri-  
 tual Union between him and his disci-  
 ples in the following manner, *ver.* 5, *I*  
*am the Vine, and ye are the Branches;*  
*He that abideth in Me, and I in Him;*  
 the

*the same bringeth forth much Fruit:* Serm.  
 And as St Paul, without Any danger of XII.  
 being misunderstood, sets forth the same  
 notion still more sublimely Thus, *Eph. v,*  
*30, We are Members of his Body, of his*  
*Flesh and of his Bones:* So in the place  
 before us, after our Lord's stiling himself  
 the *Bread of Life*, in the same sense as  
*Wisdom* in the Book of *Ecclesiasticus*  
 says concerning herself, *They that EAT*  
*me, shall yet be hungry;* there cannot,  
 without great perverseness, be put a wrong  
 Sense upon what he adds, *ver. 56, He*  
*that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my*  
*blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.*  
 For, Why should not what our Lord calls  
*eating his flesh and drinking his blood,*  
 be as easily understood of our *imbibing* and  
*digesting* his Doctrine, converting it by  
 way of spiritual Nourishment into the ve-  
 ry Habit of our Mind, and into the Pra-  
 ctise of our Lives; as *St Paul* is by All  
 men, even of the meanest capacities, un-  
 derstood without any difficulty to speak in  
 a spiritual and figurative Sense, when he  
 says of all good Christians, that they are  
*Members of Christ's Body, of his Flesh*  
*and of his Bones?*

Serm.

XII.

II. Having thus from the whole Tenour and Phraſeology of Scripture, explained the *doctrine* laid down in the Text, and given an account of the particular *figure of Speech* wherein it is expreſſed: It remains in the *ſecond* place, that I briefly make ſome Obſervations thereupon, and Inferences from it. And

1<sup>ſt</sup>. From what has been ſaid, it appears, that in this whole Diſcourſe of our Saviour in *this* ſixth chapter of *St John's* Goſpel, there is no mention at all made of the *Eucharift* or *Sacrament of the Lord's Supper*. The Diſcourſe was ſpoke by our Saviour, *long before* the inſtitution of That Sacrament: And therefore it could never have been applied by Any to That Subject, had they not thought the Phraſes of *eating his Fleſh* and *drinking his Blood*, incapable of being explained to any other Senſe. But from the many Paſſages both of the Old and New Teſtament, which I have now alledged to This purpoſe, 'tis evident that thoſe Phraſes, in the Jewiſh language and manner of ſpeaking, do very eaſily ſignify, the *receiving* and *imbibing*, the *digesting*  
and



and *practising* a *Doctrine*: And that the only reason why our Lord was misunderstood by many that heard him, was That Dullness in Some, and That *Perverseness* in Others, arising from unreasonable *Prejudices*, which we find him so often complaining of in the Gospel.

2dly. If the *Sacrament of the Lord's Supper*, is not at all spoken of in *this chapter*; then *much less* can any Argument be drawn from any expression therein, in favour of the Romish Doctrine of *Transubstantiation*. Receiving and *imbibing*, *digesting* and *practising* his *Doctrine*; is what our Lord here calls, *eating his flesh* and *drinking his Blood*. And 'tis called so by the *like* figure of Speech, (though without any *Reference* to each other in This place,) as is used indeed in the Sacrament of the *Lord's Supper*, and in That of *Baptism* too. The *Bread* and *Wine*, are not themselves literally the *Body and Blood of Christ*; But the *inward* thing *signified* by those *outward* Symbols, is the *Body and Blood of Christ*: Just as, in the Sacrament of *Baptism*, the being immersed in *Water*, is not itself the *Death and Burial of Christ*, but only an *outward* Sign; the *inward* thing *signified* whereby, is the being

Serm. *buried with Christ in his Death.* And  
 XII. the *Body and Blood of Christ*, is *verily*  
 and indeed *taken and received* by the Faith-  
 ful in the Lord's Supper; just in the same  
 manner, as Persons baptized do *verily*  
 and indeed *Die and are Buried with*  
*Christ*. No man ever was so absurd, as  
 to understand the *One* literally; and there  
 is no more Reason to understand the *O-*  
*ther* so: But by *Both*, men are intitl'd,  
 if they be worthy Receivers, to the spi-  
 ritual Benefits purchased by Christ's Death.

3dly. From hence we may learn *in ge-*  
*neral*, how to understand many *Other*  
 metaphorical expressions in Scripture.  
 After the same manner of speaking, as  
 Christ is here stiled The *BREAD of Life*;  
 he is elsewhere stiled The *WAT and the*  
*Life*, the *RESURRECTION and the*  
*Life*, the *Door* and the *Vine*. He is  
 called the *Word*, and the *Wisdom*, and  
 the *Power of GOD*; and he is called  
*The Righteousness* (or *Justification*) of  
*MEN*. He and the *Father*, are affirm-  
 ed to be *One*; And of *Paul* and *Apol-*  
*los* 'tis said, *He that planteth, and he*  
*that watereth, are One*. The *Eucharist*  
 is spoken of, as a *Sacrifice*; And *Praise*,  
 is expressly called a *Sacrifice*; And the *Bo-*  
*dies*

*dies* of Christians, are stiled *holy and living Sacrifices*: for *no other* reason, but because these things, in the *Christian* institution, *succeeded* in the *place* of the *Sacrifices* which had been offered among the *Jews*. And therefore when some antient Christian Writers stile the *Eucharist* an *unbloody Sacrifice*; modern Writers, who understand this phrase in a *literal* sense, are just as absurd, as if they should understand *St Paul* literally, when he calls Christians *The CIRCUMCISION* *without hands*; By which *He* plainly means nothing more, but that the *Christian Church* succeeded in the place of the *Jewish*, who had in the *literal* sense been stiled *The Circumcision*. And by the *same* figure of Speech; because God, who had formerly chosen *Jerusalem* to place his Name there, has Now declared that he will be worshipped in *All places* alike; therefore the whole World has sometimes been elegantly stiled, *The TEMPLE* of God; And *Every Man*, and *Every Moral Duty*, is a *Sacrifice* acceptable to him,

4. *Lastly*: Since these and the like *figurative* expressions, contain *Always* in them a *moral* meaning and signification,

Serm. we ought carefully to observe, that in  
 XII. *this their Moral meaning only, can they*  
 ever be of any Use to us. *The flesh,*  
 Joh. vi, *saith our Blessed Saviour, profiteth no-*  
 63. *thing; The words that I speak unto you,*  
*they are Spirit and they are Life.* The  
 Participation of the *Sacrament*, without  
 true *Faith*; is *Bread*, without the *Body*  
*of Christ.* *Faith* itself, without *Obe-*  
*dience*; is (as *St James* expresses it,) a  
*Body without Soul or Life.* *Relying on*  
*the Merits of Christ*, without *doing the Will*  
*of his Father which is in Heaven*; can  
 be of no more Use to us, than the *Death*  
*of Christ* would have been, if there had  
 never been any *Resurrection.* All great  
 Corruptions of Religion in all Ages, have  
 arisen by separating the Letter thus from  
 the Spirit; And in amending This Fault,  
 lies the principal efficacy of true Virtue  
 and Goodness.



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A  
S E R M O N

Preach'd in the

PARISH-CHURCH

O F

*St James's Westminster,*

On *Sunday, Dec. 15, 1723.*

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ECCLES. VII, 29.

*Lo, This only have I found, that God  
hath made Man upright; but They  
have sought out many Inventions.*

**T**IS, not only at this day, the greatest  
and most difficult Question among  
*Christians*; but it was so of old a-  
mong the *Jews* under the Law; and, be-  
yond *That*, even among the *Wiser Hea-*  
*thens* also, under the State of Nature;  
*How Sin and Misery came first into the*  
T 4 *World;*

Serm.  
XIII.



Serm. *World*: How *Man*, whose rational Faculties seem naturally to lead him to discern and choose what is *good*, yet in Event for the greater part has his Understanding so blinded and apt to be deceived, his Will so biassed and inclined to evil, his Appetites so corrupt and perpetually tempting him to forbidden Objects; his Passions so ungovernable, and unwilling to submit to Reason; that if a judgment was to be made, not from the *Faculties* of men, but from their *Actions* only; if we were to take our Estimate, not from the Obligations of our *Nature*, but from the Experience of mens *Practice*; it might be imagined that, not *Virtue*, but *Vice*, was natural to Mankind, and the proper Effect of their Original Composition. For otherwise; if *originally* God made men *upright*, and *Virtue* was naturally most agreeable to their Frame; how then was it *possible* (will it be obvious to ask,) that they could almost universally *seek out* so many evil *Inventions*? And if the *Inventions* they have sought out, are so many and so evil, that they can hardly be conceived to arise but from something faulty in their very *Nature*; how then can it be comprehended, that God nevertheless created them *originally upright*?

If

If *God* be perfectly *Good*, (as perfect Goodness is of necessity included in the very Notion of *God*;) how is it possible that Any of the Works of *His* Hands, should become so *evil*? And if the *Inventions* of men be so *evil*, as Experience too manifestly declares them to be; how is This reconcileable with a firm Belief, that yet *God*, who made them, is perfectly *Good*? When we begin with consulting our *natural Notions of God*, Reason and Demonstration represent him to us of necessity so intirely and absolutely Good, that we are apt to expect, *whatever* is the Product of such a Cause, *whatever* is the Workmanship of such an Author, should have impressed upon it no obscure Image, should carry with it no small Resemblance, of the Perfections of its Maker. On the *other* hand, when we begin with considering things as *in fact* they are in the World, and observe the extreme Wickedness of the greater part of Mankind; 'tis then very hard to apprehend, how so very *frail* and *sinful* a Creature, could come out of the Hands of an All-merciful and Good *God*. Too hard was this Speculation, for the Philosophy of the Heathen World; and it drove many of their Disputants to argue themselves into  
an



Serm. an Imagination of an irresistibile *Evil*  
 XIII. Cause, in perfect Opposition to, and of  
 equal Power with, the Supreme *Good*.  
 But the Impossibility of two Supreme  
 Causes, being demonstratively apparent;  
 Others, with much greater and better Reason,  
 resolv'd all the Evil and all the  
 Wickedness in the World, into the *Free*  
*Choice* and *voluntary* Corruption, of Men  
 whose Nature God originally had created  
 Good. And yet even still a Difficulty re-  
 main'd, *Whence* it came to pass, that tho'  
 the *Nature* of Man, as of God's creating,  
 had indeed nothing *actually* in it but  
 Good; yet it should be so *frail* and fal-  
 lible, so *prone* to Evil, and so *apt* to be  
 seduced, as by Experience it was found  
 to be. The true Occasion of This, is  
*briefly intimated* to us in the sacred Wri-  
 tings, in the History of the *Fall of Man*.  
 And evidently there is nothing any way  
 inconsistent with the Divine Goodness in  
*This*, that God whose inexhaustible Wis-  
 dom and Power shows forth itself most  
 properly in producing a never-failing va-  
 riety of Creatures of different Natures,  
 Capacities,<sup>3</sup> and Faculties; should suffer  
 the *Posterity of Adam* to be of a more  
 frail and fallible Nature, more subject to  
 Temptation and more prone to be de-  
 ceived,



ceived, than they would otherwise have been; after their first Parent had forfeited those advantageous Circumstances of his first Creation, to which he had *originally* no more Right, (but by the free Gift and mere good pleasure of God,) than he had to the Powers and Perfections of an *Angel*. And *Adam* might with as just Reason have complained against the Goodness of God, because he was not created an *Angel in Heaven*; as *We* can, for our not being Born in *Paradise*. Nor is it more inconsistent with the Divine Goodness, to suffer *Us*, in consequence of *His* introducing Sin into the World, to become *more* frail and fallible, *more* peccable and obnoxious to Temptation, than *He* at first was; than it was inconsistent with the same Goodness, to make *Him*, by the *original* Condition of his Creation, subject to Temptation and to Sin *at all*. In a Word: Either we must be so unreasonable as to assert, that the Goodness of God cannot allow him to make *Any* Creature at all; because no Creature can be originally and absolutely incapable of Sinning: Or else, by the same reason he may likewise, reconcileably with his Goodness, make all *Variety* of Creatures, in all the various degrees of Frailty and Liableness



Serm. to Temptation: Always *excepting* That,  
 XIII. of being *necessarily* and *unavoidably* Wick-  
 ed and Miserable; and always *supposing*,  
 that God will finally judge with perfect  
 Equity these *frail* Beings, each of them  
*according to what he has, and not ac-*  
*ording to what he has not.* And still  
*much less* inconsistent will it be with the  
 same Divine Goodness, to permit the Po-  
 sterity of a sinful and depraved Creature,  
 to continue *by natural consequence* in a  
*lower* and *more obnoxious* Rank of Be-  
 ings, than possibly they would have been  
 placed in, had no such Depravation been  
 introduced either by our *First Parent*,  
 or by *Any of his Successors*.

*Some Writers* have indeed, without suf-  
 ficient Warrant from Scripture, carried  
 this Matter further; and have asserted  
 that, for the Sin of *Adam*, not only him-  
 self and his Posterity were made subject  
 to *Death*, and to all the *Miseries of this*  
*mortal Life*, consequent upon the Earth's  
 being cursed for his Sake; and that they  
 became very *weak* and *frail*, exposed to  
*more* Temptations, and *more* prone to Sin;  
 but that moreover *all Mankind*, for That  
*One* Transgression of their *Fore-Father*,  
 were actually liable to be condemned to  
 the

the Punishment of eternal Torments; and were by Nature so Wicked and so entirely indisposed to all Good, that the Will of Man had thenceforward no more Liberty to choose what was Right, than a Dead Man has Power to restore himself to Life. But These things, the Scripture does not teach; how great soever it represents the Depravity of Human Nature. And indeed, to suppose that *God himself* sends men into the World, under an Absolute Necessity in their very Nature, of being *Wicked and Miserable*; is not much better, than what some Heathens imagined, of their being made so by the Power of an Opposite Supreme *Evil Principle*. How much more Wise and Reasonable is the Determination of *Solomon* in the Text: Who in Matters of Difficulty and deep Inquiry, in things wherein 'tis impossible for the narrow Understanding of short-sighted Mortals to discover the whole Order and Method, the Occasion and Reason of many of the Divine Proceedings; advises us to *separate* the *Certain* from the *Uncertain*; to adhere to what we certainly know to be True, and not be moved from it by the Uncertainty of what we cannot discover! For so he

con-

Serm. concludes a difficult and profound Inquiry; *Lo, This only have I found.*  
 XIII.

He had been in vain searching into the Depths of Providence, and attempting to comprehend the Counsel of the Most High. And indeed, What Wonder is it, that Man, who sees so *small a Portion* of the Works of God from the Beginning to the End, should not be able to comprehend the Wisdom of the *Whole*? *All This*, says he, *have I proved by Wisdom*, ver. 23: *I said, I will be Wise, but it was far from me: That which is far off, and exceeding deep, who can find it out?* And then he concludes in the Words of the Text; *Lo, This only have I found.*

Among the things impossible to be discovered by human Understanding, there is still always *something* certain and to be depended upon; *something*, in which a rational Person may acquiesce and rest satisfied; *something*, on which he may with Confidence fix his Foot. *Lo, This have I found.*

The *particular* Inquiry, upon occasion of which the Wise man makes this Conclusion,

clusion, was the Consideration of the Difficulty I now mentioned; *viz.* What might be the *reason* of the exceeding great Depravity and Corruption of Human Nature; *ver. 25, I applied mine Heart to know, and to search, and to seek out Wisdom, and the Reason of things, and to know the WICKEDNESS of Folly, even of Foolishness and Madness.* And the Result was: *Lo, This only have I found; that God hath made Man upright, but they have sought out many Inventions.*

Serm.  
XIII.

In the Words, we may observe these Two things. *1st.* A general Direction of Intimation, that in *all Questions of Difficulty* whatsoever, we ought to *separate* what is *Certain* from that which is *Uncertain*: and never think it a sufficient reason to depart from *One Truth*, that our Faculties have not enabled us to discover *All*. *Lo, THIS ONLY have I found.* *2dly,* An *Application* of this general Direction, to That great Question *in particular*; *Whence the Corruption and Depravity of Humane Nature arises.* *This have I found, that God has made man upright, but they have sought out many Inventions.*

*First,*

Serm.

