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# SERMONS

ON THE

Following SUBJECTS,

VIZ.

Of the Glory of GOD.	Of Imitating the Holiness of GOD.
Of GOD's being the Father of Mankind.	Of the Love of GOD towards Sinners.
Of being the Children of GOD.	Of Believing in GOD.
Of Loving GOD.	Of the Grace of GOD.
Of the Fear of GOD.	Of the Kingdom of GOD.
Of the Wisdom of being Religious.	

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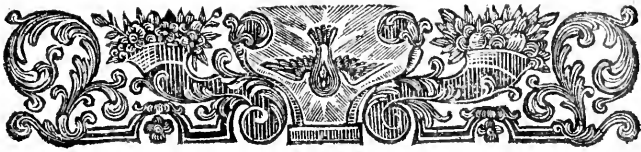
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S E R M O N





# S E R M O N I.

Of the G L O R Y of G O D.



I C O R. X. 31.

*Whether therefore ye eat or drink,  
or whatsoever ye do, do all to the  
Glory of God.*



THE Design of the Apostle in S E R M. I. this chapter, is to press upon Christians the great Obligation they are under, to walk *worthy of their holy vocation; to walk worthy of God, as he elsewhere expresses it, (i Th. ii. 12.) to live as becometh the Gospel of Christ; to behave themselves in such a manner, as may do honour to their religion, may give Credit*

S E R M. and Reputation to their Profession; In a  
 I. word, that they be sollicitous above all  
 things to promote the *Glory of God*, and  
 the *Salvation of Men*; to bring over *Unbe-*  
*lievers* to the acknowledgment of the  
 Truth; and to prevent, as far as possible,  
 those who *Do believe*, from being in any  
 manner offended and discouraged in their  
 Duty, or by any means tempted and se-  
 duced into Sin.

T H E Great Temptation in the Apostles  
 days was that of relapsing into the Heathen  
 Idolatry; either *directly*, into the gross Acts  
 of this Sin, through Fear of Persecution;  
 or *consequentially*, into the Snare of a de-  
 filed Conscience, by presumptuously mis-  
 understanding the true Bounds of what  
 was lawful and innocent. Against *Both*  
 these, St *Paul* gives diligent Caution in  
 This chapter. Against falling into *direct*  
 Idolatry through fear of Persecution, he  
 exhorts the *Corinthians* by the following  
 Argument, ver. 13. *There has no Tempta-*  
*tion, says he, taken you, but such as is*  
*common to Man: But God is Faithful,*  
*who will not suffer you to be tempted above*  
*what ye are able; but will with the Temp-*  
*tation also make a way to escape, that ye*  
 may



may be able to bear it : Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from Idolatry. To strengthen which Argument, he proceeds in the next Verses, to represent to them the Greatness of the Sin ; by showing them distinctly, under a plain and obvious Similitude, what Idolatry was. Ver. 15. I speak, saith he, as to Wise men ; judge ye what I say. He does not insist merely upon his own Authority, though it was no less than Apostolical, as Others, who have no such Claim, are frequently too apt to do : He does not require of them to submit implicitly to what he says, without first considering whether it was right or no : But he exhorts them to make use of their own Reason and Understanding : I speak, says he, as to Wise, (that is,) to Sensible and Reasonable Men ; Judge ye what I say : Consider, if what I now propose to you, be not a reasonable and conclusive Argument. *The Bread which we break, is it not the Communion of the Body of Christ ?* that is, is it not a professing ourselves to be Disciples of Christ ? to be Members of his Body ? ver. 16. *For we,* says he, *being Many, are one Bread and one Body.* In like manner, he speaks of *Israel* af-

S E R M. *ter the flesh, Are not they which eat of the*  
 I. *Sacrifices partakers of the Altar?* that is,  
 is not This a declaring themselves to be  
 Disciples of *Moses?* ver. 18. By the same  
 Argument therefore; being *partakers*,  
 saith he, *of the Table of Devils*, by eating  
 of the Sacrifices in the Idol-Temple,  
 ver. 21; is, in reality, to communicate in  
 the Guilt of the Heathen-Idolatry.

AGAINST the *next* danger, *viz.* that  
 of falling *consequently* into the Snare  
 of a defiled Conscience, by presumptu-  
 ously misunderstanding the true Bounds  
 of what was lawful and innocent; A-  
 gainst *This*, he cautions them in the re-  
 maining part of the chapter. An *Idol*, eve-  
 ry well instructed Christian knew to be  
*Nothing in the World*: As to *Meats* there-  
 fore offered in sacrifice to Idols; the *good*  
*Creatures of God* could not be defiled by  
 the imaginary Superstitions of *vain Men*.  
 And therefore Christians, provided *They*  
*themselves* bore no part in the Heathen-  
*worship*, were not obliged to make any  
 Inquiry, whether Meats sold in the Mar-  
 kets, or set before them at any Friend's  
 house, had by *Others* been dedicated to  
 Superstitious Use, ver. 25, 27. Never-  
 theless,

Of the Glory of G O D.

5

theless, though as to Those who *had* this S E R M.  
Understanding, the Matter was clear; I.  
yet, if any *scrupulous and weaker* Brother  
was dissatisfied as to the Lawfulness of  
This Practice, in *such case* they were  
bound to abstain: Bound, not by any ob-  
ligation upon their *own* Conscience, but  
out of Tendernefs and Regard to *His*,  
ver. 28, 29, lest by *Their* needlessly do-  
ing what was innocent to *Themselves*, *He*  
should be encouraged to do the same  
thing which was *not* innocent to *Him*:  
In which case, it was much more *materi-*  
*al*, and of *greater importance to the Ho-*  
*nour of Religion*, that they should *avoid*  
offending his *Conscience*, than that they  
should unreasonably assert *their own Liber-*  
*ty*. Ver. 23. *All things are lawful for me,*  
*but all things are not expedient; all things*  
*are lawful for me, but all things edify not.*  
The Meaning is; All things that are *law-*  
*ful for a man to do*, 'tis not consequently  
for the Interest of Religion that he *should*  
*do* them, if it so happens that *other Mens*  
Consciences be not therein satisfied as well  
as his *own*. For *That* is most for the True  
interest of Religion, which tends most to-  
wards making all men act with a good

S E R M. conscience. *Ver. 24. Let no man therefore*  
 I. *seek his own, but every Man another's*  
*Wealth: That is; be not so much solli-*  
 citous to keep up the full Extent of your  
 own innocent Liberty, as to do That  
 which will more generally and effectually  
 prevent Men's falling into Sin. This  
 ought always to be the main End, the  
 great and prevailing consideration, in  
 every Action of a good Christian; *what*  
 will most tend to promote the Kingdom  
 of God, the Practice of universal Righte-  
 ousness and Truth amongst Men. In or-  
 der to *This* End, it is not indeed Lawful  
 to do any thing that is *Evil*, but it is at  
 any time very commendable to forbear do-  
 ing what is *innocent*. *This* End, all our  
*Great and Religious* Actions ought always  
*actually and directly* to aim at; and all  
 our *smaller and indifferent* Actions, ought  
 by a *general and habitual* intention, to  
 have the same Tendency. For so the A-  
 postle concludes his *whole* Discourse, in the  
 words of the Text; *Whether therefore ye eat*  
*or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do All to the*  
*Glory of God: Give none Offense, neither to the*  
*Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the Church*  
*of God: Even as I please all men in all*  
*things,*

things, not seeking mine own Profit, but the Profit of Many, that they may be saved. S E R M.  
I.

THE words of the Text contain a Doctrine of the highest importance in Religion; And therefore, in the following Discourse upon them, I shall more largely and distinctly consider; 1<sup>st</sup>, What is the true meaning, and full Intent, of that Phrase which we so often meet with in Scripture, *The Glory of God*: And 2<sup>dly</sup>, What it is, that is required of men in Practice, in order to their satisfying the Precept in the Text; *Whether ye eat or drink, or whatever ye do, do All to the Glory of God*.

I. As to the true meaning of that Phrase which we so often meet with in Scripture, *The Glory of God*: 'Tis to be observed that the

1<sup>st</sup> and original Signification of it, is to denote to us the *Essence*, the *Person*, or the *Majesty* of God; that is, *God himself*, who is the *Fountain of Glory*. Thus 2 *Pet.* i. 17. *There came to him*, (to our Saviour at his Baptism,) *such a Voice from the Excellent Glory*: From *the Excellent Glory*, that is, from *God*, his *Father*; as 'tis literally expressed, in the very same

S E R M. Verſe. In *This* ſenſe, the Name of *God*, the *Majeſty on High*, and ſome other ſuch Phraſes, are alſo uſed in the like manner, to ſignify *God himſelf*. And, *ſitting on the right hand of Power*, Matt. xxvi. 64. is, ſitting at the right hand of *God*, who Alone has properly *All Power*.

2dly, T H I S phraſe, *the Glory of God*, ſignifies in the *next* place, the *Manifeſtation of God's Perfections or Attributes by the external Exerciſe of them towards his Creatures*. God was eſſentially Happy before any thing was created, in the enjoyment of his own unſpeakable Perfections: But the *Manifeſtation of the Glory of thoſe Perfections, and the Communication of Good to Others*, could not be till the Creation of Things. Hence the Prophet *Iſaiab* repreſents God Thus ſpeaking, (*ch. xliiii. 7.*) *I have created him for my Glory, I have formed him, yea I have made him*. In *Alluſion* to which expreſſion it may probably be ſuppoſed to be, that *St Paul* ſays, *1 Cor. xi. 7.* that *Man is the Image and Glory of God*.

A N D becauſe in *every one* of the divine Perfections *in particular*, when manifeſted ſingly in their proper and reſpective Acts,

## Of the Glory of GOD.

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SERM.

I.



Acts, there is something *distinctly* worthy of Adoration and Praise ; 'tis therefore not unfrequent in Scripture to express any *one* of those Perfections singly, by the Title of the *Glory of God*. Thus concerning the Divine Power, *Pf. xix. 1. The Heavens declare the Glory of God*, (that is, they show forth unto Men the *Power* of God in *creating*, and his *Wisdom* in *disposing* things;) *and the Firmament sheweth his handy-work*. And *Job. xi. 4, 40. This Sickness of Lazarus*, saith our Lord, *is not unto Death, but for the Glory of God*, ----that *thou shouldest see the Glory of God*,----and that *the Son of God might be glorified thereby* : The Meaning is ; It was intended for a manifestation of God's *Power* to raise the dead, and of his having *communicated* That Power also to the *Son of Man*. And here we may observe, by the way, that the Tyranny indeed of *weak and vain Mortals*, is apt to take pleasure in *Power for Power's sake* ; and their great Complacency and *Glory* is, in being able to exercise it arbitrarily and without reason. But *God*, whose Power is truly *infinite*, makes it His *Glory* to exercise Power, *only in doing Good* ; (for  
almost

SERM. almost *all* our Saviour's Miracles were  
 I. Acts of *Beneficence*, as well as of *Power*;) or at least, if the Subject is not capable of *Good*, yet the Exercise of his Power, even in Acts of *Severity*, is according to *Justice* always. *Rom. ix. 22. What if God, willing-----to make his Power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of Wrath fitted to destruction!* He did not show his absolute *Power*, in *fitting* a certain Number of men *to destruction*; as Some have absurdly understood this Text, directly contrary to the words themselves; but he showed his *Power* in *justly* punishing Those, who after *much long-suffering* and forbearance with them, appeared finally *fit* for nothing but *Destruction*.

AGAIN: Because *Mercy and Goodness* are represented in Scripture, as the Attributes wherein God *chiefly delights*; according to that of *St James, ch. ii. 13. Mercy rejoiceth against Judgment*; or, as it is in the Original, *Mercy glorieth over Judgment*: therefore *This* also is, in a particular and *emphatical* manner, called *the Glory of God*. *Rom. ix. 23. That he might make known the Riches of his Glory, on the vessels of Mercy*: And *Ephes. iii. 16.*



## Of the Glory of GOD.

II

*That he would grant you, according to the Riches of his Glory, to be strengthened--- by his Spirit in the inner man.*

S E R M.  
I.  


IN pursuance of which *same* manner of speaking, *Grace* or *Mercy* is by the Evangelist called likewise the *Glory of Christ*; Joh. i. 14. *We beheld his Glory, the Glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of Grace, (that is, of Mercy,) and Truth.* And even of a *Man*, Prov. xix. 11. *It is his Glory, saith Solomon, to pass over a Transgression.* And the *Thanks*, which men are bound to return to God for his *free Goodness and Compassion* towards them, is expressed to be accordingly *to the Praise of his Glory*; Eph. i. 14. *The redemption of the purchased Possession, unto the Praise of his Glory.* In *This* particular sense is sometimes meant That general Observation, that the *End* to which God directs All his *Actions*, is *his own Glory*; Rom. xi. 32. *God hath concluded All under Sin, that he might have Mercy upon All.* and Gal. iii. 22.

THUS God's *manifesting* the several *Attributes and Perfections* of his *Divine Nature*, in the *external Exercise* of them  
towards

S E R M. towards his *Creatures*; is frequently what the Scripture means by the *Glory of God*.

I.  


3dly, FROM hence, on the other side, the *Return* or *Acknowledgment*, which *Creatures* make again to *God*, for *His* manifestations of his Goodness to *Them*; is likewise in Scripture stiled *The Glory of God*, or *Their* giving *Glory to Him*. To give *Glory to God*, is to promote his *Honour* in the *World*; or to contribute what we can towards keeping up in All men's minds, a just *Sense* of him, and *Regard* towards him.

AND This is done, particularly; by *Worshipping* him, with *constant* and perpetually-returning Acts, of solemn *publick Devotion*. *Pf. xxix. 1. Give unto the Lord glory and strength; give unto the Lord the glory due unto his Name; worship the Lord, in the Beauty of Holiness.* Thus the *Saints in Heaven*, (*Rev. iv. 11.*) are represented as *worshipping* God, and 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.* And the *Nations of the Earth* are directed accordingly, (*ch. xix. 7.*)

## Of the Glory of GOD.

13

*Fear God, and give Glory to him, and worship him that made Heaven and Earth.* Which Worship because the Heathen World gave to *Others* instead of the True God, even to *Gods which did not make the Heaven and the Earth*, as the Prophet describes them; therefore St Paul Thus charges them, *Rom. i. 21.* that *when they knew God, yet they glorified him not as God.*

S E R M. 6

I.



Jer. x. 11.

Again: BY *Thanks particularly returned for special Mercies or Benefits received*, by which we profess our Sense of God's being the Author of those Benefits; is the Honour of God promoted among Men, or *Glory* given unto him. Thus (*Luke xvii. 18.*) when of the ten Lepers that were healed, one only, who was a *Samaritan*, was truly Thankful for the Mercy shown him; *There are not found*, says our Saviour, *that returned to give Glory to God, save This Stranger.*

Further: *GLORY* is in like manner said to be given to God, by *Acknowledgment of his Government and Supreme Dominion in the World*: *Phil. ii. 11.* *That every tongue should confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the Glory of God the Father*; that is, to the Honour of God

who

SERM.

I.



*who exalted him, and who gave him a Name which is above every Name, by setting him at his own right hand in the Heavenly places. Thus also Rev. xi. 13. when great Judgments of God fell upon the idolatrous World, the remnant (says the Text) were affrighted, and gave Glory to the God of Heaven; that is, they then acknowledged the True God to be indeed Supreme Governor of the World. For not acknowledging of which, but proudly assuming to himself the cause of his own Grandeur and Riches, King Belsazzar is thus reproved by Daniel, (ch. v. 22.) Thou, O Belsazzar, hast not humbled thine heart, but hast lifted up thy self against the Lord of Heaven; and---the God in whose hand thy Breath is, and whose are all thy ways, thou hast not glorified. And King Herod, when, being arrayed in royal apparel he sat upon his Throne; immediately the Angel of the Lord smote him, Acts xii. 23. because he gave not God the Glory; that is, because forgetting his dependance upon God, he suffered the People to applaud him as being himself a God, and the Author of his own Greatness.*


UPON the same Ground, *Confession of* S E R M.  
*past Sins*, with true *Humiliation*, and a I.  
just Sense of the *Unworthiness* and *Un-*  
*gratefulness* of Sin, is in Scripture stiled  
*giving Glory to God*. Josh. vii. 19. *Jo-*  
*shua said to Achan*, who had stolen some  
of the accursed things, and indeavoured  
to dissemble it; *My Son, give, I pray thee,*  
*glory to the Lord God of Israel, and make*  
*confession unto him*: That is; Acknow-  
ledge, that nothing can be concealed from  
*His* all-seeing Eye; and that to *Him* there  
is no secret nor Shadow of Darknes,  
where the Workers of Iniquity may hide  
themselves.

*Actual Repentance*, and *Forsaking* of  
Sin, by *real Amendment*, is still in a high-  
er degree *giving Glory to God*, or pro-  
moting his Honour. Rev. xvi. 9. *Men*  
*blasphemed the Name of God, who hath*  
*Power over these plagues; and they repent-*  
*ed not, to give him Glory*.

*HABITUAL Holiness*, or a *constant*  
*established Practice of Virtue*, in the course  
of our Lives, is yet further, in the *highest*  
degree we are capable, *giving Glory to*  
the *God* of all Righteousness and Holiness,  
who is of purer Eyes than to behold ini-  
quity.

S E R M. I.   
 quity: I Cor. vi. 20. *Glorify God, in your Body, and in your Spirit : Being filled with the Fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the Glory and Praise of God. (Phil. i. 11.)*

Phil. iv. 8.   
 IN a word: *Whatever* tends to the true Honour of Religion, to the promoting and establishment of Virtue and Goodness among Men ; *Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any Virtue, if there be any Praise, these are the things which promote the Glory of God.* God is *himself* a Being of infinite Holiness and Goodness ; a perfectly just and righteous, as well as Supreme, Governor of the Universe : And the Glory of *such* a Governor, is the establishment of his *Moral Kingdom*, the universal establishment of the *Dominion and Power of Virtue*, in the Wills of all reasonable and intelligent Creatures. His *natural Kingdom* is by *Necessity* ; for the material World *cannot but* obey him : But his *moral Kingdom* which is his *greatest Glory*, is the Dominion of *Righteousness*

*business and Virtue.* Hence the Apostles, S E R M.  
in their Exhortations to the Practice of I.  
*Any Virtue* whatsoever, frequently urge   
*This Argument*, that it will be *to the Glo-*  
*ry of God*: (Rom. xv. 5.) *God---grant*  
*you to be like-minded one towards ano-*  
*ther,-----that ye may with one mind glo-*  
*rify God, even the Father of our Lord*  
*Jesus Christ.* And in the words of the  
Text; *Whether ye eat or drink, or what-*  
*soever ye do, do all to the glory of God*:  
Do every thing, even the most *common*  
actions of Life; in such a manner as  
may *become* the Professors of the Gospel  
of Christ, and may promote the Honour  
and Interest of Religion. The words are  
of the same import, with those in *Col. iii.*  
17. *Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do*  
*all in the name of the Lord Jesus*; do eve-  
ry thing so as becomes the Disciples of  
Christ, *giving Thanks to God, even the Fa-*  
*ther, by Him*; that God in all things may  
be glorified, *through Jesus Christ*, 1 Pet.  
iv. 11; or, as 'tis expressed, *Tit. ii. 10.*  
that ye may adorn *the Doctrine of God*  
*our Saviour in all things.* To adorn the  
Doctrine of God is, by your Practise to  
cause it to appear *lovely and beneficial* to  
V O L. II. C mankind;

S E R M. mankind; to show how *glorious* 'tis in its  
 I. Effects, and how *worthy* to be embraced,  
 and practised by all men. This is what  
 the Scripture elsewhere calls, glorifying  
*the word of the Lord*, Acts xiii. 48; *glorifying it*, and causing it to *have its free*  
*course*; so St Paul explains it, 2 *Tb.* iii. 1.  
 'Tis promoting the interest of Religion  
 and Virtue, and the general Salvation of  
 Men; 'Tis spreading the *Knowledge* of  
 God, and bringing men over to the  
*Obedience* of his Commands, in order to  
 their becoming capable of being Partakers  
 of his *Happiness*. Which *Happiness and*  
*Perfection* of rational Creatures, being  
 the great *End and Design* of God's Crea-  
 tion, and what both Nature and Scrip-  
 ture calls the *Kingdom of God*; therefore  
*whatever* tends to the promoting of Vir-  
 tue and True Religion in the World, is  
 promoting the Honour and the Glory of  
 God. When Many of the Jews, convin-  
 ced by our Saviour's Miracles, embraced  
 the Truth of his Doctrine; the Scripture  
 thus expresses it, *Mat.* xv. 31. that they  
 glorified *the God of Israel*. When our Sa-  
 viour promises his Disciples, for the fur-  
 ther confirmation and establishment of  
 \* their




their Faith, that God would certainly grant them the Petitions they should rightly put up in his Name; he does it in the following manner, *that the Father*, says he, *may be glorified in the Son*, Joh. xiv. 13. In the 21<sup>st</sup> chapter of the same Gospel, *ver. 19*; because the Testimony and the Sufferings of the Martyrs, are one of the principal Means of propagating the True Religion, therefore our Saviour's foretelling in what manner St *Peter* should die, is by the Evangelist thus exprest, that our Lord *signified by what Death Peter should glorify God*. For the same reason, the Spreading of the Knowledge of the True God among the Nations of the World, is by the Prophet called, *setting his Glory among the Heathen*, Ezek. xxxix. 21. And because Nothing does This more effectually, than the virtuous *Lives*, and good *Examples* of those who profess the Truth; therefore the Apostle tells the *Corinthians*, (2 Cor. iv. 15.) that *the abundant grace* which was in them, did, *thro' the thanksgiving of Many, redound to the Glory of God*. And our Saviour, exhorting his Disciples to be bright Examples of Virtue to the World, does it in

S E R M.  
I.  
~

S E R M. this manner, (Matt. v. 16.) *Let your*  
 I. *Light, says he, so shine before Men, that*  
 they may see your good works, and glorify  
 your Father which is in Heaven.

ALL that has been said upon This Head concerning the *Glory of God*, is still further confirmed by the consideration of the Contrary, what is meant by the *Dis honour of God*. Literally and strictly speaking, 'tis evident God *cannot be dishonoured*, because his essential *Honour* or *Glory* is *immutable*. But as the *promoting of Virtue and Righteousness*, is *glorifying God*; so the bringing any *Reproach* upon *Religion and Goodness*, is *dishonouring of God*, who is the Author of true Religion and the Fountain of Goodness. Thus, under the *Old Testament*, the *Wickedness of Eli's Sons*, [1 Sam. ii. 17.] caused *men to abhor the offering of the Lord*. And the *Sin of David*, (2 Sam. xii. 14.) gave *great occasion to the Enemies of the Lord to blaspheme*. Upon This ground, *Nebemiah* thus exhorts the Jews at their return from the captivity, (ch. v. 9.) *Ought ye not to walk in the Fear of our God, because of the Reproach of the Heathen our Enemies?* And God complains by the  
 Prophet

Prophet *Isaiah*, ch. lii. 5. *They that rule* S E R M.  
*over my people, oppress them, saith the* I.  
*Lord, and my Name continually every day*   
*is blasphemed. And again, by Ezekiel,*  
ch. xxxvi. 20. *When they entred unto the*  
*Heathen whither they went, they profaned*  
*my Holy Name, when they said These are*  
*the people of the Lord.*

IN the *New Testament*, the same *Ar-*  
*gument* is urged by *St Paul*, *Rom. ii. 23.*  
*Through breaking the Law, dishonourest*  
*thou God? For the Name of God is blas-*  
*phemed among the Gentiles, through You,*  
*as it is written. And in his particular*  
*Directions* to persons in *particular Stati-*  
*ons*, his exhortation to *young women* is,  
that by *sober conversation* they *give none*  
*occasion to the Adversary to speak reproach-*  
*fully,* *1 Tim. v. 14:* and that they be  
*chaste and discreet, that the word of God be*  
*not blasphemed:* *Tit. ii. 5.* And to *young*  
*men*, ver. 8. that by their *uncorruptness,*  
*gravity and sincerity,-----he that is of the*  
*contrary part may be ashamed, having no*  
*evil thing to say of them.* And to *Servants,*  
that they behave themselves well to-  
wards their *Masters, that the Name of*

S E R M. God and his Doctrine be not blasphemed,  
 I. (1 Tim. vi. 1.)

THUS have I briefly explained what is in Scripture meant by This phrase, *The Glory of God*, and our *giving glory* to him. 'Tis promoting the interest of *True Virtue and Righteousness* in the World. For as the natural *Kingdom of God* over the *inanimate* Creation, consists in his Exercise of *Power and Wisdom*; so the spiritual *Kingdom of God* over the *rational* World, consists in the *Obedience of the Wills* of reasonable Creatures to the *moral and eternal Laws of Righteousness*: And the *Glory of God*, as of every *Good Governour in Proportion*, is the *Goodness and Happiness of his Subjects*. When therefore we say that God *does every thing for his own Glory*, and that This is his *Ultimate End*; the meaning is, that his Design in all things is the final establishment of his Kingdom of universal *Righteousness* in the whole Creation. And accordingly when a Man does any *Action because it is good and right*, or *forbears it because it is evil and immoral*; then only, and not when he acts upon any *enthusiastick*

*ick* principles, does he truly *intend the* S E R M.  
*Glory of God.* I.



**T H I S** in *General*. I should now have proceeded in the *2d* place, to show *more particularly*, what it is that is required of men in Practice, in order to their satisfying the Precept in the Text, *Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the Glory of God.* But This, hereafter.







# SERMON II.

Of the GLORY of GOD.



I COR. X. 31.

*Whether therefore ye eat or drink,  
or whatsoever ye do, do all to the  
Glory of God.*



IN Discourſing upon theſe SERMON  
words, I have propoſed to II.  
conſider, 1<sup>ſt</sup>, what is the  
True Meaning, and full In-  
tent, of that Phraſe which  
we ſo often meet with in Scripture, *The  
Glory of God*: And 2<sup>dly</sup>, What it is, that  
is required of Men in Practice, in order to  
their ſatiſfying the Precept in the Text.

I. As

SERM.

II.




I. AS to This Phrase, which we so often meet withal in Scripture, *The Glory of God*; I have shown, that it denotes, in its 1<sup>st</sup> and original Signification, the *Essence*, the *Person*, or the *Majesty* of God; that is, *God Himself*, who is the *Fountain of Glory*. 2<sup>dly</sup>, It signifies the *Manifestation* of God's Perfections or Attributes, in the *external Exercise* of them towards his *Creatures*. And from hence, 3<sup>dly</sup>, on the *other* side, the *Return* or *Acknowledgment*, which *Creatures* make again to *God*, for *His* manifestations of his Goodness to *Them*, is likewise in Scripture stiled, *The Glory of God*, or *Their* giving *Glory* to *Him*.

THUS far I have *already* proceeded *in general*. That which *Now* remains, is,

II. To consider distinctly and *particularly*, in the several Cases and Circumstances of Life, *what* it is that is required of men in Practice, in order to their satisfying the Precept in the Text; *whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the Glory of God*.

AND



And 1<sup>st</sup>, H E who will in all things S E R M. promote the *Glory of God*, must in the II. first place show forth the Sense he has of  God upon his Mind, by *Acts immediately and directly religious* ; by such Acts, as are *Professed Acknowledgments of our own Dependence upon God*, and *exemplary to provoke other men*, (as the Apostle elegantly expresses it, *Heb. x. 24.*) *unto Love and to good Works*. Of This Kind, are *publick Prayer and Thanksgiving* : Pf. cvii. 31. *O that men would 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 !* By this *publick Worship of God*, are made the properest *Expressions* of the Sense we have of our Dependence upon him ; and by this manner of expressing it, is *That Sense itself*, the Sense of God and of Religion upon the Minds of men, most effectually kept up and preserved. Very emphatical is the Description St *John* gives us, of the whole Universe joining in their several Capacities, to give *Glory in This manner to their Common Lord* :


Rev.

S E R M. Rev. v. 13. *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, Blessing, and Honour, and Glory, and Power, be unto him that sitteth upon the Throne.*

2dly, H E who, according to the Direction in the Text, will do all things to the *Glory of God*; as he must be constant in *Acts immediately and directly religious*, so he must resolve against being at Any time guilty of *Any Action* which is *directly irreligious*. Of This Kind, is *every deliberate Sin*, every Act which is *against a man's own Conscience*, every *known Transgression of a Commandment*. Which things whosoever is at any time guilty of; far from *doing all to the Glory of God*, he on the contrary, as much as in him lies, *dishonours* and reproaches him. For wilful Sin, finning *presumptuously* or *with a high hand*, (as the Scripture expresses it;) is in the Nature of Things a *Dishonour* to God: Rom. ii. 23. *Thou that makest thy boast of the Law, through breaking the Law dishonourest thou God? 'Tis reproaching the Lord*; or contending,

in effect, that his Commandments are not S E R M.  
 wise, just, and good: *Num. xv. 30. The* II.  
*Soul that doth ought presumptuously, the*  
*same reproacheth the Lord, and that Soul*  
*shall be cut off from among his people.*  
 'Tis casting *Contempt* upon his Laws;  
*If. v. 24. They have cast away the Law*  
*of the Lord of Hosts, and despised the*  
*word of the Holy One of Israel. 'Tis de-*  
*fying his Power; 1 Cor. x. 22. Do we*  
*provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we*  
*stronger than He? In a word; 'tis pro-*  
*fessing that we know better what is right*  
*and fit for us ourselves, than he can judge*  
*for us; and therefore that we will not*  
*have Him to reign over us. This is the*  
*case of presumptuous Sins; of all Acti-*  
*ons, known to be directly and in their*  
*own nature irreligious.*

BUT, not only by Actions *intrinsically*  
 and *in their own* Nature immoral, is  
 God dishonoured; but also by every  
 thing, which in its *Circumstances* is Evil;  
 by every Act, which either the *Person who*  
*commits it, judges to be unlawful; or*  
*which needlessly gives Offence to Others,*  
 and becomes to *Them* the Cause or the  
 Occasion of Sin. For, the Kingdom of  
 God

S E R M. God consisting in the Prevalency of universal Righteousness, Sincerity, and Truth ;  
 II.  it follows, that not only by the Practice of whatever is *intrinsically immoral*, but also by whatever *wounds and defiles the conscience* either of him who does the Action, or of Others who by the Example of it are led into the Commission of what to Them is Sin ; by *every* such thing is God's Kingdom of Righteousness diminished, and the Dominion of Virtue over the Hearts and Wills of Men, (which is the *Glory* and the *Delight* of God) is weakned and impaired. For whoever does any thing with a Sense or Judgment in his own mind of its being unlawful when he does it ; however otherwise the Act might possibly have been innocent in its own Nature ; yet he sins at That time against his own *Conscience*, and consequently against *God*. And whoever does any thing with a probable Knowledge or Expectation, that his doing it will be a means of deceiving or tempting his *Neighbour* into Sin ; however otherwise the Action might have been not only innocent *in itself*, but innocent also to *Him*, because he *knew* it to be so ; yet in This case,

case, by Uncharitableness, he sins against his *Brother*, and consequently against *God*. For, since the promoting of Virtue and Goodness in the World, is the most important of all things; it becomes us at all times, and in all our Actions, to look upon it as our main End. And though the *Perverseness* of *malicious* persons, who are apt to *misrepresent* things, is by no means an Obligation upon any Good man to forbear doing any thing that he *himself* knows to be innocent; yet the *Weakness* of *sincere* and *well-meaning* persons, who by relying upon *His* Example might be led to do what would in *Them* be Sin, is a very strong reason, (unless he has otherwise some *Great* Occasion or Necessity of Acting,) it is (I say) in point of *Charity* a very strong reason, why he should forbear doing that which would be so hurtful to *Them*. Where the thing that gives Offence to Others, and either drives or leads them into Sin is such, as not only upon account of this *Circumstance* or *Consequence*, but *intrinsically* also and *in its own Nature* is *unlawful*; there the Scripture denounces against the Offender the utmost *Severity* of Woe, as

against

S E R M. II. against a presumptuous Dishonourer of God: *Matt. xviii. 6. Whoso shall offend one of these little ones that believe in Me, it were better for him that a milstone were hanged about his Neck, and that he were drowned in the Depth of the Sea: Woe unto the World, because of Offences; for it must needs be that Offences come, but Woe to that man by whom the Offence cometh.* But where the thing done is innocent in itself, and only by accidental consequence proves an occasion of Sin to Others; yet even There, he who foresees this consequence and takes not care to prevent it; is in Scripture charged with *Uncharitableness* towards the Soul of his *Brother*, if it be a *Fellow-christian* whom he so causes to offend; or with want of true Concern for the *Glory of God*, if the Offence be given to an *Unbeliever*.

As to the Case of *Unbelievers*; the Apostle thus exhorts, *1 Pet. ii. 12. Have your conversation honest among the Gentiles; that-----they may by your good works which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of Visitation.* Again, *2 Cor. viii. 21. Provide for honest things, (that is, things of good reputation as well as lawful;)*

ful,) not only in the sight of the Lord, but S E R M. also in the sight of men. Abstain from all II. Appearance of Evil, 1 Th. v. 22. Provide things honest, that is, reputable, in the sight of all men, Rom. xii. 17. Walk honestly towards them that are without, 1 Th. iv. 12. Honestly, that is, wisely, circumspectly, so as to afford them no Objection against your religion; Thus the same Apostle explains himself, Col. iv. 5. Walk in Wisdom towards them that are without.

As to the case of *Fellow-christians*; how the *Glory of God* is to be promoted by our behaviour towards *Them*; by our taking care to avoid even such *innocent* things, as we see likely to lead any of *Them* into Sin, and may be forborn without any *great* inconvenience to *Ourselves*; the Apostle explains himself at large, by putting a particular and very remarkable instance, in the *chapter whereof my Text is a part*; and in the *eighth chapter of This Epistle*; and in the *fourteenth chapter to the Romans*.

THE Case he puts, is, whether it was lawful for Christians to eat of such meats, as the Heathen had sacrificed to their  
 V O L. II.                      D                      Idols.

S E R M.

II.



Idols. In the *present chapter*, whereof my Text is a part, he thus resolves the question, *ver. 25, 27. Whatsoever is sold in the shambles, or set before you at a friend's house, That eat, asking no question for conscience sake; i. e. Care not, whether the Heathens have superstitiously offered it to their Idols, or not; For the Earth is the Lord's, and the Fulness thereof; ver. 26. The Meaning is; God made all things, and every creature of His is good, if it be received with Thanksgiving; nor can any man's Folly and Superstition make That to be unclean, which God has made clean to us. But if any man say unto you, This is offered in sacrifice unto Idols, ver. 28. then eat not, for his sake that shewed it; that is, forbear Then, out of charity to Him, least Your Liberty cause Him to strain his Conscience, and so fall into Sin. And then he sums up all in the words of the Text, Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the Glory of God: Give none Offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the Church of God.*



IN the *eighth chapter* of this epistle, S E R M. he again proposes and resolves the *same* II. question: Ver. 4. *As concerning the eating things offered in Sacrifice unto Idols, we know that an Idol is nothing in the World, and that there is none Other God but One. Howbeit, saith he, ver. 7. there is not in every man That knowledge: For some with conscience of the Idol unto this hour, eat it as a thing offered unto an Idol; and their Conscience, being weak, is defiled. Wherefore, though in reality, and to a man of understanding, the good creatures of God are not at all the worse, for having by other mens vain and senseless superstition been offered to an Idol; yet take heed, says the Apostle, ver. 9. lest by any means this Liberty of yours become a stumbling-block to them that are weak: For if any man see Thee which hast knowledge, sit at meat in the Idols temple, shall not the conscience of Him that is weak, be emboldened,* (in the original it is expressed very emphatically, *shall he not be edified,)* *to eat those things which are offered to Idols? And through Thy knowledge, shall the weak Brother perish, for whom Christ died. And then he concludes, ver. 12. When*

S E R M. ye sin so against the Brethren, and wound  
 II. their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ:  
 Wherefore if Meat make my Brother to offend, I will eat no meat while the World standeth, lest I make my Brother to offend.

Lastly, T H E same question he again determines, in the fourteenth chapter to the Romans: I know, saith he, ver. 14. and am perswaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself; but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to Him it is unclean: But if thy Brother be grieved with thy meat, Now thou walkest not charitably:-----All things indeed are pure, but 'tis evil for that man who eateth with offence: It is good therefore, neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy Brother stumbleth, or is made weak: Hast thou Faith? have it to thyself before God. His meaning, in these last words, is; not, (as some have wickedly perverted the words,) that provided a man has right notions of religion himself, he need not openly own and profess them before Others: But his meaning is, that in things of an indifferent nature, (of which only he was here speaking,) men of understanding had better keep to themselves


*elves* their lawful Liberty, than run the hazard of encouraging *others* to venture further than their Consciences will innocently permit them. *Hast thou Faith?* i. e. hast thou *assurance* of the innocency of what thou dost? *have it to thyself before God.*

S E R M.  
II.  


THE Sum is This: To *do* any *Evil Action*, that *Good* may come of it, is *not lawful*: But to *forbear* any *innocent* action, when such forbearance is the likeliest means to prevent another man's falling into Sin, is both *lawful* and *commendable*. Nay, the acting otherwise, is, in such case, *Uncharitableness* towards our Brother: *Rom. xiv. 15. If thy Brother be grieved with thy Meat, Now walkest thou not charitably.*

To apply this to *Other* cases. We affirm, and with great reason, that such Use of *Images* in religious Worship, as the Church of *Rome* enjoins, is *direct Idolatry*. But suppose it were *not*; yet, so long as the generality of the people cannot possibly pray otherwise amongst them, than *with* Conscience of *the Idol*, as *St Paul* expresses himself, *1 Cor. viii. 7.* 'twould be the greatest Injustice in the world, for


S E R M. *Them* to cause their Brethren to perish, for whom Christ died; by imposing upon them needlessly, and without warrant of Scripture, so manifest a stumbling-block, and so evident a cause of falling into Sin. And the like may be said in proportion, concerning the Violent and Obstinate Imposition of *any* dubious doctrine, or *any* dangerous Ceremony, beyond the original Plainness and Simplicity of the Gospel. 'Tis chusing to hazard the Salvation of Men, and to cause Divisions, and Strifes, and unnecessary Difficulties of Conscience among the Servants of Christ, for the sake of Pride and Vanity and Love of Dominion over men. Whoever is sincerely desirous to *do all things to the Glory of God*; as he will be heartily sorry for all his *own* Sins and Offences, so he will really endeavour, as much as in him lies, to prevent the Sins of *Others*; He will avoid every thing, that may lead them into Sin; he will set them an example of Virtue, in the Practice of his own life; he will recommend to them in his Discourse, upon all fair and proper occasions, the excellency and the reasonableness of Religion; he will

will rejoice and be truly pleased, to see S E R M.  
 Virtue, Righteousness, and universal Cha- II.  
 rity, and Good-will, prevail and prosper   
 in the World; he will lead no man into  
 Error, nor be easy to see any man con-  
 tinue in it; but will wish with *Moses*,  
 that *all* the Lord's people were Prophets;  
 and contribute, as much as in him lies,  
 towards enabling them to be so. And,  
 if he be in Power or Authority, he will  
 desire not to grieve or burden the Con-  
 sciences of Men; but will esteem it of  
 much more importance to unite Chri-  
 stians in the plain Simplicity of the Go-  
 spel, and in the bonds of Righteousness  
 and true Charity; than to establish for  
 Himself Any Power or Dominion over  
 the Consciences of his Brethren, either  
 by presumptuously claiming to himself a  
 false *spiritual* Authority which Christ  
 has not given him, or antichristianly and  
 atheistically making use of *Temporal Pow-  
 er* to compel or awe men in matters of  
*Religion*.

THUS have I briefly explained the  
 Two *Primary* and Great Instances, where-  
 in consists a man's *doing All things to the  
 Glory of God*. It implies *first*, that he

S E R M. regularly show forth the Sense he has of  
 II. God upon his Mind, by *Acts immediately and directly religious*; and 2dly, that he resolves against being at Any time guilty, of Any *Action* which is *directly Irreligious*. But further,

3dly, IN all great Actions, Actions of *moment and consequence* in the main course of a man's life; although they be *not* such, as have any direct *relation to Religion*; yet ought he *expressly to intend the Glory of God*, as his chief and main end. He ought to intend the *Glory of God*; that is, the promoting of *Truth and Right, of Justice and Goodness* in the World. For whatever is *Therefore* chosen, *because* it tends to the promoting of *Virtue and Goodness*, is (in the Scripture-sense) done *for the Glory of God*: And whatever is *for That reason* avoided, *because* it has, in any manner, a *Tendency to Evil*; is avoided *for the Glory of God*. Now there is no *considerable* Action in any man's Life, no Action of *consequence and importance* in the World, but which, even though it has *not any direct relation to Religion*, yet some way or other has in the whole a *Tendency to promote the Cause*

Cause either of Virtue or of Vice. Such S E R M.  
 is, for instance, a man's choosing his II.  
*Profession*, imployment, or manner of   
 Life in the World. Whatever Profession,  
 though *not* in itself directly *unlawful*, yet  
 leads Men needlessly into many and strong  
*Temptations* to Sin, will always, if pos-  
 sible, and if he is not under any *pressing*  
 necessity, be avoided by a Man who is sin-  
 cerely desirous to do all things to the Glo-  
 ry of God. Every *innocent* Profession  
 may *equally* and *indifferently* be chosen by  
 any good Man; But yet, even in *That*  
 Choice, his *main and ultimate* End will  
 be the Exercise of Right and Truth, and  
 the mutual comfortable Support of Men,  
 in Justice, Faithfulness and Charity. Pro-  
 fit, Power, Credit, Reputation, and the  
 like, may very innocently, and very just-  
 ly be aimed at by Men in Any business  
 or imployment whatsoever: But these  
 things must Always be desired with a  
 due Subordination to the Interest of Vir-  
 tue; which is the *Glory of God*, and the  
 only true and final *Happiness* of Men.  
 Whoever, in the Great *Lines* and main  
*Course* of his Life, aims merely or prin-  
 cipally at worldly and temporal Ends;  
 in

S E R M. in the attainment of Those Ends, he *has*  
 II. *his Reward.*

4thly and *Lastly*; As in all *Great* Actions, a good Christian ought actually; so in all even the *smallest* and most *inconsiderable* Actions of Life, he ought habitually to intend the *Glory of God*. *Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the Glory of God*. The Scripture represents all, even *irrational* and the very *inanimate* creatures, (*Pf. cxlviii. 2, &c.*) *Beasts and all cattle, worms and feathered fowls; the Sun, the Moon and Stars; Mountains and all Hills, fruitful Trees and all Cedars; Fire and Hail, Snow and Vapours, Wind and Storms*; The Scripture, I say, represents even *All These* as *glorifying God*, because they act *regularly*, according to the *Nature* he has given them, and by *his* Command. Much *more* then, may even the most *common* actions of *Men* be justly said to be *done to the glory of God*; when they are done *decently and soberly, regularly and innocently*; as becomes *Men, and Christians*, and such as have upon their minds, even when they are not directly thinking of it, an *habitual* Regard to God and Religion. In a  
*Journey*;



Journey; to a diligent Man, and one S E R M. whose mind is really bent upon his journey's End, every thing he does, as well as II. actual travelling, tends truly to the same End. His Rest and Sleep, his Stops and Refreshments, nay even his very Diversions and Digressions, still tend uniformly towards enabling him to arrive at his intended Home. And thus likewise in the course of a Religious Life; to a Man truly and sincerely Virtuous, every Action of his Life promotes the Honour of Religion, which is the Glory of God; and every thing he does is sanctified by a Habit of Virtue: His worldly business and employment, by Justice and Charity running uniformly through all the parts of it; The common Actions of his Life, by decency and inoffensiveness; His very Pleasures and Diversions, by Innocency and right Intention. In a word; whatsoever he is doing, he still Always habitually remembers the End, and therefore he never does amiss, Ecclus. vii. 36.


III. THE Uses, which may be drawn by way of Inference from what has been said, are :

1<sup>st</sup>, FROM

SERM. Iſt, FROM hence we may learn how  
 II. *ſevere* a Reproof thoſe perſons juſtly de-  
 ſerve, who, far from doing *all* things, as  
 the Apoſtle directs, *to the Glory of God*,  
 do, on the contrary, by *Profaneneſs; Un-  
 righteousneſs and Debauchery*, directly diſ-  
 honour Him whom they profeſs to ſerve ;  
 bringing a *Reproach and Infamy* upon our  
 moſt Holy Religion, and cauſing the  
 Name of God and the Doctrin of Chriſt  
 to be through *Their* means *blaſphemed* a-  
 mong Unbelievers.

2dly, THOSE deſerve in the *next* place  
 to be rebuked ſharply, who, though they  
 do not diſhonour God by Acts directly  
*irreligious*, yet are *careleſs and negligent*  
 in matters of Religion ; not much regard-  
 ing whether *Truth* or *Errour* prevails in  
 the World ; nor being ſollicitous to do  
*honour* to their religion, and to promote  
 the *ſpreading* of the Doctrin of Chriſt,  
 by ſhowing the *reaſonableneſs* of it, by  
 preſerving the Simplicity and *Purity* of it,  
 and by exhibiting the *Beauty* of it to all  
 Mankind.

3dly, AFTER Theſe, are to be repro-  
 ved ſuch as *have* indeed a *Zeal* for Religi-  
 on, but *not according to Knowledge* ; pla-  
 cing

cing the main Strefs of Religion in S E R M. *Forms and Ceremonies* unworthy of God ; II.  
or in *Opinions and Notions*, which either   
through their *obscurity and unintelligible-*  
*ness*, or by their *disagreeableness* to the *E-*  
*verlasting Gospel*, to *natural Religion* and  
to the *Divine Perfections*, hinder, instead  
of promoting, the Glory of God.

4thly, EVEN the *Best* of Men have  
need to be admonished, and to be *put in*  
*remembrance*, that they stir up the *Gift of*  
*God that is in them*, 2 Tim. i. 6. That  
they *purge* themselves continually from  
every evil work, that they may bring forth  
more *fruit*, Joh. xv. 2. that they be *more*  
*and more diligent* in all their *Actions*, to  
do every thing to the Glory of God : Not  
with a superstitious Anxiety, or burden-  
som Preciseness, in things of little mo-  
ment ; but with a cheerful Application of  
every thing that occurs in Life to the  
promoting of Truth and Right, of Rea-  
son and Virtue among Men. Rejoicing  
in the Glory of God, and in the esta-  
blishment of his Kingdom of Righteous-  
ness ; as That wherein consists the Hap-  
piness of the whole Creation, both in  
This

S E R M. This World and in That which is to  
II. come.



*Lastly*, F R O M hence we may learn to comfort and satisfy the minds of some *weak* Christians; who, not having a right Notion *What* the Glory of God is, can never assure themselves that they are *True* Promoters of it. They read that *Moses* prayed to God to blot *Him* out of his book, if thereby the children of *Israel* might be saved; and that *St Paul* even *wished* Himself *accursed* from *Christ*, if thereby the Nation of the *Jews* could be converted. And hence *some* have put the question to *Themselves*, and *others* have been so weak as to put it in their *Writings*; whether a Christian ought to be *content* to perish finally, for the Glory of God. The question is absurd and contradictory; and has *no* foundation in the Texts referred to. *Moses*, and *St Paul*, in the circumstances they were Then in, might charitably, and without any extravagancy, be willing to have born the *temporal* Curse then coming upon the *Jews*, (which is all that their words mean;) if thereby it could have been possible to have saved the whole Nation. But such High Expressions

ons

ons of Affection are always well understood, in *all* books and in *all* languages, to have, not a literal, but a figurative Meaning. A *Christian's* Duty, of doing all things to the *Glory of God*, signifies plainly *This only*; that he ought always to prefer the Interest of *Religion and Virtue*, before all *Worldly considerations* whatsoever. Which that We may All do, &c.

S E R M.  
II.  
~







# S E R M O N III.

Of GOD's being the FATHER of  
Mankind.



M A T T. xxiii. 9.

*And call no man your Father upon  
the Earth; For One is your Fa-  
ther which is in Heaven.*



IN the following Discourse up- S E R M.  
on these words, I shall endea- III.

your to show distinctly, *1<sup>st</sup>*,  
in what Sense God is in  
Scripture usually styled Our  
*Father.* *2<sup>dly</sup>*, What we are to under-  
stand, when we find it affirmed of him,  
that he *is in Heaven.* *3<sup>dly</sup>*, What is meant,  
by calling any man our Father upon the  
V O L. II. E Earth.

S E R M. *Earth.* And 4thly, Why we are forbidden to call any man Father on the Earth, upon account of there being One which is our Father in Heaven.

III.




I. IN the *First* place; there are two Senses, wherein God is in Scripture usually stiled our *Father*.

I. THE *first* is, as he is the *Father* or Author of *all things*, by originally *creating* or giving them Being. In *This* Sense, the wisest of the Antient *Philosophers* among the *Heathen*, stiled God, *the Father of the Universe*. And the *Scripture* sometimes uses expressions of the same Nature. Thus when St *Paul* had declared, 1 *Cor.* viii. 6. that *To Us there is but One God*; he immediately in the very next words gives a Description who That One God is, by adding, *the Father*, of *whom are all things*; that is to say, *from whom* all things derive their existence, and are brought into Being by his Will and Power. The like manner of speaking we find again, *Eph.* iv. 6. *One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in all: Father of all*, that is, Author and Creator of all things. So the word is used in the *Creed*,




*Creed*, when we declare we believe in S E R M .  
 God, *the Father Almighty*, or, *the Al-*  
*mighty Father*, the Maker of Heaven and III.  
 Earth. And This is the utmost latitude  
 of signification to which the word can  
 possibly be extended: it reaching, in *This*  
 sense, to things both *rational* and *irra-*  
*tional*, *animate* and *inanimate*; making  
 God truly and properly, in the fullest and  
 most literal Sense, *the Father of the Uni-*  
*verse*. But *more commonly*, the word is  
 used in Scripture in a Sense somewhat  
 more restrained, with regard to rational  
 and intelligent Beings; God being pecu-  
 liarly stiled Father, with respect to These  
 to whom he has given *Life and Under-*  
*standing*; but Creator or Maker only, with  
 respect to *inanimate* things, to whom he  
 has communicated only *Simple Being*.  
 Thus *Heb. xii. 19. The Father of Spirits:*  
*And Eph. iii. 15. The Father;---of whom*  
*the whole Family in Heaven and Earth is*  
*named. Father, and Family, are relative*  
 Terms; And 'tis a noble Idea, which  
 This Text gives us of God; representing  
 the *whole Universe* as the House of God,  
 framed and preserved by his Power; and  
 all Orders of *intelligent* Beings, as the Fa-  
 mily


S E R M. mily of God, under the Government of  
 III. his Wisdom, Justice, and Goodness, in  
 their several and respective Stations. In  
 This sense, *Angels* are stiled the *Sons of God*; Job xxxviii. 7. *The morning-stars sang together, and all the Sons of God shouted for joy*; that is, the *Angels* rejoiced and praised God at the time of the creation of the visible World. And the same Assembly, who are stiled the *Host of Heaven*, 1 Kings xxii. 19. (*I saw the Lord sitting on his throne, and all the Host of Heaven standing by him on his right hand and on his left*;) are, in another description of the like vision, called the *Sons of God*, Job i. 6. *There was a day when the Sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord*. Again, Dan. iii. 25. *Nebuchadnezzar saw four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire; and the Form of the Fourth, says he, is like the Son of God; or like a Son of God, that is, like an Angel*; as the same person is stiled, ver. 28 of that chapter. Upon the same account; namely, upon account of having received *Life* from the hands of God, *the Life of an intelligent and rational Being*, our first Father *Adam* is called, *The Son of God*,  
 Luke

Luke iii. 38. which was the Son of *Adam*, S E R M.  
 which was the Son of *God*. And *all man-*  
*kind*, considered as Creatures endued with III.  
 Reason and Understanding, in opposition   
 to *Idols*, which have neither Understand-  
 ing, Sense, nor Life, are said to be *The*  
*Off-spring* of God, *Acts* xvii. 29. This  
 therefore is the *first* and original Sense,  
 wherein God is in Scripture stiled our  
*Father*. It signifies our deriving from  
 him our *Being* and our *Life*. *All* things  
 are his *Creatures*; but *Intelligent* Beings  
 only are his *Sons*.

2dly, T H U S far God is our *Father* by  
*Nature*. But 2dly, there is still a higher  
 and more peculiar sense, wherein the  
 Scripture represents God as being our *Fa-*  
*ther spiritually*, by *religion and grace*.  
 Concerning which *St Paul* thus speaks,  
*Rom.* viii. 15. *Ye have received the Spirit*  
*of Adoption*, whereby we cry *Abba, Fa-*  
*ther*. The true explication of which  
 Notion, may (I think) rightly be set  
 forth in the following manner. As God  
 is in *general* the Father of all *intelligent*  
 and rational Beings, so he is in a more  
*particular* and exalted manner the Father  
 of Him, who in Scripture is stiled *The*

S E R M. *Only-begotten Son; the Brightness of his Father's Glory, and the express Image of his Person; the Image of the Invisible God, and the First-born of every Creature, Col. i. 15.*

III.  By the interposition of this divine person, the only-begotten Son, *it pleased the Father, saith St Paul, to reconcile all things unto himself, Col. i. 19. By Him, saith he, to reconcile all things, ver. 20. whether they be things in Earth, or things in Heaven.* The Meaning is: The whole World of rational Creatures being considered as the *Family of God*, (according to that Text before-cited, which declares that *Of Him the whole Family in Heaven and in Earth is named*;) the government of this House of God is represented by the Apostle, as administered by the only-begotten Son; Eph. i. 22. *whom the Father has given to be the Head over all things, that he might gather together in One all things in Christ, both which are in Heaven and which are on Earth, even in Him, Eph. i. 10.* By Sin, men reject themselves; and in the divine Justice, are rejected out of This household of God, and are no more worthy to be called his Sons. But by True Repentance and Amendment of Life, made available through

through the Intercession of Christ our great S E R M.  
 High-Priest; they who were sometimes a- III.  
*alienated, and Enemies in their Minds by*   
*wicked Works, are again reconciled, Col. i.*  
*21. and, Through Him have access again*  
*by one Spirit unto the Father; and are no*  
*more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-*  
*citizens with the Saints, and of the House-*  
*hold of God, Eph. ii. 18. This Restoring*  
 of Sinners by Repentance and Reforma-  
 tion of Life, through the Mediation of  
 Christ, to the Favour of God, is ele-  
 gantly stiled by St Paul, *God our Father's*  
*Adoption of Children by Jesus Christ to*  
*Himself, Eph. i. 2, 5. The Effect of which*  
 reconciliation, to those who by the Prac-  
 tice of Virtue and Righteousness, conti-  
 nue to live worthy of their most Holy  
 Calling; the Effect of it is, that *Christ is*  
*not ashamed to call them Brethren, Heb.*  
*ii. 11. that God himself vouchsafes them*  
 the Denomination of *Sons, 1 Job. iii. 1.*  
*Behold, what manner of Love the Father*  
*has bestowed upon us, that we should be*  
*called the Sons of God; and that accord-*  
 ingly they have *access* with confidence to  
 the Throne of Grace, as to a merciful  
 and reconciled *Father; Gal. iv. 5. Ye*

S E R M.

III.



have received the Adoption of Sons; And because ye are Sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your heart, crying *Abba, Father*; wherefore thou art no more a *Servant*, but a *Son*. In consequence of this State of Reconciliation, our Saviour in all his Discourses constantly represents God, as having the tender care and affection of a *Father* towards us: teaches us to acknowledge him and look up to him as our *Father*, upon account of his continual *Providence* in preserving us; his *Love*, in revealing himself to us by his *Son*; his *Goodness*, in being ready to assist us with his *Spirit*; his *Mercy*, in forgiving our *Offences*; his *Authority*, mixt with the greatest *Patience*, in correcting us, not, as earthly parents, *after their own pleasure*, but for *Our Profit*, Heb. xii. 10. And, to encourage us to pray to him, he lays before us That moving and most pathetick Argument, *Mat. vii. 11. If ye being evil, know how to give good Gifts unto your children; how much more shall your Father which is in Heaven, give goods-things to them that ask him?* In the Writings indeed of *Some Authors*, God seems sometimes to be represented to

us under a different character; as a *hard* S E R M.  
*master, expecting to reap where he has not* III.  
*sown, and to gather where he has not straw-*  
*ed:* But such representations are conse-  
 quences only of mens own private Opi-  
 nions; and not taught, but *reproved*, in  
 Scripture. For *God is Love*; and he  
 loves, and does good to, all his Creatures;  
 and his tender mercies are over all his  
 works. Only against wilful *wickedness*, he  
 is indeed irreconcilably severe, and *un-*  
*righteousness* is his abhorrence and abomi-  
 nation.

II. HAVING Thus briefly explained  
 what the Scripture means, when it styles  
 God our *Father*, I proceed now in the  
 2d place to show *what* we are to under-  
 stand, when we find it affirmed of him  
 that he *is in Heaven*. As if He who is  
 equally in *all* places, could be confined in  
*Any*; or any proper Habitation could be  
 ascribed to *Him*, whom *the Heaven, and* 2 Kings  
*the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain,* viii. 27.  
 If. lxvi. 1. *Thus saith the Lord, The Hea-*  
*ven is my Throne, and the Earth is my*  
*Footstool; Where is the House that ye build*  
*unto me? and Where is the place of*  
*my Rest?* The true meaning therefore,


SERM.

III.



when God is said to *Be in Heaven*, is to express his *Height and Dignity*; not in *place*, but in *Dominion and Power*: It being only a *similitude* drawn into common Speech, from the situation of things in Nature. As the Heavenly Bodies, the Sun and Stars, are High above us in *place*; and all Earthly Blessings depend on the Sun and Rain and the Descent of kindly Influences *literally from above*: so, by an easy *figure* of Speech, whatsoever is above us *in Power*, we are from hence used to represent as being above us *in Place*. The Power and Dominion of the King of *Babylon*, is thus set forth by the Prophet *Isaiab*, ch. xiv. 13, 14. *Thou hast said in thine Heart, I will ascend above the Heights of the clouds, I will ascend into Heaven, I will exalt my Throne above the Stars of God!* And the *Destruction* of his Monarchy is described after the like manner, ver. 12. *How art thou fallen from Heaven!* Thus likewise our Saviour speaking of the *Pride and Greatness* of *Capernaum*; *And thou Capernaum, which art exalted unto Heaven, shalt be brought down to Hell*, Matt. xi. 23. And with Us *Now*, Men's being *High* or *Low* in *Place*, is not meant to express their



their *habitation* upon *Hills* or in *Vallies*, S E R M. III.  
 but the Dignity of their Station in the World. The Greatness and Dignity of   
*our Saviour's own Kingdom*, is represented in Scripture, by his *sitting at the right hand of God in the heavenly places*: We know that God has no Hands, nor any Shape or Figure; But the meaning of Christ's sitting on his right Hand, is, his being exalted next to him in Authority and Power. Thus therefore when we speak likewise of *God*, even the invisible Father himself, as being *in Heaven*; it must always be understood to express his *Supremacy*, not in *Place*, but in *Power and Dominion*; that He is the High and Holy One, Great and Glorious and Supreme above All.

BUT there is also *another* reason of this expression, of God's being *in Heaven*; To signify, that tho' of his real actual *presence* there is indeed no Confinement, yet of his *Glory and Majesty* there is in That place a particular and extraordinary *Manifestation*. Thus the Archangel in the Book of *Tobit* represents it, ch. xii. 15. *I am* (saith he) *one of the Seven Holy Angels, which go in and out before the Glory of the Holy One*;

S E R M. One ; and the Salutation to the Churches,  
 III. which begins the Book of the Revelation,  
 is of the same Nature, ch. i. 4. *Grace be  
 unto you and Peace, from him which is,  
 and which was, and which is to come, and  
 from the seven Spirits which are before his  
 Throne. The real and proper Presence  
 of God is equally and necessarily in All  
 places : But his Throne, his Glory, the  
 place where the righteous shall see his  
 Face, that is, a more particular glorious  
 manifestation of his Power and Majesty ;  
 this, is in Heaven. In like manner here  
 upon Earth ; in places where God has  
 been pleased more particularly to manifest  
 his Glory, to place his Name There, to  
 receive There the Homage of his Ser-  
 vants ; in those places God in Scripture-  
 Phrase is said to Be. Not as if at the  
 same time he was not equally in all other  
 places also : For in Him we live and move  
 and have our Being, Acts xvii. 28. And,  
 as Job elegantly expresses it, ch. xxiii. 8.  
*Behold, I go forward, but he is not there ;  
 and backward, but I cannot perceive him ;  
 On the left hand, where he doth work, but  
 I cannot behold him ; he hideth himself on  
 the right hand, that I cannot see him : But  
 the**

the Meaning of God's being said to *Be* in S E R M.  
*particular places*, is, that in those places III.  
 he chose to *manifest* himself to his Ser-  
 vants, and to receive *Homage* from them.  
 The Patriarch *Jacob*, concerning the  
 place where he first saw the Vision of  
 Angels ascending and descending out of  
 Heaven; *surely*, saith he, *the Lord is in*  
*this place*, Gen. xxviii. 16; *and it shall be*  
*the house of God*, . ver. 22. In like manner  
 in the Temple at *Jerusalem*, the *Glory* of  
 God *appeared visibly*, 2 Chr. vii. 1. and  
 There it also was, when it did *not* appear:  
 And how He, whom the Heaven and the  
 Heaven of Heavens cannot contain, did  
 thus at that time dwell on Earth, in a  
 Temple made with hands, is in a lively  
 manner expressed by *Solomon*, 1 Kings viii.  
 30. *Hearken thou to the Supplication of thy*  
*Servant, and of thy people Israel, when*  
*they shall pray in, or towards, this place;*  
*and bear thou in Heaven thy dwelling-place:*  
 The meaning is; God, who is present in  
*every place*, had appointed in *That place*  
 to receive his Tribute of Worship. A-  
 gain; when the Lord appeared to *Moses*  
 in the Bush, *the place*, saith he, *where-*  
*on thou standest, is Holy Ground*, Ex-  
 od.

S E R M. III. *Exod. iii. 5.* Not that *God* himself was present even Then in the Bush, any more than in all other places; but the place was made Holy, by God's manifesting his *Glory* there; For so *St Stephen* expressly tells us, *Acts vii. 30.* *There appeared to Moses an Angel of the Lord, in a flame of Fire in the Bush.*

IN like manner, God is said in Scripture to *dwell in the Hearts* of good men: And that the *Bodies* of them which are sanctified, are *Temples* of the Holy Ghost; God dwelling in them *by his Holy Spirit*: Not by any Confinement of the *Presence* of God; but by his being pleased to show forth the *Power and Influences* of his Holy Spirit, in particular places, and to particular persons.

III. HAVING thus shown at large, what the Scripture means by stiling *God* our *Father*, and by affirming him to *be in Heaven*; I am in the 3d place to consider, what we are to understand by *calling any man our Father upon the Earth*. And This plainly appears in the Context, from the whole Scope and Design of our Saviour's discourse, in the directions he gives to his Disciples. *The Scribes and Pharisees,*

Pharisees, says he, *fit in Moses's seat*; SERM.  
 ---- *But do not ye after their works: For* III.  
*they ---- love greetings in the Markets, and*  
*to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi: But*  
*be not ye called Rabbi; for One is your*  
*Master, even Christ: And call no man*  
*your Father upon the Earth; for One is*  
*your Father, which is in Heaven: Neither*  
*be ye called Masters; for One is your*  
*Master, even Christ.* From whence it  
 clearly appears, that *calling any man our*  
*Father upon Earth*, signifies, paying to  
 any Earthly Teacher, (not a *due* regard  
 and attention, but) That *deference*, which  
 the Scribes and the Pharisees were by our  
 Saviour reprov'd for unjustly claiming.  
 And the Deference or Regard *they* claim-  
 ed, was, that men should follow them  
 ignorantly and *implicitly* in the Tra-  
 ditions they taught. In the Histories of  
 the Antient *Jews* 'tis observed, that they  
 frequently preferred the Traditions of  
 their Rabbi's, even before the Writings  
 of the Prophets themselves. And This  
 Account of them we find confirm'd in  
 Scripture. God complain'd of *old* by the  
 Prophet *Isaiab*, ch. xxix. 13. *Their Fear*  
*towards me is taught by the Precept of*  
*men;*

S E R M. *men*; i. e. Humane Authority had too  
 III. *much* weight among them in matters of  
 Religion. In our *Saviour's time*, things  
 were grown to a still higher degree of  
 Corruption in this respect: *In vain*, says  
 our Lord to the Pharisees; *do they worship*  
 God, *teaching for Doctrines the Command-*  
*ments* (or Inventions) of Men, *Mar. vii. 7.*  
*For, laying aside the Commandment of God,*  
*ye hold the Tradition of Men,* ver. 8.  
 And he repeats it again in the next verse;  
*Full well ye reject the Commandment of*  
*God, that ye may keep your own Tradi-*  
*tion,* ver. 9. *Making the word of God of*  
*none effect, through your Tradition which*  
*ye have delivered,* ver. 13. The Profes-  
 sors of *Christianity* itself quickly began,  
 even in the *earliest* times, to fall into  
 some degrees of the same Fault; as ap-  
 pears by the instructions St Paul gives to  
*Titus*, ch. i. 14. *Rebuke them sharply, that*  
*they ----- may not give heed to ----- Fables*  
*and Commandments of Men.* Some of  
 these Commandments of Men, he parti-  
 cularizes, *Col. ii. 18. Let no man beguile*  
*you of your reward, in a voluntary humi-*  
*lity, and worshipping of Angels, intruding*  
*into those things which he hath not seen,*  
 vainly

vainly puffed up by his fleshy mind. In af-  
 ter-times, these Commandments of Men  
 (as is the nature of all Superstition) con-  
 tinually multiplied and increased; accord-  
 ing to the Apostle's Prophecy, 2 Tim. iv.  
 3. *The Time, says he, will come, when  
 they will not endure sound doctrine, (that  
 is, they will not be content with the Form  
 of Sound words delivered by Christ and  
 his Apostles;) but after their own lusts  
 shall heap up to themselves Teachers,---and  
 shall turn away their ears from the Truth,  
 and shall be turned unto Fables. And  
 the only possible way to prevent this Evil,  
 is to consider, that this assumed Authority  
 of Men in matters of Faith, prevailed  
 from time to time more and more, till at  
 length it ended in the establishment of  
 that Kingdom of This World, which we  
 call Popish religion. And here I cannot  
 omit to observe, that the word Pope, the  
 original of which is the old Greek word  
 παππας, signifies Father; and it signifies  
 Father in that very sense, wherein the  
 Text forbids us to call any man Father  
 upon Earth. For by calling a man Fa-  
 ther here, our Saviour plainly means ha-  
 ving regard to humane Authority in mat-*

S E R M.  
 III.  


S E R M. *ters of Faith, or in Doctrines of Religion.*

III.



Which thing is altogether inconsistent with true Christianity; because the *revealed* Will of God, or whatever is *additional* to the law of Nature, is *at once* made known to us *Whole* and *Entire* in the Writings of the Evangelists and Apostles. The adhering immoveably to which Rule, the Law of Nature and of the Gospel, is acknowledging that *One only is our Father, which is in Heaven; and one only our Master, which is Christ.* All *we*, are *brethren* only; and have *no* Authority to *make* any doctrines of Religion, but only to *perswade* and earnestly exhort men to practise what Christ has already taught. The *Apostles themselves*, did not take upon them to exceed their Master's instructions: Much *more* *inexcusable* are vain men, who in *later* Ages have been guilty of so great and high a presumption. The Power which the Church of *Rome* has assumed, of imposing Doctrines of Faith by the Authority of *Popes*, and of *general Councils*, and *Armies*, and *Inquisitions*, is most elegantly described in Scripture under the character of a *man of Sin, sitting in the Temple of God;*



God; that is, in his Church; *exalting* S E R M.  
*himself above God, showing himself that* III.  
*He is God, speaking great words against* Dan. vii.  
*the most High, and taking upon himself* 25.  
*to change Times and Laws, and com-* Rev. xiii,  
*manding all the World to worship him;* 8.  
 that is, imposing upon men by Force,  
 his own Religion. This is the description  
 given us of the Church of Rome in the  
 Prophecies of *Scripture*; and whosoever  
*taketh from, or addeth to, the words of that*  
*inspired Rule, by endeavouring to set up*  
*any human Authority in matters of Faith,*  
 makes himself in proportion a partaker of  
 the Sin, of that great Corruptness of  
 the World.