XIII.



*First*, Here is a general Direction or Intimation; that in *all Questions of Difficulty* whatsoever, we ought to *separate* what is *Certain*, from that which is *Uncertain*; and never think it a sufficient reason to depart from *One Truth*, that our Faculties have not inabled us to discover *All*. *Lo, This only have I found*. The Works of God, are infinite and boundless; and the Understanding of Man, is limited and finite. We cannot therefore comprehend the *whole* Works of God, because our Understandings are *not infinite*; And yet, because we *have* Understanding given us, therefore we *ought* to endeavour to understand them *in part*. The Scripture frequently declares the Incomprehensibleness of the Works of God; And no where more emphatically, than in this Book of *Ecclesiastes*. Ch. iii, v. 11, *He has made every thing beautiful in his time; also he has set the World in their Heart; so that no man can find out the Work that God maketh, from the beginning to the End*. Again, ch. viii, 17, *Then I beheld all the Work of God, that a man cannot find out the Work that is done under the Sun; because though a man labour to seek*

*seek it out, yet he shall not find it; yea* Sermon.  
*further, though a WISE man think to* XIII.  
*know it, yet shall he not be able to find*  
*it. And ch. xi, 5, As thou knowest not*  
*what is the way of the Spirit, nor how*  
*the Bones do grow in the Womb of her*  
*that is with Child; even so thou knowest*  
*not the Works of God, who maketh all.*  
 Nevertheless, both by *Reason* and *Scripture*  
 we are directed to *study* the Works  
 of God; That, by what we *can* discover;  
 we may learn to admire and adore his  
 Wisdom in what we *can not* discover;  
 and by what we *are able* to understand,  
 be convinced of the Excellency of the  
 things that *exceed* our Comprehension.

To instance in *Particulars*. In *what*  
*manner* this beautiful Fabrick of the  
 World was *made*, and *how* the several  
 parts of it in particular were *formed*;  
 the greatest Philosophers upon Earth have  
 by no means been able to discover. *This*  
*only have they found*, that these things  
 are evidently the Works of an *Intel-*  
*ligent* and *Powerful* Cause, and cannot  
 possibly be the Effects either of *Chance*  
 or of *Necessity*.

Serm. In *what manner* the several Steps of  
 XIII. Providence in the *Government* of the  
 World, shall finally be cleared, has been  
 a thing too hard for the *Wiseſt* of men to  
 comprehend, and a *Depth* inſcrutable to  
 the moſt enlarged Underſtandings. *This*  
*only*, are they well aſſured of; that *the*  
*Judge of all the Earth, will do what*  
*is right*; will deal equitably with All  
 perſons, according to their reſpective Cir-  
 cumſtances; and that, at laſt, *he will con-*  
*ſpicuouſly be juſtified in his Saying, and*  
*be clear when he is judged.*

In *what particular manner* God's *Fore-*  
*determination* of *Many* Events, and his  
*Fore-knowledge* of *All*, is reconcileable  
 with That *Liberty* of Human Actions,  
 without which there could be no Religion,  
 no Punishment, no Reward; is a Secret  
 which we ſhall then perhaps clearly and  
 thoroughly underſtand, when the *Books*  
 of Providence ſhall be laid *open*, and the  
*Secrets of all Hearts ſhall be diſcloſed*;  
 when *the Lord ſhall come with ten thou-*  
*ſands of his Saints, not only to execute*  
*Judgment* upon men, but alſo to *con-*  
*vince* (as St *Jude* expreſſes it,) that is, to *ſa-*  
*tisfy*, in their *own* reaſon and conſciences,  
 all



*all that are ungodly among them, of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard Speeches which ungodly Sinners have spoken against him.* In the mean time, *This only* do we know for certain, and in *This* may we with assurance acquiesce, that *God made not Death, neither hath he pleasure in the Destruction of the Living*; nor doth He, by any absolute Predetermination, bring Wickedness and Misery necessarily upon any man; but *ungodly men with their own Words and Works call it unto them.*

Serm.  
XIII.

Again: *Wherein the Nature and Dignity of the Person of Christ* (beyond what God in Scripture has thought fit to reveal to us) precisely consists, and in *what particular manner* those supereminent Attributes, which the Scripture ascribes to him, are communicated to him from the Father; is what neither Men nor Angels can perfectly understand. *This only* may Christians of *All capacities* be assured of, and may with confidence depend upon it; that Whosoever imbraces the *Doctrine* which our Saviour taught, and obeys the *Laws* which he has delivered; and, in order to obtain Remission of past

Serm. Sins, makes constant *Application to God*  
 XIII. in *HIS Name* and through *His* Inter-  
 ~~~~~ cession, as being our *Alone Mediatour*  
 with the Father ; and lives in constant
 expectation of his appearing finally as our
Saviour and Judge; to compleat our re-
 conciliation in the day of Redemption,
 and to reward every man according as his
 Work shall be : Whosoever (I say)
 heartily professes this Faith, and perseveres
 in this *Practice* by patient continuance
 in well-doing ; though he enters into *No*
 difficult Speculations, and confines his
 Thoughts entirely to what he clearly un-
 derstands ; yet *This* he may be assured of,
 and abundantly sufficient it is, if but *This*
only he can find ; that (according to the
 gracious Terms of the Gospel-Covenant)
 he shall certainly be partaker of the Sal-
 vation purchased by the Son of God, *ma-*
nifested in the Flesh.

Lastly ; To give but One Instance
 more, (which is *That* alluded to by *So-*
lomon in the *Text* :) *How* it comes to
 pass, that in a World created by infinite
Goodness, and governed by the Provi-
 dence of the same *Good God*, yet *Wick-*
edness should abound so universally as it
 does ; and our first Parents introducing
 Sin.

Sin into the World, should be permitted to have so great and lasting an Effect, that many Men *seem* as it were *originally* and *almost naturally* to have strong Inclinations to Vice; though something has already been offered, and More will be said in the following Part of this Discourse, to explain this Difficulty in some measure; yet, unless we knew the *whole Series* of Providence from the Beginning to the End, from the Creation of the Universe to the final Consummation of all things; 'tis no great wonder we should not fully understand the Whole Counsel of God, nor be able, in this *very short* and imperfect State, to search out to the bottom so unfathomable a Depth. *This only* do we *find* demonstrably certain; as being both clear in the *Reason* of things, and most expressly moreover declared in *Scripture*; (and abundantly sufficient it is, for our present Satisfaction;) that, whatever Difficulties may *now* arise in this matter, yet *in the End* it shall appear to the Conviction of Sinners, (so that every *Mouth shall be stopped* before God; stopped, not by *Power*, but by the *reason of the case*; and every *Tongue* shall confess his Justice,) that *God did make man upright*; only *They themselves have sought out many Inventions*.

Serm.

XIII.



In These and Numberless other Instances, appears the Reasonableness of the *general* Direction or Intimation given us in the Text; that, in *all Questions of Difficulty* whatsoever, we ought to *separate* what is *Certain* from that which is *Uncertain*; and never think it a sufficient reason to depart from *One* Truth, that our Faculties have not enabled us to discover *All*. *Lo, This only have I found.*

In *finite* Understandings, which are not capable of comprehending *All* Knowledge, nor of discovering *All* Truth; 'tis the highest improvement they can arrive to, and deserving the greatest Commendation, to be able rightly to distinguish what they *can*, from what they *cannot* discover; and so to rest satisfied and acquiesce in what they find, as not to entertain any Doubt concerning the Certainty of *One* Truth, because of the Uncertainty they chance to meet with in *Another*.

If we find by strong and undeniable Arguments, that the beautiful *Order* of the several Parts of the World, could not possibly arise from *Chance*; nor the in-
finite

finite *Variety* of things therein, from blind and Unintelligent *Necessity*; nor the Exquisite *Fitness* wherewith every thing is adapted to its proper End, from any *other Cause* than the Will and Free Operation of an All-Powerful and All-Wise Being; Is not *This* sufficient Satisfaction to a reasonable Mind, though he cannot comprehend the *Manner how* each particular was formed? Or, because there are *some* things, which, for *what End* they were made, our narrow Understandings cannot discover; is there *therefore* from thence any Colour of Reason to doubt, whether any thing was made for *any End* at all?

In like manner, if we find by evident Demonstration, that He who in the Beginning *made* the World by his *Power*, cannot but *govern* it unto the End by his *Providence*; Is not *This* sufficient to satisfy a rational Person, tho' he cannot at present account for *all* its proceedings? Or, is it in any degree reasonable, because the Counsels of a great Prince *before* they are entirely put in Execution, are above the Comprehension of a Mean Person; that *therefore* That mean Person should conclude the Counsels of the

Serm. Prince to have *no Wisdom* in them, or
 XIII. should doubt whether he had *any Coun-
 sels* or *Designs* at all?

Again : If we are by Experience as much assured of the *Liberty* of our *Wills*, as we are of the *Truth* of our *Understandings*, or the *Reality* of our *Senses* themselves; and have the same thing more-over confirmed to us, by all the *Promises* and all the *Threatnings* of God; and that the Divine *Fore-knowledge* is no *Fore-determination* of our Actions, but only an *unerring Judgment*, or such a *Kind* of *Prescience* (whatever *That* be,) as is consistent with *Liberty*, and necessarily *presupposes* the *Liberty* of those Actions which are foreknown to be free; Have we not abundantly wherein to acquiesce, tho' we know not the particular Manner of the Divine *Fore-knowledge*? Or, because there is some *Uncertainty* in the *particular manner* of reconciling it with Human Liberty, is there *therefore* any reason to call in question the *Thing itself*, which of all others is the most absolutely *Certain*? and pretend to doubt whether we have *Any Liberty*, that is, whether there be *any* such thing as *Religion*, any such thing as *Reason*, any *Understanding*
 in

in Man, or any *power of Acting* at all? Serm.
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Further : If we are assured by a clear and distinct Revelation, that God has sent his *Son* into the World, to teach us our Duty, and set us an Example of practising it; to *die for the Sins*, and *rise again for the Justification*, of All who shall *effectually* repent and *reform their manners*; to make intercession for us at present, and bring us hereafter unto Glory : Is not *This* sufficient to all the Purposes of Religion and Happiness, tho' we understand not the *manner* of his *generation* from the Beginning, nor *What* the Particulars of *that Glory* were, *which he had with the Father before the World was*? Or, because reasonable men do not take upon them to *define*, (as the *Schoolmen* have *presumptuously* done,) *how* and *in what particular manner* our Lord was before all Ages *the Brightness of his Father's Glory* and *the express Image of his Person*; is there *therefore* any Reason to doubt, whether we have any *Saviour*, any *Religion*, any *Hopes of Happiness* at all?

Lastly,

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Lastly: If it be clearly demonstrable by right Reason, and moreover asserted in express Words of Scripture, that *God has made man upright, but They Themselves have sought out many Inventions*: Have we not wherein to acquiesce, though *This only* be all that we *have found*; and we do not perhaps distinctly understand the Reason, *why* the All-Wise Governour of the World, has thought fit to *permit* men thus to corrupt themselves? And this brings me to the

Second Particular I proposed to speak to; namely, the Application of the *general direction* I have been hitherto discoursing upon, to that great Question *in particular, Whence* the Corruption and Depravity of Human Nature arises. *Lo, This only have I found, that God has made man upright, but they have sought out many Inventions.* But the Time not permitting to enter upon This, I shall conclude at present with Two very brief *Inferences* from what has been already said.

The *FIRST* is; That the Rule laid down in the foregoing Discourse, extends

tends only to the *express Revelations* of *God*, and not to any *Doctrines* or *Explanations* of *Men*.

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The *SECOND* is; That, from what has been said, we may see the great *Unreasonableness* of *Scepticism* in matters of Religion; and the *Absurdity* of Those, who, from the *Uncertainty* of some Questions of great *Difficulty* and of *small Consequence*, would draw reasons for doubting in matters of the *greatest Certainty* and of the *utmost Importance*. In Questions of *Natural Philosophy*, men do not so argue: In the management of *Worldly Affairs*, they do not so act; But *separate* always what is *Certain*, from that which is *Uncertain*; And the *Uncertainty* of One thing, does not hinder them from relying, in all the *Business* of Life, upon the unquestionable *Certainty* of Another. There is the same, nay much stronger reason, why they should act in like manner in matters of *Religion*: Where That which is of the *greatest Importance*, is always of the *greatest Certainty*; and whatever is *less Certain* and more difficult to be understood, is also always proportionably of *less moment*. We have upon This Head, the final Advice of *Job*,
and

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and the last and most considerate Words of *Solomon*. The *Former* of whom, concludes his Discourse concerning the Uncertainty of all *other* Knowledge, with this Admirable Reflexion, *Job* xxviii, 28, *And unto man he said; The Fear of the Lord, That is Wisdom; and to depart from evil, is Understanding.* The *Latter* having in a whole Book elegantly represented the Confusion and Uncertainty of all Human Affairs, sums up his whole Discourse in this Wise Admonition, *Eccles.* xii, 13, *Let us hear the Conclusion of the whole Matter: Fear God, and keep his Commandments; for This is the Whole, the whole Duty and the whole Happiness, of Man.*



A
S E R M O N

Preach'd in the

PARISH-CHURCH

O F

St James's Westminster,

On *Sunday, Dec. 22. 1723.*

ECCLES. VII, 29.

*Lo, This only have I found, that God
hath made Man upright; but They
have sought out many Inventions.*

THE Book of *Ecclesiastes* is a
Collection of the *general Conclu-
sions* drawn by *Solomon*, from his
Observations upon Human Nature, and
on the State of the World. He was a
Person, of whom the Scripture says, that
*God gave him Wisdom and Understand-
ing*

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Serm. *ing exceeding much; such as none of the*
 XIV. *Kings had, that were before him; nei-*
 ~~~~~ *ther shall there Any after him, have the*  
*like; 1 Kings iv, 29; and 2 Chron. i, 12.*  
 His own Experience of all the enjoyments of Life, and his High Station in the World, gave him the greatest Opportunities, and the largest Field, to improve his Understanding by the most General Observations; and to make the truest Judgment of the real Value, of every thing in the World. *I the Preacher was King over Israel in Jerusalem; And I gave my Heart to seek and search out by Wisdom, concerning all things that are done under Heaven, ch. i, ver. 12. I communed with mine own Heart, saying, Lo, I am come to great estate, and have gotten more Wisdom than all they that have been before me in Jerusalem; yea, my Heart had great Experience of Wisdom and Knowledge; And I gave my Heart to know Wisdom, and to know Madness and Folly, ver. 16.* The Result of all, was; that he found every thing to be *Vanity, and Vexation of Spirit.* That, even in *Wisdom* itself, is much grief; and he that increaseth Knowledge, increaseth Sorrow. That laughter and joy, is *Madness*; and Mirth, what Benefit is there

in it? That; when Goods increase, They are increased that eat them; and What good is there to the Owners thereof, saving the beholding of them with their Eyes? That he considered all the Oppressions that are done under the Sun; and behold, the Tears of such as were oppressed, and they had no Comforter; and on the side of their Oppressors was Power, but They had no Comforter. That, with respect to the Shortness and Uncertainty of Life, MAN also knoweth not his Time; But as the Fishes that are taken in an evil Net, and as the Birds that are caught in the Snare, so are the Sons of Men snared in an evil Time, when it falleth suddenly upon them. That, notwithstanding This, yet the Hearts of the Sons of men were full of evil; and madness is in their Heart while they live; and after That, they go to the Dead. That he applied his Heart to know and to search out the REASON of These things; and to know the Wick- edness of Folly, even of Foolishness and Madness. That All these things he proved by Wisdom, and said he would be wise, but it was far from him; For, That which is far off, and exceeding deep, who

Serm. *who can find it out? The Particulars,*  
 XIV. were impossible even for *His Understanding*  
 to discover. But, *in general*, This he was sure of, that *God was true*, tho' every Man was a Liar; that *God was righteous in all his Ways, and Holy in all his Works*; and Man, the Cause of all his own Misery. *Lo, This only have I found, that God has made Man upright, but they have sought out many Inventions.*

In the Words, I have observed these Two Particulars. 1<sup>st</sup>. A *general Direction*, or Intimation; that in all Questions of Difficulty whatsoever, we ought always to *separate* what is *Certain*, from that which is *Uncertain*; and never look upon it as a sufficient reason to depart from *One Truth*, that our Faculties do not enable us to discover *All*. *Lo, This only have I found.* 2<sup>dly</sup>. An *Application* of this *general Direction*, to That great Question *in particular*, *Whence the Corruption and Depravity of Human Nature arises.* *This only have I found, that God has made Man upright, but they have sought out many Inventions.*

The 1<sup>st</sup> of these, I have already discoursed upon. It remains that I consider at This time, (2<sup>dly</sup>) the *Application* the Wise man makes of this general Direction, to That *great Question* in *particular*, *Whence* the Corruption and Depravity of Human Nature arises. *This only have I found, that God has made Man Upright, but they have sought out many Inventions.* Now there is in *this*, as in most *other* Questions, something that is *Uncertain* and *Difficult* to be explained; something, that the Understanding even of *Solomon himself* could not attain to; something, that 'tis not *possible* for us to find out, nor *needful* for us to desire to know; something, that is to be resolved perhaps into the mere *good pleasure* of *God*; or rather into *Reasons* (for God does nothing *without* reason,) which *We* at present are *not at all* capable of judging of; *why* God in his infinite Wisdom thought fit, among that immense and boundless Variety of his Works, to make Some Creatures of such a *particular degree* of Capacity and Understanding, so frail, so fallible, so liable to be seduced and corrupted, as Mankind is. To *this part* of the Question 'tis sufficient to reply with

Serm. the Apostle; *Shall the Thing formed, say*  
 XIV. *unto him that formed it, Why hast thou*  
 ~~~~~ *made me thus? Hath not the Potter*  
power over the clay, of the same lump
to make one vessel unto honour, and ano-
ther unto dishonour? That is, Hath not
God a Right to make what Variety of
Creatures, and of what different Capaci-
ties, he pleases? But then there is also on
the other hand something in the Same
Question that is very Certain, something
that is infallibly true and may be depended
upon, something in which a reasonable
Mind may acquiesce and rest satisfied;
viz. that though God has indeed made us
frail and fallible, yet he has not made us
necessarily Wicked; He has made us sub-
ject and liable to Temptation, but not of
necessity Slaves to Sin. That we are Ca-
pable of Corrupting ourselves, is indeed
the Consequence of that Nature which
God has given us; But all Actual Corrup-
tions, are the Effects of our Free Choice,
and the Fruit of our Own Inventions. God
has made man upright, but They have
sought out many Inventions.

Of This Declaration of the Wise man,
 there are two parts. 1st. A justification
 of God, from all possibility of being charg-
 ed

ed with the Sins of Men: *God has made Man upright.* 2dly. A confession, that the Sin and Misery of *Men*, is wholly owing to themselves: *But they have sought out many Inventions.* Serm. XIV.

I. Here is a justification of God, from all possibility of being charged with the Sins of Men: *God has made man Upright.* Could wicked Men with any truth affirm, that Wickedness was the Fault of their *Nature*, and not merely the Corruption of their *Will*; it would be a just Excuse both in the Sight of *Men* and before the Tribunal of *God*, to alledge that they *Were* only what *God made* them, and what they could not but of Necessity be: There is nothing therefore more constantly and sollicitously inculcated in Scripture upon all Occasions, than that Men's destruction is of *themselves*, and not the Appointment of Him that made them. And upon *this* are grounded all the *Promises*, and the reasonableness of all the *Threatnings* of God. But though Wickedness *is not* Mens Nature; yet Weakness and Temptation, and Liableness to Sin, *is*. And the very Nature of a Probation-State, the Promises of Reward to Obedience, and the Threatnings of Punish-

Serm. ment to them that shall comply with
 XIV. Temptations; *supposes* men to be *Capa-*
 ~~~~~ *ble* of being corrupted, and to be always  
*in danger* of being seduced into Sin.

'Tis evident therefore *1st*, that God's having made Man *upright*, does not signify his having made him *incapable* of Sin, or exempt from all Temptation. No: This is perhaps a State that no Creature ever was, or can be, created in. For *he chargeth even his Angels with Folly, and the Heavens are not pure in his Sight.* Not only the Angels that *fell*, and incurred irrecoverably the final Wrath of God, appear evidently to have been created capable of Sinning: But the *good* Angels themselves, who kept their first Estate, and never forfeited their Title to the Divine Favour; even *These* the incomprehensible Purity of the Holy One charges with Folly. And nothing is perfectly faultless in the All-seeing Eyes, of Him who alone is Goodness and Holiness itself. And indeed, could any Creature be made originally and absolutely incapable of sinning; there would be no Room for Trial, there could be no Probation, there could be no Obedience, and no Reward: But the Happiness which such a Creature would in-  
 joy,

joy, would be by Nature complete and indefectible, like to the Happiness of God Himself. Which is inconsistent with the Nature of a Created Being.

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2dly, therefore ; Neither from This expression of God's having made Man *upright*, ought it to be imagined, that God originally created *Man* in That Excellency of Nature, which *Angels*, who yet were liable to Sin, were at first indued with. There is a *proper* Excellency, peculiar to every Species or Kind of things. And as, in the *Natural World*, God created every thing perfect in its kind ; and beheld, when he had finish'd it, that it was very good ; And yet One thing, though perfect in its Order and Degree, is nevertheless very far from equalling the Perfections of Another, that belongs to the more exalted Rank of a nobler Species : So, in the *Moral World* of rational and intelligent Creatures, there are Capacities and Faculties, there are Perfections and Excellencies, *peculiar* to every Sort of Beings, and appportionate to their proper Subject. And as we always understand, when we say God has given to such or such a person, Wisdom, Understanding, and Knowledge ; As we always (I say) under-

Serm. stand thereby, that he has indued That  
 XIV. Person in a remarkable manner with the  
 Knowledge and Wisdom of a *Man*, not  
 with That of a Superior and more Power-  
 ful Spirit: So, when the Preacher declares  
 in the Text, that God did make Man *up-  
 right*; 'tis manifest it must be understood,  
 that he created him with the *Uprightness*,  
 not of an *Angel*, but of a *Man*; with  
*such* an Uprightness, as is compatible to  
 a frail, mortal, and fallible Creature.

3dly. Further yet; Neither can the  
 Words of the Text be so interpreted, as  
 if *Solomon* meant to speak of *That  
 particular Uprightness*, wherein our  
 first Parent was created in *Paradise*; in  
 opposition to *that general State of Cor-  
 ruption*, which has ever since prevailed in  
 the World. For he does not insist upon  
*This*, that God created our *first Parent  
 upright*; but upon *This*, that, notwith-  
 standing all that *can be said* of the Mean-  
 ness and Frailness of our Nature, not-  
 withstanding all the disadvantages we *can  
 alledge* ourselves to lie under in con-  
 sequence of Sin having been brought into  
 the World; yet *still* God has made *Man  
 upright*. *Man*; That is, the *Species* or  
 whole Race of *Men*: All those particular  
*Men,*

Men, who in the following Words are said to *have sought out many Inventions*. The Uprightness therefore here spoken of, cannot be *That original* Uprightness, which was forfeited by the Sin of our first Parent; but *That continued* Uprightness, with which every man Now comes into the World, notwithstanding the Fall; *That* Uprightness, which every wicked man, in his own proper Person, is justly condemned for voluntarily departing from, by *seeking* out and following his own evil *Inventions*. And *This Uprightness*, which belongs even to *Fallen* Man, and which is necessary to discharge God from the Sins of Men, consists in This; That, notwithstanding all the *Weakness* and *Infirmity* of our Nature, which God, who considers that we are but Dust, readily allows for; and, notwithstanding all the *Consequences* of the Fall of *Adam*, which are abundantly provided against by the Death of *Christ*; and notwithstanding all our *Temptations*, and all our proneness to Sin: Yet no man is under a *Necessity* of being Wicked: No man can say 'tis the Fault of God's Creation, no, not even of *that frail Nature* which he receives from *Adam*, but the Wicked Choice of his own unreasonable Will,

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~~~~~

Serm. that makes him *live vitiously*, and com-
 XVI. ply with those Temptations which in this
 ~~~~~ frail State naturally and perpetually sur-  
 round him. That we are perpetually *lia-  
 ble to Temptation*; is indeed the weak  
 Condition of our Nature, and the Un-  
 happiness of our present State. But *Temp-  
 tation* is not *Sin*; And being *tempted*, is  
 not inconsistent with *Uprightness*: That  
 is, 'tis not inconsistent with *such Upright-  
 ness*, as God expects of us in this very  
 frail, fallible and imperfect State. Did  
 God *now* require of us the Uprightness of  
*Angels*, or even the Uprightness which  
 our *First Parents* ought to have maintain-  
 ed in Paradise; we might perhaps have  
 had reason to complain, that the Abili-  
 ties of our Nature were not answerable  
 to what was expected from us. But since  
 the Obedience and Holiness required of  
 us, is only of the *same Kind and Propor-  
 tion*, with *that Uprightness* our Nature  
*still* retains even since the Fall; 'tis evi-  
 dently not the Fault of *God*, nor of that  
*Nature* he even *Now* gives us, but the  
 wicked *Inventions* only of our own  
 Hearts, that make us wicked and misera-  
 ble. God has given us *Eyes* to discern  
 the Light, *Uderstanding* to distinguish be-  
 tween Good and Evil, a *Will* whereby we  
 are

are inabled to choose the One and refuse the other. And in the *Truth* or *Reality* of these Faculties, not in the *Perfection* of them; that is, not in their being such as *CANNOT* be deceived or imposed upon, but in their being such as *do not necessarily deceive US* without our own Negligence and great Fault; in *this* consists the Uprightness wherewith God Now sends men into the World, even since the Fall.

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There is only *One* great Objection, against what has been hitherto offered upon this Head. And That is, that the Doctrine of *Original Sin* has by Divines sometimes been so explained, as if Man, since the Fall, had no remains left of those Powers and Faculties, which Alone distinguish him to be a free and rational Agent. Which Explication if it were true, 'tis evident the *Sins of Men* would indeed immediately become chargeable upon *God*. And, far from making Man *upright*, as *Solomon* affirms; it would on the contrary be true, that he Now makes men *not so much as capable* of any *Religion* at all. For the clearing of This Prejudice therefore; we need only here, as in all *other* Difficulties, *separate* the  
Cer-

Serm. *Certain* Doctrine of Scripture, from the  
 XIV. *Uncertain* Explications of men : And  
 ~~~~~ then the whole *Ground* of the Objection,  
 will be taken away. Now *All* that the
 Scripture teaches concerning this matter,
 is contained in what it affirms, 1st, con-
 cerning the *Transgression itself* of our
 first Parents ; and 2^{dly}, concerning the
Consequences of that Transgression, to
 them and their Posterity.

1st. The History of the *Transgression
 itself* of our first Parents, is related very
 briefly in the Third chapter of *Genesis*.
 And though neither there, nor elsewhere
 in Scripture, is it called by that Name ;
 yet it may very properly be called The
Original Sin of Men ; because it was the
 first introducing of Sin into this World ;
 and, before it, there was no such thing
 as Sin upon Earth. This *Original Sin of
 Men* therefore, was the *Actual Sin* of
 our first Parent ; But it could not be the
Actual Sin of any other Person, because
 it was committed before any Other had a
 Being. To affirm that the *first actual
 Sin of Adam*, was *Imputed* to all Man-
 kind as well as to Him ; is to affirm what
 the Scripture does not teach. And be-
 sides ; it, to impute to *Other Persons*
 the

the *actual Sin* of *One*, be to account it *Theirs* as well as *His*; 'tis evident This is impossible with God, who cannot account *Sin*, or *any thing else*, to be what it is *not*.

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But *2dly*, Though the *Actual Transgression* of our first Parent, was *His* only, and not *Ours*; yet there are the *Consequences* of thus introducing Sin into the World, which are common to *Him* and his *Posterity*. And These are, *Mortality*, *Exclusion out of Paradise*, the *Miseries of the present Life*, and a *greater Liability and stronger Temptation to Sin*, in their *corrupt Affections*. God threatened *Adam*, that in the day he eat of the *forbidden Fruit*; that is, whensoever he should knowingly *presume* to do what God had thought fit to *forbid*; he should *surely die*. And had That Threat been *immediately* executed, 'tis plain his *Posterity* could have had no Being at all; and *as plain*, that no Injustice could thereby have been done to *them*, who never *Were*. But the Mercy of God granted *Adam* a Reprieve; And, instead of *dying* immediately, he *only became Subject to Mortality* by his Sin. That is; Being now excluded from the Benefit of the *Tree of Life*,

Serm. *Life*, (which was a *Means* or an *Emblem*
 XIV. of *Immortality*;) consequently his *natural*
 Mortality must of necessity *actually* take
 place upon him. And so it must likewise
 upon all his Posterity. In which matter ;
 since it was merely the Effect of God's
 Mercy towards *Adam*, to permit us a pos-
 sibility of beginning to live ; it cannot
 be thought unjust, that he should appoint
 us to die. Especially since *That Death*
 which was introduced by *Adam*, (and
whatever would have been the *Conse-*
quences of it in the *future* State,) was as
 universally removed by the *second Adam*,
 (who is the Lord from Heaven,) as it
 spread universally after the Transgression
 of the *first*. For *as in Adam all die*, (all
 men are made mortal ;) *even so in Christ*
shall all be made alive, (shall be restored
 from that natural Mortality,) *Rom, v, 22.*
 And *as, by the offense of One, Death*
came upon all men to Condemnation ; even
so by the righteousness of One, the free
Gift is come upon all men to justification
of Life, ver. 18 ; that is, to a Possibility
 again of obtaining *eternal Life*.

As to the *Exclusion out of Paradise*,
 and the *Miseries of the present Life* con-
 sequent upon God's cursing the Earth ;
 they

they are, with regard to the *Posterity* of *Adam*, only *natural and necessary* Consequences of his Losing those Free Gifts and Favours of God, which neither *They* nor *He* ever had any Claim of Right to enjoy. And, after all; the miseries men bring upon themselves in This World by their *own Sins*, are much greater than those they suffer in consequence of the Transgression of *Adam*. For, notwithstanding God's Curse upon the Earth, the condition of men would be in many degrees better than it is; nay, even very tolerable; did it not perpetually happen, that One man's Sin makes him a Tyrant to Others, and an Enemy to himself. And that *Men*, who have their *Beings* through Mercy, should undergo the *Natural Calamities* of this *Mortal* State; cannot be unjust with God, any more than that they should at all be *born Mortal*. Nor can *Any Reason* be given, why God might not have made men *at first* to live but such a certain number of Years as they *Now* do, if he had so pleased; nor why he might not *originally* have put them into the World with only *such a Proportion* of Good to be enjoyed by them, as virtuous and good men may *Now* enjoy in This World,

Serm. World, if all men were truly virtuous
XIV. and religious.



Lastly ; As to the *Temptations and Liableness to Sin*, which are greater and stronger since the Fall, through mens corrupt Affections ; they are by no means inconsistent with *That Uprightness*, which I am now speaking of. For *Temptation* is not *Sin*, but the *Tryal* and the Occasion of *Virtue*. And God, who knows how to make just *Allowances* for every one's case, with the most exact Proportion and Equity ; may prove the Sincere Obedience of his Creatures, by what Tryals and Temptations he himself, in his All-wise Government, thinks fit to permit. In all which, 'tis certain that God makes no man *Wicked* by *Nature* ; but every man *then* sinneth, *when he is drawn away of his own Lust and inticed*. For, *when Lust has conceived, it bringeth forth Sin ; and Sin, when 'tis finished, bringeth forth Death*. Jam. i, 15. And This may suffice for Explication of the *first* part of the Wise man's Assertion in the Text, in justification of God from all possibility of being charged with the Sins of Men ; that *God has made Man upright*.