IV. AND now, having sufficiently ex-  
 plained what is meant by *calling any man*  
*Father upon the Earth*; it will be very  
 obvious to understand, in the 4th and last  
 place, how the *ground and reason* of this  
 prohibition is assigned to be This, that  
*One is our Father which is in Heaven.*  
 For, our *Father in Heaven* having clear-  
 ly, and fully, prescribed to us the con-  
 ditions of Salvation through Christ; it  
 follows evidently that They who *call*  
*men Fathers upon Earth*, that is, who of  
 VOL. II. F 2 their

S E R M. their own Fancies make *other* conditions  
 III. of Salvation, thereby causing Divisions  
 ~~~~~ and Contentions among their Brethren;  
 do in effect subvert all true Religion.

1 Cor. iii. For, *other foundation can no man lay,*  
 11. *than that which is laid, even Jesus Christ;*  
 that is, the *doctrine* already taught, by  
*Christ Himself* and his Apostles. If any  
 man *departs from This* foundation, and  
 teaches for doctrines the Commandments  
 of Men; he *forsakes the Fountain of Li-*  
*ving waters, and hews him out cisterns,*  
*broken cisterns that can hold no water,* Jer.  
 ii. 13. Or, as St Paul expresses it, Col. ii.  
 19. *not holding the Head, from which all*  
*the Body has nourishment ministred,* his  
 religion consequently is vain. Or if *upon*  
 this true Foundation, he *builds the Hay*  
*and Stubble* of unintelligible Speculati-  
 ons, and doctrines useles in Practice, he  
 at least *loses* great part of his Reward,  
 1 Cor. iii. 12, 15. For *This* reason, it  
 highly imports all *Christians* to *take heed*  
 how *they bear,* Luk. viii. 18; and dili-  
 gently to *search the Scriptures,* wherein  
 are *the words of eternal Life.* And they  
 who have Power and Influence over  
*others,* can never too often recollect, how  
 God

God complains by the Prophet, concerning the Shepherds of *Israel*, that *with Force and with Cruelty have ye ruled.* Ezek. xxxiv. 4; and how our Saviour instructs his Disciples, saying, *Ye know that the Princes of the Gentiles exercise Dominion over them, and they that are great, exercise Authority upon them; But it shall not be so among you; but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your Minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your Servant; For even the Son of Man himself came not to be ministred unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many,* Matt. xx. 25, 26, 28. The Head of the Church of *Rome* profanely ridicules this Text, by stiling himself the *Servant of the Servants of Christ*, at the same time that he imperiously imposes upon their Faith his own Doctrines and Creeds, and persecutes them to death if they submit not to *Him* and his general Councils as *Fathers upon the Earth*. But the True Apostles of our Lord, did not *so learn Christ*. *We preach not ourselves,* faith <sup>2</sup> Cor. iv. St Paul, *but Christ Jesus the Lord: Nei-* <sup>5</sup> ther have we Dominion over your Faith,

S E R M. *but are Helpers of your Joy, 2 Cor. i. 24.*

III.

Thus spake the Apostles concerning themselves, even though they were inspired persons, and had a just claim to infallibility in Doctrine. How much more ought All, who have no pretense to such miraculous Gifts, to be of the same meek Spirit; following the Admonition of St Peter, 1 Pet. v. 3. *Feed the flock of God,-----not as being Lords over God's heritage, but as being ensamples to the Flock:* And That of St James, ch. iii. 13. *Who is a wise man, and indued with knowledge amongst you? let him show, out of a good conversation, his works with meekness of Wisdom;* and ver. 1. of the same chapter, *My Brethren, be not many Masters:* The word in the original, is, *many Teachers;* but our Translators very rightly render it, *Masters;* because the Apostle there speaks of the very same kind of haughty and imperious Teachers, against whose Practises our Saviour warns his Disciples in the Text, and in the words next following: *Be not ye called, Masters; for One is your Master, even Christ; and call no man your Father upon the Earth: for One is your Father*  
*which*

*which is in Heaven.* Which admonition, S E R M.  
that *All* among us may constantly attend III.  
to, both who *Teach* and *Hear* the Sim-  
plicity of the Gospel; God of his infinite  
mercy grant, &c.

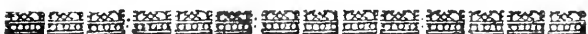






# SERMON IV.

Of being the CHILDREN of GOD.



ROM. viii. 16, 17.

*The Spirit itself beareth witness with our Spirit, that we are the Children of God : And if Children then Heirs ; Heirs of God, and Joint-Heirs with Christ.*



IN discoursing upon these SERM.  
 words of the Apostle, I shall IV.  
 endeavour to explain briefly  
 1<sup>st</sup>, What is here meant by  
 our being *Children of God.*  
 2<sup>dly</sup>, What is to be understood, by our  
 being

S E R M. being stiled *Heirs of God*, and *joint-heirs with Christ*. And 3dly, How the *Spirit of God*, the *Spirit itself beareth witness with Our Spirit*, if we be good Christians, that these Characters do truly belong to us.

## IV.

1st, I AM to consider what is here meant by our being *children of God*. God is in Scripture stiled, *The Father of All*; Eph. iv. 6. *One God and Father of All, who is above all, and through all, and in us all*. Here, the title *Father* is applied to him, in respect of his giving *Being* to all things, as they are his *Creatures* and the *Work of his hands*. For though inanimate or irrational creatures can in no Sense be stiled the *Children of God*; yet God, considered as the *Author of All Being*, may properly enough be stiled *the Father of the Universe*. In a Sense somewhat more restrained, and with regard to such *Beings* to whom he has given *Life* and *Reason* and *Moral Faculties*, God is stiled the *Father, of whom the Whole Family in Heaven and Earth is named*, Eph. iii. 15. *The Whole Family of rational creatures, Angels and Men*. And these in like manner, upon account of the *living*  
and



and *rational* nature he has given them, are frequently in Scripture stiled *the Sons of God*. By *Sin*, Men forfeit the Benefit of this natural relation to God their Father, and become *Strangers* and *Aliens* and *without God* in the World; being rejected by him, and no longer looked upon as his Sons, but cast off as Objects of his Wrath and Displeasure. By *Repentance* and *renewed Obedience*, they who are effectually convinced of the Folly and Unreasonableness of Sin, return, as far as in them lies, to their Father's house, and desire to have Access again to his Favour and Mercy. And God, by accepting their Repentance, and pardoning their past Sins according to the gracious Terms and Declarations of the Gospel, and giving them the assistance of his Holy Spirit to sanctify them for the future; receives them again, as a gracious Father, and *adopts* them for his Sons; (in St Paul's language, gives them *the Spirit of Adoption*, whereby they cry, *Abba Father*;) and they become again *Fellow-citizens with the Saints*, and of *the Household of God*. This is what the Scripture elsewhere calls *Regeneration*, or the *New Birth*; and sometimes,

SERM. times, the *New Creation*; Describing  
 IV. such persons, as being in a spiritual sense,  
 Created anew *unto good works*; and Born,  
 not of blood, nor of the *Will of the Flesh*,  
 nor of the *Will of Man*, but of God, Joh.  
 i. 13. *Being born again, not of corruptible  
 seed, but of incorruptible, by the word  
 of God which liveth and abideth for ever*,  
 1 Pet. i. 23. *The God and Father of our  
 Lord Jesus Christ*, having, according to  
 his abundant mercy, begotten us again  
*unto a lively hope*, ver. 3. And the plain  
 Meaning of all these figurative expressi-  
 ons, is; that when a Sinner sincerely re-  
 turns to a Sense of his Duty, and effectually  
 amends his Life; God, who confideth  
 whereof we are made, and remembreth  
 that we are but Dust, pitieth him  
 even as a *Father* pitieth his children; and,  
 though in strictness of estimation he be  
 indeed no more worthy to be called his  
 Son, yet, upon this his true Repentance,  
 he receives him again to the Arms of his  
 Mercy, and says, *Rev. xxi. 7, I will be  
 his God, and he shall be my Son*. An-  
 swerable to which account of this relative  
 character on God's part, 'tis manifest that  
 the Title on *Our* part, of being *children*  
 of

of God, is expressive of the highest obligations of *Duty* and *Obedience*, and of our stedfastly persevering in the practice of all *Virtue* and *Righteousness*. The departing from which originally, as it caused those who by *creation* were naturally the Sons of God, to become Strangers and Enemies to him; so by returning to it again, and by no other method whatsoever, can they, who through wicked works have been strangers and enemies to God, become again, through the divine Mercy, the Sons of God by *adoption*, and continue to preserve That character by their perseverance therein. *In This, the children of God are manifest, and the children of the Devil: Whosoever does not righteousness, is not of God.*

HAVING thus explained briefly, what the Apostle in the text means, by stiling us *the children of God*; the next thing I proposed to consider, was

2. WHAT we are to understand by the following characters; being *Heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ: If children, then Heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.* The word, *children*, being a Title of affection and Love, implies,

I when

S E R M.  
IV.



S E R M.

IV.

when used in the *figurative* Sense, an expectation of *favour*, and a dependance for *Support*. Gal. iv. 7. *Wherefore thou art no more a Servant, but a Son; and if a Son, then an Heir of God through Christ.* The expression is exactly the same with That in the Text; *We are the children of God, and, if children, then Heirs.* If the relation of *children* be acknowledged, the very Notion of that relation carries along with it in course a Promise, or Assurance of a Blessing. And because *God* is infinitely *more able* to provide for those who rely on *Him*, than *earthly Parents* are to make provision for their natural Posterity; and the portion of *God's* children can by no possible misfortune, by no Accident, by no Force, by no Fraud, be taken from them, unless by departing from the commandments of their Heavenly Father, they voluntarily cast themselves out of *His* Favour. Therefore the inheritance of those *on whom the Father has bestowed such manner of love, that they should be called the Sons of God*, is in Scripture stiled a *Kingdom which cannot be moved, the things which cannot be shaken, a City which hath foundations, a continuing city,*

Heb. xii.

28, 27.

xi. 10, 13,

14.

city, an inheritance among them that are sanctified, the inheritance of the Saints in Light, an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled that fadeth not away, And God himself, in St *John's* vision, speaking from the throne of his glory, thus declares, *Rev.* xxi. 7. *He that overcometh, shall inherit all things, and I will be his God, and he shall be my Son.* Here the Title of *Son* or *Child of God*, being used as of the same import with *One* that is to inherit *all things*, that is, all those things which God has promised to *Them* that love him; is exactly correspondent to the *Apostles* manner of speaking in the Text, *If children, then Heirs.* And because the Promise of God, who cannot lie, standeth always sure; so that the Reward of Virtue, however at present distant and invisible, is yet in reality as Certain in the determinations of the Divine Counsel, as if it was already actually in possession; hence St *Paul*, carrying the same figure still higher, in his description of the Happiness of those sincerely religious persons, whom in the text he stiles *Heirs of God*, thus expresses himself, *Eph.* ii. 5. *God hath quickned us together with Christ, and*  
*bath*

SERM.


IV.

Acts xx.

32.

Col. i. 12.


1 Pet. i. 3.

S E R M. *hath raised us up together, and made us sit,*  
 IV. *(hath already made us sit) together in hea-*  
 *venly places in Christ Jesus. And else-*  
*where he calls them, fellow-citizens with*  
*the Saints, and of the household of God: And*  
*tells them that they are come, (that they*  
*are already come) unto Mount Sion, unto*  
*the City of the living God, the heavenly*  
*Jerusalem; and to an innumerable compa-*  
*ny of Angels, and to the Spirits of just*  
*men made perfect, and to Jesus the Media-*  
*tour of the New Covenant, and to God the*  
*Judge of All.*


T H I S is the full meaning of that *Se-*  
*cond* character given in the Text to sin-  
 cere Christians; that they are *Heirs of*  
*God*; Heirs of his *Promises*, and *King-*  
*dom*.

I T follows; *And Joint-Heirs with*  
*Christ: Heirs with God, and Joint-heirs*  
*with Christ.* The sense of which expres-  
 sion is this. Though *Men*, as well as  
 all superiour rational Creatures, are origi-  
 nally by Creation the Children of God;  
 and so long as they continue to obey the  
 Law of their Nature and the Commands  
 of God, cannot fail consequently to con-  
 tinue in his Favour; And though *Sin-*  
*ners,*

ners, when they sincerely repent and amend, have good and reasonable Grounds, from the consideration of God's natural Perfections, to hope for Mercy and Compassion at his hands: Yet neither to Sinners is God under any obligation of Justice, to restore them upon their Repentance to the *same state of Favour* as if they had never sinned; nor even to the most *innocent* and perfectly *Sinless* Creatures, (if any such there were,) is he under Any natural obligation to confer *Immortality*, and an *eternal Kingdom of Glory*. All that Justice in That case requires, is, to distinguish them according to their Deserts, in That rank of the Creation wherein their natural Capacities placed them, and for such a Space of Time as the original good pleasure of the Creator allotted them. The Being which God freely gave, he may at any time without any injustice take away: And no Creature, even *without* consideration of *Sin*, has any more claim of Right to continue for ever, or even for any limited time to be exalted above the natural improvement of its original capacities, than it had any Right to be created

S E R M. *Before it was, or to have been made in*  
 IV. *Any Higher Species of Creatures. Eternal*  
 *Life therefore, or the Kingdom of Heaven,*  
*is the Gift of God; not due to Mankind*  
*by Nature; not a Claim of Right; no, not*  
*even if they had continued Innocent; much*  
*less, to returning Sinners; but 'tis the*  
*Gift, the Free Gift of God, originally*  
*in the State of Innocence; and to Peni-*  
*tents still much more is it merely a*  
*Free Gift, in and through Christ. That*  
*which is born of the Flesh, is Flesh; and*  
*has no title, no claim of Right, naturally,*  
*to the Spiritual Kingdom of God. But the*  
*Father has appointed unto his Son Jesus*  
*Christ a Kingdom, and I, says our Lord to*  
*his Disciples, appoint unto You a Kingdom,*  
*even as my Father appointed unto Me: That*  
*whosoever overcometh, (that is, whosoever*  
*prevails over the sinful Temptations of the*  
*World,) may sit down with Me in My*  
*Throne, even as I also overcame, and am sat*  
*down with my Father in His Throne. By Na-*  
*ture, we are only in general the Creatures*  
*of the Almighty, and the Works of his*  
*Hands. By Sin, we were become Ob-*  
*jects of his Wrath and Displeasure. By*  
*obeying the gracious Terms of the Gospel*  
 of



of Christ, we are *not only* restored again S E R M. to the Favour of God, as of a merciful IV. and tender Father; but our nature is  moreover *exalted* by him to some similitude with *His*, who was in a singular manner the *Son of God*, and yet condescended to become our Elder Brother, by being made in the likeness of *Men*. He voluntarily became himself the *Son of Man*; and *as many as received him, to them gave he power that They should become the Sons of God*. He has received them as *Joint Heirs* with himself in his Father's Kingdom; And God, even *the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*, has begotten them again (as St Peter expresses it) *unto a lively hope*, (that is, unto the Hope of eternal Life,) *by the resurrection of Christ from the dead*. He hath caused them to be *conformed to the Image of his Son*, that he might be the *First-born among Many Brethren*. And for this cause, saith St Paul, *Heb. ii. 11.* Christ is not ashamed to call them *brethren*. Nay, the same Apostle, in a most elegant and lively manner, carrying the same figure of speech still higher, *Eph. v. 30.* *We are members*, says he, *of his Body*

S E R M. *dy, of his Flesh, and of his Bones.* Those  
 IV. who never had the Knowledge of the  
 Gospel, are God's children by *creation*; in such a sense as St *Luke* says of *Adam*, that he was the *Son of God*. And with regard to These, the *Judge of the whole Earth will do what is Right, and with Equity shall be judge the Nations.* But as to his *Free Gifts*, he is still always at liberty to do what he pleases with his own: And in that Kingdom which he has appointed to his Son *Jesus Christ*, he may appoint whom he himself thinks fit to sit on his right hand and on his left. He may *have mercy on whom he will have mercy, and compassion on whom he will have compassion.* The meaning is; not that God will act arbitrarily and without Reason; as some have absurdly understood these words: But that He, and He only, is the competent, proper, and unerring Judge, upon what Persons, and on what Conditions, 'tis fit for him to bestow his Favours. And in and through *Christ*, he may give power, upon what Terms and Conditions he pleases, to such as shall attain to those Conditions, to become in a *peculiar* manner the *Children*

*dren of God; and if Children, then Heirs; S E R M. Heirs of God, and Joint Heirs with Christ. IV.*



IT remains, in the

3<sup>d</sup> and last place, T H A T I consider in what sense the Apostle here affirms, that the *Spirit of God, the Spirit itself, beareth witness with Our Spirit*, if we be good Christians, that these Characters do truly belong to us. For the clearer explication of which assertion, I observe

1<sup>st</sup>, T H A T nothing can be more absurd, nothing can be more contrary to the Whole Tenour of the Gospel, than the Notions of those men, who take their own *Enthusiastick imaginations* to be the Testimony of the Spirit of God. Such persons judge not of the Tree, by its Fruit; They compare not the Course of their Lives, with the Rule of God's Commandments; They judge not of their being spiritual persons, or having the Spirit of Christ, by their practice of those Virtues, which the Scripture calls *bringing forth the Fruits of the Spirit*: But they have a strong, confident Conceit, that they are the elect, the chosen people of God; and the mere strength of this groundless imagination, they apprehend to be *the Spirit of God*

S E R M. *bearing witness with their Spirit, that they*  
 IV. *are the Children of God.* But This is so  
 senseless a notion, so manifestly destruc-  
 tive of all Virtue, and of all the true dif-  
 ference between Good and Evil; that it  
 needs barely be mentioned among persons  
 of common Understanding, to expose the  
 Folly of it. Wherefore


2dly, I N the *Apostles days*, the *miracu-  
 lous Gifts and Graces of the Spirit*, made  
 evident by their *real and visible Effects*,  
 as in That great Instance of the Gift  
 of Tongues bestowed as upon This day,  
 were undeniable Testimonies, of the Spi-  
 rit of God being given to those persons,  
 in whom those Effects appeared. Not  
 that all who were endued even with mi-  
 raculous Gifts, were consequently good  
 and sincere Christians: But these Gifts,  
 to those who beheld them, were evident  
 Attestations of the Spirit to the Truth  
 of the *Gospel*: And to the *Persons them-  
 selves*, on whom those Gifts were bestow-  
 ed, if they were conscious in their own  
 Hearts of their being sincere in their Pro-  
 fession, and virtuous in their Practice,  
 then these Gifts were indeed *the Spirit  
 of God bearing witness with Their Spirit,  
 that*

that they were the Children of God. But S E R M.

3dly, BOTH in the *Apostles days*, and IV.  
 in all succeeding generations, even to the  
 end of the World; the several *Declara-*  
*tions* which the Spirit of God hath made,  
 by the *Prophets* in the *Old Testament*, and  
 by *Christ and his Apostles* in the *New*,  
 compared with the verdict of our own  
 Consciences, concerning the agreeableness  
 of our Actions to those declarations; these  
 are the Testimony of *the Spirit itself*  
*bearing witness with Our Spirit, that we*  
*are the Children of God.* The Promises  
 of God made to men in Christ, and esta-  
 blished upon the Terms of the Gospel,  
 are represented in the *New Testament* as  
 being *Sealed, or confirmed by Covenant,*  
 to us in Baptism: And therefore, speak-  
 ing concerning Baptized Converts, *2 Cor.*  
*i. 22. God, saith St Paul, hath also Sealed*  
*us, and given the Earnest of the Spirit in*  
*our Hearts.* Consequently they who make  
 good This obligation, by bringing forth  
 the fruits of the Spirit in the suitable  
 Practice of a Virtuous Life; These have  
 the Seal or Earnest of the Spirit: *2 Tim.*  
*ii. 19. The Foundation of God standeth*  
*sure, having This Seal,-----Let every one*

S E R M. that nameth the Name of Christ, depart  
 IV. from iniquity: And, Grieve not the Holy  
 Spirit of God, whereby ye are Sealed unto  
 the day of Redemption. The Testimony  
 of a good Conscience, is, in the language  
 of the text, the *Witness of our own Spi-  
 rit*; And the Agreement of this Testi-  
 mony of our own Conscience, with the  
 Revealed Declarations of the Will of  
 God, when carefully and duly compared  
 together, is what the Apostle here stiles  
 the *Spirit of God bearing witness with Our  
 Spirit, that we are the Children of God.*

By this *One* observation, the whole  
 Discourse of the Apostle in this chapter  
 becomes very plain and intelligible: And  
 at the same time, by the *whole* tenour of  
 his discourse in this chapter, is *this* clear-  
 ly confirmed to be the true meaning of  
 the Text. *Ver. 1.* *There is now, says he,  
 no condemnation to them which are in  
 Christ Jesus; who walk not after the  
 Flesh, but after the Spirit: That is, who  
 are guilty of no debauchery or vicious  
 Practices, but live in the regular practice  
 of those moral virtues, which he else-  
 where by name calls the Fruits of the  
 Spirit. For to be carnally (that is, vici-  
 ously)*

ously) minded, (ver. 6.) is death; but to S E R M. be spiritually (that is, virtuously) mind- IV. ed, is life and peace. Ver. 8. So then they  that are in the Flesh, (they that are under the power, and live in the practice of any known Sin,) cannot please God: And if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, Ver. 9. (that is, if any man who professeth the Name of Christ, yet departeth not from iniquity, which is the Seal upon which the Foundation or Covenant of God standeth sure; If any man in This sense hath not the Spirit of Christ,) he is none of his. For if ye live after the Flesh, ver. 13. ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, (that is, as many as are prevailed upon by the Motives of the Gospel to live answerably to their Holy profession,) they are the Sons of God, ver. 14. And that they are so, they may certainly know by these Fruits of the Spirit appearing in the whole course of their lives, compared with the Declarations of the Spirit made in the Gospel; even as certainly as a Tree is known by its Fruit. For Thus, adds the Apostle in the Text, *the Spirit itself beareth*

SERM. beareth witness with our Spirit, that we  
 IV. are the Children of God; and if Children,  
 then Heirs, Heirs of God, and Joint Heirs  
 with Christ; if so be that we suffer with  
 him, that we may be also glorified together.

THE reason of his annexing these *last* words concerning our *Suffering* with Christ, is, because in the whole System of moral Virtues which are the Fruits of the Spirit, there is no one that affords a more certain Mark or Testimony of Sincerity; there is no one, to which a man's own *Spirit* or Conscience beareth witness with more confidence, or to which All the Declarations of the *Spirit of God* bear witness with greater Clearness and Assurance; than to this virtue of Chusing to run the hazard of Suffering at any time for Truth and Righteousness.

2 Tim. ii. 11. *It is a faithful Saying, If we be dead with him, we shall also live with him; If we suffer, we shall also reign with him.* Wherefore, think it not

1 Pet. iv. *strange, --- saith St Peter, but rejoice, in as much as ye are partakers of Christ's Sufferings, that when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding*



*ceeding Joy.* In the Apostles days, *Suffering for or with Christ*, signified being *persecuted* for the Profession of *Christianity* in general. In later Ages, since the religion of Christ has in *Name* and *Form* been professed among the Nations, Persecution has more frequently been brought upon men for adhering to some *particular* Truths, and for opposing some *particular* Corruptions in practice. For, not only the Apostles suffered in *Their* days, but many also of the Best men in *our* days; yea, *and All*, in *All* days, says the Apostle St Paul, *that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution.* But whether they be persecuted by *men*, or no; yet if by stedfastly resisting the Temptations of Sin, they be planted together with Christ in the likeness of his Death, they shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection. Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the Body of Sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve Sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him, Rom. vi. 5, 6, 8. This is what the Spirit of God constantly and uniformly declares and testifies, through  
the

S E R M. the whole Scripture. And therefore they  
 IV. who by *these* declarations, and by the  
 consideration of *these* religious motives,  
 are influenced to live in such manner, as  
 that they can say with *St Paul*, *Our re-  
 joicing is This, the testimony of our con-  
 science, that in Simplicity and godly Sin-  
 cerity ---- we have had our conversation in  
 the world*; These, as often as they com-  
 pare their *own* hearts and actions with  
 the things that *God* has revealed unto us  
 by his *Spirit*, have, according to the ex-  
 pression in the Text, the *Spirit of God*  
*bearing witness with Their Spirit, that*  
*they are the Children of God.*





# SERMON V.

Of Loving GOD.



M A T T. XXii. 37, 38.

*Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy Heart, and with all thy Soul, and with all thy Mind; This is the first and Great Commandment.*



**I**N these words there is observable; 1<sup>st</sup>, The Duty enjoined; *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God*: 2<sup>dly</sup>, The Circumstances requisite, to make the performance of this Duty *acceptable and complete*;

S E R M O N  
V.

SERM. complete; Thou shalt love him, *with all thy Heart, and with all thy Soul, and with all thy Mind*: 3dly, The *Weight, and Importance*, of the Duty; It is *the First and Great Commandment*.

I. THE Duty enjoined, is, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God*. A Duty, in every man's mouth, of all Religions; and in all Sects: But, upon *what Ground its Obligation* is founded, and in *what particulars the rational Practice* of it consists, is not so clearly and universally understood. Men often talk very earnestly of *loving God*, while at the same time they in their doctrine represent him as the most *bateful* Being in the Universe; cruel, and partial; arbitrary, and tyrannical; showing favour to some, and making others miserable, for no other reason, but because he has absolute and irresistible Power. But what such persons speak concerning *loving of God*, is evidently nothing but *mere Forms of empty words*, without *any meaning or signification* at all; because there is in their Minds *no real Object*, upon which the Love they speak of can be fixt. And where the *Root* thus is *rottenness*; (to use the Prophet *Isaiab's* Compa-

Comparison,) what wonder if the *Blossom*, and the *Fruit*, accordingly goes up as *Dust*? what wonder if the expressions of their *Love* towards *God*, end in nothing but peevishness, contentiousness, and perhaps *Hatred* towards their *Brethren*? A True *Love* of *God* must be founded upon a *right Sense* of his *Perfections* being really *amiable* in themselves, and *beneficial* to *Us*: And such a *Love* of *God* will of Necessity show forth itself, in our endeavouring to *practise* the same virtues ourselves, and exercise them towards *others*, which we profess to *love* and admire in Him.

ALL *Perfection* is in itself lovely, and amiable in the very *nature* of the Thing: The Virtues and Excellencies of *Men* remote in History, from whom we can receive *no personal* Advantage, excite in us an *Esteem* whether we will or no: And every *good* mind, when it reads or thinks upon the character of an *Angel*, loves the *Idea*, though it has *no* present communication with the Subject to whom so lovely a character belongs: *Much* more, the inexhaustible Fountain of *All Perfections*; of Perfections without number, and with-

S E R M.

V.




out limit; the Center, in which *All Excellencies* unite, in which *All Glory* resides, and from which *every good thing* proceeds; cannot but be the Supreme Object of *Love*, to a reasonable and intelligent Mind. Even *supposing* we ourselves received no Benefit therefrom, yet infinite *Power, Knowledge, and Wisdom* in conjunction, are lovely in the very *Idea*, and amiable even in the *abstract Imagination*. But That which makes these Perfections most *truly and substantially*, most *really and permanently*, the Object of our Love; is the *Application* of them to *ourselves*, and our *own* more immediate *Concerns*; by the consideration of their being joined also with those *relative and moral* Excellencies, which make them at the same time no less *beneficial* to Us, than they are excellent *absolutely in their* own Nature. Then is God the *Complete* Object of Love, when together with the Notion of Infinite Power, Knowledge, and Wisdom, we consider him moreover as actually *governing the World*; and when, in the *exercise* of that Dominion over us, we consider his *Truth and Faithfulness*, his *Justice and Impartiality*, his *Equity, Mercy,*

Mercy, and Goodness towards his Creatures; When we consider his Goodness in giving us *Being*, and a *Being so excellent*; his Care, in making such plentiful Provision for our *temporal Preservation*, and for our *eternal Happiness*; his Mercy, in sending his Son to redeem us from Death and to procure Pardon even for the *greatest* of Sinners upon their true Repentance: When we consider *these* things, I say, *Then* is it that God truly appears the complete Object of Love: For so our Saviour himself teaches us to argue; *Luk. vii. 47.* To whom *much* is forgiven, he will love the *more*; and the Apostle St *John*, 1 *Joh. iv. 19.* We (says he) *love Him, because He first loved Us.*

THIS therefore is the true Ground and Foundation of our Love towards God. But *wherein* this love towards God consists, and by what *Acts* it is most properly exercised, has sometimes been very much misunderstood. Men of strong Passions and warm Imaginations, have been too apt to place it in a mere *Enthusiastick zeal of Affection*, a sort of Scholastick Speculation, unintelligible and fruitless; seated in the *Fancy* only, instead of the

S E R M. *Understanding*; and having no Effect upon the *Will*, or *Actions*, in the *general course* of a Man's Life. By which means, they make the *Love of God* a thing entirely *distinct* from the *Love of Virtue and Righteousness*: Whereas the Scripture always speaks of them as being *One and the Same*; judging of Men constantly by that *never-failing* Rule, of discerning the Tree by its Fruits; and always representing men to have just so much *Love* towards *God* in their *Hearts*, as they pay *Obedience* to his *Laws* in their *Actions*. The *only* Distinction found in Scripture, is, that our *Love of God* is *sometimes* used in a more *restrained* Sense, as distinguished from the *Love of our Neighbour*; and then it signifies, that which is usually called our *Duty towards God*; worshipping the *True God*, and *Him Only*, in opposition to all *False Gods*; and placing our *whole Faith and Trust* in him accordingly. At *other* times 'tis used in a more *general* sense, as including our whole *Duty both* towards *God* and towards *Men*; righteousness towards *Men* being inseparable from a true *Love towards God*; and it being impossible that he who loveth *God*, should



should not love his *Brother* also. But in *Both* S E R M.  
 these Senses, whether it be understood ac- V.  
 cording to the more *limited*, or the more   
*general*, interpretation, it *always* signifies  
 a moral Virtue, not a *Passion* or *Affecti-*  
*on*; and is therefore in Scripture always  
*with great Care* explained and *declared* to  
 mean, the *Obedience* of a *virtuous Life*,  
 in opposition to the *Enthusiasm* of a *vain*  
*imagination*. In the *old Testament*, *Moses*;  
 in his *last* exhortation to the *Israelites*,  
 thus expresses it; *Deut. x. 12. And now*  
*Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require*  
*of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God,*  
*and to love him? And what is loving*  
*him? why, he tells them in the very*  
 next words, 'tis to *walk in all his ways,*  
*and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy*  
*heart and with all thy Soul, to keep the*  
*Commandments of the Lord, and his Sta-*  
*tutes which I command thee this day for thy*  
*good. In the New Testament, our Saviour*  
 still more *distinctly* expresses the same thing,  
 inculcating and repeating it in such a  
 manner, as shows plainly his *foreseeing* at  
 that time, in his own mind, how apt  
 men would be to misunderstand it: *Job.*  
*xiv. 15, 21. If ye love me, saith he, keep*

S E R M. *my Commandments : He that hath my Com-*  
 V. *mandments, and keepeth them; he it is*  
*that loveth me. And in his prophecy*  
 concerning the Signs of the End of the  
 World, he puts *Love towards God*, as the  
*opposite to iniquity*; thereby plainly decla-  
 ring it to mean the *same as Virtue*: Matt.  
 xxiv. 12. *Because iniquity shall abound,*  
*the Love, saith he, of Many shall wax*  
*cold.* And the beloved Disciple, who, as  
 he leaned more nearly upon his Master's  
 Breast, so he seems in this matter to have  
 been more particularly inspired with his  
 Master's Sentiments; *Whoso, says he,*  
*keepth his word, in Him verily is the*  
*Love of God perfected; Hereby know we,*  
*that we Are in Him: For This is the Love*  
*of God, that we keep his Commandments,*  
 1 Joh. v. 3. And again, 2 *Joh. vi. This,*  
*says he, is Love, that we walk after his*  
*Commandments.* And, effectually to pre-  
 vent such Men's enthusiastick Notions of  
 Religion, as judge of their *Love towards*  
*God by any empty Speculation, by any*  
*Warmth of Zeal in matters of Opinion,*  
*by any Passion or Affection whatsoever,*  
 wherewith the Mind or Imagination may,  
 without any real Fruit of Virtue and  
 Righte-

## Of Loving GOD.


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Righteousness, fancy itself transported; S E R M.  
the same Apostle frequently gives us this V.  
*one sure rule, in which there can be no*  
Deception; that we measure the Truth of  
our Love towards God, by the extent and  
proportion of our Love towards our Neigh-  
bour. 1 Joh. iii. 17. *Whoso seeth his Bro-*  
*ther have need, and shutteth up his com-*  
*passion from him, how dwelleth the Love*  
*of God in him?* Again, ch. iv. 12, 20.  
*No man hath seen God at any time; If we*  
*love one another, God dwelleth in Us, and*  
*his Love is perfected in us: If a man say,*  
*I love God, and hateth his Brother, he is*  
*a Liar; For he that loveth not his Brother*  
*whom he hath seen, how can he love God,*  
*whom he hath not seen?* The Argument is:  
God, who is invisible, can no otherwise be  
shown to be the Object of our Love, than  
by our delighting to obey and imitate him,  
in Acts of Righteousness, and Charity, and  
universal Good-Will towards Mankind  
who are visible and always with us. This ver. 21.  
*Commandment have we from Him, that*  
*he who loveth God, love his Brother also:*  
That is, that whosoever pretends to love  
God, should prove the Truth of what he  
professes by his behaviour towards Men.

SERM. *For by This we know*, (as the same Apostle goes on, ch. v. 2.) *that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep his Commandments.* The words, from their connexion with what went before, seem to be transposed; and that they should not be read thus, *that we love the children of God, when we love God*; but on the other side, *by This we know that we love God, when we love the children of God, and keep his Commandments.* Those who place the Sum of their religion in imposing upon men blind Notions and unintelligible Opinions; and *hate and persecute* All who differ from them; and, by endeavouring to *compel* Others into their own hypocrisy, fill the World with cruelty, violence and oppression; These persons, I say, do in one *respect* act extreme wisely; that they discourage men, as much as they can, from reading and studying the Scriptures with their own eyes; lest they should There see it set forth, in so *plain, so clear, so bright, so perpetual and unavoidable* a *Light*, how *different*, how *Contrary*, *Their Spirit* is to the Spirit of *Christianity*, which is the Spirit of *Love*. For, if they who *right-*  
*ly*

ly teach the *true* doctrine of Christ, shall yet be bid to *depart from him*, if in their own private lives they be *workers of iniquity*; much *more* shall the same Sentence be pronounced on those, the manner of whose very *teaching* is *itself* a work of unrighteousness, violence and oppression. But to proceed: As the *Scripture* thus *expressly*, so the *reason and nature of the thing itself* no less *plainly*, shows, in opposition to all Superstitious Notions, that *Love towards God*, and *Virtue or Righteousness of Life*, are in reality only two different *Names* of One and the Same *Thing*. For, *What* is rational *Love*, but a *Desire* to *please* the person beloved, and a *Complacency* or *Satisfaction* in *pleasing* him? To *love* God therefore, is to have a sincere *Desire* of obeying his *Laws*, and a *Delight* or *Pleasure* in the *Conscience of That Obedience*. Wherever *This Obedience* is not found, Men may talk what they please, of *ardent Love and Devotion* towards God, of the *highest Zeal* and even *Fury* for his *Service*; it is all nothing but most *certain* hypocrisy. For whatever specious pretenses the *Wit of Man* may invent, our Saviour's Argu-

S E R M.  
V.  
~

SERM. V.  ment will for ever stand good ; *men do not gather grapes of thorns, nor figs of thistles.* The Tree will always be known by its Fruit. Love towards God will always show forth itself in doing his Will. *If a man love me, saith our Saviour, he will keep my words, Joh. xiv. 23.* To love God, is to love *Goodness, Righteousness, Charity and Truth*: If therefore to love these Virtues, and live at the same time in the Practice of all the *contrary Vices* be a Contradiction ; for the same reason it follows, that, to pretend to love God, and at the same time practise the *Vices which he hates*, is a Contradiction also. As *He only who doth righteousness, is righteous* ; so *He only who doth what is pleasing to God, can be said to love him.* To love God, and yet delight to *disobey* him, is a manifest inconsistency: And therefore the Psalmist's Admonition, is both an *Argument of Reason*, and a *Rule* by which to Try men ; *Pf. xcvi. 10. Ye that love the Lord, see that ye hate the Thing which is Evil.* In Scripture, wicked men, and evil Spirits, are elegantly stiled *Enemies and Haters of God*: not that they oppose or withstand his *Power* ; for  
That

That is impossible; but because they *hate* S E R M. his Laws, and *delight* in what he forbids. V.  
 In like manner therefore on the *other* side,  Love *towards* God, is also impossible to be expressed by any *Benefit* we can do to *Him*, but can be testified only by our *Love of Righteousness* and by our *Practice of Virtue*. Even to an *Earthly* Superiour, to a *Parent*, or a *Prince*, Love can no otherwise be shown from a *Child* or a *Servant*, than by chearfully observing the *Laws*, and promoting the true *Interest*, of the Government he is under. There is *This* difference only; that *Earthly* Superiours are *then* only to be obeyed, when they command what we see to be just and right: But God, who, being infallible can *never* command what is wrong, is for that reason absolutely to be obeyed in *all* things: Only, to prevent the Errors and the Frauds of *Men*, whether *impious* or *pious* Frauds, very *great* heed is to be taken, in matters of weight and importance, that whatever is pretended to be a Command of *God*, be really and indeed Such.

Lastly:

SERM.

V.




Lastly: THAT the *Love of God*, and the *Practice of Righteousness*, are one and the same thing, appears from those Texts, wherein all *Relation of Men to God*, is declared to be founded upon *Virtue* only. Thus the Title of *Sons of God*, *Rom. viii. 14.* *As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the Sons of God:* and *Phil. ii. 15.* *That ye may be blameless and harmless, the Sons of God.* The Title of *Friendship* likewise: *Jam. ii. 23.* *It was imputed unto Abraham for righteousness, and he was called the Friend of God:* He was called; that is, he was so stiled in the *old Testament* by God himself, *Ij. xli. 8;* and *2 Chr. xx. 7.* *Thou, Israel, art my Servant, the Seed of Abraham my Friend.* Our Saviour gives the same Title to his *Apostles*, upon the same ground; *Joh. xv. 14.* *ye are my Friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.* And still more emphatically, *Mat. xii. 50.* *Whosoever shall do the Will of my Father which is in Heaven, the same is my Brother and Sister and Mother.* *Christ* acknowledges no relation, but what arises from *religion* only; nor regards any declaration of *Love* towards him, other than that of *Obedience* to his

Commands



Commands in the Gospel. St Paul elegantly pursues the same Similitude, 2 Cor. v. 16. *Henceforth know we no man after the Flesh; yea, though we have known Christ after the Flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more*: His meaning is; All temporal personal Knowledge and Friendship, such as was between Christ and his natural Relations here upon Earth, now disappears; and no man knows Christ, or is known of him, any otherwise than in proportion as he obeys his Laws. The like is to be observed, concerning That Title given to the *Jews*, of being *God's peculiar people*: For *They only* were so in the spiritual and religious sense, who in *Practice*, not who in *Profession*, served the true God. Gal. iii. 28; and Col. iii. 11. *There is neither Jew, nor Greek; there is neither male, nor female; neither Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free; but Christ, (that is, Obedience to Christ,) is all in all*. And ch. v. 6; and 1 Cor. vii. 19. *Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the Keeping of the Commandments of God*. And the same is fully expressed in that declaration of *John the Baptist*, when he says, that

SERM.  
V.  


S E R M. that even out of the *Stones of the street,*  
 V. *God could raise up children unto Abra-*  
 *ham: Children unto Him, in the spiritu-*  
*al and best sense, who for his exemplary*  
*obedience had this Testimony given him,*  
*that he is called in Scripture, (Rom. iv. 16.)*  
*the Father of the Faithful.*

Now from this Account which has been given of the *true Nature of Love towards God*; it will be easy for us to correct the Errors, which Men have sometimes fallen into in Both Extremes. *Some* have been very confident of their *Love towards God*, from a mere warmth of superstitious zeal and enthusiastick affection, without any great care to bring forth in their Lives the Fruits of Righteousness and true Holiness. And the Error of *these men* may be corrected, by considering, that God being essentially just and good, holy and true, and of all other moral Perfections; 'tis consequently evident, that unless they consider him under *These Characters* which are inseparable from his Nature, and unless they accordingly love (and themselves imitate) these Virtues; 'tis not *God* whom they are zealous for, but a mere *abstract Notion*.

Notion, a *Phantom* only of their own Imagination. SERM.  
V.

ON the contrary; Others there are, who though they really *love*, and fear, and serve God, in the course of a virtuous and religious life; yet, because they feel not in themselves that *warmth* of affection, which many Enthusiasts pretend to; therefore they are afraid and suspect, that they do not *love God* sincerely, as they ought. Now the Errour of these pious persons is to be corrected, by considering, that there is *no* other Mark so infallible of the Goodness of a Tree, as the *Fruit* which it brings forth. If they live in *Obedience* to the Commands of God, they need *no other* evidence of the Sincerity of their Hearts towards him: For all *other* Signs may possibly be erroneous; but *This*, is the *very thing signified* itself. Love of *Goodness, Righteousness, and Truth*, is Love of *God*: For *God is Goodness and Truth*: And He who loves these Virtues, which are the moral Perfections of the divine Nature, does therefore love God most perfectly; because he loves *those* Excellencies, for the

*Sake*

S E R M. *Sake of which God expects that we should*  
 V. *love him above all things.*



B U T further : There are *Some* persons of This sort, who are fearful that their Love towards God is not entire and perfect, and that they do not love God as the Chief Good, if they obey and serve him for the hope of *Reward*. But This also is a great mistake : For *as* Happiness, no less than *Holiness*, is *essential* in the divine Nature ; *so* in all *inferiour* Beings, the proper *Reward of Virtue* is inseparably desirable with *Virtue itself* : And not the Desire of *Heaven*, which is the Perfection of Virtue ; but only the Desire of *Sinful Pleasure*, which is destructive of Virtue, is inconsistent with, and diminishes from, our *Love of God*. The Scripture expressly declares, that he  
 Heb. xi. 6. who cometh to God, not only *may*, but *must* believe him to be a *Rewarder* of them  
 ver. 10, that diligently seek him : That *Abraham*  
 14. accordingly, That Great Father of the Faithful, *looked for a City which hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is*  
 ver. 26. *God* : That *Moses*, had *respect unto the re-*  
 ver. 35. *compense of Reward* : That the *Martyrs*  
 suffered

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III

suffered in hope, *that they might obtain a better Resurrection*: That our Lord himself, endured the Cross, *for the joy that was set before him*: And that the end of All good mens *faith is the Salvation of their Souls, even joy unspeakable and full of Glory*. The *Hope* of which Joy, the Apostle in That very Verse, not only supposes to be *consistent with*, but speaks of it as being, *itself*, our *Love of Christ*.

S E R M.  
V.  
ch. xii. 2.

1 Pet. i.  
8, 9.

II. HAVING thus at large explained the *Duty* enjoined in the Text, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God*: I proceed now in the 2<sup>d</sup> place, to consider briefly the *Circumstances* requisite, to make the performance of this *Duty acceptable and complete*: Thou shalt love him *with all thy Heart, and with all thy Soul, and with all thy Mind*. In St *Luke* it is, somewhat *more distinctly*; with all thy *Heart*, with all thy *Soul*, with all thy *Strength*, and with all thy *Mind*. Which words, though sometimes indeed used *promiscuously*, yet, when thus put together in *Order*, seem intended to express after a more *distinct* manner, the requisite *Circumstances* of That *Obedience*, which is the proper *Evidence* of our *Love* towards God. And

10. 27.

SERM.

V.



Mat. vi.


1<sup>st</sup>, IT must be *Sincere*: We must love, or obey him with all our Heart. 'Tis not the *external action* only, but the *inward affection of the Mind* principally, that God regards: An affection of Mind, which influences all a man's actions *in secret*, as well as *in publick*; which determines the person's *true Character*, or denomination; and distinguishes *him* who really is a Servant of God, from *him* who only *seems* or *appears* to be so. It was the character of the *Jews of old*, and is now of too great a part of Christians, *Ezek. xxxiii. 31. With their Mouth this people shews much Love, but their Heart goeth after their Covetousness; i. e. after their Sinful Pleasures.*

Mat. vi.

24

2<sup>dly</sup>, OUR Obedience must be *Universal*: We must love God with all our Soul, or with our whole *Soul*. He does not love God, in the Scripture-sense; who obeys him in *some instances* only and not in *all*. *No man*, says our Saviour, *can serve two masters*: And, *if any man love the World, the love of the Father is not in him*, 1 Joh. ii. 15. And *Jam. iv. 4. Whosoever will be a Friend of the World, is the Enemy of God*. The meaning of these

these passages, is not, that he who Truly S E R M.  
 loves God, must consequently *wholly neg-*  
*lect*, and have *no regard at all* to any thing  
 else; but, that nothing else must *so* pos-  
 sess our affections as to *interfere* with  
 our Duty, when they come in competi-  
 tion, and thereby render our Hearts (as  
 the Scripture expresses it,) *not right* or  
*not whole* with the Lord. Thus *Saul* was  
 tempted to spare the *best* of the *Amale-*  
*kite's* Goods, expressly contrary to God's  
 Command: And the *Jews*, under Pre-  
 tense of the *Corban*, of giving somewhat  
 to the service of the *Temple*, excused  
 themselves from providing for their neces-  
 sitous *Parents*: And *Many* who have  
 zealously *taught* the doctrine of Christ,  
 shall at the day of Judgment be bid to  
*depart from him*, because they have al-  
 lowed themselves in the practice of some  
 unforfaken *iniquities*. The Psalmist pla-  
 ces his confidence in *This* only, that he  
*had respect unto All God's commandments*,  
 Pf. cxix. 6. Generally speaking, most  
 men's Temptation lies principally in some  
*One Particular Instance*: And *This* is the  
 proper *Trial* of the person's *Obedience*,  
 or of his *Love* towards God. If he over-

S E R M. comes in *This* instance, then may he *have*  
 V.  confidence towards God; But if he fails  
*here*, and *continues* so to do, he is guilty  
 of *all*. By forsaking the Sin that *most*  
*easily* besets us, we must endeavour to  
 improve daily and grow in grace; aiming  
 at the character given in the gospel to  
*Zacharias*, that he was *perfect*, *walking*  
*in all the Commandments of the Lord blame-*  
*less*. The meaning is; not that our Obe-  
 dience can in this life be *indeed sinless*;  
 but that we must be *sincere* in endeavour-  
 ing to avoid *all Sin*, according to the  
 measure and possibilities of our *present*  
 frailty; 'till at last we be presented really  
*faultless*, before the presence of his glory,  
 with exceeding Joy.

3dly, O U R Obedience must be *constant*  
 and *persevering in Time*, as well as *Uni-*  
*versal* in its *Extent*: We must love God  
 with all our Strength; *persevering* in our  
 Duty, *without fainting*. *He that endureth*  
*to the end*, saith our Saviour, *the same*  
*shall be saved*; and *He that overcometh*,  
*shall inherit all things*; and, *we are made*  
*partakers of Christ*, if *we hold the begin-*  
*ning of our confidence stedfast unto the*  
 end. The Scripture-notion of Obedience  
 is,



is, walking in holiness and righteousness S E R M.  
before him all the days of our life, Luk. i. V.

75. The meaning is, not so as never to fall into any Sin, but so as never to apostatize from our Duty by falling finally into any course of Sin. *The just shall live by faith; but if any man draw back, says God, my Soul shall have no pleasure in him.* For Christianity is a warfare, wherein we must not only fight, but so fight as to overcome; and a race, wherein we must not only run, but so run as to obtain.

4thly, OUR Obedience to God, ought to be willing and chearful: We must love him with all our Mind. *Pf. v. 12. They that love thy Name, will be joyful in thee:* And St Paul, among the fruits of the Spirit, reckons up peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. Nevertheless, This ought not to be matter of scruple to any weak and sincere mind: For Obedience to the Commands of God, whatever principle it proceeds from, even though it be but Fear only, will be accepted unto Salvation. But Virtue becomes more perfect, when 'tis made easy by Love, and by habitual Practice incorporated as it were into a man's very nature and temper. For so

S E R M. the Scripture represents *Angels*, as *rejoycing* and *delighting* to perform their Lord's pleasure; And our Saviour declares that 'twas his *meat and drink* to do the Will of his Father which is in Heaven. Which Examples when we can in any *tolerable* degree imitate, then is fulfilled in us the observation of St *John*, that *perfect Love casteth out Fear*; and That of St *Paul*, *Rom. viii. 15.* that *we have not received the Spirit of bondage to Fear, but the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father*; and 2 *Tim. i. 7.* *God hath not given us the Spirit of fear, but of love, and of a sound mind.*

1 Joh. iv.  
18.

T H E S E are the *Circumstances* requisite to make the performance of this Duty acceptable and complete: We must love the Lord our God, with all our *Heart*, with all our *Soul*, with all our *Strength*, and with all our *Mind*. The

III<sup>d</sup> and last thing observable in the Text, is the *Weight and Importance* of the Duty; It is the *First and great Commandment*. The Reason is, because 'tis the *Foundation of all*; and, without *Regard to God*, there can be *no Religion*. Not that Virtue, at *any* time, or in *any* person

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person whatsoever, can be *not praise-wor-* S E R M.  
*thy*; much less, that in those who have V.  
*not* a right knowledge of God, even virtu-  
ous Actions themselves are (as some  
have very *unreasonably* affirmed) only  
*splendid Sins*; but that there is no *secu-*  
*rity*, no certain *depending* upon such vir-  
tues, as arise merely accidentally from  
*natural goodness of Temper*, and are not  
built upon a firm and settled persuasion,  
that God does Now govern, and will fi-  
nally judge the World. The House is  
good; but it is built (according to our  
Saviour's comparison) upon the *Sand on-*  
*ly*, and not upon a *Rock*. 'Tis *Faith* on-  
ly that *overcomes the World*: Nothing  
but a steady Belief of a Judgment to  
come, and of God's being a Rewarder  
of them that diligently seek him, can be  
effectual to conquer the Temptations of  
Sin. *This* Faith therefore, that we may  
all hold fast, God of his infinite Mer-  
cy grant, &c.





# SERMON VI.

Of the FEAR of GOD.



JOB xxiii. 15.

*Therefore am I troubled at his presence: When I consider, I am afraid of him.*



IN This Chapter *Job* gives a SERMON noble Description of the VI. Sense he had upon his Mind, of the invisible Omnipresence and Omniscience of God.

Ver. 8. *Behold, I go forward, but he is not there: and backward, but I cannot perceive him: On the left hand where he doth work, but I cannot behold him; he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him: But he knoweth the way*

S E R M. *that I take.* To a man of Virtue and Integrity, the consideration of This great Truth is a solid Ground of real and lasting Satisfaction. *He knoweth the way that I take:-----My foot hath held his steps; his way have I kept, and not declined: Neither have I gone back from the Commandment of his Lips: I have esteemed the Words of his Mouth, more than my necessary Food,* ver. 11. In times of *Affliction* particularly, 'tis an inexpressible Support, if a man can be able to say with this exemplary person, ver. 3. *O that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even to his Seat! I would order my Cause before him, and fill my Mouth with Arguments.-----Will he plead against me with his great Power? No; but he would put Strength in me.-----He knoweth the Way that I take: When he hath tried me, I shall come forth as Gold.* Nevertheless, though the Hope signified by these high Expressions, is indeed a well-grounded Hope, and what the Apostle St *John* calls, an *assuring of our Hearts before God*; Yet considering the infinite Purity of the Divine Nature, and the Frailness of this our mortal State, and the unprofitableness

1 Joh. iii.  
19.

fitableness even of our best Services, and our aptness to impose upon ourselves, and to deceive through carelessness even our Own Hearts; so that though a man be not conscious to himself of any Great Wickedness, yet is he *not hereby justified*, <sup>1</sup> Cor. iv. *but he that justifies him, is the Lord*: <sup>4.</sup>

And considering also, that, in the nature of Things, there cannot but be many Secrets in the Dispensations of Providence, and in God's Government of the Universe, unsearchable to our short and limited Understandings; 'Tis not without great reason that *Job* immediately corrects himself in the words next following; ver. 13. *But he is in One Mind, and who can turn him?---- For he performeth the thing that is appointed for me; and many such things are with him. Therefore am I troubled at his presence; when I consider, I am afraid of him.* The Expressions are of the same import, as those in the *Ninth* chapter, ver. 11; *Lo, he goeth by me, and I see him not; he passeth on also, but I perceive him not. Behold, he taketh away; who can hinder him? Who will say unto him, what dost thou?-----Whom, though I were righteous,*

S E R M.  
VI.  
~~~~~