II. Here

II. Here is in the 2^d place a Confession, that the Sin and Misery of Men, is wholly owing to *themselves*: But *THEY have sought out many Inventions*. And concerning This, there needs not much to be addd. For when it has once been made appear, that God made Man *upright*; that is, that notwithstanding all the Infirmities of their Nature, he has yet indued them with *proper Faculties* for their *present* State, to enable them to perform the Duty that is expected of them, according to the Proportions of a *Man*, in this very Imperfect State; It follows in course, that the *Corruptions* wherewith they deprave themselves, are not the Fault of that *Nature* which God has given them, but the perverse *Inventions* of their own Wills. And indeed, whoever looks into the World, cannot but observe, that much the greater part of the Vices of Men, arise plainly from bad Education and ill Example, from the Allurements of the World and the Temptations of ill Company, from the Violence of unguided Passions and the perverseness of unreasonable Desires: None of which things do belong properly to the *Nature* of a Reasonable Creature, but are unreasonable

Serm. sonable and violent and therefore *unnatural*
 XV. Corruptions of the Faculties where-
 with God has indued us.

To enter into the *Particulars* of *All* vitious Habits, would be impossible, as well as disagreeable. But, to mention briefly the Three *great* Heads or Instances of Corruption.

1st. With respect to our Duty towards God. Is it not evidently *agreeable to the nature* of *rational* Creatures, to adore and worship, to love and to obey, the Supreme Author and Preserver of their Being? And is it not an *unnatural Invention*, sought out by the most brutish degeneracy; to forsake the Worship of Him that Made the Heavens and the Earth and the Seas and all that in them is, to worship Wood and Stones graven by Art and Man's Device; and to *change the Glory of the incorruptible God, into Images made like to corruptible Man, and to Birds, and four-footed Beasts, and creeping things?* Or even in the Service and Worship of the *True* God, to forsake *That Method* of Worship which he himself has appointed; and set up any *Inventions of their own*, in the Place
 of

of what God has exprefsly command-
ed.

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2dly, With regard to our Duty towards *Men*: Does not *Nature* plainly lead us to Righteousness and Truth, to Justice and Equity, to universal Charity and Good-Will towards each other? And is it not apparently the Base *Invention* of a Heart which has laid aside all Humanity, that is; all true humane *Nature*; to enrich itself by Fraud and Unrighteousness, by oppressing the innocent and the poor; or to exalt itself by Violence and Cruelty; and insulting over the Miseries of its fellow-Creatures?

Lastly, With regard to our Duty towards *Ourselves*: Are not the Appetites of *Nature*, reasonable and modest, regular and sober, peaceable and contented within their proper limits? And is it not plainly the *Invention* of an evil Heart, and of a wilfully degenerate and corrupted Spirit; to heighen unnatural Appetites by Art, to blow up disorderly Passions by obstinate Self-Will, and to indulge unreasonable Desires by habitual opposition to right Reason and Religion?

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In All these Cases therefore 'tis manifestly true, that *God has made Man upright, but They themselves have sought out many Inventions. Inventions, to corrupt by indirect Practices the Simplicity of Nature : And, when they have so done, Inventions to deceive themselves, by giving the Name of Nature to the unnatural Effects of evil Customs and Habits ; and Inventions to lay themselves asleep in their Error and Deceit, by finding out numberless ways of reconciling a Wicked Life with the Hopes and with the Pretences of Religion.*

The Application of what has been said, may be very brief. And

1st. From what has been said, we may observe, that the Difficulty of obeying the Commandments of God, does not so much arise, generally speaking, from the Nature of our *Duty*, or from the Nature of *Man* ; as from the Temptations of *the World*, and from the *Custom* of Sinning. To Idolatry, Profaneness and Irreligion, there is *no Temptation in Nature* ; but from the Wickedness of Men, *wilfully* deceiving one another, and being deceived.

ceived. To Iniquity, Cruelty and Injustice, there is nothing in *human Nature* that prompts us; But the Vices are *inhumane* as much as unchristian, and the effects only of unreasonable indulged evil Habits. To Intemperance and Debauchery, there *are* indeed in many persons strong Inclinations, that may seem *more natural*, and to be more immediate Effects of man's *Original* corruption; being a *Law in the Members, warring against the Law of the Mind, and bringing men into Captivity to the Law of Sin* and Death. But even *These* inclinations, are *Temptations* only, and not *Sins*; unless they be consented to and indulged, in *unreasonable* and *unlawful* Instances; which God has given us the Use of Reason, and the Obligations of Religion, on purpose to restrain. If therefore it be *Natural* to Man to be a *reasonable* Creature, 'tis *natural* to him also to be *Religious*; Religion being nothing else but the highest Reason, and the keeping our Passions subject and obedient to its Laws. Wherefore when St *Paul* affirms, *Eph. ii, 3,* that *we all were by NATURE children of wrath*; 'tis a very great Abuse of Scripture, to understand him as if he had said,

Serm. that *we were CREATED children of*
 XIV. *wrath.* For the *Nature* the Apostle there
 speaks of, is not *That nature* wherein
 God created us, but *That second Nature*
 of evil Habits, which wicked men bring
 upon themselves by *Custom* in Sinning;
That Nature, which we usually mean e-
 ven in common Speech, when we say
 'tis the *Nature* of a profane or vitious
 man, to act profanely or vitiously. For
 so are the Apostle's *express Words*: *We*
were by Nature, saith he, *the children of*
wrath, even as Others; because *among*
them WE also had our conversation in
times past, in the Lusts of our Flesh,
fulfilling the desires of the Flesh and of
the Mind: Speaking of Christians, con-
 verted from Heathen Wickedness and I-
 dolatry.

And *This* shows, in what manner also
 are to be understood such Texts as these
 which follow. *Behold, I was SHAPEN*
in iniquity, and in Sin did my Mother
CONCEIVE me, Ps. li, 5. *The wicked*
are estranged from the WOMB, they go
astray as soon as they are BORN, speak-
ing lies, Ps. lviii, 3. *I knew that thou*
wouldst deal very treacherously, and wast
called

called a transgressor from the WOMB, Serm. l. xlviij, 8. *They were a naughty generation, and their malice was BRED in them, and their cogitation would NEVER be changed,* Wisd. xii, 10. The Meaning of all these Texts is, not that men were really wicked by necessity of Nature; but 'tis a complaint of them, that they were *so* wicked and corrupt, *as if*, speaking by way of Similitude, it had been *bred* even in their very nature. But that it is not so meant *literally*, appears from hence, that, on the contrary, the same manner of speaking is used concerning Good men also. *Job xxxi, 18,* describing his own charitableness to the Poor, he saith; *From my YOUTH, he (the Poor) was brought up with me; and I have guided her (the Widow) from my Mother's WOMB.* And *Ecclus. i, 14,* describing very Righteous men, he saith; *To fear the Lord, is the beginning of Wisdom; and it was created with the Faithful in the WOMB.* The Meaning is; Such persons are as just and righteous, as if Virtue (comparatively speaking) had not been a matter of *Choice*, but as if it had really been a Part even of their Nature itself.

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XIV.

Serm.

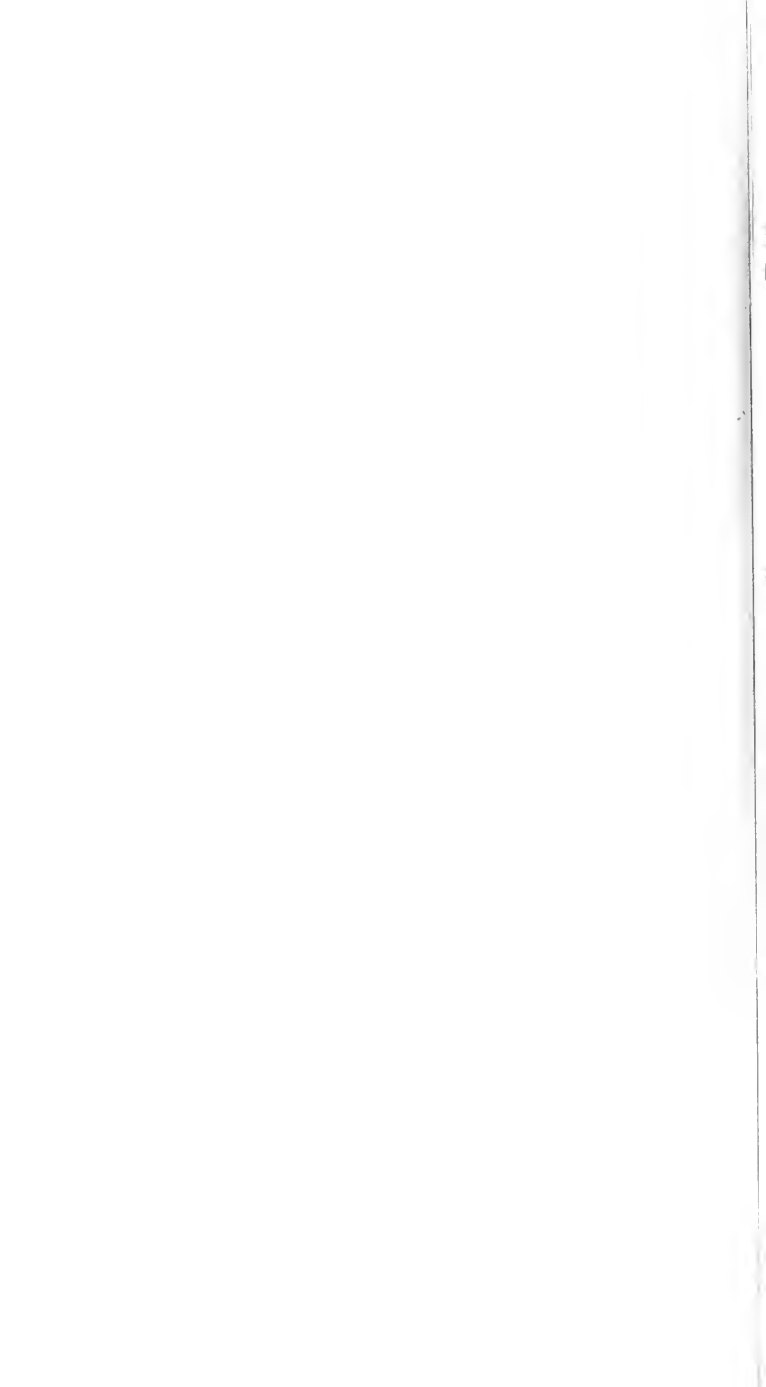
XIV.

2dly. From what has been said, we may see the Reason of the *Manner* of our Saviour's admonition to his Disciples; when, taking up a *young child* in his arms, and recommending its *natural* Simplicity, humility and innocence; he told them, that *except they were converted and became as little children, they should not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven*; for that of *Such was the Kingdom of God*. And St Paul makes use of the same Similitude, 1 Cor. xiv, 20, *In Understanding, saith he, be Men, but in Malice be ye children*; that is, be ye like to those who have not yet *sought out* any evil *Inventions*.

3dly. We may from hence observe, how *great* the *Sin* of Those is, who by ill Advice, or bad Example, *corrupt* the Minds of *Children*, or of *Men*. This is, in the highest degree, being like unto *Satan*, the great Tempter and Destroyer of Mankind. And if *They* shall severely be punished, who *comply* with those Temptations which rob them of their *Own* Innocency, and destroy that *Uprightness* wherein God had created

ated them ; of how much sorer Punish- Serm.
ment shall *Those* be thought worthy, XIV.
who industriously labour in teaching
Others also to seek out evil *Inven-*
tions!





A

S E R M O N

Preach'd in the

PARISH-CHURCH

O F

St James's Westminster,

On Sunday, Dec. 29. 1723.

R O M. IX. 23, 24.

And that he might make known the Riches of his Glory on the Vessels of Mercy, which he had afore prepared unto Glory: Even Us whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles.

THERE is no part of the whole New Testament, of greater difficulty to be understood; or which has been more misapplied by the ignorant,
more

Serm.

XV.



Serm
XV.
~

more wrested by the learned, and more falsely interpreted by the melancholy pious person; than this 9th chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the *Romans*. In which Chapter, whilst Some have greatly perplexed themselves by picking out some of the middle verses of it; concerning God's electing the *children which were yet unborn*, and had *neither done good nor evil*; concerning his *loving Jacob*, and *hating Esau*; concerning his *hardning Pharaoh*; and *shewing Mercy on whom he will have Mercy*, and *having Compassion on whom he will have Compassion*; and concerning his having the same Power over Mankind, as the *Potter* has over the *Clay*, to make one Vessel to Honour, and another to Dishonour: Whilst some, I say, have greatly perplexed themselves by picking out some of these particulars singly; 'tis yet nevertheless very evident, both from the Apostle's *Introduction* of his Discourse at the *Beginning* of the chapter, and from his *Conclusion* and summing up of his Argument at *the End*; that the design of the *Whole*, is not at all to speak concerning any Decree of God, with respect to the *final* and *eternal* state of *particular Persons*; but only to declare both the Sovereign Power and the Justice of God,
in

in distributing to *different Nations* in divers Ages *what different Advantages* he pleases; and revealing his Will to them at *what Times* and in *what manner* he thinks fit. As, in that great instance of his rejecting the *Jews*, and calling in the *Gentiles*. Which, at the *Beginning* of the chapter, the Apostle expressly declares to be the Aim and Intention of his Discourse: And at the *End* he sums it up, as the Conclusion designed: And all the *intermediate* parts of it, and the Examples therein alledged, are plainly nothing but *Similitudes* and *Illustrations* of this Argument.

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The Words of the Text itself, are as clear a Declaration of this whole matter, as can be desired. *That he might make known the Riches of his Glory on the Vessels of Mercy, which he had afore prepared unto Glory; even US whom he has called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles.* Here the Apostle clearly and expressly declares, that by the *Vessels of Mercy, prepared afore of God unto Glory*, (of whom he had been treating in the fore-going part of the Chapter,) he does not mean *particular Persons* chosen unconditionally to *eternal Salvation*; but the
whole

Serm. *whole Body* of Christians, even *Us* whom
 XV. *he has called*, (and who have *obeyed* That
 Call by believing in Christ,) not from a-
 mong *the Jews only*, but *also of the*
Gentiles: Called, to receive that Grace
 and Mercy, and to embrace those Advan-
 tages of the *Gospel*; by rejecting of which,
 the *Jews* became Vessels of Wrath fitted
 to destruction. And *We* in like manner,
 notwithstanding our being at present the
 Vessels of Mercy, yet, if *we live unwor-*
thy of the same Advantages, the Apostle
 bids us beware, least, since God spared
 not the *Jews*, the natural branches; much
 more he also spare not *Us*, who were but
 ingrafted after *Their* Fall.

But, to enter into a more full and par-
 ticular Explication of the Apostle's *whole*
 Discourse. In the *foregoing part* of this
 Epistle, he had shown at large, *that* the
Gentiles, by corrupting themselves con-
 trary to the Law of *Nature*, (*ch. i;*) and
 the *Jews* by disobeying the Law given
 them from *Heaven*, (*ch. ii;*) were *Both*
of them become equally liable to the
 wrath of God: For that, God being no
 Respector of Persons, *as many as have*
sinned without the Law, shall perish with-
out the Law; and as many as have sin-
 ned

ned in the Law, shall be judged by the Law, ch. ii, ver. 12. Serm.
XV.

That therefore the insufficiency of *Both* these Laws, either to preserve men from Sin, or to furnish them with sufficient means of reconciliation after Sin; I say, the insufficiency of *Both* these Laws evidently appearing: consequently both *Jews* and *Gentiles* were obliged to believe in *Christ*; embracing and obeying the *grace* or *gracious Terms* of the Gospel, as the only Means of Justification for the future, (ch. iii.) *For since all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God, they can only be justified freely by his Grace, through the Redemption that is in Jesus Christ, v. 24.* That is; *All* being Sinners, they can none of them claim Salvation by the merit of their obedience, but merely through the gracious pardon of Sin freely granted to penitents thro' Faith in Christ.

That this Justification by *Faith* without *Works*, (that is, by the Obedience of the *Gospel alone*, without the Ceremonies of the *Law*;) *Was* abundantly *Sufficient*; because it was *the same*, by which *Abraham* himself, the Father of the faithful, had been justified, (ch. iv;) *For the Promise was not to Abraham or to his Seed through*

Serm. *through the Law (the Mosaick Law,)*
 XV. *but through the righteousness of Faith,*

ver. 13.