SERM. *righteous, yet would I not answer; but*  
 VI. *I would make Supplication to my Judge.*

THE words of my Text; *I am troubled at his Presence; when I consider, I am afraid of him;* have, in the place, they stand, a particular Reference to *These* Considerations. But I shall take them at this time in their larger sense, as containing this more general and very important Proposition; that the *Fear of God* is the Result of *Consideration*, the Result of *Attention*, and true *Reason*; not of empty *Imagination*, and vain *Apprehensions*. *When I consider, I am afraid of him.*

BY the *Fear of God*, I would be understood to mean, not the Superstitious *Dread* of an *arbitrary* or *cruel* Being; but That *Awe* and *Regard*, which necessarily arises in the Mind of every man, who believes and habitually considers himself as living and acting in the sight of an Omnipresent Governour, of perfect Justice, Holiness and Purity; who sees every Thought, as well as every Action; who cannot be imposed upon by Any Hypocrisy; who, as certainly as there is any Difference between Good and



Evil, cannot but approve the one, and detest the other; and whose Government, as certainly as he has any Power at all, consists in rewarding what he approves, and punishing what he hates. Of such a Governour as This, though we are sure he is indued with infinite Goodness, yet may it justly be said, with the greatest Reason, and without any tendency to Superstition; *When I consider, I am afraid of him.*

THIS *Fear of God*, is the *Foundation of Religion*. For though *Virtue* is indeed amiable, *absolutely*, in its own Nature; and, if the World could possibly be supposed to subsist without the *Government*, and even without the *Being* of God, still the nature of *Good and Evil* would be what it is, and *Virtue* would be *in itself* unalterably excellent, and *Vice* for ever blame-worthy; Yet the great *Support* of *Virtue* among *Men*, is the Sense upon their Minds of a Supreme Governour and Judge of the Universe, who will finally and effectually *reward* what is in itself essentially *worthy of reward*, and *punish* what is *worthy of punishment*. To a *perfect and unerring* Mind, incapable of being


S E R M. ing deceived, and which is exalted above  
 VI. all possible temptation; to such a one,  
 the *intrinsic Reason* of Things, the *essential Excellency* of Truth and Right, is in itself a steady and always sufficient Motive of Action. But *Men*; who, when they *know* what is Right, and necessarily *approve* it, yet at the same time find *another Law in their Members warring against the Law of their Mind*, urging them with strong *Passions*, and uneasy *Appetites*; and these sollicitated moreover with perpetual Temptations from *without*, with Allurements of *Pleasure* and *Profit*, with Baits of *Power* and *Ambition*, with *Examples* of a degenerate and corrupt World, and with *Threatnings* also of perpetual *Persecutions* in different kinds, if they adhere stedfastly to the Interests of Truth and Virtue: To *such* Beings as these, I say; to finite, changeable and fallible Creatures; 'tis very necessary, that the *eternal intrinsic Reason of Things*, the *essential and unalterable Excellency of Truth and Right*, considered as a *Motive of Action*, should be *supported* and *strengthened* by a constant and lively Sense upon their Minds, of an universal  
 Supreme

Supreme Governour ; who being essentially the Fountain of all Perfection, the *Truth and Reason of Things* and the *unalterable Right of every Case* are consequently the eternal *Laws* of his Kingdom : Which, by his universal Power and Government over all, he will as certainly support and maintain ; finally rewarding Virtue, and punishing Vice ; as 'tis certain there *Is* a Difference between Good and Evil, and that infinite Wisdom cannot be *insensible* of That Difference. A firm and settled Perswasion of the reality and certainty of this great Truth, that we are continually under the inspection of *such* a Supreme Governour and Judge ; of an omnipresent Spirit, *in whom we live and move and have our Being*, and to whom our very Thoughts are open as our Actions ; cannot but fill the mind of every *considerate* Person, with a just Awe and Fear of him : *When I consider, I am afraid of him* : Afraid, not as of an arbitrary and tyrannical Power ; but as of a just and powerful and wise Governour, whose Laws are reasonable and necessary to be obeyed, and from whose just displeasure

S E R M. displeasure the Disobedient can by No  
 VI. Power or Artifice be protected.

THE *Ground* of *This Fear*, the Text tells us, is *Reason and Consideration* : *When I Consider, I am afraid of him.* Atheistical and profane men suppose on the *contrary*, that the *Ground* of this Fear is *Timorousness of Temper, Superstition, Customary Tradition, or political Fiction.* 'Tis of infinitely great Moment, to determine *which* of these two is the *Truth*; And therefore I shall consider distinctly the very different *Grounds, Characters, and Effects, of Religion and Superstition*; and how these Two things, which Atheistical and corrupt Minds would fain imagine to be the same, may be *distinguished* from each other.

I. IN the *first* place, as to the *Ground and Foundation* of Religion. That there is an essential Difference between Good and Evil, between Virtue and Vice, is what every man as clearly discerns by the natural and necessary Perception of his own Mind and Conscience, as his Eyes see the Difference between Light and Darknes. 'Tis not a man's *particular Timorousness of Temper*, 'tis not *Customary Tradition*

*Tradition* from his *Ancestors*, 'tis not the S E R M.  
*imaginary Speculation* of *Philosophers*, 'tis VI.  
 not the *political Fiction* of *Governours*,   
 that makes him see when he is *oppressed*,  
*defrauded*, *cheated*, treated *unjustly* and  
*injuriously*; that these *Actions* are in their  
 own nature *unrighteous*, and the *Person*  
 who is guilty of them *worthy of Punish-*  
*ment*. Every man, of every degree of  
 capacity, in every Age, and in every Na-  
 tion, sees and feels this to be the Truth  
 of Things; And no *accidental Variety* of  
*Temper*, no *Tradition*, no *Philosophy*, no  
*Form of Government*, can either *alter* or  
*abolish* these Notions. The *Reasonings*  
 and *Speculations* of *Men* do not *make*  
 things to be what they are; but only help  
 men to *discover* with greater Clearness,  
 or to a greater degree, what their *real*  
*intrinsic* Natures are. *Laws* likewise,  
 do not *make* Virtue to be Virtue, or Vice  
 to be Vice; but only *inforce* or *discourage*  
 the Practice of such things, as the very  
*making of a Law* always and necessarily  
*presupposes* to have been Fit or Unfit  
*before* the making of the Law: Because  
 otherwise *all Laws* about *moral* matters  
 would be *professedly* to *no Purpose*, and  
 of

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of *no Use*. There *may* perhaps be in some *Men*, and possibly in some whole *Nations*, for want of Attention and Consideration, a very great degree of *Ignorance*, in many *particular Instances*, of this natural and essential difference of Good and Evil; (Though, I believe, no person, who had at all the use of his Reason, ever was so *universally* ignorant, as not to dislike and think *really blame-worthy* a wilful *Breach of Faith*, or an Act of *causeless Cruelty*.) But the *Ignorance*, be it in what degree it will, either of any *Man* or of any *Number of men*, makes no alteration at all in the *Nature and Truth* of *Things*; nor affords any Argument, against the *reality* of their *essential Differences*. Were there in nature *no real and unalterable* Difference between Moral Good and Evil; it would follow, not only that whole Nations might possibly be *ignorant* of This Distinction; which is nothing to the purpose: (For so they may be of the plainest Mathematical Truths, and yet those Truths not be at all the less certain:) But it would follow, that whole Nations might as *possibly*, with a full persuasion within themselves of the

Strength

Strength and Clearness of their manner of S E R M. reasoning and arguing, determine in all VI. instances universally Virtue to be Vice, and Vice to be Virtue, as *We* think we with reason determine the contrary: Nay, it would be as *easy*, and as *natural*, and as *probable* they should so determine, as that Nations should differ in the *Fashion* or *Colour* of their *Cloaths*, or in any other Circumstances of things by nature indifferent. Which since no man (I think) has ever been so absurd as to affirm; it follows undeniably, that That First *Ground* and *Foundation* of Religion, the essential Difference between Virtue and Vice, is laid *immutably* and *universally* in the *Nature* and *Reason* of Things: Whereas all *Superstitions*, various always as the Motion of the Winds and Clouds, are notoriously founded only in *accidental Temper*, *customary Tradition*, or *political Fiction*.

A G A I N: That there is an *invisible Power* presiding over the Universe, (which is *Another* part of the prime *Ground* and *Foundation* of Religion;) The Belief, I say, of an *invisible Power* ruling over the Universe, and which will finally *support*

S E R M. Virtue and *punish* Wickedness, is a Belief arising from *Reason and Consideration*; which is directly contrary to the Essence of *Superstition*. The *visible Works* of Nature, every man by his own experience every day perceives evidently to be the Effects of an *invisible Power*. The more *extensive*, and the more *exact*, any man's Observations are, the *more* Evidences he continually finds of the *reality*, and of the *Greatness*, of this *invisible Power*: But even to the *meanest Capacities*, and in the most *obvious Occurrences* of life, God has by no means *left himself without Witness*, causing his Sun to shine, and sending us Rain and fruitful Seasons, filling our Hearts with Food and Gladness. The *Marvellousness* of the Works of Nature shows the *Greatness* of this Power; and the *Regularity* and *Uniformity* of them shows it to be the Power of *One and the Same* Agent, acting or directing every where. The *Understanding* of this universal Governour, which is sufficient to direct the whole Frame of *Nature*, cannot be insensible of that Difference of *Moral* Good and Evil, which even to *Us* appears necessarily and essentially demonstrable.

Matt. v.

45  
Acts xiv.

17.




strable. To expect therefore that this Supreme Being will judge according to *Right*, that is, according to the *necessary nature* of Things; In other words, To *fear* that he will punish us if we act unreasonably, and to *hope* for his Favour if we be Followers of Truth and Right; is the Voice of *Reason*, and not of *Superstition*.

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*Superstitious* Apprehensions, arising in particular from *Timorousness of Temper*, teach men to fear they know not *what*, or to be afraid of *God* they know not *why*; to *fear* him, not as a *just and righteous Judge*, but merely as vested with *irresistible Power*; to *fear* him, not so as by That Fear to be deterred from unrighteous Practices, but so as to be perpetually commuting for a vicious Life with the repetition of unprofitable Ceremonies without number. *Superstitions* founded upon *Customary Tradition*, teach men to be afraid of things which have *no existence*; or of *Beings* which have *no Power and Dominion* over us; to place *Religion* in Practices which have *no Tendency to Virtue*; to lay Strefs upon *Opinions*, which have *no Sense*, or *no Truth* in them; upon

S E R M. things, whereof no man can give a rational Account, or, in St *Peter's* language, VI. give an Answer to any one that asketh a Reason of the Hope, or of the Fear, that is in him. Superstitions derived from political Fiction, teach men to make Religion consist in Parties and Factions; in things which, in different countries, are contrary to each other, and, in the same country, contrary at different Times; in things which promote not at all the Honour of God, nor universal Meekness and Goodwill towards Men; but on the contrary, sometimes are directly destructive both of Truth and Charity,

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 I N S T A N C E S of all these several kinds of Superstitions in the *Heathen* World, were their worshipping of *fiitious* Deities, instead of the Great God and Governour of the Universe, of whom by the Light of Nature and Reason they were not ignorant: And more particularly, their mixing sometimes *barbarous* and *cruel*, sometimes *bestly* and *impure* Rites, even amongst their sacred and religious Performances. In the *Jewish* Nation, the general and prevailing Superstition always was, their relying upon outward

outward *Forms* and *Ceremonies*, (which S E R M. ought *not* indeed to be left undone,) and VI. laying the strefs of Religion upon *them*,  more than upon *the weightier matters of* Mat. xxiii. the *Law*, Justice, Mercy, and Fidelity; 23. of which, all *external* Purifications were but Shadows and Memorials. In the *Christian* World, Instances of no less shameful Superstitions, are, mens departing from *the Everlasting Gospel*, which requires us (*Rev. xiv. 6, 7.*) to *worship him that made Heaven and Earth*; and setting up the Worship of the *Host*, and of the *Blessed Virgin*, and of *Angels*, and *Saints*, and *Relicks*, and *Images*: Also relying upon *Indulgences*, *Pilgrimages*, *Processions*, *Masses for the Dead*, and the like: Nay, and upon the most ridiculously extravagant *Absurdities* in *Belief*; and the most *inhuman Persecutions* and *Barbarities* in *Practice*. All which things have no Foundation in *Reason*, nor any Appearance of being commanded of *God*. The true *Religion of Christ*, as taught by Himself and his Apostles, has nothing of This Sort in it; requiring nothing of us, but This most *reasonable Service*, that, in expectation of a righteous Judgment to

S E R M. VI. come, we continually *worship* the God of the Universe; living in *Sobriety, Righteousness, and Charity towards All men*; and making constant *Acknowledgments* of the Divine *Goodness and Compassion*, in receiving *Sinners to Repentance* through the *Atonement and Intercession* of Christ. Than which *Doctrine*, nothing can be more *firm* in its *Foundation*, or more *excellent* in its *Effects*.

2. AND This is the *Second* great or characteristick Mark, by which *Religion* and *Superstition* may be distinguished from each other. As they differ entirely in their *Ground and Foundation*, so do they likewise in their *Effects*. By their *Fruits* ye shall know them, Matt. vii. 20. *Religion*, which is founded in *Truth*, always makes men impartially *inquisitive* after *Truth*, *Lovers of Reason, Meek, Gentle, Patient, Willing to be informed: Superstition*, on the contrary, naturally makes men *blind* and *passionate*, despisers of *Reason, careless* in *inquiring* after *Truth, Hasty, Censorious, Contentious, and Impatient of instruction*. *Religion* teaches men to be exactly *just, equitable, and charitable* towards all men: *Superstition*, on

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the contrary, frequently puts men upon undervaluing the eternal Rules of *Morality*, and upon preferring the Interest of particular *Señts and Parties*, the prevalency of some *uncertain Opinions*, and the practice of some *needless Ceremonies*, before the unalterable Precepts of the *everlasting Law* and the *everlasting Gospel*. Lastly, *True Religion*, the Religion of *Nature* in general, and the Religion of *Christ* in particular, by securing the Belief of a *future Judgment*, tends greatly to promote the Happiness of *Nations* and *good Governments*, in obliging the *Consciencs* of men to *real Fidelity*, *Justice*, and the *sincere Practice* of every *Virtue*, which the *very best human Laws* can but *imperfectly* secure, by compelling merely the *External Action*: But *Superstition*, on the contrary, frequently produces *Wars*, and *Tumults*, and *Persecutions*, and *Tyrannies* without end; there being nothing so *wicked*, which men of *Superstitious Principles* will not think *pious* and *necessary*, and which men of *No Principles* will not upon occasion bring themselves to submit to.

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S E R M. I SHALL conclude This Head, with  
 VI. observing that there are *Two* Particulars,  
 wherein *True Religion*, the Religion taught  
 by *Christ himself*, (for the Religion pro-  
 fessed by many Nations who *call* them-  
 selves *Christian*, is palpably nothing but  
*Superstition*;) the *true Religion*, I say, as  
 taught by *Christ himself*, has in *Two*  
 Particulars principally, by men who re-  
 ceive not the Gospel, been objected to as  
 encouraging *Superstition*. One is, that it  
 teaches men to be *obstinate* and *wilful*, in  
 parting with all Advantages, even with  
*Life* itself, for the sake of Religion. The  
 Other is, that by teaching men to *despise*  
 the *World*, it hinders them from attend-  
 ing to the *Good of the Publick*. But the  
 Answer to Both these Objections is not  
 difficult. Without a *Stedfastness* which  
 cannot be moved by Temporal Inconve-  
 niencies, there is *no Virtue* to be depend-  
 ed upon, in *natural Religion*, any more  
 than in *Christian*: Is therefore *All Virtue*,  
 nothing but *Superstition*? And as to *de-*  
*spising the World*, in the Sense of *with-*  
*drawing from the Business* of the World,  
 Christianity no where teaches this, but  
 only in Times and Places of general *Per-*  
*secution*.

*secution.* In *Other Cases*, despising the *World*, does not signify despising the *Business* of the *World*, or neglecting to attend the *Publick Good*, but despising all *Temptations* to the *Wickedness* of the *World*, the *Temptations* of *lawless Pleasure*, the *Temptations* of *unjust Gains*, the *Temptations* of *corrupt Ambition*. These only, are, in the *Scripture-sense*, That *World* which is an *Enemy* to *God*.

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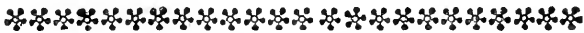






# SERMON VII.

Of the WISDOM of being Religious.



PROV. IX. IO, II.

*The Fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wisdom, and the Knowledge of the Holy is Understanding; For by me thy days shall be multiplied, and the years of thy Life shall be increased.*



HERE is no Desire which SERMON  
 God has so deeply fixed and VII.  
 implanted in our Nature, as  
 that of Preserving and Pro-  
 longing our Life. Life and  
 Health, are the Foundation of all other  
 enjoyments;

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enjoyments ; and are therefore of greater value than all other Possessions put together, because they are necessary in order to the Enjoyment of those Possessions ; And without These, all other things that are the Objects of Men's Hopes and Desires in the World, have with regard to Us, no Being, no Subsistence. *For, what shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole World, and lose his own Life? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his Life?* The principal Point of Wisdom therefore in the Conduct of Human Life, is so to use the enjoyments of this present World, as that they may not themselves shorten that Period, wherein 'tis allowed us to enjoy them. And if any part of Knowledge deserves a steddier attention than other, and has of all others the justest pretence to be esteemed invaluable ; 'tis unquestionable *That Knowledge, by which, as the Wisemen here expresses it, our days may be multiplied, and the Years of our Life may be increased.*

*Let us eat and drink, for to morrow we die ;* was the reasoning of the Epicure, mentioned by St Paul, 1 Cor. xv. 32. But it was very false reasoning, to make the

the melancholy consideration of the Shortness of Life an Argument for Debauchery, when that very Debauchery is evidently the Cause of making Man's Life still shorter. Temperance and Sobriety, the regular Government of our Appetites and Passions, the promoting Peace and good Order in the World, are, even *without* regard to any Arguments of Religion, the greatest instances of Human Wisdom; because they are the most effectual means of preserving our Being, and Well-being in the World; of prolonging the Period, and enlarging the Comforts and Enjoyments of Life. *Religion*, has added Strength to these Considerations; and, by annexing the Promise of God's immediate Blessing to the natural Tendency and Consequences of Things, has made the Wisdom of choosing Virtue infinitely more conspicuous; and the Folly of Vice more apparently absurd. *Length of Days* upon *Earth*, is in the *old Testament* frequently promised to the *Righteous*; And the principal intent of that Promise, was to be an Emblem or Signification of a *longer Life*, even of *Eternity*, more expressly promised in the *New*. The Land  
of

S E R M. of *Canaan* was a Type of Heaven, the true Land of Promise ; And the *days* of the righteous being *long in the Land which the Lord their God had given them*, was a figurative præsignification of that future and more complete State of Happiness, wherein their *days should be multiplied* without number, and *the years of their Life should be increased without End*. This is a Demonstration indeed, of the Wisdom of being Religious ; and of the happy Effects of having always before our Eyes the Fear of the Lord. *The Fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wisdom, and the Knowledge of the Holy is Understanding ; For by me thy Days shall be multiplied, and the Years of thy Life shall be increased.*

*The Fear of the Lord*, and the *Knowledge of the Holy*, are two synonymous Expressions, each of which signifies in Scripture Phrase, *the Practice of Virtue and true Religion*. For so it is very usual in all good Authors, to express the *Whole* by some *principal Part*. Thus, when 'tis said, *The Soul that sinneth, it shall die* ; because the Soul is the principal and most excellent part of Man, 'tis of the same import,

import, as if it had been expressed, *The* S E R M.  
*Man that sinneth, shall die.* And *Gen.* xlvi. VII.  
 27. *All the Souls of the House of Jacob*  
*which came into Egypt; that is, all the*  
*Persons, were threescore and ten.* In like  
 manner, because the *Fear* or *Love* of  
 God, the *Knowledge* or *Study* of his Will,  
*Faith* or *Trust* in him, the *Remembrance*  
 of him, or *frequent Meditating* upon his  
 Laws, are *principal Parts* of Religion;  
 and such as are apt to have so great an  
 influence upon Men, that One of these  
 Virtues can hardly be supposed to be  
 found any where separate from the rest,  
 or without producing its true and genuine  
 Effects in the general course of a religi-  
 ous and Holy Life; therefore *each* of  
 these are frequently put *singly* in Scrip-  
 ture for the *Whole* of Religion, and to  
 express the Practice of Virtue in general.  
 Thus, to Remember our *Creator in the*  
*days of our Youth*, is the Wiseman's de-  
 scription of an early Piety; and with *the*  
*Wicked that shall be turned into Hell*, in  
 the Psalmist's language, are joined *all the*  
*Nations that forget God.* In like manner  
*Believers*, or they that have *Faith* in  
 God, signifies always in the *New Testa-*  
*ment*

S E R M. *ment good Christians, or such as are endued with all virtues and graces of the Spirit; and on the contrary every kind of Wickedness, as well as Infidelity, is represented under the Character of Unbelief. The Love of God, is by St John and by our Saviour himself, defined to be this, that we keep his Commandments, 1 Joh. v. 3; and Joh. xiv. 15. The Knowledge of God, is in the writings of the same Apostle explained by the very same Phrase of keeping his Commandments, 1 Joh. ii. 3, 4: and they that know not God, are by St Paul described as Persons nothing differing from those that obey not the Gospel. 2 Th. i. 8. Lastly, Because Fear is of all other Passions the most deeply rooted in our Nature; and is more apt to be strongly moved by Apprehensions of the Divine displeasure, than the milder Passions of Desire and Hope are to be worked upon by Representations of the Excellency of Virtue and of the Greatness of its Reward; therefore the Fear of God is the most frequently of all these figurative Expressions, put in Scripture for the Whole of Religion; and Persons of Universal Piety and remarkable Holiness, are by no character*

character more usually described than by This, that they fear *the Lord*, or have the Fear of God before their Eyes. And because each one of these Phrases singly, signifies thus, properly enough, the *Summ of Religion*; therefore any Two of them may likewise be used, as synonymous to each other; As, in the Text, the Fear and the Knowledge of the Lord: *The Fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wisdom, and the Knowledge of the Holy is Understanding; For by me thy Days shall be multiplied, and the Years of thy Life shall be increased.*

IN the Words we may observe,

1<sup>st</sup>, THAT the Practice of Religion is in general Man's truest Wisdom: *The Fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wisdom; and the Knowledge of the Holy is Understanding.*

2<sup>dly</sup>. THAT the Practice of Religion is in particular Wise in this respect, that it tends to prolong our Life and lengthen our days: *For by Me thy Days shall be multiplied, and the Years of thy Life shall be increased.* And

3<sup>dly</sup>, IT may be reasonable to inquire, how far this Blessing of long Life pro-