That This Justification by the Faith and Obedience of the *Gospel*, affords much greater assurance of present peace and reconciliation with God, and of eternal Life and Glory hereafter, than the *Law* could do, (*ch. v.*) *For if* (saith he) *when we were Enemies, we were reconciled to God by the Death of his Son; much more being now justified by his Blood, we shall be saved from Wrath thro' him,* ver. 9.

That this free justification by *Grace* through the Faith of the *Gospel*, without the Ceremonies of the *Mosaick* institution, obliges men to a stricter *Obedience*, to greater Purity and Holiness of Life, than the *Law* itself had done, (*ch. vi;*) Christians *being now made free from Sin, and become the Servants of righteousness; being dead unto Sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord,* ver. 11 and 18.

That the *Law of Moses*, was by no means able to deliver men from the bondage and slavery of Sin; from *forbearing* to do the *good* they would, and from *doing* the *evil* they would not; from the *Law* in their Body, *warring against the*
Law

Law of their Mind, and bringing them into Captivity to the Law of Sin and Death, (ch. vii.) But that the Gospel, having delivered men from the Body of this Death, from the bondage of corruption into the glorious Liberty of the children of God; enabled them to prevail, not only over the Temptations of Sin within themselves, but also over all the Persecutions and all the Powers of the World, (ch. viii.) For the Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus, hath made me free from the Law of Sin and Death. And Now, Who shall separate us from the Love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or Sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us, ver. 2 and 35.

The Apostle, I say, having largely proved these several Particulars in the first *Eight* Chapters of this Epistle; proceeds in this *Ninth* Chapter to answer a great *Prejudice* and strong *Objection*, which he foresaw would be raised by the *unbelieving Jews*, against what he had hitherto been pleading for. For, if his doctrine deliver'd in this Epistle was true,

Serm. true, the consequence was plain, that; who-
 XV. soever of the *Jews* rejected the Gospel; it would follow, notwithstanding their being *descended* from the *Patriarchs*, to whom all the *Promises* were made; notwithstanding their being the *peculiar people* of God; notwithstanding that *to Them* were committed the *Prophecies and Oracles of God*; notwithstanding that *to Them* pertained the *adoption, and the glory, and the Covenants, and the giving of the Law, and the Service of God, and the Promises*; It would follow, that they were still *nevertheless* out of the Way of Salvation, in their most zealous Observance of the ceremonial righteousness of the *Law*; unless they *believed* in *Christ*, and *obeyed* the *Gospel*, which is the *Righteousness of Faith*. This the *Jews* thought to be an impossible Doctrine; and contrary to the Promises of God made to their Fathers the *Patriarchs*; and that therefore it was only an effect of the Apostle's *zeal* and *Prejudice* against them; *since* his forsaking *Them*, and being converted to *Christianity*. To this Objection therefore he replies at large, in this *Ninth* chapter; by showing that there was no injustice in God, no breach of Promise, no change of his Will, in re-
 jecting

jecting the unbelieving Jews, and receiving in the Gentiles; since even *originally* the Promise was not made to *All* the children of *Abraham*, but to *Isaac* only; and not to *Both* the Sons of *Isaac*, but to *Jacob* only: And, of the Posterity of *Jacob*, *All were not Israel*, which were of *Israel*; but, in *Elijah's* days, seven thousand only were the true *Israel*; and, in the time of *Isaiak*, though the number of the children of *Israel* was as the sand of the Sea, yet a remnant only was to be saved; And, during the Whole period of the *Law*, God had mercy on whom he *would* have Mercy, and Compassion on whom he *would* have Compassion; *That is*, not on the whole people promiscuously, but on whom *he himself* pleased, who was the *Alone* competent Judge, and who *Alone* could infallibly distinguish such as were truly stedfast in their *Faith* or *Fidelity* towards him: And *whom he would*, he *hardened*; that is, out of obstinate and incorrigible Offenders, he chose whom he pleased, to make remarkable examples of his wrath and vengeance. Since this, saith the Apostle, was the Case *Originally*, and the method of God's proceeding *all along*: Much more at the coming of the *Messias*

Serm. into the World, who was the End of the
 XV. Law; might God justly reject and cast off
 the Unbelievers; and reckon Those only
 the true children of *Abraham*, who imi-
 tated the Faith and Obedience of that
 great Father of the Faithful: *Making
 known the riches of his glory*, as the
 Text expresses it, *on the vessels of mercy,*
which he had afore prepared unto glory;
*Even US whom he has called, not of
 the Jews only, but also of the Gen-
 tiles.*

This being premised *in general*, and
 the principal force of the Apostle's Argu-
 ment explained; the several *Particulars*
 of his discourse in this chapter, which
 have often been so widely mistaken and so
 strangely misapplied, may without much
 difficulty be understood. In the *first five
 verses* he begins with an *Apology* for him-
 self, that, in this whole doctrine concern-
 ing the rejection of the *Jews*, he was
 not at all influenced by any *Prejudice* or
Hatred he had contracted against his coun-
 try-men since his conversion to Christiani-
 ty. So far from *that*, that on the con-
 trary he calls God to witness in the most
 solemn manner, that his grief and trou-
 ble of Mind for their Impenitency and
 In-

Incredulity, and for their consequent rejection, and the judgments God would send upon them; was much greater and more uneasy to him, than all the other afflictions and calamities he met with in the World. *I say the Truth in Christ* (says he,) *I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost; that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my Heart; For I could wish that MY SELF were accursed from Christ, for my brethren my kinsmen according to the flesh.* The expression is highly figurative and affectionate. And melancholy pious persons have sometimes been disturbed at it; as if *St Paul's Wish* was an inimitable flight of Affection: Whose example herein, if a Christian can *in no case* follow, he may be apt to accuse himself of want of Charity; and yet to follow it in *any case*, seems terrible even to the strongest affection, and shocking even to the most fervent Zeal. For tho' for a good man, as the same Apostle elsewhere expresses himself, one would even dare to *die*; yet for a man, upon any possible account whatsoever, to be content to become subject to the *Curse of God*, and to his *final displeasure*; this seems beyond the utmost bounds even of

Serm. Christian Charity itself, either to desire,
 XV. or to be ever capable of being prevailed
 with to submit to. 'Tis certain therefore,
 that the Meaning of the Apostle has been
 misunderstood; and that his intention in
 this passage, was not to wish himself sub-
 ject to the *eternal wrath of God*, (which
 is absurd and impossible;) But, the wish-
 ing himself *accursed from Christ* for the
 sake of his own Nation and People, is to
 wish, that, if it were possible, he, by
 bearing *himself* those temporal judgments,
 which he saw were coming upon *Them*
 on account of their being *accursed from*
Christ through their obstinacy and incre-
 dularity, might restore them again to the
 Favour of God, and reinstate them in the
 Privileges of his peculiar people. *I could*
wish that MY SELF were accursed from
Christ, for my brethren my kinsmen ac-
cording to the Flesh. So far (says he,)
 am I from bearing any *hatred* or *ill-will*
 to my own Nation the *Jews*, that on
 the contrary I could willingly suffer all
 the Calamities in the World in their stead,
 if thereby I could prevent their rejection,
 and their being *accursed from Christ*.
 And this high expression of his zeal and
 concern for his own Nation in the *Begin-*
ning of his Discourse, is an undeniable
 De-

Demonstration, that the *whole Argument* Serm. XV. *itself*, which follows in this chapter, does not at all relate to any imaginary Predestination of *Particular* persons to *eternal Happiness* or *Misery*; but that it wholly belongs to the rejection of the *NATION of the Jews*, for their infidelity; and the calling in of the *Gentiles*, by the Gospel. For, in *This* Sense, his Apology for himself is very *pertinent* and apposite, and *necessary* to be premised in the Introduction of a Discourse, which he foresaw must needs be so extremely ungrateful to the *whole Jewish Nation*. But according to the *Other* Interpretation of the Apostle's Argument, there can *no Sense* at all be made of this *Apology*. For since predestinate or reprobate persons, if of such he were speaking, were selected *irrespectively* both from among *Jews* and *Gentiles*; and, *who* the *particular persons* so selected were, could not at all be known in this life; it could not serve any imaginable purpose in *such* an Argument, to premise an *Apology* concerning his great heaviness and continual sorrow of Heart for the rejection of his *own Nation* and Countrymen, the *whole people* of the *Jews*.

Serm.

XV.

This *latter* therefore, being plainly his true Scope and Design; he proceeds at the *6th* verse to show, that there was no injustice, no breach of promise in God, in rejecting the unbelieving *Jews*, and receiving in the *Gentiles* in their room; forasmuch as the very *original* Promise to their Father *Abraham*, by which they were first intitled to become God's peculiar people, was not made promiscuously to *all* his Posterity, but to the children of the promise, the seed of *Isaac* only. Which was from the Beginning a Type and plain præfiguration, that God did not principally intend his promise, to take place in *Abraham's* Descendants according to the *Flesh*; but in those who by a *Faith* or *Fidelity* like his, were in a truer and higher Sense the children and Followers, of that great Father of the Faithful. The Promise of God therefore is not at all made void by this new Dispensation: Nor can I in any wise be charged, says he, *as though* I supposed *the Word of God had taken none effect*; *For they are not All Israel, which are Of Israel; Neither because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children; But in I-*
saac

Isaac shall thy seed be called ; That is, Serm. XV.
They which are the children of the Flesh, these are not the children of God ; but the children of the promise, are counted for the Seed, ver. 8. So that, even according to the Original Intent of the promise made to Abraham, Christians of the Gentiles who imitated the Faith and moral Obedience of that Patriarch, were more truly his children, than his unbelieving Posterity according to the Flesh.

The same Argument the Apostle further illustrates in the 10th verse, by a still more eminent Example. For, if, saith he, not only among the children of *Abraham*, but even among the Posterity of *Isaac* himself, (that Child of the Promise ;) God was pleased to continue to make such a distinction, as to confine the Promise to *Jacob* in exclusion of *Esau*, even before Either of them was born into the World : Much more may God *Now*, without injustice, confine his promise to *such* only, who, after the Example of *Jacob*, believe in God, and obey his Will in what manner soever it be made known to them ; Exclusive of those, who continue in their Unbelief, and obstinately reject that only means of Salvation which God hath proposed to them :

Serm. Exclusive (I say) of these, notwithstanding
 XV. that they be by descent the Posterity of
 ~~~~~ *Jacob*, and in Other Respects equal to  
 them that Believe. And this is the full  
 meaning of the following Words, v. 11.  
*The children being not yet born, neither  
 having done any good or evil; that the  
 purpose of God according to election might  
 stand, not of works, but of him that  
 calleth; It was said unto Rebekah, The  
 elder shall serve the younger; As it is  
 written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau  
 have I hated.*

That *the Purpose of God, according to  
 election, might stand.* The only difficul-  
 ty in this passage is, *What Purpose* of God  
 the Apostle is here speaking of. Many  
 have strongly imagined, that it is his Pur-  
 pose of choosing some particular persons  
 unconditionally to eternal Life, and o-  
 thers to eternal Destruction. But the A-  
 postle gives not the least Hint of any  
 such thing. On the contrary, he explains  
 himself in exprefs Words, that he means  
 God's *Purpose of appointing the elder  
 of Isaac's Sons to serve the younger; And  
 This*, not so much in their *Persons*, as  
 in their *national Posterity*: And therefore  
 no Wonder, that God made This Ap-  
 pointment *before they were yet born.* And  
 the

the *Use* or *Application* the Apostle makes of this Instance, is, to prevent an Objection of the unbelieving *Jews*; Who since they could not deny but, notwithstanding all the Promises made to *Abraham* and *Isaac*, yet God might in *This Sense*, without any injustice, *hate* and *reject Esau*; consequently they could not reasonably charge God with any unrighteousness, in rejecting in like manner the *unbelieving Jews* also *themselves*. *What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid.* ver. 14.

And to the *same* Purpose he urges, in the following verses, the Instances of what God *declared* to *Moses*, and what he *did* to *Pharaoh*. If *of old* God declared to *Moses*, that he would have mercy on whom he *would* have mercy, and would have compassion on whom he *would* have compassion; *that is*, would have compassion on men in *what manner* and upon *what conditions* he *himself* judged fit, who is certainly the *most proper* and the *Only unerring Judge*: For the *same* reason *Now* also, says the Apostle, neither *is it of him that willeth* nor of *him that runneth*, to choose for himself in *what Method* God shall bring men to  
Sal-

Serm.  
XV.



Salvation; (as the *unbelieving Jews* would do, by adhering obstinately to the *ceremonial* righteousness of the *Mosaick Law* :) But 'tis of *God* only, that sheweth *Mercy*; 'tis *His* part only, to appoint in *what manner*, to *whom*, and on *what conditions*, he will show it. Even in *Humane* Judicatures, should an *unskilful Spectator* take upon him to find fault with the Sentence of an *Able and Upright Judge*; might not the Judge *well* express himself in this manner: *I will acquit, whom I see fit to acquit; and I will condemn, whom I see fit to condemn?* Meaning, not that he would do it *arbitrarily*; but that, as having Alone the most perfect Knowledge of the *Law* and of the *Fact*, his Sentence ought not to be questioned by *unskilful Spectators*.

Again: If of *old* God always reserved to himself a Liberty of choosing likewise out of incorrigible offenders, whom he thought fit, to make publick and eminent examples of his wrath and vengeance; as in the instance of *Pharaoh*, whom God hardned, (just in the same sense as He is said to have *tempted David*, when by his permission *Satan* tempted him, 2 *Sam.* xxiv, 1; and 1 *Chron.* xxi, 1.

God



God\* hardned *Pharaoh*, I say,) not by making or decreeing him to be wicked, (God forbid;) but, *being* wicked and incorrigibly obstinate, God raised him up or supported him in his Power, and deferred destroying him, and by many tryals made both his obstinacy and his punishment remarkable and conspicuous to the World, that he might shew his Power in him, and that his Name might be declared throughout all the Earth. If thus in all Former times, says the Apostle, God always reserved to himself this Power of choosing from among incorrigible offenders, whom he pleased, to make publick examples of his wrath; as in this instance of *Pharaoh*: for the same reason Now also, says he, neither is there any injustice in God, in choosing to make the impenitent and unbelieving *Jews*, (whom all his Judgments hitherto, and all his merciful and gracious invitations to embrace the Gospel,

Serm.  
XV.




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\* Thus *Deut.* xxix, 4, When *Moses* intended to expostulate with the *Israelites*, and to reprove them in the severest manner, for their *Wilful obstinacy and ingratitude*; he thus expresses it: *Ye have seen all that the Lord did -----: Yet the Lord hath not Given you an Heart to perceive, and Eyes to see, and Ears to hear, unto This day.* The Sense of these words of *Moses*, is exactly what at This day is vulgarly expressed by the term, *Graceless*.

have

Serm. have only *hardned*, instead of bringing  
 XV. them to Repentance;) there is no injustice in God in making *Them* Examples of his Severity and Wrath, notwithstanding their being the Posterity of *Abraham* according to the Flesh; at the same time that he resolves to have mercy upon as many of the *Gentiles*, as shall obey the Call by which he invites them to receive the Gospel.

Having thus cleared his main Argument, the Apostle proceeds in the 19<sup>th</sup> verse, to propose an *Objection*, which he foresaw the unbelieving Jews would make against the Doctrine he had been hitherto establishing. *Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? for Who hath resisted his Will?* If God resolves to cast us off and destroy us, as he did *Pharaoh*; why doth he yet blame us, for being so rejected? for, how can his Will be resisted? To this, He makes a two-fold Answer. *First*, by way of general Caution, *ver. 20, 21*; And *secondly*, by a particular and direct Reply, *ver. 22*, and in the Words of the Text. *First*, by way of general Caution, he reproves the rashness of replying presumptuously against God,

God, ver. 20; *Nay but, O man, Who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed, say to him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the Potter power over the Clay, of the same lump to make one Vessel to honour, and another to dishonour?* That is; not that God could originally create one man unconditionally to eternal Life, and another on purpose for eternal Misery; For this, if it were *possible* (as 'tis infinitely *impossible*) to be true, would yet be nothing at all to the Apostle's Argument concerning the Whole Nation of *the Jews*: But the plain meaning is (as appears from the express application of these passages in the 45<sup>th</sup> of *Isaiab* and the 18<sup>th</sup> of *Jeremiah*, from whence they are cited;) that God has as much *Power* and as much *Right*, to punish or reject *one* Nation or people, and receive or exalt *another*, upon what terms *he himself judges* to be most fit and reasonable; as the Potter has, to form and mould his clay, first into one Shape, and then into another. But *Secondly*, the Apostle answers further to the fore-mentioned Objection, by a particular and direct Reply; that the rejected Jews had no reason at  
all

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all to murmur against the Power and Will of God; for that though it was indeed *his* absolute Will and uncontrollable Power, to punish them *when and in what manner* he thought fit; yet it was *Their own* obstinacy and impenitency only, that made them liable to be so rejected and punished *at all*. Ver. 22, *What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his Power known, endured WITH MUCH LONG-SUFFERING the Vessels of wrath fitted to destruction?* The words, *with much long-suffering*, prove very clearly, that even the rejected *Vessels of Wrath* themselves were not destroyed, till God had first long waited even for *Their* Repentance and Amendment; which evidently shows, it was not *before* determined to be impossible. And then he adds in the words of the Text: *And that he might make known the Riches of his Glory on the Vessels of Mercy, which he had afore prepared unto Glory; Even US whom he has called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles.* The *Vessels of Mercy* therefore, are not *particular persons* chosen irrespectively; but *Us* whom he has called, that is, the *whole Body of Christians*, in opposition to the *whole*

*whole Nation* of the rejected unbelieving *Jews*. Which is also further evident from the Application he makes in the following verse, of the words of the Prophet: *As he saith also in Osee, I will call them my people, which were not my people, and her beloved, which was not beloved: And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there shall they be called the children of the Living God.* And still more clearly, if possible, from the manner of his *Summing up* the *whole Argument*, ver. 30; *What shall we say then? that the Gentiles which followed not after Righteousness, have attained to Righteousness, even the Righteousness which is of Faith; But Israel which followed after the law of Righteousness, hath not attained to the Law of Righteousness: Wherefore? Because they sought it not by Faith, (that is, by embracing the Gospel,) but as it were by the Works of the Mosaick Law.* All which, he goes on yet further to explain and illustrate, in the whole 10th and 11th Chapters following. Which are so plain, that they need no Interpretation.

From

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From what has been said, we may draw the two following practical Observations.

1<sup>st</sup>, Such pious Persons, as are apt to be disturbed with melancholy apprehensions concerning their own State; fearing, that after all their sincerest and most earnest indeavours to obey the Will of God by a life of Virtue and true Holiness, they may yet possibly not be of the number of those *Vessels of Mercy, whom he has afore prepared unto Glory*; Such Persons, I say, may have their Doubts removed, by considering, that all those passages of Scripture, from which Some have earnestly indeavour'd to establish the Doctrine of absolute and unconditionate decrees, do upon a careful consideration appear to have been greatly misinterpreted; and that by *the Vessels of Mercy, whom God had afore prepared unto Glory*, St Paul plainly means, not *particular Persons* chosen irrespectively out of the bulk of Mankind; but the *whole Body of Christians*, the universal Church of Christ, in opposition to the *whole People or Nation of the Jews*. The *Election*  
(the

(the *chosen people*) have obtained it, and *the rest were blinded.* Serm.  
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2dly, On the other hand, such as are apt to be Presumptuous, and think themselves secure in the bare Profession of Christianity; upon account of the *whole Body of Christians* being stiled in Scripture, *the elect, the election, Vessels of Mercy*, and the like: These ought to take Notice, that in like manner as St Paul, out of the prophet *Isaiab*, observes that when the *whole Nation* of the Jews were the chosen and peculiar people of God, yet out of Them *a Remnant* only were to be finally saved; So *Now* also, though the whole Body of Christians, upon account of God's gracious Offers of Mercy to them in Christ, are stiled in Scripture *the election of grace*; yet Those only who live *worthy* of so excellent a Profession, by the Practise of true Virtue, Righteousness and Holiness, shall finally be made partakers of the Benefit thereof. For, as Christ *chose*, (the word in the Original is, *electèd*) twelve disciples, and yet one of them proved a Devil and the Son of Perdition; so, notwithstanding that *all* Christians are the *Vessels of Mercy, prepared of God a-*  
A 2 *fore*

Serm. *fore unto Glory* ; yet if any man *draws*  
XV. *back*, he shall lose the Benefit of that  
Preparation ; and God will no longer  
*have any Pleasure* in him ; that is, he  
shall finally be rejected, and not be made  
partaker of the Salvation of the Go-  
spel.





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A  
S E R M O N

Preach'd in the

PARISH-CHURCH

O F

*St James's Westminster,*


On *Sunday, Feb. 2, 1723.*

---

LUKE XVI, 12.

*And if ye have not been Faithful in  
That which is Another man's, who  
shall give you That which is your  
own?*

**T**H E S E words are the Conclusion of Serm.  
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a Parable; in which our Lord shows  
us, that the Men of *This* world  
are generally more diligent, more skil-  
ful, and more true to their Own Interest,  
A a 2 in



Serm. in the pursuit of their *worldly* Designs ;  
 XVI. than men who have the Knowledge of  
 the *True Religion*, and of the Happiness  
 of the *Life to come*, are in securing to  
 themselves a Portion in That *eternal*  
*State*. And thence he exhorts his Dis-  
 ciples, to learn Wisdom *in this Parti-*  
*cular*, even from *vitious* and *corrupt*  
 men ; to learn, even from *Their* Beha-  
 viour, to make the best Improvement of  
 the Advantages they have in their Hands ;  
 and be as diligent in making Provision for  
 the time to come, in Matters of *Eternal*  
 Concern, as Others are in *Temporal*.  
 The case he puts by way of Similitude,  
 is that of a *Steward* ; who having em-  
 bezzled his Lord's Goods, and finding  
 he should thereupon be removed from his  
 Place, deliberates with himself what Course  
 he had best to take for his future Subsistence.  
 To *dig*, or earn his Bread by the  
 Labour of his Hands, was what he had  
 never been brought up to ; To *Beg*, he  
 was ashamed. What he at last resolv'd  
 upon, was to do at present some consi-  
 derable Acts of Generosity to several of  
 his Lord's Debtors ; that afterwards, when  
 he came to be discharged from his Place,  
 he might find Some Support in the Re-  
 turns of *Their* Gratitude: *Ver. 4, I am*  
*resol-*

*resolved what to do; that, when I am put out of the Stewardship, they may receive me into their Houses.* Accordingly, sending for his Lord's Debtors, he immediately *remits* to each of them a considerable Proportion of their Debt. Whether we are to suppose he did this *fraudulently*, in further Wrong to his Lord; or whether he did it *with Justice*, out of his own present Substance; is not material to the Intent of the Parable. What our Saviour *observes* upon it, is *This only*; that his Lord commended him, ver. 8, *because he had done wisely*: He commended his *Worldly Wisdom*, in securing to himself Friends against the day of Adversity. And the *Application* our Lord makes of it, is *This*: That, what All men, both just and unjust, acknowledge to be the great Instance of Wisdom in *Temporal* Affairs; the making provision beforehand against a time of Necessity: is really *much more* so, with regard to things *Eternal*. But in fact, 'tis in this *latter case* much more rarely put in *Practise*: For *the children of This World*, says he, *are in their generation wiser than the children of Light*. This Observation contains an affectionate *Reproof* of the *Remissness* of Christians, in not being

Serm.  
XVI.  
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Serm. sufficiently solicitous about their *future*
 XVI. and *final* Interest: And there is included in it an earnest *Admonition to them*, to learn from the example even of an *unrighteous* World, to be true to their Principles; and to be as *Wise* in attending to *their own* Advantages, as *worldly men* are to *Theirs*. Learn, says he, even from the Similitude of the *Unjust Steward*, to *lay up* for yourselves a *Treasure* against the time to come, to *secure* to yourselves a *Refuge* against the day of Trial. *Make to yourselves Friends of the Mammon of Unrighteousness; that when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting Habitations. He that is Faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much; and he that is unjust in the least, is unjust also in much. If therefore you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your Trust the True Riches? And if ye have not been faithful in That which is Another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?* There is some little Obscurity in the Words, arising from the *manner of expression*; especially in that *latter part* of them, which are the words of *my Text*. But if we carefully consider their *True Sense*; they will
 will

will appear to contain the *clearest Reasoning*, and the *strongest and most noble Argument* in the World. Serm. XVI.

In the *first* place 'tis to be observed, that the words, *unrighteous mammon*, with which our Lord here exhorts his Disciples to make to themselves Friends, do not signify *Riches UNJUSTLY gotten*, Riches which men have *no RIGHT at all to possess*; but which they have *no Lasting, no certain, no Secure and Permanent Right* to; *no Right of perpetuity of Enjoyment*. For they are expressly opposed, not as *unjust* or *ill-gotten*, to *just* or *well-gotten* Riches; but as *False* and *Deceitful*, they are here opposed to the *True Riches*; and as *insecure transitory Possessions*, to *Everlasting Habitations*.

In the *Next* place 'tis to be observed, that the words, *He that is Faithful in that which is LEAST, is Faithful also in MUCH*; are a comparison between the *Present* Life, and the *Future*. *He*, and *He only*, who, in the State of Tryal *Here*, shows his *Fidelity* in a *Small Trust*; shall *Hereafter* have intrusted to him an unspeakably *Larger* and *more permanent Possession*. Thus our Lord explains himself in the Parable of the Talents, *Matt.*

Serm. 25, 21; *Well done, thou good and Faithful Servant; Thou hast been Faithful over a Few things, I will make thee Ruler over Many things; Enter thou into the Joy of thy Lord.* Or, as he expresses it in *Luke 19, 17; Well, thou good Servant; because thou hast been Faithful in a very Little, have thou Authority over Ten Cities.*

Lastly, 'tis to be observ'd (which indeed is the principal difficulty in the Text;) that the words, *Who shall give you That which is your Own?* do not signify, That which is *Already* your own, but that which *is to be*; that which, when once given you, *WILL* be your own for a *Perpetual and Unalienable Possession.* *If ye have not been Faithful in that which is Another man's, in that which you knew was only a Trust committed to you, and committed to you only for a very short time; how then can you be fit to be intrusted with a Possession for Perpetuity? If in a matter whercin you knew you must be called to account, and knew not every day but the very next might be the day of accounting, you have still ventured presumptuously to be Unfaithful; how are ye fit to be intrusted with Power*
and

and a KINGDOM, with Power in your
Own Property, with a Possession secure
and of *unchangeable Duration*?

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Thus the *Sense* of our Lord in this whole Discourse, is exceeding *clear*; and the Argument on which he builds his Admonition, *strong* and *affectionate*. Learn, says he, *one part* of true *Wisdom*, even from *worldly*, even from *unrighteous* men. The *unjust Steward* in the *Parable*, foreseeing he should not long possess his Stewardship, had Wisdom enough to make *some sort of Provision* for himself, against the Day of Adversity. *Ye* also, says our Lord, are *Stewards*, entrusted with a small treasure, for a very uncertain, but certainly very short, Time. *This Treasure*, to which you have no *lasting Right*, no *continuing Title*; make to yourselves Friends with it, *Now*. Employ it in such a manner, in things innocent and virtuous, in ways just and righteous, in works useful and charitable; that *hereafter*, when this *transitory life* shall *fail*, ye may be found worthy to be *received into everlasting Habitations*. To obtain a Portion in those *everlasting Habitations*, there is no other possible way, but by being found faithful in this *Temporary Trial*. For *He*
that

Serm. *that is Faithful in Little*, may reasonably be depended upon, that he will be
 XVI. *Faithful also in Much*; But *He that is Unjust in the Least thing*, can with no reason expect to be trusted with what is *Greater*. If therefore, says our Lord, *ye be not faithful in a Trust of so short continuance, as the present time is*; how are ye fit to have committed to you the *True and Eternal Riches*? And if *ye be not faithful in That which is Another's*, and for which ye are *accountable every moment*; how is it fit ye should be trusted with a *permanent Treasure, a Treasure to continue in your own Power, in your own proper and unalienable Possession*?

Having thus at large explained the *words*, and illustrated the *Argument* used by our Lord in the Text; it remains that I deduce from thence some *Doctrinal Observations*, which may be of Use to us in *Practice*. And

1st. 'Tis obvious to observe, that What our Lord here argues, both in the Parable and in the Application of it, with regard to the use of *Riches* in particular; is equally applicable, and intended to be applied, to *every other Advantage or Ability whatsoever*. *Authority, Honour, Power, Knowledge; every Opportunity*
 in

in Life, of having *Influence* upon Men; may, as well as *Riches*, be either made use of to the Glory of God, and the promoting of Virtue; or may be abused to Other, and Contrary Purposes. The *Ground* of our Lord's Exhortation in the Text, is the *Same* with regard to *All* these things; and may, with *equal Reason*, be applied to them *All*. They are *All of them*, in the *present* Life, of very short; *all of them*, of equally uncertain continuance. They are *all of them* committed to us, as to *Stewards* during pleasure; *all of them*, what we are *accountable for*, every moment. What have we then to do, according to *Any* measures of *Wisdom and Prudence*; but to employ all these things faithfully to *Such Purposes here* in this *transitory* life, as may *hereafter* be a *Foundation* for our being *received into everlasting Habitations*? For if, in the use of *Any* of these Abilities, we be not at present *Faithful* in *That which is Another's*; in *That* which Now for a *short* time only, is committed to us upon *Trust*, and upon *Account*, from *Another*: How can we reasonably expect to have them hereafter *given* to us for *Our Own*, for an unalienable and everlasting Possession?

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2dly,

Serm. 2dly, A *Second* doctrinal Observation
 XVI. arising from our Saviour's Argument in
 the Text, is ; that the *present life* is a
 Tryal of mens *Fidelity*, a *Probation* of
 their *Fitness* for a *future and more lasting*
State. *He that is faithful in that which*
is Least, is Faithful also in Much ; and
He that is unjust in the Least, is un-
just also in Much. If therefore, (says he)
 ye be not *Faithful* in a *Temporary* Trust,
 Who shall think fit to give you an *Eter-*
nal Inheritance? What *Moses* said to the
Israelites concerning their Passage thro'
 the *Wilderness* to the *Promised Land*,
Deut. viii, 2 ; is exactly parallel to the
 present case. *Thou shalt remember all the*
way which the Lord thy God led thee
these forty years in the Wilderness, to
humble thee, and to PROVE thee, to
KNOW what was in thine heart, whe-
ther thou would'st keep his Command-
ments, or no. The meaning is ; not, that
 God wants *information*, or tries men with
 regard to *Himself*, who knoweth all
 things: But with regard to *Them*, he proves
 and exercises their *Virtue* ; the *Habits* of
 which, *essentially* and in the *Nature* of
 things, are *produced* and *improved* no
 otherwise than by *Aëts*. In the *Fabrick*
 of the *Natural* and *Material* World, eve-

ry thing is, by the *Necessity of its Nature*, exactly and invariably what the Creator made it : Nor can any of *These things* possibly, by *Any Power of Nature*, either *improve* or *destroy* their own originally implanted Perfections. But in the *Moral* world, of intelligent and rational Creatures ; the Case is just the *Reverse*. The very *Essence of Virtue* consists, in being *freely chosen*. And had not God so constituted *Moral Agents*, as to make *Their Goodness* or *Badness* depend upon the *Habits* they should acquire by their *own free Acts* ; he had in the very Act of Creation destroyed his own Design, and had not made them at all *Moral Agents*. Consequently, (which is the *Noblest Part* of the Idea of God,) he had neither been *King* nor *Judge* nor *Governour* of the World, but merely as an *Artificer* of a *Great Machine*. A *Machine* ; in the *Fabrick* of which, he *has* indeed displayed, by an infinite variety of the most surprising Effects, *Wisdom unfathomable*, and *Power inexhaustible*. But 'tis all *merely* for the sake of the *Inhabitants*, whom he has placed therein, capable of contemplating this divine Workmanship. For otherwise, the whole *Fabrick* of the Earth and Heavens ; beautiful, great, and glo-

Serm. glorious as it is ; is yet *in itself*, (being
 XVI. lifeless, void of all Sense and Knowledge,
 and not so much as Conscious of its own
 Existence,) less valuable than the meanest
 single Animal in the Universe. And *to-*
gether with an infinite variety of creatures
 indued *merely* with *life, sense, and mo-*
tion ; 'tis still comparatively as Nothing ;
 'tis still really of less Value, than *One Ra-*
tional, Intelligent, Free, Moral Agent,
 capable of *Knowing*, capable of *Contem-*
plating and *Acknowledging*, capable of
Imitating, in its *degree* and *measure*, the
 Perfections of its Great Creator. For
 the Sake of *These* therefore, the World
 was created. And *These* God cannot
 but govern in ways suitable to *There* na-
 ture, as he governs the *material* World
 in a way suitable to *Its* nature. *These*
 he cannot but dispose into different Sta-
 tions, proportionable to their *Moral Ca-*
pacities and *Improvements* ; in like man-
 ner as, in the *Natural* World, he has ad-
 justed every thing in *Weight and Mea-*
sure. In the *One*, appears the Skill and
 Wisdom of an All-powerful *Artificer* ;
 In the *Other alone*, appears the Glory
 and Majesty of a Supreme *King*, and the
 Righteousness of an All-seeing and un-
 erring *Judge*. This is the manifest Voice
 of

of *Nature and Reason*; and This is the exprefs and constant Declaration of *Scripture*. All sorts of *Abilities, Powers,* and *Capacities* whatsoever, wherewith God has *at present* indued men; *Riches, Honour, Authority, Wisdom, Knowledge,* and the like; are by our Saviour, in his Parable of the *Talents*, represented as so many particular *Trusts*, committed to mens Charge in This World; as *Tryals* of their *Fidelity*, in way of *Probation* of their *Fitness* for a *Better and more Lasting* State. They who employ not these *Abilities* to *Virtuous* Purposes, in promoting *Truth* and *Righteousness* in the World; are the *wicked and slothful Servant*, to whom his Lord said, *Thou oughtest to have put my Money to the Exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with Usury: Take therefore the Talent from him;----- and cast ye the unprofitable Servant into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of Teeth,* Matt. 25, 27. On the contrary: They who, according to their respective *Abilities*, employ the different *Powers* (*whatsoever* they be) wherewith God has intrusted them, in promoting the *Glory of God*, and the *Practise of Virtue* in the World; These are the Ser-

vants,



Serm. vants, who, in trading with *five* talents;
 XVI. having gained *five* more; and with *two*
 talents, having gained *Other two*; their
 Lord said to each of them in his Proportion; *Well done, thou good and faithful Servant; Thou hast been Faithful over a Few things, I will make thee Ruler over Many things: Enter thou into the Joy of thy Lord.* In the language of my Text: *Thou hast been Faithful in That which is Another man's, in That small and short Trust which I committed to thy Charge; I will Now therefore give thee a Possession, which shall be in Property thy Own, thy Own for an unalienable and everlasting Inheritance.* In the 24th ch. of *St. Matthew*, v. 42. our Lord expresses the same thing *still more strongly: Watch therefore, says he, and---- be Ye also ready; for in such an hour as you think not, the Son of man cometh. Who then is a faithful and wise Servant, whom his Lord has made Ruler over his Household, to give them Meat in due Season? Blessed is That Servant, whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing: Verily I say unto you, that he shall make him Ruler over All his Goods.* 'Tis in allusion to *This* Notion, of the *present life* being a
 Tryal

Tryal of mens *Fidelity*, or of their *Fitness* for a *better State*; that St Paul, when the End of his days drew near, declares concerning himself, 2 *Tim.* iv, 7, *I have fought a good fight, --- I have kept the Faith*; (I have preserved my *Fidelity*, or shewn my self *Faithful* in my *Trust*;) *Henceforth there is laid up for me a Crown of Righteousness.* And in the former Part of his Life, describing his Care in the Government of himself and of his own Passions, 1 *Cor.* ix, 27, *I keep under my Body*, says he, *and bring it into Subjection*; *least that by any means, when I have preached to Others, I myself should be a Cast-away*: in the Original it is, *I myself should be* [ἀδύκνιστος] *found Not proof*; not proof against the Temptations of the *present World*; not *meet for the USE*, for the *Employment*, for the *Station* intended me in the *Life to come*. For, (as he in another place expresses this matter by a most apt similitude;) *in a great House, there are*, says he, *not only Vessels of Gold and of Silver, but also of Wood and of Earth*; and some to Honour, and some to Dishonour. *If a man therefore purge himself from These*, (from ungodly Works and Doctrines mentioned in the former

Serm.
XVI.2 *Tim.* ii,
21.

Serm. part of the chapter;) *he shall be a Vessel unto*
 XVI. *Honour, sanctified and meet for the Master's*
 Use, and prepared unto every good Work.

The *Principal* method, in which the unsearchable Wisdom of God has *most frequently* been pleased to *Try* the *Fidelity* of his *Best* and most eminent Servants, has been by *Afflictions* and *Persecutions* of various kinds: *Proving* them, whether, in case of *Competition*, they would stedfastly prefer the *Interest* of *Truth* and *Virtue*, in opposition to all the *Advantages*, and to all the *Sufferings* too, of this *present* Life. *Who-soever* (says our Lord) *does not bear his Cross, and come after me; cannot be my Disciple*, Luke xiv, 27. And hence it is, that in Scripture we so frequently find the *Tryal* of mens *Fidelity*, compared to the purifying and *Trying* of *Metals* by *Fire*. *Many shall be purified and made white, and tried*, Dan. xii, 10. *And they that understand among the People, shall instruct many; yet they shall fall by the Sword and by Flame, by Captivity and by Spoil: ----- And Some of Them of Understanding shall fall, to Try them, and to purge, and to make them white.* Thus again, *Is. lxxviii, 10. Behold, I have refined*

refined thee, but not with Silver; I have chosen thee in the Furnace of Affliction. I will refine them, as Silver is refined; and will try them, as Gold is tried. Serm. XVI. Zech. xiii, 9.

And Job xxiii, 10; *He knoweth the way that I take: When he has tried me, I shall come forth as Gold.* The Later Writers, of the Books of *Wisdom* and *Ecclesiasticus*, apply the same similitude with great justness of Thought, and eloquence of Expression. *Gold is tried in the Fire, and Acceptable men in the Furnace of Adversity.* Ecclus. ii, 5. The Souls of the Righteous are in the Hand of God, and there shall no Torment touch them. Wisd. iii, 5. Having been a little chastised, they shall be greatly rewarded; for God PROVED them; and found them worthy for Himself. As Gold in the Furnace has he Tried them, and received them as a Burnt-Offering. In the New Testament, the same figure of speaking, is continued in the same Sense. Our Saviour, in his Exhortation to the Christian Church in That Period of time, which is represented by the Church of *Smyrna*: Behold; (says he,) *the Devil* (the Spirit of False Accusation) shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be TRIED: -----

Be thou faithful unto Death, and I will

Serm. *give thee a Crown of Life, Rev. ii, 10.*
 XVI. And at another time: *Because* (says he)
thou hast kept the word of my Patience,
 h. iii, 10. *I also will keep Thee from* (or carry thee
 safely through) *the Hour of Temptation,*
which shall come upon all the World, to
TRY them that dwell upon the Earth.----
Him that overcometh, (that is, who shall
 be found *Faithful* in that Hour of Tryal,
 notwithstanding all the Allurements and
 all the Terrors of an unrighteous World;
 Him) *will I make a PILLAR in the*
Temple of my God: A PILLAR, or
 Eminent Part, of *That Living Temple of*
God, of which the *Twelve Apostles* are
 (by a most beautiful and expressive meta-
 phor) represented as being the *twelve
 * *Rev. xxi,* *Foundation-Stones,* or * *Rocks* on which
 14. & *Mat.* it is built; and *Jesus Christ* himself the
 xvi, 18. *chief corner-stone,* by which the *Whole*
Building is compact together. With a
 View to These and the like Promises it
 Jam. i, 12. is, that St *James* declares: *Blessed is the*
man that endureth Temptation; for when
he is TRIED, he shall receive the
 1 *Pet. i, 7.* *Crown of life.* And St *Peter*: *That*
the TRYAL (saith he) *of your Faith,*
 (of your *Fidelity* or *Faithfulness,*) *being*
much more precious than of Gold that
perisheth, though it be tried with Fire,
 might

might be found unto praise and honour and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ.

Serm.
XVI.



3dly. A *Third* doctrinal Observation, obviously arising from the fore-going, and of great Use in Practice ; is This. If the *present life* is a *Tryal* of mens *Fidelity*, a *Probation* of their *Fitness* for a *Future* and *more Lasting State* ; then every *erroneous Notion*, which is of *such* a nature, as leads men to rely upon *Any Equivalent* whatsoever, instead of employing *faithfully* those *Talents*, where-with God has intrusted them, in promoting his Kingdom of *Truth* and *Righteousness* ; must needs be a *Fatal Deceit*. If men content themselves barely with a *zealous Profession* of the *true Religion*, and a diligent avoiding of all *false opinions* in *Speculation* : If they rely entirely upon a regular Observance of those merely *External Duties* of Religion, which were appointed of God as *Obligations* and *Assistances* to *True Virtue* : If they satisfy themselves with that *Sorrow for Sin*, and *Fear of Punishment* upon the Approach of Eternity, which is vulgarly called a *Death-bed-Repentance* : If they depend upon any *absolute Decree* of God, or

Serm. upon any application of the *Merits* of
 XVI. *Christ*, to save them, not *from*, but *in*
 ~~~~~ their *Sins*: If they expect to be saved by  
 their *Faith*, meaning thereby mere *Credulity*, instead of *Fidelity* or *acting Faithfully* upon the Principles they profess: In these and all other Cases whatsoever, which can possibly be reconciled with *vitious* and *immoral* Practise; our Saviour will say unto them, *Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity*. For *if ye have not been Faithful* in a small and temporary *Trust*, how is it fit I should give you a *Kingdom* to be *your Own* for ever?