S E R M. *mised to Obedience under the Old Testa-*  
 VII. *ment, is proper to be desired by Christians*  
 ~~~~~ *under the Gospel-State.*

1st, T H E Words contain this universal Proposition; That *the Practice of Religion is in general Man's truest Wisdom: The Fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wisdom, and the Knowledge of the Holy is Understanding.* And here, the whole Tenor of Scripture, in Conjunction with the Reason of Things, concurs in setting forth the Wisdom of being virtuous and religious. The Books of *Solomon* especially, whose *Human* Judgment was superior to all others, even separate from his Knowledge in things *Divine*, are so full of this Notion; that, throughout all his Writings, the Words seem never to be used in any other Signification, but that Wisdom is always put for true Virtue and Piety, and Folly or Madness for the Habit of Sin. As if there were *no other* Folly in the World, but that of Wickedness; nor *any* true Wisdom, but that of Religion; because, in the *comparative* Sense, no other things so *eminently* deserve those Names. And indeed, if Wisdom consists in studying those things which are  
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of the greatest Use and Necessity for us to Know; If it be wise to imploy our Thoughts about things *in their own Nature* the most Excellent, and, in *their relation to Us*, of the utmost importance; If it be Wise to pursue the noblest *Ends*, and in the pursuit thereof to use the best and properest *Means*; If it be Wise to consult our own real Happiness; and to be more concerned for the improvement of our Minds in practical Knowledge, than for amusing them with vain and empty Speculations; If Eternity be of more importance than Time, and a never-ceasing Duration than a transitory Moment; If the Favour of God be infinitely more valuable than the Friendship of the World; and it be more advisable to please an Almighty Benefactor, than mortal Men whose Breath is in their Nostrils; If Joy and Satisfaction of Mind be truly more desirable, than endless Anxiety, Horrour and Despair; If Peace and Love, Charity and universal Good-Will, be more eligible than Wars, Confusions and Desolations; and it be wiser to promote the Happiness of the World, than that Men should make each other misera-

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S E R M. ble without Cause and without End ; In  
 VII. a word ; If Wisdom consists in knowing  
 and distinguishing, in choosing and in adhering to, *whatsoever things are true,-----  
 -----bonest,-----just,-----pure,-----  
 -----lovely,-----of good report ;* things that promote the Health of our Bodies, and secure the Peace and Quiet of our Minds ; things that establish the Order of the World, and make Other Men Happy as well as ourselves ; things that make our present enjoyments, easy, and the remembrance of what is past, comfortable ; and the Hopes and Expectations of what is to come, secure ; If the choosing *These* things, be the Part of a Wise Man ; then is Religion evidently Man's truest Wisdom. For where are these things to be found, but in the Practice of Virtue and true Religion ?

T H E R E *is* a Wisdom in the understanding of *Arts* and useful *Sciences*, which are beneficial to Mankind in this present State, and are in Scripture ascribed to the inspiration of the Almighty : But *this* is a Wisdom confined to particular Persons, and its usefulness limited to a very short Duration. There *is* a Wisdom ;

dom, which men place in being able to S E R M.  
over-reach and defraud each other, con- VII  
sisting in the *Skill and cunning Craftiness*   
*of them that lye in wait to deceive*: But  
this is a Wisdom falsely so called; and  
the End of it appears always to be the  
extremest Folly. There *is* a Wisdom  
of those, who by *Political Skill* manage  
secretly the great Affairs of the World,  
and by deep Counsels bring about unex-  
pected Changes in the States and King-  
doms of the Earth: But *This* Wisdom is  
often a great Snare, and a dangerous  
Temptation to Men's Virtue; giving ex-  
traordinary Opportunities indeed to the  
brighter Virtue of some very few Heroick  
Spirits to shine forth illustriously, to the  
Glory of Religion in singular Acts of Mo-  
deration and Justice, of Piety and great  
Goodness, for the Publick Peace and Se-  
curity of Mankind; but much more usu-  
ally joined with great Wickedness, and  
seldom mentioned in Scripture, but with  
the Marks of an evil or suspicious Cha-  
racter. There *is* a Wisdom, in *Words*,  
and artful *Representations* of Things;  
called by St Paul *the enticing Words of*  
*Man's Wisdom*: But *This* also in Scrip-

S E R M. <sup>VII.</sup>  ture, is always spoken of with an ill Character; being that *Philosophy and vain Deceit*, That Art of confounding Truth and Falshood, which *St Paul* warns us against; and which vain Pretence to Wisdom, God chose the weak things of the World, the plain unaffected simplicity of the Doctrine of the Gospel, on purpose to confound. Lastly, There is a Wisdom in searching out the Secrets of *Nature*, and understanding the Variety of the Works of God: And this indeed, so far as 'tis practical, and leads to the Knowledge of the Author of Nature, is an excellent Wisdom, and worthy of great Commendation: But where 'tis *merely Speculative*, 'tis of more difficulty than Use, and lies level to the Capacity of but few men's Understandings. The *only Wisdom*, that *all Men* are capable of, and that *all Men* are indispensably obliged to attain, is the *Practical Wisdom* of being truly Religious; the Wisdom of understanding, and of steddily pursuing, their own true Temporal and Eternal Interest. The comparison between *Speculative* and this *Practical Wisdom* is most elegantly made by *Job*, in his xxviiiith chapter:

chapter: Surely, says he, there is a Vein for the Silver, and a place for Gold where they mine it, ver. 1. There is a Path which no Fowl knoweth, and which the Vultur's Eye has not seen; The Lion's whelps have not trodden it, nor the fierce Lion passed by it; ver. 7. But where shall Wisdom be found, and where is the Place of Understanding? ver. 12. Man knoweth not the price thereof, neither is it found in the Land of the living; The depth saith, It is not in Me; and the Sea saith, It is not with Me; It cannot be gotten for Gold, neither shall Silver be weighed for the price thereof, ver. 15. Whence then cometh Wisdom? and where is the place of Understanding? ver. 20. The Reply follows; God, saith, he, understandeth the Way thereof, and He knoweth the place thereof; For He looketh to the Ends of the Earth, and seeth under the whole Heaven, ver. 23. But unto Man be said; Behold, the Fear of the Lord, That is his Wisdom, and to depart from Evil that is his Understanding, ver. 28. His Meaning is; The Secrets of Nature, God only knoweth perfectly; but the Knowledge of Religion is the proper Wisdom of Man. The Secret

S E R M. *things belong unto the Lord our God ; but*  
 VII. *the things that are revealed, belong unto*  
 *Us and to our Children for ever ; that we*  
*may do all the Works of the Law, Deut.*  
 xxix. ult. This is very affectionately ex-  
 pressed likewise by *Moses* in his exhortati-  
 on to the *Israelites*, Deut. iv. 6 ; *Behold, I*  
*have taught you statutes and judgments,*  
*even as the Lord my God commanded*  
*me ;-----Keep therefore and do them ; for*  
*This is your Wisdom and Understanding*  
*in the sight of the Nations.* This is that  
 which alone can make men truly great,  
 truly admirable and praise-worthy ; *The*  
*Fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wis-*  
*dom ; a good Understanding have all they*  
*that do thereafter ; the Praise of it indu-*  
*reth for ever, Pf. cxi. 10.* I conclude  
 this Head, that *the Practice of Religion is*  
 in general *Man's truest Wisdom*, with the  
 excellent Words of the wise Author of  
 the Book of *Ecclus.* ch. i. 14, 16, 26,  
 27. *To fear the Lord, is the beginning of*  
*Wisdom ; and it was created with the*  
*faithful in the Womb : To fear the Lord,*  
*is fulness of Wisdom ; and filleth men with*  
*her fruits : If thou desire Wisdom, keep*  
*the commandments ; and the Lord shall*  
 give

give her unto thee; For the Fear of the Lord, is Wisdom and Instruction; and Faith and Meekness are his Delight.

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2dly, THE Practice of Religion, as it is man's truest Wisdom in general, so in particular the Text assures us 'tis wise in this Respect, that it tends to prolong our Life and lengthen our Days: *The Fear of the Lord, is the beginning of Wisdom; and the Knowledge of the Holy, is Understanding; For by Me thy days shall be multiplied, and the years of thy Life shall be increased.* There is nothing in the Old Testament more frequent, than Promises of Health and Life, of a longer and more comfortable Subsistence, to them that live in Obedience to the Commands of God. In the delivery of the Law, God himself annexes to the Fifth Commandment a Promise, that *the Days* of those that observed it should *be long in the Land which the Lord their God had given them*: And St Paul takes notice of it as the *first*, and indeed the *only* Commandment, with an express and particular Promise annexed. Solomon, in his Book of Proverbs, among a great variety of Arguments to persuade men to the Practice of Virtue, always

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always mentions *Length of Days*, as a principal Motive proposed by God in the person of Wisdom; *My Son, forget not my Law, but let thine Heart keep my Commandments; For length of Days, and long Life, and Peace shall they add unto thee;* Prov. iii. 1. *They shall be Life unto thy Soul, ver. 22; and ver. 13. Happy is the Man that findeth Wisdom, and the Man that getteth Understanding; For Length of Days are in her right hand, and in her left hand Riches and Honour, ver. 16.* And accordingly the Psalmist in his exhortation to Obedience, cited by St Peter in his first Epistle; *Come ye children, says he, hearken unto me, I will teach you the Fear of the Lord; What man is he that desireth Life, and loveth many Days, that he may see good? Keep thy Tongue from evil, and thy Lips that they speak no guile; Depart from evil, and do good, Ps. xxxiv. 11.* And in the prophetic description of the final happy restoration of *Jerusalem*, among other blessings it is added, *Is. lxxv. 20. There shall not be in it an old man that hath not filled his days.* On the contrary, among the various Threatnings denounced in the *Old Testament* against

Sinners,



Sinners, 'tis very usual to make this de-  
 SERM. VII.  
 SW
 claration, that their *Days shall be short-*  
*ned.* Prov. x. 27. *The Fear of the Lord*  
*prolongeth Days; but the Years of the*  
*wicked shall be shortned.* And Job xv. 31.  
*Let not him that is deceived, trust in Va-*  
*nity; for Vanity shall be his recompense.*  
*It shall be accomplished before his Time,*  
*and his Branch shall not be green. He*  
*shall shake off his unripe Grape as the Vine,*  
*and shall cast off his Flower as the Olive.*  
 The Application of which Observation,  
 is made by the Wiseman, Eccles. vii. 17.  
*Be not overmuch Wicked, neither be thou*  
*foolish; why shouldest thou die before thy*  
*Time?* There is something in the Nature  
 of Things that tends to verify this Doc-  
 trine; and there is More in the positive  
 Appointment and Constitution of Provi-  
 dence. In the Nature of Things, men de-  
 stroy themselves and shorten their Days  
 by many kinds of Wickedness: By Wars  
 and Desolations they depopulate whole  
 Countries; by private Quarrels they bring  
 each other to untimely Ends; by capital  
 Crimes they bring themselves to be cut  
 off by the Hands of Justice; by Luxury  
 and Intemperance they destroy their Bo-  
 dies;

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dies; the riotous and unclean person going (as *Solomon* very elegantly expresses it) like as an ox goeth to the slaughter, or as a Fool to the correction of the stocks; 'Till a dart strike through his Liver; as a Bird hasteth to the snare, and knoweth not that it is for his Life, *Prov. vii. 22.* By Envy and Malice they consume themselves, and pine away in the midst of their iniquity; This also is elegantly expressed by *Solomon*, *Prov. xiv. 30.* *A sound Heart is the Life of the Flesh, but Envy the Rottenness of the Bones.* Lastly, by the Terrors of their own Minds are they eaten up, and gnawed upon by the Worm of Conscience till they are consumed: *Pf. xxxix. 11.* *When thou with Rebukes dost chasten Man for Sin, thou makest his Beauty to consume away, like as it were a Moth fretting a garment.* In like manner on the other hand, according to the same natural Tendency of Things, by Peace and Charity are men preserved from Destruction; by Temperance are their Bodies maintained in Health; by Quiet of Conscience and Satisfaction of Mind, is a new Life added to their Spirits; *Prov. iii. 7.* *Fear the Lord, and depart from Evil;*

Evil; It shall be Health to thy Navel, and Marrow to thy Bones, which Notion is still more fully exprest by the Author of the Book of Ecclesiasticus, ch. i. ver. 11, 12, 20. *The Fear of the Lord is honour, and glory, and gladness, and a crown of rejoicing; The Fear of the Lord maketh a merry Heart, and giveth joy and gladness, and a long Life; The Root of Wisdom is to fear the Lord, and the Branches thereof are long Life.*

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AND This, in the *Natural Order and Tendency of Things.*

IN the *positive Appointment and Constitution of Providence*, there was yet more Assurance of the Doctrine; God, under the Old Testament, wherein these Promises were made, usually preserving the Righteous by a singular Care and Protection; (so that Job's Friends could appeal to experience, *Whoever perished being innocent? or when were the righteous cut off?* Job iv. 7.) and on the contrary, the same Providence generally cutting off the Wicked, by extraordinary judgments, in the present Life. Even of those who prospered longest, so that it was hard for the Psalmist to understand the reason of it,

S E R M. it, and reconcile it with Providence, *Pf.*  
 VII. lxxiii. 16; yet even of *These* at length he ob-  
 served upon better consideration, *Surely thou*  
*didst set them in slippery places, thou cast-*  
*edst them down into Destruction; How are*  
*they brought into Desolation as in a mo-*  
*ment! they are utterly consumed with Ter-*  
*rors,* ver. 18, 19. But, most frequently,  
 evil Doers were cut off sooner, and de-  
 stroyed suddenly in the midst of their  
 carriere. *Hast thou marked the old way,*  
*which Wicked men have trodden? which*  
*were cut down out of Time, whose foun-*  
*dation was overflown with a Flood?* Job  
 xxii. 15. *Bloody and deceitful Men, shall*  
*not live out half their days,* *Pf.* lv. 23.  
 Upon account of the Profanenefs of *Eli's*  
 Family, God threatens him, *1 Sam.* ii. 32.  
*There shall not be an old man in thy house*  
*for ever.* And the Psalmist, as being sen-  
 sible what the usual Effect of Wickedness  
 was, prays thus, *Pf.* cii. 24. *O my God,*  
*take me not away in the midst of my Days.*  
 Indeed, in the whole Book of *Psalms* the  
 Wicked are perpetually threatned with  
 being cut off before their Time: And  
 That Threatning is paraphrased with great  
 Variety and Elegancy of Expression, in  
 the

the Book of Job ; *The Flag, whilst it is yet in its greenness, and not cut down, it withereth before any other Herb ; So are the Paths of all that forget God, and the Hypocrites Hope shall perish, ch. viii. ver. 12. Yea, the Light of the Wicked shall be put out ; and the spark of his Fire shall not shine, ch. xviii. ver. 5. His roots shall be dried up beneath, and above shall his branch be cut off, ver. 16. They are exalted for a little while, but are gone and brought low,-----and cut off as the tops of the ears of Corn, ch. xxiv. ver. 24.*

NEVERTHELESS, after all This ; forasmuch as general Threatnings are not executed always without exception ; neither were the Wicked constantly cut off, even under the Times of the *Old Testament*, but sometimes prospered for a long time ; and Sudden Cutting off was not itself always a judgment, but sometimes a *taking away from the Evils to come* ; and righteous Persons themselves, were not always preserved from every Destruction, but in some cases, God threatned to *cut off the Righteous with the Wicked* ; and Preservation itself, or Length of Days, was not always a Mercy ; but only when it was promised

SERM. VII. promised and granted as an Emblem or Præsignification of a longer, even of an eternal Life; and the Temporal promises of the Old Testament, cannot Now be applied with any Certainty under the New, where eternal Life is so much more clearly revealed: For these reasons, in the

3<sup>d</sup> place, IT may be worthy our Inquiry, *how far* this Blessing of long Life, promised to Obedience under the Old Testament, is proper to be desired by Christians under the Gospel State. And here it is certain, the Gospel gives us so mean a Notion of the present Life, and so glorious a representation of the Happiness of that to come; that no Man who firmly believes the Scriptures, and has lived so religiously as to have secured to himself a good Foundation against the Time to come, but must needs wish rather, (whenever he seriously meditates upon these things,) to be *delivered from the miseries of this sinful World, and to be present with the Lord, which is far better.* But alas! there are few, extremely few, whose Lives have either been so innocent, or their Repentance and Amendment so complete,

complete, as not to have Reason to wish S E R M. for *more years*, wherein to root out more VII. perfectly their former ill Habits, or to improve the good Dispositions they have already in some measure attained. And it were very well, if even Years and Experience could, in these latter degenerate Ages of the World, produce but the same Effect which the Belief of the Gospel, in the primitive and purest Times, accomplished frequently as it were in a Moment. But if the generality of Christians *were* so perfect, as not to need to desire longer Space of Time for their *own* Amendment and Improvement; yet at least for the sake of *others*, with whom they are concerned either in private Friendships, or in natural Relation, or in publick Affairs, 'tis reasonable men should desire for themselves, and others for them, the Blessing of Length of Days. *For none of us liveth to Himself, and no man dieth to Himself*, Rom. xiv. 7; and St Paul, though for his own part he desired rather to *be present with the Lord*; yet, because for him *to live was Christ*, that is, was needful for the propagation of the Gospel, and more beneficial to the

V O L. II. M Persons,

S E R M. Persons he had Converted ; therefore he  
 VII. desired rather to continue with them ;  
 and This he calls the *Fruit of his Labour*.  
 Phil. i. 22. Further ; since God has plac-  
 ed Us in this World, for Ends and Pur-  
 poses of his all-wise Providence ; and we  
 know not beforehand what Duties he in-  
 tends to call us to ; and he has implanted  
 in us a natural and necessary Desire of  
 Life, in order to accomplish his Wise  
 Designs in the Government of the World ;  
 'tis therefore natural and reasonable for  
 us to look upon Length of Days as a  
 Blessing ; and that *the hoary head is a  
 crown of glory, if it be found in the way  
 of righteousness*. But when any person  
 through discontent desires, not to conti-  
 nue in the World, nor to fulfil that Du-  
 ty which God has appointed him here ;  
 'tis like desiring that he had never come  
 into it ; which is murmuring and finding  
 fault with God's Creation, and repining  
 at God for making us such Creatures as  
 he has been pleased to make us. How-  
 ever, the very longest Life here, is but a  
 Moment in Comparison of Eternity ; And  
 the greatest Length of Days is then only  
 really a Blessing, (as I before observed,)



when 'tis a Type or Emblem of a happy Eternity, of God's *giving men indeed a long Life, even for ever and ever*, Pf. xxi.

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4. We ought therefore to make it the main Care of our Lives to secure our Eternal Happiness hereafter; and then Length of Days here will be a Blessing, not only upon their own Account, but much more so upon account of their affording us Opportunity of preparing ourselves by still greater Care and Watchfulness, and continual improvement of ourselves in the Practice of all Virtues, for a more perfect and complete Degree of Happiness in the Life to come. If This be not done, Length of Days will, like all other Blessings, be turned into a Curse; and become only a stronger Evidence against us of our incorrigible Impenitency. If we be not *so taught to number our Days, as to apply our Hearts unto Wisdom*; If, as our Years pass on, we think not more and more intensely on the Preparations for Eternity; but defer our Repentance from *day to day*, and put off our designs of being religious from one *year* to another; it will nothing profit us, (nay, on the contrary, it will be a

S E R M. great Aggravation of our Misery,) that  
 VII. *our Days have been multiplied, and that  
 the Years of our Life have been increased.*  
 For, when *all these things are passed away  
 as a Shadow, and as a Post that hast-  
 eth by*; (which is the case even of the  
 longest Life here upon Earth;) then sud-  
 den and so much heavier destruction will  
 come upon us unawares, even as Pain  
 upon a Woman in Travail, and we shall  
 not escape. Then the expectations of the  
 delaying Sinner shall appear *thin as the  
 Spider's web*; and his *Hopes as the light  
 Chaff, which the wind scattereth away  
 from the Face of the Earth.* Then they  
 who spend the Day in Riot and De-  
 bauchery, and say *To morrow shall be as  
 this Day and much more abundant*, shall  
 have their Soul required of them in a  
 moment; and *the Servant that says in  
 his Heart, My Lord delayeth his Coming*;  
*and shall begin to beat the men-servants  
 and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to  
 be drunken*; the Lord of that servant will  
 come in a day when he looketh not for him,  
 and at an hour when he is not aware, and  
 will cut him in sunder, and will appoint  
 him his portion with the Unbelievers; and

how *much* soever the Masters delay, *i. e.* SERM.  
how *long* soever that wicked Servant's VII.  
*Life* be, yet his destruction, when it  
comes, surprizes him unprovided as in a  
moment. But He, on the other hand,  
who in a short Life makes speedy provi-  
sion for Eternity; though he be prevent-  
ed with early death, yet, *being made per-*  
*fect in a short Time, he fulfilleth a long*  
*time*; as the Son of *Sirach* excellently  
expresses it; *For honourable Age is not*  
*that which standeth in length of Time,*  
*nor that is measured by numbers of Years;*  
*But Wisdom is the gray hair unto men,*  
*and an unspotted life is old Age.*







# SERMON VIII.

Of imitating the HOLINESS of  
G O D.



I P E T. i. 15, 16.

*But as he which hath called you, is Holy; so be ye Holy, in all manner of Conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy.*



NOTWITHSTANDING the natu-  
ral Proneness of Mankind to  
Superstition; and the strong  
Bent which is in all cor-  
rupt Minds to endeavour to  
make amends, by formal and external  
Services,

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S E R M. Services, for the want of true Virtue and  
 VIII. Holiness of Life; yet even in the *Heathen*  
 World itself, under the bare Light of *Nature* alone, the best and wisest men were sensible of this great Truth, that the most acceptable Service which could be paid to God, was to endeavour to become *like* him by a righteous Temper and Disposition of Mind. The *Revelation* which God has been pleased to make to us of himself in Scripture, does every where confirm this Notion; and almost the whole Design, both of the antient Prophets under the Law, and of all our Saviour's Discourses in the Gospel, is to establish the same Doctrine: *As he which hath called you, is Holy; so be Ye Holy, in all manner of Conversation.* In the following Discourse upon which words, I shall 1<sup>st</sup> briefly set forth the *Obligations* we are under to *imitate* the God whom we worship. 2<sup>dly</sup>, I shall consider the true *Extent*, and proper *Limitations* of This Duty. And 3<sup>dly</sup>, I shall draw some useful *Observations* from the whole.

1<sup>st</sup>. I SHALL briefly set forth the *Obligations* we are under, to *imitate* the God whom we worship. The *Difference* of

*moral Good and Evil*, is, in the nature of S E R M. things, eternally, essentially, and un- VIII. changeably necessary. Just as *Light* and *Darkness* are of necessity always contrary to each other, and can by no Power be made to be the same. With regard to this necessary and unalterable difference of Good and Evil; the *Will of God*, who can never be imposed upon by any Error, is constantly and invariably determined to do always what in the whole is *best and fittest* to be done, according to the everlasting Rules of Justice, Equity, Goodness and Truth. This, is the Ground and Foundation of all God's *own Actions* in the Government of the Universe. Now the same intrinsick Excellency of *Right* and *Good*, which always determines the *Will of God Himself*, ought also in Proportion to govern the Actions of all *other* rational Beings likewise, according to the degree of their *Knowledge* of what is right, and of their *Power* to perform it. That is to say; All *rational and intelligent* Beings are, by the Law of their Nature, obliged to endeavour to become in their several degrees and proportions *like* unto *Him*, who alone

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none is *Perfect* Reason and Understanding. This is an *original* Obligation, founded in *Nature itself*, requiring us to *imitate* what it *necessitates* us to *admire*. And this Obligation is confirmed by the same Light of Reason, teaching us further, that *Imitation of God*, as 'tis most *fit* in *itself*, so it cannot but be likewise most acceptable unto *Him*, and agreeable to his *Will*. For, the *same absolute Perfection* of the Divine Nature, which makes us certain that God must *Himself* be of Necessity infinitely Holy, Just and Good; makes it equally certain that he cannot possibly approve Iniquity in *Others*: And the same *Beauty*, the same *Excellency*, the same *Weight and Importance* of the Rules of everlasting Righteousness, with regard to which God is always pleased to make those Rules the Measure of all his *Own* Actions, necessarily prove, that it must likewise be his *Will*, that all rational Creatures should proportionably make them the Measure of *Theirs*. Even among *Men*, there is no *Earthly* Father, but in those things which he esteems his *own* Excellencies, *desires* and *expects* to be imitated by his *children*. How much

more



## Holiness of GOD.

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*more* is it necessary that *God*, who has the tenderest Concern for all his Creatures. and who is infinitely far from being subject to such Passions and Variableness as frail *Men* are, should desire to be imitated by his Creatures in those Perfections, which are the foundation of his own unchangeable Happiness.

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PARTICULARLY, If *God* is *himself* essentially of infinite Holiness and Purity; it plainly follows, that 'tis impossible but he must likewise be of *purser Eyes than to* Hab. i. 13. *behold* with Approbation any manner of *Impurity* or *Immorality* in his *Creatures*. And consequently it must needs be his *Will*, that they should All (according to the Measure of their frail and finite nature) be *Holy as He is Holy*.

IF *God* is *himself* a Being of infinite Justice, Righteousness and Truth; it must needs be his *Will*, that all *rational Creatures*, whom he has created after his own Image, whom he has endued with excellent Powers and Faculties to enable them to distinguish between Good and Evil; should imitate him in the Exercise of those divine Perfections, by conforming  
all

SERM. all their Actions to the eternal and unal-  
 VIII. terable Law of Righteousness.

IF God is *himself* a Being of infinite Goodness; *making his Sun to rise on the Evil, and on the Good, and sending Rain on the Just and on the Unjust; having never left himself wholly without Witnesses, but always doing Good, giving men Rain from Heaven and Fruitful Seasons, and filling their Hearts with Food and Gladness:* it cannot but be his *Will*, that all *reasonable creatures* should, by mutual Love and Benevolence, permit and assist each other to enjoy in particular the several Effects and Blessings of the divine universal Goodness.

IF God is *himself* a Being of infinite Mercy and *Compassion*; as 'tis plain he bears long with men before he punishes them for their Wickedness, and often freely forgives them his *ten thousand Talents*; it must needs be his *Will*, that they should forgive one another their *hundred pence*; being *merciful* one to another, as *he is merciful to them All*; and having *Compassion* each on his *Fellow-servants*, as *God has pity on Them*.

Again: IF *Love* towards God be an S E R M. obvious and principal Duty of Natural VIII. Religion, in those who believe God to be the Supreme Good; it follows of necessity, that *Imitation* of him also must equally be a Duty of indispensable Obligation. For God, being essential Goodness, Righteousness and Truth, can no otherwise have *Love* express'd towards him from his Creatures, than by their loving and imitating those Virtues in *their* Practice, which in *His* Nature are essential Perfections. Love of God, in any *other* sense than This, is nothing else but unintelligible Enthusiasm. Lastly: If *Happiness* is Man's chief End; and *perfect Happiness* is, in the divine nature, in *essential* conjunction with perfect *Holiness and Goodness*; it follows necessarily, that *so far only* can any creature possibly become *like* to God in the enjoyment of *Happiness*, as he is first made *like* to him in the participation of *Goodness*.

THESE are the *Obligations* we are under, to *imitate* the God whom we worship; drawn from the consideration of the Nature of *things*; and of the *Will of God* as made known to us by the *Light of Reason*

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son *only*. In the *Revelation* which God has been pleased to make to us of himself in *Scripture*, the necessity of the same Duty is more expressly and more clearly enforced. At the delivery of the *Law*, to *Moses*, the *particulars* of Duty, by which the Worshippers of the True God were to be distinguished from all other Nations, are introduced with this *general* Preface to the *whole*, Levit. xix. 1. *The Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto all the Congregation of the children of Israel, and say unto them, Ye shall be Holy, for I the Lord your God am Holy.* And ch. xi. 44. *I am the Lord your God; ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves; and ye shall be holy, for I am Holy.* By the citation of which words, spoken thus from the Mouth of God himself to *Moses*, the *Apostle* confirms his own Argument in the words of the Text; *As He which hath called you, is Holy; so be Ye Holy, in all manner of Conversation: Because it is written, Be ye Holy, for I am Holy.* Man, was originally created in the *Image* of God, *Gen. i. 27*; that is, he was made in his *natural* capacity a rational and intelligent creature, capable of distinguishing

stinguishing between Good and Evil, and of being Lord over the inferiour Creation. By a right use of these Powers and Faculties, in imitation of God, he is declared likewise in the *moral* sense, to be *after God, created in righteousness and true Holiness*, Eph. iv. 24. *After God*; that is, after the *pattern and similitude* of God, *after the Image of Him that created him*, Col. iii. 10. By Debauchery and Corruption of manners, by the Practice of Any wickedness whatsoever, men are *alienated*, saith St Paul *from the Life of God*, Eph. iv. 18: And when again by true Repentance and real Amendment of Life, they return to their Duty, and improve in the Practice of Virtue; the Apostle represents them as being restored and *made partakers of the Divine Nature*. 2 Pet i. 4. The manner of speaking is figurative, and very elegantly expressive of that *moral* likeness to God, which is elsewhere stiled literally, being *partakers of his Holiness*, Heb. xii. 10; and, in the Text, being *Holy as He is Holy*: Without which *Holiness*, the Scripture plainly declares, *no man shall see the Lord*. A *Likeness to God here*, by the habitual Disposition,

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Heb. xii.  
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position of a virtuous mind, is indispensably necessary to the enjoyment of *Glory* and *Happiness hereafter*. And the Perfection even of *That* *Glory* and *Happiness* itself principally consists in our becoming still *more and more* like him, by the total abolishing of all Sin: *We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is,* 1 Joh. iii. 2. What the full meaning of This is, the Apostle tells us, *does not yet clearly appear*. But, though God is himself invisible; yet both by the *Light of Nature* we have a competent Knowledge of his *moral* Attributes; and in the Life of *Christ*, who is the *visible* Image of the invisible God, we have a complete Example, and Pattern of moral *Perfection*, set before us to imitate. *Learn of Me*, saith our Saviour, *for I am meek and lowly in Heart*, Matt. xi. 29. And again in another place, *I have given you an Example*, saith he, *that ye should do as I have done to you*. The Apostles accordingly, in their exhortations to the practice of *Virtue*, do frequently remind us of this Divine Pattern: 1 *Pet.* ii. 21. *Christ has left us an Example, that ye should follow his Steps; who did no Sin, neither*

Joh. xiii.

15.

neither was guile found in his mouth: S E R M. VIII.  
 And 1 Job. ii. 6. *He that saith, he abideth in Him, ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.* This is the highest Excellency and Perfection of a Christian; to be conformed to the Image of the Son of God, by a Life of Virtue and Righteousness here: Which whosoever is, shall hereafter also be changed into the same Image, from glory to glory; when our Lord shall present his Servants faultless before the presence of his Father's glory, with exceeding Joy; and they shall see his Face, and his Name shall be in their foreheads; and they shall serve him day and night in his Temple, and enjoy his uninterrupted Favour for ever and ever. Rom. viii. 29. 2 Cor. iii. 18.

THESE are the Obligations we are under to imitate God: Which was the first Head I proposed to speak to.

Secondly, I AM in the next place to consider the true Extent, and proper Limitations of this Duty. And here 'tis very evident,

1st, THAT All imitation of God must be understood to be an imitation of his moral Attributes only, and not of his natural ones. In the exercise of his Su-

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preme *Power*, we cannot imitate him: In the Extent of his unerring *Knowledge* we cannot attain to any Similitude with him: We cannot at all *Thunder with a Voice like Him*, Job xl. 9; nor are we able to search out and comprehend the least part of the depth of his unfathomable *Wisdom*. But his *Holiness and Goodness*, his *Justice, Righteousness*, and *Truth*, his *Mercy and Compassion*; these things we can understand; in these things we can imitate him; nay, we cannot approve ourselves to him as obedient Children, if we do not imitate him therein.

THE Holiness of God; that is, *in general*, That disposition of the Divine Nature, by which he is infinitely removed from all *moral Evil whatsoever*, is in an emphatical manner proposed to our imitation in the words of the Text; *As he which has called you is Holy, so be Ye Holy in all manner of Conversation*. The word, *Holiness*, is perpetually in the mouths of Christians; but what it properly means, This they have often but a very imperfect and confused Notion of. It signifies originally, in the Jewish language, *Separation from Common Use*: And



in *That* Sense, all the Vessels and Furni-  
 ture of the Temple are, in the Old Te-  
 stament, stiled, *Holy*. In the same Sense  
 'tis used of *Persons* also employed in the  
 Service of God; who are intitled to this  
*external* and *nominal Holiness*, whether  
 they really answer their character or no.  
 But the word is used in a *better* Sense,  
 when 'tis transferred from this *literal* to  
 a *moral* signification; expressing a man's  
 being *separated*, by true religion, from  
 the *common Practices* of a vicious and  
 corrupt World; And, when applied to  
 God, it signifies his *infinite* Distance,  
 from every *kind* and *degree* of *moral Evil*  
 whatsoever.

IN the Text therefore is proposed to  
 our imitation the Example of the Divine  
*Holiness*, or his *Hatred to Sin and Wick-*  
*edness* in general; *Be ye Holy, for I am*  
*Holy*. In *other* passages of Scripture,  
 particular moral Attributes are laid before  
 us as Patterns to walk by. The words  
 immediately following the Text set forth  
 the Justice of God; ver. 17. *Calling on*  
*the Father, who, without respect of Per-*  
*sons, judgeth according to every man's work.*  
 In the *fifth* chapter of St Matthew, our

S E R M. Saviour directs us to imitate the Goodness  
 VIII. of God, as the most effectual means to  
 obtain a share in his Favour, and a part  
 in his most perfect Happiness: *Love your  
 Enemies*, saith he, (that is, *not*, make  
 them equal with your Friends, *but*, de-  
 sire and promote their amendment, and  
 then be ready to forgive them;) *do good to  
 them that hate you, and pray for them which  
 despitefully use you: That ye may be the  
 children of your Father which is in Hea-  
 ven*, (that is, that ye may be like unto  
 Him,) *who maketh his Sun to rise on the  
 Evil and on the Good, and sendeth Rain  
 on the Just and on the Unjust*. And, to  
 mention no more Instances, the *Mercy* of  
 God is by our Saviour in a very affecti-  
 onate manner proposed as an Example to  
 excite us to Charity; *Luk. vi. 35. Do  
 good, and lend, hoping for nothing again;  
 and your Reward shall be great, and ye  
 shall be the children of the Highest; for  
 He is kind unto the Unthankful and to the  
 Evil; Be ye therefore merciful, as your  
 Father also is merciful*. Which last words,  
 are remarkably varied by St Matthew, in  
 his narration of the same Discourse of  
 our Lord. For what in St Luke we read  
 thus,

thus, *Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful*, is by St Matthew set down in the following manner; *Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect*. As if *Perfection*, and *Mercy or Charity*, were one and the same thing; and as if he that was truly indued with this virtue of *Charity*, might consequently be supposed to be perfect in all *other* virtues likewise. This is the *first* necessary limitation, of this Duty of imitating God; It must always be understood to be an imitation of his *moral* Perfections only.

2dly, E V E N in these *moral* Excellencies, 'tis evident further, that it must necessarily mean an imitation of *likeness* only, and not of *Equality*. One would think, there could be no great *need* of this Observation. Yet some Enthusiasts there have been, who have vainly boasted themselves to be altogether without Sin; and being puffed up with spiritual pride, and thinking themselves *above* the Duties of what they call *common Morality*, have by a Neglect of true Virtue, fallen into the snare and condemnation of the Devil. Of This kind there seem to

S E R M. have been Some in St *John's* time, against  
 VIII. whom he directs his Discourse, in his First  
 Epistle, ch. i. 8. *If we say that we have no Sin, we deceive ourselves, and the Truth is not in us.* But in our present Age, men are apt to run much rather into the contrary extreme; not *pretending* to a perfection *above* what is human, but *neglecting* to endeavour after what *is* their Duty to obtain. They know God to be a Being of infinite Holiness; that he *charges even his Angels with Folly, and the Heavens are not pure in his Sight:* And therefore they think *frail men* may be excused from attempting to imitate him at all. But This is a very wicked and profane Suggestion. For though the Goodness indeed of such imperfect creatures as *we* are, can be but in a very mean and low degree; yet *in* that proportion and degree, we are indispensably bound to follow after it. And as a Finite *can* resemble infinite, so *we are* to resemble God, by partaking of the same moral excellencies in *kind*, though they cannot but be infinitely inferiour in *degree*. The Light of a *Star*, though it bears no proportion at all to the glorious Beauty of the  
 the

the *Sun*, yet *Light* it is nevertheless, and directly contrary to *Darkness*: So the Virtues of *Angels and of Men*, though they bear *no proportion* to the adorable Perfections of *God*, yet, in their proper *measure and degree*, they resemble them, as being of the same *nature and kind*; opposite and contrary to *wickedness*, just as every degree of *Light* is contrary to *Darkness*. The Apostle aptly expresses This, by the similitude of a *Child* learning to imitate the Virtues of a *wise man*, and an *affectionate Parent*; *Eph. v. i. Be ye therefore Followers of God*, saith he, *as Dear Children*.

3dly, BUT though our Imitation of the moral Perfections of God is always to be understood with these great Limitations; as signifying an imitation of *Likeness* only, and not of *Equality*; suitable to the weak nature of such frail, imperfect, and fallible Creatures: Yet ought we *also* to consider, that even in the *Degrees* of Goodness it is our Duty *continually* to improve, if we will at all answer the Precept in the Text, *Be ye Holy, for I am Holy*. A perfect and most complete Example is set before us to

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imitate, that aiming always at That which is most excellent, we may grow continually and make a perpetual Progress in the ways of Virtue: And though we can never come up to our Pattern itself, yet, by such imitation as our frail and mortal nature is capable of, we may attain to what St *Peter* calls being *made Partakers of the Divine Nature*. Which participation of true Holiness *after the Image of him that created us*, is truly and in a proper Sense the *comparative* Perfection of our *Humane* nature, as *absolute* Perfection is the Perfection of the *Divine*. Which clearly explains the meaning and extent of St *Paul's* exhortation, 2 *Cor.* vii. 1. that we should perfect *Holiness in the Fear of God*; and That Advice of our Saviour himself, St *Matt.* v. 48. *Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect.*

III. I T remains now in the *last* place, that I draw some useful *Observations* from the Whole of what has been said; and so conclude. And

1<sup>st</sup>, IF true Religion consists in the imitation of God; and all imitation of God, is of necessity confined to his *moral* Perfections only; then it hence evidently follows, that *moral Virtue* is the chief End of Religion; and that, to place the main stress of religion in any thing else besides true Virtue, is Enthusiasm or Superstition. When our Saviour gave his Apostles Power over unclean Spirits, he thought it necessary to add at the same time the following Caution, *Luke x. 20. Notwithstanding in This rejoice not, that the Spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your Names are written in Heaven: your Names are written in Heaven*, that is, your Repentance and Obedience is acceptable to God: For so, in Scripture-phrase, they who *keep the Commandments of God*, are said to be *written in the Book of Life*; and those who *Sin* against him, he threatens that he will *blot* out of his *Book*, *Exod. xxxii. 33.* Again: In his description of the day of Judgment, *Many*, says our Saviour, *will say to me in That day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy Name, and in thy Name have cast out devils, and in thy*  
*Name*

SERM. Name done many wonderful works? And  
 VIII. then will I profess unto them, I never knew  
 you, Depart from Me ye that work iniquity; that is, all ye who have lived vitiously and immorally. St Paul in like manner, 1 Cor. xiii. 1. *Though I speak with the Tongues of Men and Angels; and though I have the gift of Prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all Faith, so that I could remove Mountains, and have not Charity,-----it profiteth me nothing.* The greatest part of the Rulers of this World are strangely guilty of *This* Error; when they affect rather to be like God in *Power*, which is *not* an imitable Attribute, than in *Goodness*, wherein alone 'tis their Glory to be like him.

2dly. IF true Religion consists in the imitation of God; and that which is imitable in God, be his *moral* Perfections; hence it follows necessarily, that *moral* Excellencies, *Justice*, *Goodness*, *Truth*, and the like, are of the *same kind* in God as in Men. For otherwise, if (as some have imagined in order to maintain unintelligible doctrines,) *Justice*, *Goodness*, and *Truth* in God, did not answer  
 our



our common and natural Notions of those Virtues; but were of a kind quite different, and inconceivable to us; how then could Men be obliged to *imitate* they knew not what? or how could it become possible in *any* sense to be *holy as he is Holy*, if it could not Be understood by us, *What* Holiness is? The Truth therefore plainly is; As Light is Light, *wheresoever* and in what *degree* soever it appears, and has no communion or similitude with Darkness: so Goodness, in *whomsoever* and in what *degree* soever it be found, still always carries along with it the same Idea of Goodness, and has no communion or Fellowship with Wickedness.

3dly and *Lastly*; FROM hence it appears, of how great importance it is to *Men* to frame to themselves right and worthy Notions of *God*. For such as are the Conceptions Men have of the *Object of their Worship*; such also will proportionably be *their own Behaviour and Practice*. The *Gentiles*, who worshipped *wile and impure Deities*, were *themselves* accordingly *given up to work all Uncleaness with Greediness*. The *Jews*, when they fell from the *Worship of the True God*,

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God, to serve the Idols and Images of really or fictitiously *cruel Dæmons*; were *themselves* accordingly devested of humanity, and sacrificed even their own Children to *Moloch*. And among *Christians* likewise, it is too sad and true an observation; that in proportion as they have departed from the Simplicity of the Gospel, and feigned to themselves either *ridiculous* or *wicked* notions of the infinitely wise and good God; so has their *religion* accordingly been changed either into a *ridiculous*, or into a *barbarous* and *cruel* Superstition. The only possible remedy for which Evil, is to adhere stedfastly and immoveably to the natural and unchangeable notions of *righteousness* and *holiness* in *God*, and the indispensable necessity of true *righteousness* and *holiness* among *Men*.

S E R M O N



# SERMON IX.

Of the LOVE of GOD towards  
Sinners.



St JOHN. iii. 16.

*For God so loved the World, that  
he gave his only-begotten Son,  
that whosoever believeth in him  
should not perish, but have ever-  
lasting Life.*



THESE Words are part of SERM.  
that Excellent Discourse, IX.  
wherein our Saviour instruct-  
ed *Nicodemus*, giving him a  
short Account of the Doct-  
rine of the Gospel ; And the Words them-  
selves

S E R M. selves are a brief Summary of that whole  
 IX. Discourse. *Nicodemus* was a Man of  
 Learning and Authority among the *Jews*,  
 and, as it seems, of a better and more  
 pious Disposition, than the generality of  
 those of his own Rank. Moved there-  
 fore by the Greatness of our Saviour's  
 Miracles, and probably also having stud-  
 ied the Prophecies, which foretold the co-  
 ming of the *Messias* about That Season ;  
 he thought himself bound to inquire what  
 That Doctrine was, which our Saviour  
 began so publickly and with so great Au-  
 thority to teach ; And accordingly he  
 goes to him by Night, to converse pri-  
 vately about it. Our Saviour, address-  
 ing himself to him as to a Man of Under-  
 standing, begins at the Foundation of the  
 Whole ; and represents to him the Neces-  
 sity of entring upon a religious Course of  
 Life, according to the perfecter and more  
 spiritual Principles of the Christian insti-  
 tution : ver. 3. *Except, says he, a man  
 be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom  
 of God.* Which Expression, *Nicodemus*  
 at first not understanding ; our Saviour  
 further explains it to him, ver. 5. *Except,  
 says he, a Man be born of Water and of  
 the*

*the Spirit*; except he be baptized into the Profession of the true Religion, and, suitably to this external Obligation, be inwardly renewed and purified from all wicked Dispositions in the Spirit of his Mind; *he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.* For, *whatsoever is born of the Flesh, can be but Flesh; That which is born of the Spirit, That only is Spirit.* By natural Birth, a Man can have no other Title than only to the enjoynments of this *Natural and Mortal Life*: To *Immortality* and a share in the *Kingdom of God*, he cannot be intitled, but by a New and *Spiritual Birth*, by being delivered from the Dominion of *Fleshly Lusts*, and living under the more perfect Law of Reason and Religion. To make This still more intelligible, and to take off the Difficulty of apprehending the meaning of that Phrase of being *Born again*, our Saviour proceeds to illustrate it by an easy similitude, ver. 7; that, as in the Course of *Nature* some of the greatest and most sensible Effects are produced by secret and imperceptible Causes; so it ought not to be wondred at, if some of the greatest *Moral Effects*, and most important Chan-

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ges in the Mind of Man be wrought likewise by degrees invifible, and by means not discernable to Sense: *Marvel not that I faid unto thee, ye must be born again: The Wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the Sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; fo is every one that is born of the Spirit.*

HAVING thus prepared the Way, by explaining the Foundation; our Saviour from hence makes a Transition, ver. 12. to the higher and more fublime Doctrines of the Gospel; *If I have told you, fays he, earthly things, and ye believe not; how fhall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?* If ye believe me not even in thefe plain and more obvious matters, which I have futed to your Capacities, and delivered in eafy Comparifons, drawn from the moft natural and common things here upon Earth; how much lefs will ye believe me, when I tell you more fublime and heavenly myfteries? when I declare to you the Dignity of my Perfon and Office, the fpiritual Nature of my Kingdom, and the Sufferings I muft firft undergo for the Redemption of Mankind?

And

And yet these things are true and certain S E R M.  
as the others; and the Works which I do, IX.  
are sufficient Arguments, why ye should  
believe me even in These things also.  
Now These sublimer Doctrines he begins  
to enumerate, ver. 13. *No man, says he,*  
*hath ascended up to Heaven, but he that*  
*came down from Heaven, even the Son of*  
*Man which is in Heaven : That is; Christ,*  
*the Son of Man, the promised Messias,*  
*That Son of Man described in the Prophet*  
*Daniel as coming in the clouds of Heaven*  
to receive an everlasting Dominion; *This*  
Son of Man came forth from God, so as  
no other Prophet, no not *Moses* himself,  
ever did; For he was with God before  
he came amongst Men; and when he  
first appeared in this World, he had before  
had a Being in Heaven in the Bosom of  
his Father, in which Dignity he still con-  
tinues. And 'tis the Prerogative of *him*  
only, who came thus from God as no o-  
ther ever did, throughly to understand and  
to reveal to Men, the yet secret Counsels  
of God concerning the establishment of  
his Kingdom, and the Method of Men's  
Salvation. *No man hath ascended up to*  
*heaven, but he that came down from Hea-*  
V O L. II. O ven,

S E R M. *ven, even the Son of Man which is in Hea-*  
 IX. *ven.* What This Method of Men's Salva-  
 tion was he proceeds more distinctly to  
 declare, ver. 14 and 15, *As Moses lifted*  
*up the Serpent in the WilderNESS, even so*  
*must the Son of Man be lifted up; That*  
*whosoever believeth in him, should not pe-*  
*rish, but have eternal Life.* That is:  
 That the Messiah, by his Sufferings and  
 Death should accomplish the Redempti-  
 on and Salvation of Men, opening an  
 entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven, to  
 all those who shall sincerely obey him;  
*This* (says our Saviour) ye ought not to  
 be surprized at, as a new and strange  
 Doctrine; since ye have a representation  
 and prediction of it, even in your own  
 Law. For as *Moses* set up in the Wilder-  
 ness the Figure of a Serpent, which being  
 indeed the Likeness of a venomous Beast,  
 yet was so far from having any thing of  
 its poisonous Nature, that on the contra-  
 ry all those which had been bitten by real  
 Serpents, were immediately healed by  
 looking up towards this Representation:  
 So the *Son of Man*, the *Angel of the Co-*  
*venant*, being made in the likeness of sin-  
 ful Flesh, yet having really no Sin in him,  
 shall

Mal. iii. 1.  
 If. lxiii. 9.



shall be lifted up on the Cross, that by the Power of his Death, sinful men believing in him, and being enabled to conquer and forsake their Sins, may obtain remission of Sin, and Everlasting Life. For thus he adds in the Words of the Text, summing up his whole Discourse; *God so loved the World, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting Life.*

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THE Connexion of our Lord's Discourse being thus explained; we may in the Words themselves consider *1st*, how and in what sense it is supposed, that without the coming of Christ into the World, Men could not but have perished: *2dly*, in what Sense it is affirmed, that all who believe in him shall not perish, but have everlasting Life: and *3dly*, we may take Notice, that this Salvation of Men by the Coming of Christ is ascribed to the antecedent Love of God, the original Goodness and Mercy of the Father Almighty. *God so loved the World, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting Life.*

S E R M. Iſt, WE are to conſider, how it is ſup-  
 IX. poſed in the words of the Text, that with-  
 out the Coming of Chriſt into the World, Men could not but have periſhed. And for the clearer explaining the ground of this Suppoſition, it may be proper to obſerve in the *firſt* place, that when God originally created Man in the State of *Innocence*, and ſeated him in the Garden of *Paradice*, there was no *Obligation* upon God to induc him with *Immortality*. 'Twas not by *Virtue* of any *Claim of Right*, or by any *Necceſſity* in the Nature of the Thing, but an *Effect* of his unbounded *Goodneſs* only, and a mere *free Gift*, that God created Man to be *Immortal*, and made him to be an *Image of his own Eternity*. He might juſtly have created him for what *Time* he pleaſed; and even in the State of *Innocence*, might without any *Wrong* have put a *Period* to That Being, which at firſt 'twas nothing but his own good *Pleaſure*, that moved him to give *Beginning* to at all. And if this was the *Cafe* even in the State of *Innocence* itſelf, how much more when Man by *Sin* had forfeited all *Title* to the *Divine Favour*! If God was under no *Obligation*

to give Immortality to the immediate S E R M.  
 Work of his own Hands, how much less IX.  
 to the Posterity of a fallen Sinner! and  
 what claim could *They* have to the perpetual  
 enjoyment of Paradise, which to their First  
 Parent himself, even in his most perfect State  
 of Innocence, was but a Free Gift! Undoubtedly  
 nothing is more evident, than that God might  
 without any Wrong have left them All to the  
 natural Consequences of their own Mortality,  
 and without any Injury to them might have  
 forbore to make that Promise of eternal Life  
 in Christ, which the World would have had no  
 Right to demand, even though there had never  
 been in it any Sin. But then we are also to  
 observe *further*, that all the Sons of *Adam*  
 are moreover Sinners *themselves*; and as by the  
 Sin of *Adam* they became in the *Course of Nature*  
 excluded out of Paradise, and from the Tree of  
 Life, and from the Hopes of Immortality; so  
 by their *own* Sins they became farther, and in  
 a more proper Sense, liable to the Wrath of  
 God; and subject, not only to *Death*, which  
 came *equally and universally* upon All; but  
 also to *actual Punishments*

S E R M. *ments* in the future State, *proportionable*  
 IX. to every man's *private Sin* and *personal*  
 Demerit. From which *common Death*,  
 coming *equally* upon *All*; and from  
 which *proportionable Punishment*, due to  
*every man's particular Sins*; nothing, that  
 Sinners themselves could do, could avail  
 to rescue them, or to prevent their *perish-*  
*ing* according to the Course of Nature,  
 and the righteous Judgment of God. For  
 God, whose Promise of Immortality e-  
 ven to *Innocent* Creatures, was but a Free  
 Gift of mere Bounty, was much less un-  
 der any Obligation to provide a Place of  
 eternal Happiness for the Posterity of a  
 sinful Parent; themselves also actual Sin-  
 ners, and at the best but very imperfect  
 and undeserving Penitents; whose great-  
 est Endeavours of Repentance, could at  
 the most but afford ground of Hope for  
 an Abatement of Punishment, and not  
 any Expectation of Reward. The Sup-  
 position therefore in the Text is by no  
 means disagreeable to Reason; that, with-  
 out the Coming of Christ into the World,  
 Men could not but have *perished*: Those  
 who *themselves* had sinned after the simi-  
 litude of *Adam's* transgression, being ne-  
 cessarily

cessarily liable to the wrath of God, and S E R M. to the proportionable *actual Punishment* IX. of their Sins; and those who had not sinned in their own Persons, being yet unavoidably in the Course of Nature involved in that *common Death*, from which God was not under any Obligation to rescue them; seeing it was his *Free Gift* to give them Being at all, and that even in the State of *Innocence* itself He had been under no Obligation to indue them with Immortality.

THIS seems, strictly and accurately speaking, to have been the True State of *All Mankind*, when considered as antecedent to the Promise of Christ's Coming. But it deserves also to be taken Notice of, that as in most other places, so in the Text likewise, 'tis probable that when men's *Perishing* is spoken of, it is not so much to be understood in that *strict Sense*, wherein *Every man whatsoever* is liable, more or less, to the Wrath of God; as in that more *general and usual Sense*, wherein both *Jews* and *Gentiles* are represented as being for the *greatest part* by an universal Corruption of Manners lost in Sin, and utterly fallen *short of the Glory of God*.

S E R M. The *Jews* had in their Law itself, no  
 IX. Expiation appointed for great and wilful  
 Transgressions; And therefore *through*  
 Christ was *preacht* unto them *the forgive-*  
*ness of Sins*; that by him, all that believe  
 might be *justified from all things, from*  
*which they could not be justified by the Law*  
*of Moses, Acts xiii. 39. And Rom. viii. 3.*  
*What the Law could not do, in that it was*  
*weak through the Flesh, God sending his*  
*own Son in the likeness of sinful Flesh, and*  
*for Sin, condemned Sin in the Flesh. The*  
*Gentiles* are justly represented by *St Paul*,  
 as being *Enemies* to God; walking gene-  
 rally in the *Vanity of their Mind*; Ha-  
 ving the *Understanding darkned*, being alie-  
 nated from the *Life of God*, through the  
*ignorance that is in them, because of the*  
*blindness of their Heart*; who being past  
 feeling, (having lost all sense of the natu-  
 ral and essential Difference of Good and  
 Evil,) have given themselves over----to  
 work all *Uncleanness with greediness*,  
 Eph. iv. 18. This was too plainly the  
 case of the greatest part of the *Gentile-*  
*World* in the *Apostles Time*. And  
 though there be among *Us*, some De-  
 niers of the Gospel of Christ, who pre-  
 tend

tend that by the Light of Reason, without any Belief of Revelation, they can make out the Obligations of Morality, and teach men the Practice of Virtue, and their natural Duty both towards God and Man; yet the best and principal of those Reasonings they are inabled to make use of even concerning *natural* Religion itself, are evidently owing to that Light and Improvement, which has arisen from the Preaching of the *Gospel of Christ*. Had the Knowledge of the Christian Religion never been propagated amongst Us, we had still, like our barbarous Ancestors, been Worshipping of Stocks and Stones in the Darknes of most stupid Ignorance: And those very Persons, who now indeavour to turn against Christianity, those Arguments for the Reasonableness of Natural Religion, which without the Knowledge of the Gospel they would never have been able to discover; far from improving themselves, as they fondly imagine, under the Light of Nature, had then in all probability been destitute of the common Principles even of Civility and Humanity. 'Tis to the Mercy of the Gospel therefore, that these

Persons

S E R M.  
IX.

SERM. IX. Persons owe their being *Now* in a State so different from that of the *Gentiles* in the Apostles Times, who, by their total Corruption, were in a State of absolute *Enmity against God*, and liable to his severest Wrath. Without the Knowledge of Christ, it cannot be doubted but the greatest part of *Us*, who now are apt to think so highly of our own Improvements, would have been in the Case of those, who *not liking to retain God in their Knowledge*, were given up unto vile *Affections*, and received in themselves *That recompence of their Error*, which was meet, being drowned in *Destruction and Perdition*. And those who, by escaping the greater Pollutions, would not indeed have been involved in the same *degree of Perdition* with the rest, (for the Judge of all the Earth will always do what is Right,) yet would have had *no Title* to that eternal Inheritance, that heavenly Kingdom, which is the *Free Gift* of God in Christ; an undeserved Gift, which nothing that Men could do of themselves, even when they had done their whole Duty, could at all have merited, or (without the Sanctification of the Spirit of God,)



God,) have qualified them for. For S E R M.  
*Except a man be born from above* (so IX.  
the words are in the original, which we  
render, *Except a man be born again;*)  
*Except a man be born from above, except*  
*he be born of Water and of the Spirit, he*  
*cannot enter into the Kingdom of God, Joh.*  
*iii. 3, 5. Neither is there Salvation in*  
*any other, Acts iv. 12. For there is none*  
*other Name under Heaven given among*  
*men, whereby we must be saved; i. e.*  
*whereby we can attain that Kingdom of*  
*Heaven, that free Gift of eternal Life,*  
*that Place peculiarly prepared by Christ*  
*for his Disciples out of the Many Man-*  
*sions in his Father's House, that Weight*  
*of Glory and unspeakable Reward, un-*  
*deserved even by our best Performances.*  
*Very agreeable to Reason* therefore is the  
Supposition in the Text, that, without  
the coming of Christ into the World,  
men, in the manner before explained,  
could not but have *perished*.

2dly, THE Second thing to be confi-  
sidered in the Text, is; in what Sense 'tis  
affirmed, that *All who believe in Christ,*  
*shall not perish, but have everlasting Life.*  
Of which Kind, there are frequent *gene-*  
*ral*

SERM. *ral* Assertions in Scripture. *Acts* x. 43.

IX. *Through his Name, whoſoever believeth in him, ſhall receive Remiſſion of Sins; and ch. xiii. 39. By him, all that believe, are juſtified from all things, from which they could not be juſtified by the Law of Moſes. St John in like manner in his Firſt Epiſtle, ch. v. 12. He that bath the Son, bath life; and he that bath not the Son of God, bath not life; Theſe things have I written unto you that believe on the Name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal Life. And our Saviour himſelf, in the Goſpel, St John iii. 36. He that believeth on the Son, bath everlaſting Life; and in the words immediately before thoſe of the Text, ver. 14. As Moſes liſted up the Serpent in the Wilderneſs, even ſo muſt the Son of Man be liſted up; That whoſoever believeth in him, ſhould not periſh, but have eternal Life.* There have been ſome ſo abſurd, as from theſe and other the like paſſages in the New Teſtament, to conclude that by *Faith* only, viz. by a bare Aſſent to the Truth of the Chriſtian Doctrine, or by a confident Perſwaſion of their belonging to Chriſt, they ſhould not fail of Obtain-  
ing

ing Salvation. But the contrary is plain S E R M.  
 both from the Reason of the thing itself, IX.  
 and from numberless other passages of Scri-  
 pture: That, when it is affirmed, that  
 whosoever *believeth* in Christ, *shall not*  
*perish, but have everlasting Life*; the  
 meaning is not, whosoever *professeth* or  
*pretends* to believe in him, but whoso-  
 ever *really* believes in him, and *with Ef-*  
*fect*; whosoever is *so* perswaded of the  
 Truth of his Doctrine, as to embrace the  
*Terms* proposed by the Gospel, and to  
 make them the Rule of his Life and  
 Actions. For as, in all other cases, things  
 are judged of not by their *mere Denomi-*  
*nation* and *external Appearances*, but by  
 their *inward Powers or Qualities*, and by  
 their *real Effects*; and *Shadows* are not  
 taken for *Substances*, nor *Pictures* for the  
*Things themselves* which they represent,  
 notwithstanding their being called per-  
 haps by the same *Names*: So, *believing*  
*in Christ*, is not barely professing *to be-*  
*lieve in him*, but *believing in him* indeed;  
 believing his Doctrine to be *True*; con-  
 sidering it accordingly as of the utmost  
*Importance*; endeavouring consequently  
 to understand it *ourselves*, and not trust-  
 ing

S E R M. IX. ing ourselves to be imposed upon by Others ; and finally, governing ourselves by it in all our Actions, in the whole Course of our Lives. For the word *Faith*, always contains in it the Notion of *Faithfulness* or *Fidelity*. And though the plain Reason of the Thing itself might be sufficient in so evident a Case ; yet the Scripture is not wanting to explain it also in variety of Words. *He that believeth*, (says our Saviour in another place,) *and is baptized, i. e. and enters into an obligation to live suitably to That Belief ; he shall be saved.* For, *not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that doth the Will of my Father which is in Heaven.* And being baptized, saith St Peter, is not the washing away of the filth of the Flesh, but the Answer of a good Conscience towards God. And the Answer of a good Conscience towards God, is the *Faith* which worketh, or evidences itself, by *Love* : For the End of the Commandment, saith St Paul, is *Charity, out of a pure Heart, and of a good Conscience, and of Faith unfeigned, 1 Tim. i. 5.*

*ALL* that believe therefore, are *All* S E R M.  
 that embrace and obey the Gospel. For IX.  
 These, Christ came into the World on  
 purpose, that they might not perish, but  
 have everlasting Life: And because the  
 Gospel was commanded to be preached  
 to every Creature, that is, to all man-  
 kind; and God has expressly declared  
 that he would have *all men* to be saved;  
 and desireth not that *any* should perish,  
 but that *All* might come to Repentance;  
 therefore we may reasonably understand  
 the Words in the Text, *whosoever believeth*  
*in him*, as if it had been Thus ex-  
 pressed: God gave his Son, that *Every one*  
 by believing in him; that every man, by  
 his means, and by accepting the advan-  
 tage and gracious Terms of the Gospel,  
 might avoid perishing, and obtain ever-  
 lasting Life. And This Sense of the  
 Phrase is justified by the Words immedi-  
 ately following the Text, ver. 17. *For God*  
*sent not his Son into the World to condemn*  
*the World, but that the World, that the*  
*whole World, through him might be saved.*  
 Those to whom the Gospel is actually  
 preached, have this Salvation clearly of-  
 fered them, unless they reject it by their  
 wilful

SERM. wilful Impenitence. The Jews and Patriarchs had it no less *certainly*, though more obscurely, repositied in the expectation of him that was to come : And those who never heard either of the Law or the Gospel, yet have it *effectually* laid up for them, (though without their having any present Knowledge of it,) in that declaration of the Apostle, that *they which have not the Law, are a Law unto themselves* ; and that *their uncircumcision*, if they keep the Law, shall (through the blood of Christ, though not explicitly made known amongst them,) *be counted to them for circumcision*. Thus God shall universally be justified, when he appears in Judgment ; and *All mouths* shall be stopped before him.

AND This may suffice for Explication of the 2d particular that was to be considered in the Text, *viz.* in what Sense it is affirmed, that *all who believe in Christ, shall not perish, but have everlasting Life*.

3dly, WE are in the last place to take Notice, that This Salvation of Men by the Coming of Christ, is ascribed to the antecedent Love of God, the original  
Mercy

Mercy and Goodness of the Father Almighty. God *so loved the World, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting Life.* It is a false Notion which some men have taken up of God, and very injurious to Religion, to conceive God in his own Nature to be a severe and merciless Punisher; to look upon him as a Cruel Exerciser of irresistible Power, as an Object only of dread and horror; to imagine, that, contrary to his own Inclination, and as it were *against* his Will, he was prevailed upon by Christ to take Pity on his Creatures, as a Cruel and Passionate Man is sometimes over-ruled by his Friend, to be better than his Intention. No: All This is a very unjust Representation of God; The hard Speeches which ignorant or unrighteous men have spoken against him. The *Scripture* on the contrary, as well as *Natural Reason*, always sets forth God as the Supreme Fountain of Goodness; the Preserver, not the Enemy and Destroyer, of his Creatures. 'Twas not the interposition of Christ which *changed* the Mind of God; but 'twas the original Goodness and Love

S E R M.  
IX.  


S E R M. of God, which *appointed* for us the Inter-  
 IX. position of Christ. To punish Sinners,  
 and destroy Wickedness out of his King-  
 dom, is indeed the necessary Office even  
 of That Governour who is Goodness it-  
 self; and therefore, in order to discour-  
 age Sin, he thought fit it should be par-  
 doned by no easier a Method, than by  
 the Incarnation and Death of his Son.  
 Yet 'twas his Goodness only that moved  
 him to contrive that Method; and his  
 original Love to his Creatures, that put  
 him upon so reconciling Mercy with  
 Justice. God did not *bate* the World,  
 and suffer the Intercession of Christ to  
 prevail over that Hatred; but God *loved*  
 the World, and *therefore* gave his only-  
 begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in  
 him should not perish, but have everlast-  
 ing Life. And hence it is, that the *Fa-*  
*ther* is stiled (by way of eminence) *God*  
*our Saviour*: Tit. iii. 4, 6. *The Kindness*  
*and Love of God our Saviour,-----which*  
*he shed on us abundantly through Jesus*  
*Christ our Saviour.* But this is a Subject  
 of such importance, that it deserves to  
 be treated of more particularly in a fol-  
 lowing Discourse.





# SERMON X.

Of the LOVE of GOD towards  
Sinners.



St JOHN. iii. 16.

*For God so loved the World, that  
he gave his only-begotten Son,  
that whosoever believeth in him  
should not perish, but have ever-  
lasting Life.*



IN discoursing upon these **SERMON**  
Words, I have proposed to **X.**



consider the following parti-  
culars; 1<sup>st</sup>, how and in  
what sense it is *præsupposed*


in the Text, that without the Coming of  
Christ into the World, men *could not but*  
have perished. 2<sup>dly</sup>, In what Sense it is

S E R M. affirmed, that *All* who *believe* in him shall not perish, but have everlasting Life. And 3<sup>dly</sup>, that this Salvation of Men by the Coming of Christ, is ascribed to the Antecedent Love of God, the Original Mercy and Goodness of the Father Almighty. *God so loved* the World, that he *gave his only begotten Son*, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting Life. The Two former of these Propositions I have already discoursed of; and shall therefore at this Time proceed directly to the *Third*; namely, to observe, that in the Words of the Text, the Salvation of Men by the Coming of Christ, is expressly ascribed to the Antecedent Love of God, the original essential Mercy and Goodness of the Father Almighty. *God so loved* ~~the~~ World, that *he gave* his only-begotten Son. And This is necessarily to be observed, in Vindication of the essential *Goodness of God*, which is one of the primary Attributes of the Divine Nature; and in opposition to those, who while they think they magnify the Redemption purchased by the Blood of Christ, (which can never indeed be too

much

much magnified in a *consistent* manner,) SE R M.  
 seem to forget the equal Necessity, of X.  
 maintaining at the same Time all the ori-  
 ginal Attributes of God; and are not suf-  
 ficiently aware of the Danger of represent-  
 ing *one* Method of God's acting, as incon-  
 sistent with *another*; or *any* of God's actions  
*so*, as to be *contradictory* to his *Nature* or  
 any of his *Attributes*. For since Truth can-  
 not be contrary to itself; and *every* true  
 Doctrine must of Necessity be agreeable,  
 and in perfect harmony on all sides with  
 every *other* true Doctrine whatsoever; 'tis  
 of the utmost importance to Religion,  
 that we take Care never to represent any  
*one* part of its Doctrine in such a manner,  
 as to destroy *another*; least *That* also in  
 its turn destroy the *present* Notion; and  
 so *Both* give Advantage to the sceptical  
 Unbeliever. 'Tis not easy to imagine,  
*how much* Religion has frequently suffered  
 by this very means; and what occasion  
 has been given to the profane Adversary  
 to blaspheme, whilst the unwary carrying  
*particular* Doctrines too far, and pres-  
 sing them by Arguments not well con-  
 sistent with *other* Doctrines of equal Ne-  
 cessity, have afforded too plausible

S E R M. Grounds of Objecting against the *Whole*.

X.  What I am now speaking of will best be understood, by *instancing* in *particular Instances*. The *Justice* of God may seem to be most highly magnified, by supposing that it puts an absolute *Necessity* upon him, either of inflicting an infinite Punishment, or of demanding an infinite Satisfaction. But they who so speak, ought at the same time to consider on the other hand, that they leave no room either for Goodness or Mercy: And that the Scripture on the contrary always speaks, even of the Satisfaction of *Christ*, not as a Price or Equivalent which made our Pardon *due* by a Claim of *Right*; but as a Means *freely* appointed, and *freely* accepted, by the mere Mercy and Compassion of the Father; who, as Supreme Governour of all things, remits voluntarily of his own Right, in what Measure and upon what Terms he pleases.

IN like manner the *Grace* of God, some Men imagine they greatly magnify, when they ascribe to its operation the *whole* and *entire* Progress of every good work. But if they would look at the  
 same

same time on the other part of the Quest-  
 ion, they might find, that by leaving no-  
 thing at all for the *Will of Man* to do,  
 they make him to be a Subject no more  
 capable of Religion, than the Beasts  
 that perish, or even than lifeless Matter  
 itself.

S E R M.

X.



AGAIN; The Merit of *good Works*,  
 which the Church of *Rome* boasts of, is  
 indeed effectually destroyed, by making  
 good Works to be of *no importance at all*  
 towards Justification, and by ascribing  
 the Whole to *Faith only*. But they who  
 so destroy Merit, should not be ignorant,  
 that at the same time and with the same  
 Argument, taking away the Necessity of  
 Virtue and of good Manners, they de-  
 stroy also the very Foundation of *all Re-*  
*ligion*.

To give an instance or two of another  
 kind. The *Authority of Councils*, or of  
 any *humane Power*, to determine Matters  
 of Faith, is indeed a most effectual  
 Means of putting a perpetual stop to  
 all kinds of Schism, and to all Divisions  
 whatsoever in Matters of Religion: But  
 he that uses this Argument against an  
 Adversary *before* him, ought not to be

SER M. unaware, that there is another *behind* him, who makes use of the very same Argument even with greater Force against *Him*; For the Church of *Rome* has plainly the greatest and the most universal Weight of *human Authority*, which God ever permitted to oppress fair and impartial Inquiry after the Truth.

AGAIN; the *Divinity of Christ*, may seem to be most earnestly and zealously contended for, by those who confound it with the Supreme Independency and Self-existence of the Person of the Father: But if they considered on the other hand, how in so doing they either destroyed the most Fundamental Principle of *all Religion*, the *Unity of God*; or else the first Principle of *Christian Religion*, the *Being of the Son of God*; it would appear that they knew rightly, neither the Father nor the Son.

*Lastly*; To instance in the Doctrine of the Text, the *Coming of Christ* into the World for the *Redemption of Mankind*; It may seem indeed at first sight to be a pious extolling the Love of our Saviour, and the Greatness of the Work he undertook; to aggravate the natural Misery

Misery of Mankind, to represent in the terriblest Colours the Severity of the Justice of an incensed God, and to describe the Supreme Father and Creator of all things, as having no Thoughts of Pity or Compassion towards his perishing Creatures, till moved thereto as it were *against* his original Intention, by the Interposition of Christ. But they who thus argue, ought on the other hand to be aware, that 'tis no less injurious to Religion, to diminish the original Goodness and Compassion of the *Father of Mercies*, than 'tis pious to be worthily sensible of the greatness of the Redemption purchased by the Blood of Christ. A true and sincere Christian will after a consistent manner magnify the Love of *Christ* in *dying* for our Sins; and the Mercy of *God*, in *sending* him to die for that Purpose, in choosing and in accepting that Atonement. *God so loved the World, that he gave his only-begotten Son; (and the only-begotten Son so loved the World, that he was willing to be given for our Redemption;)* that *whosoever believeth on him, should not perish, but have everlasting Life.* The Salvation of Men therefore, is  
owing

S E R M.  
X.

SERM. owing *both* to the *Redemption* of *Christ*,  
 X. who gave himself for us ; and to the an-  
 ~~~~~~  
 tecedent *Love* and original essential Good-  
 ness of *the Father Almighty*, who was  
 pleased to appoint and to accept that Sa-  
 crifice. Nor is it so great an Argument  
 of the *Severity* of God, that he would  
 not pardon Sinners without the Death of  
 his Son ; as it is of his essential *Goodness*  
 and *Compassion*, that he would rather ap-  
 point his Son to die, than that sinful  
 man should not be pardoned. He that  
 appoints the *Means*, thereby declares his  
 Choice and Approbation of the *End* : And  
 if God had not been by Nature, origi-  
 nally and essentially Good and Merciful,  
 he would no more have *accepted* any Pro-  
 pitiation *for* Sin. than he would have  
 pardoned it *without* any. Most unjustly  
 therefore, and with great injury to Reli-  
 gion, is God sometimes represented as an  
 implacable and cruel Judge, delighting  
 in the destruction of Sinners, till they  
 were *taken* (as it were) out of his Hands  
 by the Interposition of Christ ; This (I  
 say) is a very injurious Representation of  
 the Great God and Father of Mercies :  
 For, the Coming of Christ was not the  
 first



first Cause of the Goodness and Love of S E R M.  
 God towards us ; but the essential and X.  
 eternal Goodness of God was the cause  
 and reason of the Coming of Christ. *God*  
*so loved the World*, says our Saviour, *that*  
*he gave his only-begotten Son*. It became  
 the Supreme Governour of the Universe,  
 to punish Sin : And yet he so loved the  
 World, and had such Compassion upon  
 the Work of his Hands, that he was wil-  
 ling to find an Expedient by which sinful  
 man might be pardoned and saved, with-  
 out giving encouragement to Sin ; and  
 therefore *he gave his only-begotten Son*,  
*that whosoever believeth on him, should not*  
*perish, but have everlasting Life*.

THE words of the Text, are Each of  
 them very emphatically significant, and  
 strongly expressive of that glorious Attri-  
 bute of the Divine Nature, his essential  
 and eternal Goodness. *God*, even the  
 Father and Lord of all things, who dis-  
 poses all things according to the plea-  
 sure of his own Will, and whose Actions  
 can be determined by Nothing Without  
 Himself ; *He so loved the World*, was so  
 moved by the original and eternal Good-  
 ness of his own Nature, to have Com-  
 passion

S E R M.

X.



passion upon the Work of his Hands; that he *gave*, freely and out of mere Bounty, without any Obligation, and without any Constraint; he gave *his* Son out of his Bosom, his *only-begotten Son*, the *Son of his Love*, to die for the Sins of Men; that so, though it was not fit, in his Wisdom and Government of the World, that *Sin* should pass unpunished; yet by this means, *Sinners* believing on him, and being by him brought to Repentance, might not perish, but have everlasting Life. He might justly have sent his Son to take *Vengeance* upon a sinful World; to *destroy* it *totally*, as he did before *in part* at the overthrow of *Sodom*; and to do it *finally*, as he had before done it *for a Time* at the general Deluge. But on the contrary our Saviour declares, that *Mercy* prevailed over Judgment; that *God so loved the World*, (that is, was so moved by his own internal Goodness to have compassion upon Sinners,) that he *sent his Son into the World*, *not to condemn the World*, *but that the World through him might be saved*, Joh. iii. 17. In later Ages, Many have been used to speak otherwise; and to represent God as clothed with

with the mere Severity of a rigorous and strict Judge, till his Wrath was, (as it were, *contrary to his own Intention*,) appeased and pacified by the Intercession of Christ. And This has made Some very pious Persons look upon God as an Object of the greatest *Terror*, who on the contrary ought above all things to be *Loved* as the most perfect Good: For, comparatively speaking, *There is None Good, saith our Saviour, but One, that is, God.* To *Sinners* indeed, so long as they continue *Impenitent*, God cannot but be very justly an Object of the utmost Dread. And so also indeed is even *our Saviour himself*, who died for them: For thus the Scripture emphatically represents their Case, *Rev. vi. 16.* that they shall say to the Mountains and to the Rocks, *Fall on us; and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the Wrath of the Lamb.* To *impenitent Sinners*, the Wrath of the *Lamb* himself is no less terrible, than even the Face of him that sitteth upon the Throne. But on the contrary, to *Sinners truly penitent*, and to All who sincerely endeavour to obey the Will of God; not only the Love of

*Christ,*

S E R M.  
X.

SERM. *Christ*, which is the *mediating* Cause, but  
 X. the antecedent Love and essential Good-  
 ness of *the Father Almighty*, which is the  
*primary and original* Cause of their Sal-  
 vation, is always in Scripture represented  
 and laid before them as a *Motive of Gra-  
 titude*, and as a principal Argument to  
 excite in *Them* suitable Returns of Love  
 and Obedience to *Him*. In the twentieth  
 chapter of the *Acts*, ver. 24. St Paul calls  
 his Apostleship *the Ministry which he had  
 received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the  
 Gospel of the grace of God: The Gospel  
 of the Grace of God*, i. e. the graci-  
 ous declaration of God's Love and Fa-  
 vour towards Mankind, manifested by  
*Christ*. In his Epistle to the *Romans*,  
 ch. i. ver. 1, 3, 5. he styles it the *Gospel of  
 God, concerning his Son Jesus Christ our  
 Lord, by whom we have received grace;  
 Grace*, that is, the gracious Manifestation  
 of God's Compassion towards Sinners in  
 the Gospel. Ch. iii. 22, 25. he calls it  
 the righteousness of God, *which is by Faith  
 of Jesus Christ; whom God hath set forth  
 to be a propitiation through Faith in his  
 Blood, to declare his righteousness for the  
 remission of Sins that are past, through the  
 for-*

forbearance of God. The Righteousness of S E R M.  
 God, in sending Christ for the remission X.  
 of our Sins, is a phrase that sounds harsh  
 in modern language : But in the Jewish  
 Speech, because *righteous and good* men  
 are *apt* to be moved with *compassion*, there-  
 fore they have but one and the same Word  
 to express both *Righteousness* and *chari-  
 table Pity*. From whence, both in the  
 Old and New Testament, the word *Righ-  
 teousness* must frequently be understood to  
 signify, not strict *Justice*, but *Equity*,  
*Charity*, *Forbearance*, and *Compassion* :  
 And particularly in the place now cited,  
 the Righteousness of God in sending Christ,  
 signifies, not any *Obligation* upon him in  
*Justice* so to do, but his *Goodness* and  
*Mercy* moving him to do it. In the same  
 Epistle to the *Romans*, ch. v. 5, 6, 8, 15.  
 he Thus describes the state of the Gospel ;  
 that the Love of God is *shed abroad in  
 our Hearts*, because *when we were yet  
 without strength, in due time Christ died  
 for the Ungodly* ; And, that God *com-  
 mendeth his Love towards us, in that  
 while we were yet Sinners, Christ died for  
 us* ; And that, as *through the offence of  
 One, viz. by the Occasion of Adam's Sin,*  
 Many

S E R M. *Many be dead ; so, and much more, the*  
 X. *Grace of God and the Gift by Grace, i. e.*  
 the Love and Favour of God, *by one Man,*  
*Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto Many.*  
 And ch. viii. 32. He draws an Argument  
 of further Hope, from *this very* confi-  
 deration ; *He that spared not his own Son,*  
*but delivered him up for us all, how shall*  
*he not, with Him, also freely give us all*  
*things ?* 'Tis the same Argument, which  
 the wife of *Manoah* had of old made use  
 of, *Judg. xiii. 23. If the Lord were pleased*  
*to kill us, he would not have received a*  
*burnt-offering at our Hands.* Again, in  
 the Second Epistle to the *Corinthians,*  
 ch. v. the Apostle represents God, not  
 only as *consenting* to our redemption by  
 Christ, and being the *original Author* of  
 it, ver. 18. *All things are of God, who*  
*hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus*  
*Christ ;* but he carries it still much fur-  
 ther, ver. 20. *As though God did beseech*  
*you by Us, we pray you (saith he) in*  
*Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.*  
 This is not the Character of a merciless and  
 Cruel Judge ; to be himself not only the  
*Author* of man's Redemption by *Sending*  
 his Son, but even to *beseech* us also to  
 accept

accept him when he is sent? *As I live, S E R M. X.*  
 faith the Lord God, *I have no pleasure in*  
*the Death of him that dieth, but rather*  
*that he should turn from his Ways and live.*

Nor are these, *figurative Expressions*, or the incidental representations of Single Texts; but they are the *whole Tenour* of Scripture, inculcating This Notion perpetually, as of the *greatest importance* to Religion. Thus the same Apostle St Paul again, in his Epistle to the *Ephesians*, ch. ii. 4, 5, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13. God, faith he, *who is rich in Mercy, for his great Love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in Sins, hath quickned us together with Christ;---That in the Ages to come he might show the exceeding Riches of his Grace, in his Kindness towards us through Christ Jesus:----For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them; Wherefore remember that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by bands, that at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel,*

S E R M. *and Strangers from the covenants of Promise, having no hope, and without God in the world; But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ. And in 2 Thes. ii. 13, 14. We are bound to give thanks always to God for you,----because God hath from the beginning chosen you to Salvation, ----whercunto he called you by our Gospel, to the obtaining of the Glory of our Lord Jesus Christ: And ver. 16. Our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us and hath given us everlasting consolation, and good hope through grace,----stablish you in every good Word and Work. Again, 2 Tim. i. 9. God---hath saved us, and called us---according to his own Purpose and Grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the World began: And Tit. iii. 4, 6. After that the Kindness and Love of God our Saviour toward Man appeared;-----which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour: The expression is very remarkable, that speaking of the Love of the Father towards us, he calls Him by the Title of Saviour in the first place: The Kindness and Love of God our Saviour,*



Saviour, which he shed on us through Je-  
 sus Christ our Saviour. The Apostle  
 St John in like manner, 1 Job. iii. 1, 16. S E R M.  
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*Behold (saith he) what manner of Love,*  
*the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we*  
*should be called the Sons of God: Hereby*  
*perceive we the Love of God, because He*  
*(that is, Christ) laid down his Life for*  
*us: And ch. iv. 9. very nearly repeating*  
*the Words of our Saviour in the Text,*  
*In This (saith he) was manifested the*  
*Love of God towards us, because that God*  
*sent his only-begotten Son into the World,*  
*that we might live through Him. These*  
 and numberless other the like passages in  
 Scripture, do sufficiently declare, what I  
 at first proposed to prove in Vindication of  
 the Divine Attributes, viz. that the Sal-  
 vation of men by the Coming of Christ,  
 is and ought to be ascribed primarily to  
 the Antecedent Love, and Original essen-  
 tial Goodness of the Father Almighty.  
*God so loved the World, that he gave his*  
*only-begotten Son, that whosoever belie-*  
*veth in him, should not perish, but have*  
*everlasting Life.*

S E R M. I T remains that I conclude, with  
 X. drawing some useful Inferences from what  
 has been said upon This Subject.

And *1st*, F R O M hence we may observe, that every Doctrine of Truth is consistent both with *itself*, and with every *other* Truth; and stands clear of Objections, equally on *All* sides. Upon *some Representations* of the *Severity* of God, and of the *Misery* of Men, Unbelievers have been encouraged to object: If perfect Goodness be an essential Attribute of the Divine Nature, how then could God, who is infinitely Good, leave all men to perish, antecedently to the consideration of the Coming of Christ? The Answer is obvious: *God* did not cause Men to perish, but their *own Wickedness* made it necessary for the Wisdom of a perfectly Good Governour to punish and destroy them. And yet his Justice and Wisdom were not more speedy in condemning them, than his Goodness in moving him to find a means of bringing them to *Recovery* by Repentance, and to *Salvation* by Christ. And This Goodness did not first manifest itself at the Coming of Christ; but the  
 Apostle

Apostle assures us it was *given us in* S E R M.  
*Christ Jesus* before the World *began,* X.  
 2 Tim. i. 9. It was promised to *Adam,*  
 it was repeated to the Patriarchs, it was  
 declared by the Prophets; it was fulfil-  
 led in Christ: And both *before* and *since*  
 the Coming of Christ, it has been made  
 good to those, who observed the *Law,*  
 and who obeyed the *Gospel,* and to those  
 who (without the Knowledge of Either)  
 have been (as *St Paul* describes them)  
*a Law unto themselves.* In this whole  
 Transaction, the *Goodness* of God has  
 manifested itself abundantly, in doing  
 what he was by no means *bound* to do,  
 what no Power could have *constrained*  
 him to do, what to *Himself* was *no Be-*  
*nefit* or Advantage; (For he could as  
 easily out of the *Stones* have raised up  
 Children unto *Abraham,* according to the  
 elegant expression of *St John the Baptist,*  
 as have prevailed with the real Children  
 of *Abraham* to bring forth Fruits meet  
 for Repentance :) Lastly, 'twas doing  
 That, which brought the *greatest Suffer-*  
*ings,* (not indeed *necessarily,* for That  
 would not have been just; but *freely*  
 and *voluntarily,*) upon the Person who was

S E R M. *most dear* to him, even his only-begotten  
 X. and most beloved Son. And *What greater*  
 Instance of Goodness and Bounty than  
 This, can possibly be conceived? Had God,  
*without* requiring any Propitiation at all,  
 freely forgiven all Sins upon Repentance;  
 This (no doubt) would by all have been  
 esteemed an Act sufficiently evidencing  
 that perfect Goodness and Mercy which  
 is an essential Attribute of the Divine  
 Nature: But now, freely and of his own  
 meer Bounty, to *find out and appoint* a  
 Propitiation; is, with regard to his *Good-*  
*ness* towards *Us*, the very same thing, as  
*requiring no Atonement at all* would have  
 been; and, at the same time, 'tis more  
*agreeable* to the Exercise of his *Other*  
 Attributes, in the Government of the  
 World. Neither therefore is the *essential*  
*Goodness* of God, in any wise inconsistent  
 with that *Severity* against Sin, which  
 made the Incarnation of Christ necessary  
 to mens Salvation; Nor on the other  
 side is that *Severity*, wherewith God con-  
 demns men antecedent to their redem-  
 ption by Christ, at all inconsistent with  
 the most perfect Notion of essential  
 Goodness.

2dly, FROM what has been said, we S E R M. may observe, of how great Importance it X. is to Religion, to frame right and worthy Notions concerning the *Attributes* and the *Actions* of God. The Foundation of Religion is the *Love* of God; and no Man can love whom he does not think well of. The Service of a Tyrant, is Slavery: And where there is not a Reverence, mixt with the Affection of *Love* as well as Fear, there the Obedience can be but Formal and External, without the Heart and without Life. 'Tis therefore of the greatest Consequence in Religion, that men entertain not hard and dishonourable Thoughts of God. To represent God, as choosing and delighting to make Men extremely miserable, or as being originally and of Himself mercilessly severe, may indeed at first Sight to inconsiderate Persons seem to magnify the Redemption purchased by Christ: But in reality, by destroying our natural Notion of God's essential Goodness, it destroys the first Principle and Foundation of Religion. God is, of Himself, the Father of Mercies: But because, in the All-wise government of the World, it was fit and

S E R M. necessary that Sin should not go unpunished, therefore this Mercy could not be manifested to us, but thro' the Son of his Love. Yet still 'twas the same God, who, moved by his *own* Compassion, showed us mercy in his Son; And the Scripture is against no persons more severe, than against those who speak hardly, and unworthily, of God. One part of the great and final judgment, as represented by St *Jude*, is to *convince men of all their hard speeches which they have spoken against him*, ver. 15. And severe is the reproof given upon this Account to the slothful Servant in the Parable, St *Luk.* xix. 22. *Out of thine own Mouth will I judge thee;----Thou knewest that I was an austere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow.* And 1 *Sam.* ii. 2, 3. *There is none Holy as the Lord;----let not arrogancy (in the original it is, let not Hard words) come out of your Mouth.* And *Mal.* iii. 13. *Your Words have been stout against me, saith the Lord; Yet ye say, What have we spoken so much against thee? Ye have said, It is vain to serve God, and what profit is it that we have----walked mournfully before*

fore him? 'Tis therefore plainly injurious S E R M. to religion, to entertain *hard* Thoughts of X. God, in diminution of his original and essential Goodness. Nevertheless on the contrary it ought also to be observed, that 'tis equally dangerous for Sinners to presume on the *other side* unreasonably upon his *Love and Mercy*. For as, *before* the Coming of Christ, men stood condemned for their *Sins*; so, *after* his Coming also shall they be condemned for their *impenitency*. And as the *Justice* of God did not prevent his *Mercy* from sending a Redeemer to save all true *Penitents*; so his *Love in Christ* will not prevent his *Justice*, from becoming to all *incorrigible* Sinners a consuming Fire.

3dly, FROM what has been said, we may learn how vain That distinction is, which has sometimes been made between *Nature* and *Grace*, as if the Gifts of *Nature* and those of *Grace* were opposite to each other; when in reality they are nothing else but the Gifts of the *same* God, *derived* to us *originally* from the *essential* Goodness of his Nature, and *improved* in us by his *reconciled* Goodness and Mercy through Christ.

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4thly, FROM hence we may observe, how the *Satisfaction of Christ* is by no means inconsistent with the Notion of God's *Free Pardon* of Sin. For it was not, that the *Satisfaction of Christ* did in Strictness of Justice *oblige* him to pardon; but on the contrary, his Resolution to pardon Sin determined him *freely to appoint and to accept that Satisfaction*.

5thly, IF God so loved Us, the Application is easy, that *We* ought also to love *Him*. And *how* we are to do *That*, the Apostle St *John* tells us, 1 *Joh.* v. 3. *This is the Love of God, that we keep his Commandments.* Love towards a Superiour consists properly in taking pleasure to do his Will: in delighting to obey him and to do things acceptable to him. *Whoso* therefore keepeth *his* Word, *in Him* verily is the *Love of God* perfected; *hereby* know we that we *Are in Him*, 1 *Joh.* ii. 5.

*Lastly*, IF God so loved us, then ought *We* also, after *His* example, to love *one another*. And This is the Inference of the same Apostle St *John*, 1 *Joh.* iv. 7---21; wherewith I shall conclude: *In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because*



because that God sent his only-begotten Son S E R M.  
into the World, that we might live through X.  
Him ;----Beloved, if God so loved Us, We  
ought also to love one another.----If a man  
say, I love God, and hateth his Brother,  
he is a Liar ; for he that loveth not his  
Brother whom he hath seen, how can he  
love God whom he hath not seen ? And This  
commandment have we from Him, that  
He who loveth God, love his Brother also.







# SERMON XI.

OF BELIEVING IN GOD.



ROM. iv. 3.

*Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for Righteousness.*



BELIEF in God is the Foundation of all Religion both Natural and Revealed. For, *he that cometh to God must believe that He Is, and that he is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek him.* Good Temper and Humanity may be, and often is the cause of many virtuous Actions ; which, wherever they are found, ought never to go without their

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S E R M. their just commendation: But the *steady*  
 XI. *course* of a virtuous and religious life, u-  
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 niform in all its parts and upon all occa-  
 sions, resisting all the temptations of the  
 World, overcoming all difficulties, and  
 persevering to the End under all discour-  
 agements; this is a Superstructure  
 which cannot be built upon a less strong  
 Foundation than a firm Belief of a fu-  
 ture State, and an Expectation of the  
 righteous Judgment of God.

Now, as *without* Belief in God  
 there *can* be *no Religion*; so, where there  
*is* such Belief in God, the Scripture al-  
 ways in course supposes it accompanied  
 with every *other* part of true Religion.  
 The *Root* is *always* supposed to have the  
*Branches* joined with it; and where a  
*Tree* is mentioned, 'tis always understood  
 to be a Tree bearing its proper *Fruit*. A  
*Man*, never signifies the dead *Body* of a  
 Man without the *Soul* or *Life*; neither  
 does *Faith* in Scripture-phrase ever  
 mean the bare *Profession* of men's *Belief*,  
 without *evidence* of its *reality* by its *Ef-*  
*fects*; except only where it is declared  
 to be *dead* and *useless*. As the *Body*, saith  
 St James, *without the Spirit, is dead; so*  
*Faith*

*Faith without Works, is dead also, Jam. ii. 26.* As, in *natural* things, to separate Causes and Effects, to separate things in their own nature inseparable, to suppose the *Sun* to be without *Light*, or the *Fire* without *Heat*, is unnatural and absurd: so, in matters of *Religion and Morality*, to separate *Belief* and *Practice*, to separate the *Obligation* to any *Duty* from the *Performance* of it, is, morally speaking, monstrous and impossible: the *one* being as contrary to *Reason*, which is the *Rule of Morality*, as the *other* is contrary to the course and possibilities of *nature*. For *this* reason both in *Scripture* and in common *Speech*, the *Name* of any *One* eminent *Virtue* is very usually put for the *Sum* of *All*; and he that in the inspired *Writings* is commended particularly for *One* *Virtue*, is not thereby so much intended to be distinguished for *That*, as supposed to be thereupon indued with *all others* likewise. *Righteousness*, which properly signifies the *particular* *Duty* of fair and equitable *Dealing* between *Man* and *Man*, is in *Scripture* generally used for the *whole* *Practice* of true *Religion* in general. And the *Character* given to

*Noah,*


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*Noah*, Gen. vi. 9. that he *was a just man*; is in the very same verse explained to be, that he was a man perfect *in his generation*, and that he *walked with God*. In like manner, *believing in God*; because 'tis the Foundation of *Obedience* to him, and wherever it is sincere will naturally be *attended with* such Obedience, signifies therefore the same as living *religiously*. Which, as it is True concerning *Religion in general*, so in *Christianity in particular* it is still *more usual*, to put *Faith* for the *whole Practice of Virtue and Religion*; because, as the *Foundation of Religion in general* is *Believing in God*; so the *Foundation of Christianity in particular*, is the *Belief of that great Act of God*, the raising his Son from the Dead, in order to judge the World in Righteousness. Which is what the Apostle observes, ver. 23. of this chapter: *It was not written, says he, for Abraham's sake alone, that his Faith was imputed to him for Righteousness: But for Us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the Dead*. This is the reason, why the *whole Gospel* is, in the *New Testament*, so frequently called by the Name

Name of *Faith*. The *Jewish* Religion S E R M.  
 is, on the contrary, through the whole XI.  
*New Testament*, usually stiled by the   
 Name of *Works*; upon account of the  
 numerous external Ceremonies and ritual  
 Observations, which, though not in reali-  
 ty, yet, in the opinion and practice of the  
 greater part of that Nation, were the  
 main Body of their Religion, or that which  
 they chiefly and most eagerly contended  
 for. For so indeed, both in *antient* and  
 in *modern* time, the corrupt disposition  
 of Mankind generally leads them to this  
 one constant Errour; to value *most* in eve-  
 ry Religion that which is of *least* impor-  
 tance in it; *opinions or ceremonies*, which  
 distinguish them into different *Parties*;  
 and not *true Virtue, Righteousness and*  
*Goodness*, wherein all, who are indeed  
 religious, do necessarily agree. The *great*  
 Question at the first preaching of the  
 Gospel, was, whether the Practice of Vir-  
 tue required by Christ in *his* Religion,  
 was sufficient to Salvation, without the  
 continuation of the *Jewish* Ceremonies.  
 The Argument used by the Apostle to  
 prove that it *was* sufficient, was, that *A-*  
*brabam* their Father was *himself* saved,

S E R M. not by the Observation of the *Rites They*  
 XI. laid such stress upon ; but by the Practice  
 of the very *same* Virtues which the *Go-*  
*spel* now requires ; insomuch that the  
 Scripture expressly affirms, that the *Go-*  
*spel* was before preached unto *Abraham*,  
*Gal. iii. 8.* And this Argument is at large  
 urged in *Rom. iv. 3.* the present chapter,  
 whereof my Text is a part. *Abraham's*  
*Faith*, says the Apostle, was *reckoned un-*  
*to him for righteousness* ; and it was so  
 reckoned unto him, not only *after*, but  
*before* his circumcision, ver. 10. The ac-  
 ceptableness of his Faith therefore did  
 not depend upon the covenant of circum-  
 cision, as the *Jews* imagined ; but upon  
 that right and worthy *Notion of God*  
 from which his Faith proceeded ; and up-  
 on that *consequent Obedience*, of which  
 his Faith was the cause ; ver. 20. *He stag-*  
*gered not at the promise of God through*  
*Unbelief ; but gave Glory to God ; being*  
*fully persuaded, that what he had promi-*  
*sed, he was able also to perform ; and*  
*therefore it was imputed to him for Righte-*  
*ousness.* And the Application is ; that it  
 was not written for his sake alone, but for  
 Us also, to whom it shall likewise be impu-  
 ted,



ted, if we believe on Him that raised up S E R M.  
*Jesus our Lord from the Dead; who was* XI.  
*delivered for our offenses and rose again for*  
*our Justification.* Which last words are  
 added to set forth the True Nature of  
 Faith in Christ. For if the End of  
 Christ's Death was to deliver us from  
*Sin*; and the End of his *Resurrection*, to  
 bring us unto *Righteousness*; 'tis evident  
 that Faith in Christ is no otherwise of  
 Benefit to us, than as it tends to destroy  
*Sin*, and establish *Virtue*. Which shows  
 the extreme Folly and most dangerous  
 Error of Those, who set up Faith in  
 opposition to Moral Virtue; and make the  
 Gospel of Christ a Form of *Words* only,  
 and an *imaginary Speculation*, instead of  
 being (what the Scripture always repre-  
 sents it) the *way of Righteousness* and the  
*Holy Commandment*.