4thly and *Lastly*: From what has been said, it appears, that the principal *Difference* of men, in *God's* estimation, consists not so much in the *Number* of the *Talents* committed to them, as in the *Degree* of their *Fidelity*, or the *Good Use* they make of them. For, *Many that are First shall be Last, and the Last First*. And to *Him* who with *two Talents* gained *two* more, as well as to *Him* who with *Ten Talents* gained *other Ten*, our Lord says; "Well done, thou good and faithful Servant, Enter thou into the Joy of thy Lord: For he that  
 is

“ is Faithful in *Little*, is Faithful also in  
“ *Much*: Wherefore since thou hast been  
“ Faithful in that which is *Another man's*,  
“ in That short and small Trust which I  
“ committed to thy charge; I will there-  
“ fore give thee a Treasure and Inheri-  
“ tance which shall be *thine Own*, thine  
“ *Own* for an unalienable and everlast-  
“ ing Possession.”

Serm.  
XVI.





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A  
S E R M O N

Preach'd in the

PARISH-CHURCH

O F

*St James's Westminster,*

On *Sundry*, Feb. 16, 1723.

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LUKE XVII, 37.

*And they answered and said unto him:  
Where, Lord? And he said unto them,  
Wheresoever the Body is, thither will  
the Eagles be gathered together.*

**T**H E S E words are a Proverbial  
Saying, used by our Lord upon  
*two* different Occasions. Once  
in *This place*, upon occasion of the Pha-  
risees demanding of him, *ver. 20, WHEN*  
*the*

Serm.  
XVII.



Serm. *the Kingdom of God should come.* And  
 XVII. *again* in the 24<sup>th</sup> of St Matthew, upon  
 occasion of his Disciples asking him,  
*WHEN shall these Things be? and  
 What shall be the Sign of thy coming and  
 of the End of the World?* In this Latter  
 place, our Lord, in answer to the Ques-  
 tion put to him by his Disciples, gives  
 them a large Prophetick Description of  
 the destruction of the City and Nation  
 of the Jews, by the Power of the Ro-  
*mans*; and a long Series of *Other Events*,  
 which were to be accomplished before  
 his coming to Judgment. And because  
 he is very particular and distinct in *That*  
*Part* of the Prophecy, which relates to  
 the destruction of *Jerusalem* by the Ro-  
*mans*, whose Armies carried an *Eagle*  
 for their Ensign; therefore the Genera-  
 lity of Expositors have understood the  
 Meaning of the words of my Text to be,  
 that *wheresoever the Jews were, thither*  
*would the Roman Armies be gathered*  
*together* to destroy them. But *This Sense*  
 of the words seems *low*; and the *Allusion*  
 to be *far-fetched*; and the *Application* of  
 them, too much *confined*; and their  
*Connexion* in the whole Discourse, very  
 difficult *to be made out*. For our Lord,  
 in *the Place* where these words come in,  
 in



in *St Matthew's* Gospel, as well as in That of *St Luke*, is not speaking of the *Romans* destroying the *Jews*; (for, *That Part of his Prophecy* he had *finished*, several Verses before: ) But he is speaking, in *One* of these places, concerning the unreasonableness of *looking for Christ's Coming* in *Any particular Part* of the *World*, in *the Desert*, or in the *Secret Chambers*, or in *Any One Place* rather than another. And in the *Other* place, he is speaking concerning the *righteous Judgment* of God, *distinguishing* persons from each other in the *Highest degree*, between whom in all *Worldly Appearance* there was *No Distinction*. The true Sense therefore of the words of the Text, must be gathered, not from any *remote Allusion* in the single word, *Eagles*; but from the *immediate Connexion* of the intire Sentence, in the Discourse wherein it is joined; and from the *natural Signification* of the whole *Proverbial Saying*, considered as *Proverbial*.

There are several Instances in Scripture, of *Other* Proverbial Sayings, inserted in like manner as This in the Text; very usual at the *Time*, and in the *Language*, wherein they were spoken; so as  
to

Serm. to be as easily and as perfectly understood  
 XVII. by the *Vulgar*, as the most *literal* Ex-  
 ~~~~~ pressions whatsoever. Thus *Ezek. xviii,*  
2, The Fathers have eaten Sowre Grapes,
and the Childrens Teeth are set on Edge :
 There was no man among the *Jews*, even
 of the meanest capacity, but at first Hear-
 ing understood those words to mean, that
the Children were punished for the Trans-
gressions of their Fore-Fathers. Thus
 when *St Paul* tells us, that *Whatsoever*
a man soweth, That shall he also reap,
Gal. vi, 7 : Every even the lowest Under-
 standing immediately apprehends them to
 mean, that, according to mens behaviour
 Here, whether virtuous or vitious, so
 shall their Reward be, or their Punish-
 ment, hereafter. Again : When our
 Lord says, *Matt. vii, 16, Men do not*
gather Grapes of Thorns, or Figs of
Thistles ; his Sense is no less obvious,
 and his Words even more expressive, than
 if he had said directly, that Virtuous Ac-
 tions cannot reasonably be expected to
 flow from Corrupt Principles, or from
 vitious and debauched Minds. The *Pro-*
verbial Expression in my *Text*, being
 founded upon a Similitude *less Common*
 in our *Modern* language, then These be-
 fore-mentioned ; the Sense of it, for
 That

That reason, does not to an English Reader, at first Sight, appear so obvious. But with a *little Attention* to the *general Nature* of *Proverbial* Sayings, it is very easy to be understood. The *Nature* of a *Proverb* is, to contain *in one single Sentence* a *Similitude*, or *Comparison* of *Two things* with each other; and, under the Instance of some *one particular Example*, to conclude some *more general* or *Universal Truth*. This is evidently the Case, in the *Other* Instances I produced: And so it is likewise in *This* Expression in my *Text*. *Wheresoever the Body is, thither will the Eagles be gathered together. Wheresoever the Prey is, thither will the BIRDS of Prey flock towards it. Wheresoever the Case is the same*, (whatsoever be the Subject spoken of;) *there* also the *general Observation* upon the Case, (*whatsoever* That Observation be,) will have the *same* Justness and Truth. *Wheresoever the State of things is the same*, and the *Circumstances alike*; *there* also will the *Event*, in *Any Place*, or at *Any Time*, be proportionally alike.


Serm.

XVII.



ver. 3.

This is plainly the *Sense* of the words; as it arises from the Consideration of the *General nature* of a *Proverbial Expression*. And from the consideration of the *Particular connexion* of the words with those immediately foregoing, in *Each* of the Passages in the *Two Gospels* where the *same words* occur; it still *more evidently* appears to be the *True Sense* of them. In the *24th* chapter of *St Matthew's Gospel*, (and the same thing is recorded likewise in the *13th* of *St Mark*, and in the *21st* of *St Luke*;) the disciples had asked our Lord, *WHEN shall these things be? When shall all these things come to pass, which thou hast so often foretold to us? And What shall be the Sign of thy Coming, and of the End of the World?* The *Ground* of their *Question*, was; that, upon the dissolution of the *Jewish State and Government*, which he had told them was approaching; they expected the *Kingdom of Christ* should *immediately* be set up, in some *remarkable manner*, in some *particular Place*. In *Answer* to their *Question*, and in order to *rectify* this their *mistake*; our Lord tells them, that not only the *City and Temple of Jerusalem* should be destroyed, and

and the Jewish Nation dispersed ; but Serm.
 that, after This, there should still succeed XVII.
 a long Train of Calamities, and *the End* 
 should *not be yet*. For *Jerusalem* should Mar. xiii,
be trodden down of the Gentiles, till the 7.
Times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. And, Luke xxi,
 during That long Period of time, in *Other* 24.
 parts of the World likewise, *Nation* should
rise against Nation, and Kingdom against Mat. xxiv,
Kingdom ; and there should be Famines 7.
and Pestilences and Earthquakes in divers
places. And that even all *These* calami-
 ties, comparatively speaking, should be
 but the *Beginning of Sorrows*. For, a
 Deluge of Corruption and *Iniquity* should ver. 12.
 overspread the World. And there should
 be very great and very long *Persecutions*: ver. 9, 10.
 And a time of *Tribulation, such as had*
not been since the Beginning of the ver. 21.
World. And that, during This time, *the*
Gospel should be preached in all the World, ver. 14.
for a Witness unto all Nations. And
 his Conclusion of the Whole, is : that
 therefore his Disciples ought not to look
 for the *Kingdom of Christ*, as a Domini-
 on to be set up at any *particular Time*
 or *Place* : But in *all times*, and at *all*
places alike, wheresoever and whensoever
 the Doctrine of Christ is received and
 practised, *wheresoever and whensoever* any
 number

Serm. number of sincere Believers (whether *Many* or *Few*) be gathered together in His
 XVII. *Name*, *There* (says he) is the Kingdom of Christ. Ver. 23, *If any man shall say unto you, Lo, Here is Christ, or There; believe it not. For there shall arise False Christs and False Prophets, and shall shew great Signs and Wonders.----- Behold, I have told you before. Wherefore, if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the Desert, go not forth: Behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not. For as the Lightning cometh out of the East, and shineth even unto the West; so shall also the Coming of the Son of Man be. For wheresoever the Carcase is, there will the Eagles be gathered together.* The Sense evidently is This. As, in *all Places* equally, and at *all Times*, wheresoever the *Lightning* is, *There* does the *Light* of it shine forth; and wheresoever the *Prey* is, *thither* do the *Birds of Prey* resort: So, at what *Time* or *Place* soever the *Doctrine of Christ* is received, and practis'd according to *His Directions*, *There* is the *Kingdom of Christ*.

In the *Other* passage, where the same words are *again* repeated, (which is,
 Luke

Luke xvii, 37, the words of my Text;) *there* likewise their *connexion* in the Thread of our Lord's Discourse, clearly shows them to have the *Like* signification. The Manner in which they are *There* introduced, is This. *Ver. 20; And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, WHEN the Kingdom of God should come; he answered them, and said: The Kingdom of God cometh not with Observation. Neither shall they say, Lo Here, or Lo There: For, behold, the Kingdom of God is Within (or Among) you. And he said unto the Disciples; The days will come, when-----they shall say unto you, See here, or see there; Go not after them, nor follow them.* That is: Think not that the Kingdom of Christ is to be distinguished under the character of any particular *Time* or *Place*, or to be known by any *External Notes* or *Marks*; But understand, that it is in *all Places* and at *all Times* the same; distinguished, *always* and *every where* alike, by its own *intrinsic essence* only; just as the Shining of *Lightning* is one and the same, from one end of Heaven to the other. After which, he proceeds to warn them, *ver. 26;* that as, in the days of *Noah*, and in the days of *Lot*, men were negligent

Serm. and secure, having their Thoughts entire-
 XVII. ly taken up with their present Business,
 ~~~~~ their Ambition, their Covetousness, and  
 their Pleasures; till, on a sudden, the  
*Deluge of Water* swept them all away  
 in the *one* case; and *Lightning from*  
*Heaven*, joined with an *Earthquake*,  
 destroyed and consumed them in the *o-*  
*ther* case: *Even thus* (says he) *shall it*  
*be in the day when the Son of man is re-*  
*vealed.* And then he concludes, in the  
 words preceding my Text, *ver. 34, I*  
*tell you, in That Night there shall be two*  
*men in One Bed; the One shall be ta-*  
*ken, and the other left. Two women*  
*shall be grinding together; the one shall*  
*be taken, and the other left. Two men*  
*shall be in the Field; the one shall be*  
*taken, and the other left.* The Mean-  
 ing is: In the *righteous* and unerring  
*Judgment of God* the Searcher of  
 Hearts, many persons shall finally be *di-*  
*stinguished* from each other in the *Hig-*  
*hest Degree*, between whom in all *World-*  
*ly Appearance* there was *No distinction.*  
*ver. 37. And they said unto him, Where, Lord?*  
*And he said unto them, Wheresoever the*  
*Body is, thither will the Eagles be ga-*  
*thered together.* That is to say: Your  
 Question is of No moment: 'Tis all one,  
 where-



wheresoever and whensoever the same thing comes to pass. Difference of Time and Place, makes no difference at all in God's account and estimation, either of Things or Persons. Where-ever the Case is the same, and the Circumstances alike; there also will the Event be proportionably the Same. At what Times and in what Places soever, the Persons to be judged shall be found endued with the like diversity of Qualifications; there also shall the impartial and unerring Judgment of God the Searcher of Hearts, distinguish them with the like Distinction. Watch ye therefore (says our Lord) and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man. And what I say unto You, I say unto All; Watch.

Serm. XVII.

Luke xxi,

36.

Mark xiii,

37.

Having thus fully and at large explained the true Signification of the words of the Text: The Observations I shall draw from thence, are briefly as follows.

1<sup>st</sup>. That, generally speaking, All the Admonitions and Instructions given by our Saviour to his Disciples at different

Serm. Times and upon different Occasions, were  
 XVII. intended by him to be applied (allowing  
 ~~~~~ for particular differences of Circumstances) to *All Christians at all times and in all places.* Concerning things recorded in the *Old Testament* even from the *remotest* times, St Paul declares, that *Whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for Our learning; that We, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have Hope,* Rom. xv, 4. When the Scripture tells us, that *Abraham's Faith* was *imputed to him for Righteousness,* Gen. xv, 6; Rom. iv, 22, *It was not written* (says the Apostle) *for His sake alone, that it was imputed to him; but for Us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead: That is, if We act with the same Fidelity upon the Principles of Our Profession, as He did upon His.* On the other hand, when we find recorded in Scripture the severe *Punishments* inflicted upon the Children of *Israel* in the Wilderness, for their repeated Acts of Disobedience; *All these things* (says he) *happened unto Them for Examples,* 1 Cor. x, 11; *and they are written for Our Admonition, upon whom*  
 the

the Ends of the World are come. Now Serm. XVII.
 if This be so, much more may our Sa-
viour's Instructions and Admonitions to
his Disciples, be generally understood
 to be applicable, in proportion, to *All*
Christians. His *Prophetical Warnings*
 do all of them extend even unto the *End*
of the World : And his *Directions to his*
immediate Followers are usually couched
 under such Expressions, as were mani-
 festly intended for the Use and Instructi-
 on of all *intervening Ages,* until his co-
 ming to Judgment. *Where ever two or*
three (says he) *are gathered together in*
my Name, Matt. xviii, 20; *there am I*
in the midst of them. Wheresoever and
 whensoever the Doctrine of Christ is re-
 ceived, and practised according to his di-
 rections, in the love of Truth, Righteous-
 ness and Peace; be it in *one Place,* in one
Age of the world, or in *Another;* be it by
Many persons, or by *Few :* *There* is the
Church of Christ : To *Them* belong all
 the *glorious Promises,* which he has ever
 made to his *Church;* and to *Them* be-
 long all the *Warnings* which he has gi-
 ven, of *Persecutions* to be expected from
 an unrighteous and corrupt World. For
 This reason, whoever at any time asked
 him *When* the Kingdom should be resto-

Serm. red to *Israel*, or *When* the Kingdom of
 XVII. God should come; and *When* shall all
 these things come to pass; and *What* shall
 be the Sign of thy Coming, and of the
 End of the World? instead of mentioning
 any *particular time*, he constantly warned
 them to watch and to be ready at *all times*.
 And at the Conclusion of the Prophecy,
 whereof my Text is a part; he in express
 words declares, (as 'tis recorded by St
Mark, ch. xiii, 37,) *What I say unto You,*
I say unto ALL, Watch. And at ano-
 ther time, when his Disciples directly
 asked him, whether he intended his Dis-
 course in particular to *Them*, or in general
 to *All men*, *Luke xii, 41*; his Answer
 is to the very same Purpose. He had been
 exhorting them, *ver. 35*; *Let your loyns*
be girded about, and your Lights burn-
ing; And ye yourselves like unto men
that wait for their Lord.—*Blessed*
are those Servants, whom the Lord,
when he cometh, shall find watching.—
And this know, that if the good man of
the house had known what hour the Thief
would come, he would have watched, and
not have suffered his house to be broken
through. Be YE therefore ready also;
for the Son of man cometh at an hour
when ye think not. Then Peter said un-
 to

to him, Lord, speakest thou this Parable unto Us, or even to All? And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise Steward, whom his Lord shall make Ruler over his Household, to give them their portion of Meat in due Season? Blessed is That Servant, whosoever he be, whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing.

Serm.
XVII.

2dly. A Second Observation arising from what our Lord declares in the Text, is; that the Salvation of Men does not depend upon Any Differences of *External* Circumstances in the present Life, but intirely upon the *Inward* Qualifications of their Minds, and upon their Behaviour under the Circumstances wherein the Providence of God has placed them, *whatsoever* those Circumstances be. I tell you, says he, in *That Night* there shall be two men in One Bed; the One shall be taken, and the Other left. And when the Disciples asked him, *Where, Lord?* he answers in the Text, under a known *Proverbial* Expression; *Where ever the Case is alike, the Event will be the Same: Wheresoever the Body is, thither will the Eagles be gathered together.* Not only to those who shall be living at

Serm. XVII. the Time and Place of our Lord's coming to Judgment, but to All Others likewise, at all Times and in all Places, shall This declaration of His be verified: *Two men shall be in One Bed; the One shall be taken, and the Other left*: By no visible or appearing differences of worldly Circumstances, but merely according to their inward moral Qualifications, shall men finally be distinguished. Not to Those in particular, who shall be found alive at our Lord's Second Coming, does he say, *Blessed is That Servant whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing*: But his Meaning is, to All in general, in all Times and Places; *Blessed is That Servant whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find to have so done*. Thus when the Prophet Daniel says, *ch. xii, 12, Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to* — the time of the End: The Meaning is not, *Blessed is he* that shall happen to live at the time of the end; but, *Blessed is he* who by *Waiting*, that is, by *patient continuance in Well-doing*, by being constantly upon his Guard against the Temptations of an unrighteous and corrupt World, by *Keeping Himself* (as St John expresses it) so that *That Wicked One toucheth him not*; blessed is He who

Rom. ii, 7.

1 Joh. v,
18.

who by thus *Waiting*, shall be found *worthy to attain That life* which shall be revealed at the *End of the days*, and to *stand before the Son of Man*. Many are very apt to imagine, if they had lived in some *Other Place* or *Age* of the World, if they had been placed under some *Other Circumstances* than they *Are*, if they had lived in *Our Saviour's days* and at a time when *one rose from the dead*; the Principles of religion would have had a very different Effect upon them, from what they *Now* have. But all This, is a very great Fallacy: And Experience has shown, that not upon Differences of *Time* and *Place*, but upon the *Moral Disposition* of men's *Hearts and Minds*, does the *Influence of religion* entirely depend. The *Jews in the Wilderness* were not at all reformed, even by the *Sight* of numerous *Miracles*. And the *Pharisees in our Saviour's time*, who said, *If we had been in the days of our Fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the Blood of the Prophets*; did yet, by their *Deeds*, show themselves to be the *Genuine Sons*, and *Inheritours of the Temper*, of those who killed the *Prophets*.

Serm.
XVII.

Luke xvi.

31.

Serm.

XVII.



3dly and *Lastly*. The *Last* Observation I shall draw from this Discourse of our Saviour, of which my Text is the Conclusion; is, that all the *Marks* or *Notes*, which Those of the Church of *Rome* pretend to give us, of the *True Church* of God; are such as our Lord here warns his Disciples not to be deceived by. *Christ*, they tell us, is no where to be found but among *Them*: And the Doctrines and Benefits of the Gospel, can no other way possibly be conveyed to Mankind, than through the particular *Channel* of *Rome*. What is This, but the very thing our Lord here admonishes us to beware of? *If any man shall say unto you, Lo, Here is Christ, or There; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false Prophets.— Wherefore, if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the Desert; go not forth: Behold, he is in the secret Chambers; believe it not. For as, where-ever the Body is, thither will the Eagles be gathered together; And as, where ever the Lightning is, there will the Shining of it be the Same, from the one part under Heaven, even unto the Other: So also*

Matt.

xxiv; 23--
—28.

Luke xvii;

24, 37.

also is the Light of the *everlasting Gospel*,
and of *the Scripture of Truth*.

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XVII.

Thus again: Pretended *Miracles*, in order to establish their *New Doctrines*, and introduce *New Practises*; What are these, but accomplishments of That prediction of our Lord; *There shall arise False Christs and False Prophets, and shall show great Signs and Wonders, insomuch that (if it were possible) they shall deceive the very Elect!*

Matt.

XXIV, 24.

Again: *Visibility*, or *Worldly Pomp*, *Grandeur* and *Authority*, which they make to be Another *Note* or *Mark* of the *True Church* of God; is directly the *Reverse* of what our Saviour declared to *His Disciples*. *They shall deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you; and ye shall be hated of all nations for my Name's Sake. And, because iniquity shall abound, the Love of many shall wax cold. And, when the Son of man cometh, shall he find Faith on the Earth?*

ver. 9, 12.

Luke xviii,

8.

Marks therefore or *Notes* of the *True Church* of Christ, in the nature of things, there can be *None*, but *That One* essential

tial

Serm. tial one, which *makes* it to be the *True*
 XVII. Church; *viz.* the *Profession and Pract-*
 ~~~~~ *ise* of the *Truth*; the *Profession and*  
*Practise* of *That Doctrine*, which *our*  
*Lord himself* taught, and which his *A-*  
*postles* preached and delivered down in  
 Writing to all succeeding generations.  
*With This*; *where ever Two or Three*  
*are gathered together in the name of*  
*Christ, There is Christ in the midst of*  
*them*; that is to say, *There is the true*  
*Church of God. Without This*; how  
*Many*, and how *Great Nations* soever,  
*conspire* together; how numerous soever  
 the *Multitudes* be, which *follow* each o-  
 ther *to do Evil*; 'tis still *only a Sect* or  
*Schism*, 'tis but a *Heresy* or *Worldly*  
*Faction.*

Matt.  
xviii, 20.

Exod.  
xxiii, 2.

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