HAVING thus briefly explained the  
 nature and ground of the Apostle's Argu-  
 ment *in general*; we may now easily un-  
 derstand the meaning of the words of the  
 Text *in particular*: *Abraham* believed  
*God*, and it was counted unto him for  
*righteousness*. *Abraham* was the great Ex-  
 ample of *Righteousness*, so as to be styled

S E R M. in Scripture (by way of eminence) *the*  
 XI. Friend of God, and the Father of the Faith-  
 Rom. iv. ful. Ecclus. xliv. 19. *He was a great*  
 16. *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.*  
 Now *This Righteousness*, which the Son  
 of *Sirach* calls keeping the *Law of the*  
*most High*, the Apostle calls the righte-  
 ousness of *Faith*, in opposition to that of  
*Works*. By the *Works* therefore which he  
 disparages, 'tis plain he means *Rites and*  
*Ceremonies*, not the *Practice of Virtue*;  
 and by *Believing in God*, which he so  
 highly commends, he means *True Reli-*  
*gion*. By adhering to this true Religion,  
*Abraham* made proof of his believing in  
 God, which was counted to him for righte-  
 ousness; and *We*, if we *so* believe in God,  
 shall have it imputed for righteousness  
 unto *Us* likewise.

I N order therefore to make this obser-  
 vation of the Apostle useful to us in  
 Practice, it may be proper to consider di-  
 stinctly, 1<sup>st</sup>, wherein consisted that *Faith*  
 of *Abraham*, which the Text says was  
 counted to him for righteousness; and  
 2<sup>dly</sup>, *What* it is, that is particularly re-  
 quired

quired of *Us*, when *we* likewise are in Scripture commanded to believe in God.

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I. N O W the Account which the Scripture gives us of the *Faith* of *Abraham*, is this:

*Ist*, *IT* consisted in his believing the true God, the Maker and Governour of the Universe, the Lord of Heaven and Earth. The Nations among whom he sojourned, were all Idolaters; Worshipers of dead men, worshippers of the Kings who had reigned over them in their life-time: For *That* was the original of all the Heathen-Idolatry. Every City or Territory had its own Prince, and the World was divided into small Kingdoms. These Kings were honoured by their Flatterers with Honours, during their *Lives* too nearly divine; and after their *Deaths*, they were by the ignorant people worshipped as Gods. The Worship paid to such Gods of their own making, was accordingly superstitious; and the corruption of their *manners* was answerable to the absurdity of their *religion*. From these *Abraham* separated himself, and believed in the true God the

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Maker of all things; and for the sake of that Belief forsook his native country. Heb. xi. 8. *By Faith Abraham went out, not knowing whither he went, and 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.* He believed that the God of the whole World, whom alone he worshipped, was able to *preserve* him in the present Life, or *reward* him in another that should come; and This *Faith* was counted unto him for *righteousness*. Some have *disputed*, whether the Patriarchs under the old Testament had any express knowledge of the Life to come. But that they *had*, the Apostle's Argument is a plain *demonstration*, Heb. xi. 13. They who having *seen the promises afar off*, *confessed themselves to be Strangers and Pilgrims in the Earth*, declare plainly that they *seek a-----better country*, ver. 16.

2dly, As *Abraham's* Faith consisted in general in believing the *True God*, so in particular it manifested itself in such *Acts* of Dependence upon him, as became a person who had *just and worthy Notions* of the True God whom he served; And for  
This,

This, it was counted unto Him for S E R M. righteousness. Thus St Paul expressly XI. argues, in the case of *Abraham's* receiving the promise of a Son, *Rom. iv. 17.* *Before him whom he believed, even God who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not, as though they were, He against Hope believed in Hope,-----giving glory to God, and being fully perswaded, that what he had promised, he was able also to perform; and therefore (saith he) it was imputed to him for righteousness.* Thus likewise in the case of offering up his *Son*, the excellency of his Faith consisted in This, that it was founded upon that Great Principle of Religion, the expectation of a Resurrection from the dead. *He accounted, saith St Paul, that God was able to raise him up even from the dead, from whence also he received him in a Figure, Heb. xi. 19.* These last words, *from whence also he received him in a Figure*, are by Expositors understood to signify, *Isaac's* near escape from Death, when he was just upon the point of being offered. But This being an Event not foreseen by *Abraham* before it came to pass, could not be to him an Argument


S E R M. at That Time, to confirm his Faith. And  
 XI. therefore I think the words will bear *another* sense, much more pertinent to the Apostle's intention. *Abraham*, saith he, *accounted, that God was able to raise him up even from the Dead*; and he had the more reason so to account, because he had already once before *received him* from the dead *in a figure*; namely, at the time of his *Birth*, when he sprang from Parents *as good as dead*; as the same Apostle expresses in the very same chapter. *Abraham's Reasoning* was This; (and it was very pertinent and strong;) The same God who could cause *Isaac* to receive life at first from *Parents already dead through Age*, could as easily the second time raise him to life again, when he *himself* should be *dead*.

3dly, T H E Faith of *Abraham* was not a Speculation or mere Credulity, but a Principle of Obedience and True Holiness. Gen. xviii. 19. *I know Abraham, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he has spoken of him.*

These

These words of *God himself* in the Old Testament, are sufficiently clear. But because there arose afterwards some mistakes about this matter; St *James*, in express decision of a point of controversy in *His* time, alleges the very same example: Ch. ii. 21. *Was not Abraham our Father justified by Works, when he offered Isaac his Son upon the Altar? Seest thou how Faith wrought with his Works, and by Works was his Faith made perfect! And the Scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for Righteousness.* 'Tis very remarkable that these last words, which in the Text are cited by St *Paul* for the magnifying the efficacy of *Faith*, are at the same time cited by St *James*, to show the equal necessity of *Works of Righteousness*. *Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for Righteousness. Abraham was justified by believing in God; but the Reason why his Faith was so highly accepted, was because the Effect of it was Righteousness of Life.*

4thly and Lastly, THE *Faith* of *Abraham* is opposed in Scripture, just as the *Faith* of *Christians* is, not to the Works

SERM. of *Virtue*, but to the *Rites and Ceremonies* of the Law of *Moses*. Gal. iii. 7.  
 XI.  They that are of Faith, saith St Paul, that is, they who believing in Christ expect Salvation through the real Holiness of the Gospel, and not by such outward Forms and Ceremonies as the *Jews* observed; the same (saith he) are the children of *Abraham*; ver. 6. Even as *Abraham* believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. And Rom. iv. 13. The Promise was not to *Abraham* or to his Seed through the Law, but through the righteousness of Faith :-----To the end the Promise might be sure to all the Seed, not to that only which is of the Law, but to That also which is of the Faith of *Abraham*, who is the Father of us all. His meaning is: The Promises of God to *Abraham*, the Promise of giving him a better Country than that which he went out from; the Promise of being his God and his exceeding great Reward; the Promise of making him *Heir of the World*; (all which, the reason of the thing shows, and the Apostle in the eleventh to the *Hebrews* expressly declares, to be meant of the heavenly *Canaan*, the new *Jerusalem*,

Rom. iv.  
12.



*salem*, whereof the Land of Promise was but a Type and a Shadow;) These Promises were made to *Abraham*, not as circumcised, not as the Father of the Nation of the *Jews*; but as having *that* exemplary Faith, *that* firm Belief in the One true God the Maker of all things, *that* readiness to obey him in opposition to the universal corruption of an idolatrous World, and *that* dependence upon God's being finally a Rewarder of them who diligently serve him without Any Prospect of temporal Advantage; which made this great man to be deservedly esteemed the Father of all Faithful and Holy Men, who should acceptably serve the same God, in all Ages and in all Nations of the World.

THIS is the Account the Scripture gives us of that *Faith of Abraham*, which was accounted to him for *Righteousness*. The right Understanding of which matter removes at once all the Difficulties concerning the Notion of Faith and Works, which has occasioned so many vain controversies in the Christian World; and at the same time may serve to instruct us, (which was the

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II. *Second* thing I propos'd to speak to;) *what* it is, that is particularly required of *Us*, when *We* likewise are in Scripture commanded to *believe in God*. And this evidently implies,

1<sup>st</sup>, BELIEVING his *Being*: That is; not only, in a Speculative manner, believing that there *is* an infinitely Perfect Being, in the notional way wherein Philosophers describe him, which may easily be separate from any religious Affection; but 'tis having upon our Minds a constant Sense of his being, in the moral sense, the Supreme Governour, and righteous Judge of the World. *This* Belief of the Being of God is That only, which because it will certainly produce the Fruits of Virtue, shall therefore certainly be accounted unto us for Righteousness.

2<sup>dly</sup>, THE Duty of Believing in God implies, not only our believing his Being, and his being Governour and Judge of the World; but also that we have *worthy and honourable Apprehensions* of his *Nature and Attributes*. For when any man thinks he believes in God, without attending at the same time to those Perfections and Excellencies, which constitute

tute the true and real Notion of God, he deceives himself with that empty fallacy of putting *Words* for *Things*; and instead of placing his Religion in obeying the Commands of the True Governour of the Universe, by the Practice of all Holiness, Righteousness, and Virtue; he will be apt to content himself with worshipping he knows not *what*, and he knows not *how*, with a blind Superstition, without Understanding, and without any real improvement in Goodness. This is naturally the Effect of ascribing *Absurdities* to God, as those of the Church of Rome do in the matter of *Transubstantiation*; or of teaching things concerning him contrary to the common and obvious Notions of *Righteousness and Goodness*, as those have done, who contend for the Doctrine of absolute and uncondonate *Predestination*. The Religion of such men usually consists more in an useless amazement of Mind, than in any real Practice of Virtue: Than which, nothing can be more dishonourable to God, or more injurious to Religion. For if a wise and good *man* had rather his Name should not be mentioned

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at all, than that there should be joined with it a Character contrary to Wisdom and Goodness; much more must it needs be unacceptable to God, that men should *frame* of him such Notions as are not honourable to *Him*; and *serve* him with such a Religion, as is of no True Benefit to *Them*. God governs the *natural* World with absolute Power and Wisdom; and the *moral* World with perfect Righteousness, Justice, and Goodness. In the imitation and Practice of these Virtues consists the true Essence of Religion towards *men*; and in the acknowledgment of, and dependence upon, these Perfections of the Divine Nature, consists True Faith towards *God*. Herein consisteth the Faith of *Abraham*; that, in the midst of an Idolatrous World, he constantly retained this Notion of the One invisible God of the whole Universe; and trusted in him, and served him, and obeyed him accordingly, in all Holiness and Righteousness of Life; depending upon a remote and invisible Reward; and therefore he was styled, the *Friend* of God, and was set forth as a perpetual Example of True Faith to all succeeding generations. *Look*

*at*

at the generations of old, saith the Son of S E R M.  
*Sirach*, and see; did ever any trust in the XI.  
 Lord, and was confounded? or, did any  
 abide in his fear, and was forsaken? or  
 whom did he ever despise, that called upon  
 him?

3dly, BELIEVING in God, signifies believing his *Revelations* also, as well as what *Nature* teaches concerning Him. The Obligations of *revealed Religion* are founded upon the same ground as the obligations of *natural Religion*; and they mutually strengthen and confirm each other. By the dictates of *Nature* it was reasonable to expect that God would vouchsafe to make more clear to men his Will by *Revelation*; and in all true *Revelation* is contained a fuller enforcement and more strong confirmation of the Law of *Nature*. Men therefore who in Christian countries, where the Gospel is preached, pretend to believe in the *God of Nature*, and yet at the same time reject the revelation of the *Gospel*, which is so agreeable to and perfective of the Law of *Nature*; do, generally speaking, in *pretense* only, and not in *reality*, show any more regard to *natural* than

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to *revealed* Religion ; falling for the most part into absolute Atheism. Whereas they who seriously believe, and practise the Duties of *natural* Religion, are generally disposed to embrace also consequently the *Revelation* of the *Gospel*. Those whom *the Father*, the God of *Nature*, draweth, come easily to *Christ*, who is the Author of the *Gospel*. The only thing necessary here to be observed, is, that for preventing with due care the *Frauds* and *Impositions* of men, who have sometimes attempted, (as particularly in many Instances in the Church of *Rome*;) to impose their own *Inventions* instead of *Divine Revelation* ; diligent inquiry ought always to be made into the *evidence* of the *Fact*s, and into the *nature and reason* of the *thing*. For a doctrine, even not unreasonable in itself, yet is not to be admitted as a *Divine Revelation* without good evidence of the *Fact* : Neither on the contrary can any pretense of evidence of *Fact*, be sufficient for the admission of a *Doctrine impossible or absurd in itself*. *Transubstantiation* has no evidence of being revealed : But had there been never so great an appearance  
of

of Evidence for it, yet it could not be received, because the manifest *Absurdity of the thing* would always be a stronger Argument *against* its being an Object of Faith, than any other Evidence could be for it. Every Revelation *must* be agreeable to the *Nature of God*, and to the *possibility of things*. Our Saviour himself alleges it as an Argument for the Proof of the Truth even of his *Miracles* themselves; that his Doctrine was directly contrary to the Power and Interest of evil Spirits, and tended in its own Nature to the Glory of God, and to the Benefit of Men: Otherwise the Objection of the Pharisees would have been of some force, that he cast out Devils by the Prince of the Devils. In the *Old Testament*, the greatest Difficulty of This kind is the Instance of *Abraham* offering up his Son; which if it was a thing unalterably evil in itself, it may be objected could never be a Revelation from God. For the clearing of which it is therefore to be observed, that of things Evil or Immoral there are three sorts. Some things are Evil, only because prohibited by a positive Law; and these it is evident are

S E R M. no longer evil, than the Law which forbids them continues in Being. Other things are Evil unalterably in their own Nature; even so as that it would be a direct contradiction and absolute impossibility to suppose, that God should at *any time* whatsoever, or upon *any occasion*, command them: Such are *Hatred of God and Goodness*, the *worship of False Gods*, a *malicious or cruel Temper of Mind*; and the like. Now between these two sorts of Evils there is a third; which is not only evil, because contrary to any positive Law, but contrary also even to the Law of Nature itself: Yet *not so unalterably*, but that in some particular circumstances, when expressly commanded by the God of Nature, it *may* cease to be contrary to that Law. And of this kind, is the taking away the Life of an innocent man; as in the case of *Abraham* and his Son. Which though contrary to the Law of Nature, to be done by the Will of Man, or of any Power on Earth; yet may without any inconsistency be in a particular case commanded by God: Because God who *gave* life, may *take it away* when he pleases, either by



a natural Disease, or by any other Instrument which he thinks fit. Only he who in such a case shall pretend to be an Instrument in the hand of God, must show a Commission or Revelation, as *clear* as was That to *Abraham*: Otherwise all Impiety and Superstition may be brought in the place of Religion; as those of the Church of *Rome*, under pretense of doing service to God, are perpetually destroying the best of his Servants.

4thly and Lastly; As believing in God, signifies believing his *Revelations*, as well as his *Nature and Attributes*; so it always includes *Obedience* to him likewise, when it means That Faith which shall be counted to us for Righteousness. *Abraham's Faith*, saith St *James*, wrought with his Works, and by Works was his Faith made perfect. And concerning Ours in like manner St *Paul* declares, *Rom. x. 10.* *With the Heart man believeth unto Righteousness, and with the Mouth confession is made unto Salvation.*





# SERMON XII.

Of the GRACE of GOD.



TIT. ii. 11, 12.

*For the Grace of God, that bringeth Salvation, hath appeared to all men : Teaching us, that denying Ungodliness and Worldly Lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly, in this present World.*



IN the *First* Chapter of This SERMON.  
 Epistle, the Apostle instructs XII.  
*Titus* in the particulars of  
 his *own* Duty ; exhorting  
 him to be diligent in *studying*,  
 stedfast in *holding fast*, painful in *teach-*  
*ing*, and, above all things, exemplary in  
 S 3 *practising*

S E R M. *practising* the Christian Doctrine. In the  
 XII. *second* chapter, he directs him what instructions he should give to *Others*; to persons in every circumstance of Age, and in every Station of Life; That men of all Ranks and Conditions whatsoever, of all degrees and of all capacities, might know how; by a suitable Behaviour, to *adorn in all things the Doctrine of God* our Saviour; whose *kindness and Love* has been *shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ* our Saviour, ch. iii. 6. The Apostle, I say, having in *This*, and in the *foregoing* chapter, instructed both *Titus himself*, and those who were *under his charge*, in the *Great Branches of Moral Duty*; he proceeds in the words of the Text to *inforce the Practice* of those Duties by this *emphatical Argument*; that the very *End and Design* of the *Gospel of Christ* was to *teach* men the necessity of such Practice: To *teach* them, that *denying ungodliness and worldly Lusts*, they should live *soberly, righteously and godly, in this present World*; Looking for that *Blessed Hope, and the Glorious Appearing of the Great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ*; Who gave himself for us,  
 that

that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good Works.

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S O B R I E T Y, Righteousness, and Godliness, are the *Ends* for the promoting whereof, Christ came into the World. Whatever therefore in Any Profession of Religion *tends not to promote* these Ends, is *useless and deceitful*: Whatever tends in any degree to *frustrate* them, is *pernicious and destructive*. By This Rule, may easily be tried the real and intrinsic *Value* of every *doctrine*; by This, may be weighed the degree of *dangerousness* of every *Errour*, in Religion. Every Notion and Speculation whatsoever, every Form and Ceremony of Any Kind, every external Rite, every inward Opinion, concerning *Faith*, or *Grace*, or the *Merits of Christ*, or *any other Doctrine* whatever it be: So far as it leads and influences Men to be more truly *virtuous and good*, to have a more constant Sense of *God* upon their Minds, to be more *sober and temperate*, to have a more strict Regard to *Truth*, *Justice*, *Equity* and *Charity*, in the whole Course of their Actions; so far it makes them *better Christians*.

S E R M. *ans.* But if, on the contrary, any of  
 XII. these things be (as they too frequently  
 are, among *All* Professions of Men; If  
 they be) at any time looked upon as *Equi-*  
*valents*, to be accepted of God in the  
*room* and in the *stead* of true Virtue;  
 they are Then really destructive of all Re-  
 Mat. v. 19. ligious. For *whosoever* (says our Lord)  
*shall break one of these Least Command-*  
*ments*, (speaking of the *eternal Duties*  
 of the *Moral Law*), *and shall teach men*  
*so*, (that is, shall upon Any pretence  
 whatsoever teach men to look upon Other  
 things as of more importance than these;) *he*  
*shall be called the Least in the Kingdom*  
*of Heaven*; that is, he shall of all men  
 be the farthest from ever entering therein.  
 The Reason why Christ gave himself for  
 us, was, that he might redeem us from all  
 iniquity, and purify unto Himself a pecu-  
 liar people, zealous of good Works. The  
 Cause, for which was revealed that Blef-  
 sed Hope, and the glorious Appearing of  
 the Great God, and our Saviour Jesus  
 Christ, was, that it might be an effectual  
 Support to men in the Practice of Virtue,  
 under the various Temptations of a viti-  
 ous and unrighteous World. The End  
 and

and Design, for which God's graciousness S E R M.  
 towards men in the Forgiveness of Sins XII.  
 was declared in the Gospel, was to teach  
 us the necessity of Obedience for the future,  
 and to encourage us in our sincere Endeavours  
 after it. The Grace of God, that  
 bringeth Salvation, hath appeared to all  
 men; Teaching us, that denying Ungodli-  
 ness and Worldly Lusts, we should live so-  
 berly, righteously and godly, in this present  
 World.

IN the following Discourse upon These  
 Words, I shall 1<sup>st</sup> explain *What* is meant  
 by the Grace of God. And 2<sup>dly</sup>, I shall  
 consider, *How* This Grace of God  
 Teaches us; teaches us in a peculiar and  
 emphatical manner; that, *Denying Ungod-  
 liness and Worldly Lusts, we should live so-  
 berly, righteously and godly, in this present  
 World.*

I. IN the First place, the proper Signi-  
 fication of the word *Grace*, is *Favour*:  
*Favour* in such a sense, as denotes *Mercy*  
 and *Goodness* in a *Superiour*, either remit-  
 ting somewhat of his *Own Right*, or con-  
 ferring somewhat *Beneficial* upon *O-  
 thers*; freely, and without Any obligati-  
 on

SERM. on of Debt. And because *This* may be  
 XII. done after *various manners*, and in a great  
 *diversity of Instances*; hence the word  
*Grace* in Scripture, is accordingly appli-  
 ed, in a *proportionable diversity of Signi-*  
*fications.*

SOMETIMES it signifies those *extra-*  
*ordinary Gifts and Powers* of the Holy  
 Ghost, by which the Apostles were in-  
 abled to *demonstrate the Truth* of their  
*Commission*, to *preach their Doctrine* with  
*Authority*, to *convince Gainsayers* with  
*Evidence*, to *govern the Churches* by a  
 proper distribution of different *Trusts and*  
*Offices.* And the *Gifts or Powers*, by  
 which the Apostles were inabled to do all  
 these things with extraordinary Efficacy  
 and Success, are *Therefore* called *Grace*,  
 because they are not at all *Natural Acqui-*  
*sitions*, but *Free Gifts of God*; distributed  
 to every one severally, not according to  
 the Will of *Man*, but *at such times*, and  
*in such proportions*, and *to such Persons*,  
 and *for such Purposes*, as *God himself*  
 pleased. Thus Rom. i. 5. *By whom we*  
*have received Grace and Apostleship, for*  
*Obedience to the Faith among all Nations.*  
 That is; Who has *graciously* been pleased



to send forth Us the Apostles, to preach S E R M. with mighty Works and Demonstration XII. of the Spirit, in order to bring back the Nations to the Knowledge of God and to the Practice of Virtue, by the Arguments and Motives of the Gospel of Christ. In like manner, ch. xii. 6. *Having then Gifts, differing according to the Grace that is given to us, (that is, according to the good pleasure of God in distributing those Gifts;) whether it be prophecy, let us prophesy, (or whatever Gift it be, let us employ it diligently,) according to the proportion of Faith, i. e. according to the Nature and Use of the Gift or Power or Trust committed to our Charge or Fidelity : So the word Faith evidently signifies in This place ; and above, in ver. 3. according as God has dealt to every man the Measure of Faith, i. e. according to the nature and degree of the Power committed to every man's Trust or Faithfulness. Had This signification of the word been generally attended to, which is manifestly the Apostle's true meaning ; it might have prevented abundance of weak and unintelligible things, which have sometimes been spoken concerning God's giving men*

*Faith,*

SERM. *Faith*, and the like. But This, by the way. Another remarkable Passage of the same Apostle, where the word *Grace* plainly signifies again the *extraordinary Gifts of the Spirit*, is in *Eph. iv. 7, 11: Unto every one of us is given Grace, according to the Measure of the Gift of Christ:-----And he gave Some Apostles, and Some Prophets, and Some Evangelists, and Some Pastors and Teachers.* This therefore is the *First* Sense, wherein the word *Grace* is frequently used in the *New Testament*: It denotes the *extraordinary Powers* wherewith God was *graciously* pleased to indue the Apostles, in order to inable them to propagate the Gospel with Authority and Success.

IN *Other* Passages, the same word is made use of to signify That *extraordinary Assistance and Support*, which God has sometimes been pleased to afford his Servants, under *extraordinary Difficulties and Trials*. And *This* is called *Grace*, because considered as given *particularly* upon *extraordinary* occasions, over and above the *general Supports* arising from the Considerations of *Reason*, and from the *Motives and Promises of the Gospel* in *general*.

general. Thus when St Paul under some particular Affliction and Distress, which he calls *The Messenger of Satan to buffet him*, prayed with repeated importunity to have this Trouble removed from him; The Lord said unto him, 2 Cor. xii. 9. *My Grace is sufficient for thee.* And when our Saviour foretells his disciples, that they should be *persecuted and brought before Kings and Rulers for His name's sake*; he tells them at the same time, which is another Instance of *This Grace or Gracious Goodness of God*, which will not suffer men to be tempted above what they are able; He tells them they need not be solicitous, *what Answer to make*; For the Holy Ghost should teach them in *That Hour*, and He himself would give them a *Mouth and Wisdom*, which All their Adversaries should not be able to gainsay or resist; Luke xii. 11; and xxi. 14.

A Third sense, wherein the word *Grace* is sometimes made use of in the *New Testament*, is to express such *Moral Virtues*, as are the *Effects* of men's being influenced by the *Spiritual Motives of the Gospel*; and the *Practice* of which, preserves men in the *Favour* of God, and

S E R M. recommends them to his *Gracious Acceptance*. Thus *Eph. iv. 29. Let no corrupt Communication proceed out of your Mouth, but that which is good to the Use of edifying; that it may minister Grace unto the Hearers; That is, that it may promote the Practice of Virtue in the World. And, 2 Pet. iii. 18. Grow in Grace; That is, improve more and more in all virtuous Behaviour, which may render you Acceptable in the Sight of God. After the same manner of speaking, the Apostle St Paul, 2 Cor. viii. 1, stiles the extraordinary liberality of the Macedonian Churches to the Poor, the Grace of God bestowed on them. And his direction to Titus, to perswade the Corinthians to imitate that exemplary liberality, he thus expresses, ver. 6. We desired Titus, that, as he had begun, so he would also finish in you the same Grace also. And then he adds his Own exhortation, still in the very same Style, ver. 7. Therefore as ye abound in every thing, in Faith, in Utterance, and Knowledge, and in all Diligence, and in your Love to Us; see that ye abound in This Grace also, the Grace of Liberality and Charity. In these Passages, 'tis*

as evident as possible, that the word *Grace* S E R M. denotes the *very same*, as *Christian* or XII. *Moral Virtue*. And *Moral Virtues* are plainly for *This reason* called by the name of *Grace*, because they *proceed from* and are *founded in a Regard to God in general*, and in *particular to his Will revealed under the Gracious Dispensation of the Gospel of Christ*. They are the *Effects* of men's *Conversion to God*; the *Effects* of all the *external and internal Influences* of the *Gospel*; the *Fruits of the Spirit*. And not only in the *Language of Scripture*, in the *Apostles times*; but even at *This day*, in *common Speech*, the word (*Grace*) *still retains* in many *Cases* the *same Signification*. Thus when *abandoned and debauched* persons are *vulgarly stiled Graceless*; the *Intent* of That denomination never is to *excuse*, but always to *aggravate* the *Fault* of the persons so stiled. It never means any *Defect on God's part*, as if *He* afforded them not the *Capacities* of *Religion and Virtue*; but always on *their own part* only, that All the *Means and Assistances* of *Religion* are bestowed on them *in vain*, and *have not Influence* sufficient to *reform* them.

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To proceed: *Another* Signification of the word *Grace* in Scripture, is to express that *merciful Acceptance of Repentance and Amendment*, whereby God is pleased, not out of any *obligation of Justice*, but in *gracious Goodness*, to restore men to his Favour. In *This* sense, St Paul

1 Cor. xv. 9. says of *Himself*, *I am not meet to be called an Apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God: But by the Grace of God*, (that is, by his *gracious Acceptance* of my sincere Intentions,) *I am what I am*. In like manner, when the *Doctrine of Christ*, as distinguished from the *Law of Moses*, is by the Evangelist styled *Grace and Truth*; and when the *Apostles Preaching*, is by St *Luke* called *The Word* (or Declaration) of *God's Grace*; and when St

Acts xiv. 3. *Paul* declares, that repenting Sinners *are justified freely by his Grace*; and blames those, as the most *pernicious Perverters* of his Doctrine, who think they may

Rom. iii. 24. *continue in Sin, that Grace may abound*:


Rom. vi. 1. 'Tis evident the word *Grace*, in all these Passages, signifies That *merciful and compassionate* disposition of the Divine Nature, whereby God freely *remits* of his *Right of Punishment*; and receives peni-

rent Sinners upon *more gracious Terms*, S E R M. and to *greater degrees of his Favour*, than XII. he was bound to do by *any obligation of Justice*.

AND hence it is, that, in the *Last* place, the *Gospel itself*, as being the *Great and Standing Declaration of God's Mercy and Goodness* towards men, shown forth in the *free Pardon and Forgiveness of Sin*, upon the *gracious Terms of Repentance and Amendment*; hence the *Gospel itself*, I say, is in the *New Testament* very frequently meant by This Phrase, *the Grace of God*. Thus *Col. i. 6. Since the day ye heard of it, and knew the Grace of God in Truth*: That is, from the Time ye were instructed in the *Doctrine of the Gospel*. And *2 Thes. ii. 16. Our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God even our Father,-----bath given us-----good Hope through Grace*; that is, through the *gracious Promises of the Gospel*. Again; *2 Tim. ii. 1. Thou therefore, my Son, be strong in the Grace that is in Christ Jesus*, (that is, Be Faithful and Diligent, in preaching the Gospel;) *And the things that thou hast heard of Me,----the same commit thou to Faithful men, who shall be*

S E R M. *able to teach Others also.* In like manner;  
 XII. *the Prophets-----prophecyng of the Grace*  
 I Pet. i. *that should come, is, their foretelling the*  
 10. Revelation of *the Gospel.* And Some a-  
 Gal. v 4. mong the *Galatians, falling from Grace;*  
 means their rejecting the Privileges of the  
*Gospel of Christ,* when they claimed to  
 be *justified* by their observing the Cere-  
 monies of the *Jewish Law.* To give but  
 one Instance more: The Question St Paul  
 puts, *Rom. vi. 15. Shall we sin, because*  
*we are not under the Law, but under*  
*Grace?* is, in sense, plainly This: Shall  
 the *Mercy, the Compassion and gracious*  
*Goodness* of God, declared in the *Gospel*  
 much more expressly than under the  
*Mosaick Law;* shall it be an encourage-  
 ment to us to continue in Sin? God for-  
 bid. And Thus therefore likewise in the  
 words of the Text: *The Grace of God,*  
 that is, the *gracious Doctrine of the Go-*  
*spel,* has been declared *to all men; Teach-*  
*ing us, that Denying Ungodliness,* and so  
 on. The Apostle here very *expressly*  
 explains his own words. He is not speak-  
 ing of *That Grace* of God, which *ope-*  
*rates in or upon* men; but of *That Grace*  
 which *Teaches* them, that *Denying Un-*  
*godliness*



godliness and Worldly Lusts, they should S E R M.  
live soberly, righteously, and godly in this XII.  
present World. 

THE *Additional* words, (*which bringeth Salvation,*) are, in the Original, of ambiguous construction; and may equally signify, either, as we render them, *The Grace of God that bringeth Salvation, hath appeared to all men;* or, *The Grace of God hath appeared, bringing Salvation unto all men.* If we understand them in the former sense, (*The Grace of God that bringeth Salvation, hath appeared to all men;*) they are *Then* of the same import with those *other* expressions, Rom. x. 18. *Their Sound is gone forth into all the Earth, and their Words unto the Ends of the World;* and Col. i. 23. *The Hope of the Gospel which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature under Heaven.* If they are understood in the latter sense; (*The Grace of God hath appeared, bringing Salvation unto all men;*) the meaning of them *Then* is the same, as in the following Expressions of Scripture; that *Christ has abolished Death, and hath brought Life and Immortality to Light through the Gospel;* that *God will*  
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S E R M. *have All men to be saved, and to come to*  
 XII. *the Knowledge of the Truth; being not*  
 willing that Any should perish, but that  
 All should come to Repentance. In which-  
 soever of these two senses the words of  
 the Text be taken; the Meaning of them,  
 upon the whole, amounts to the Same;  
 that the Design of God in the gracious  
 Declarations of the Gospel, is to bring  
*all men*, by the Promise of Pardon, to  
 Repentance and Amendment *here*, and  
 thereby to eternal Salvation *hereafter*.  
 The Sense of the Proposition is plain:  
 The only difficulty here, is that which  
 arises, and indeed very obviously, from  
 comparing the actual Event of things,  
 with the Declarations of God's gracious  
 Intention and Design. If God designed by  
 the gracious Terms of the Gospel to  
 bring *all men* to Salvation; how comes  
 the Extent of it to be confined within so  
 narrow a Compass, and the Effect of it  
 to be in experience so inconsiderable, even  
 where in Profession it seems to have uni-  
 versally prevailed? The Answer to This,  
 is; that in all moral matters, the Inten-  
 tion or Design of God, never signifies (as  
 it does Always in Natural things) an  
 Intention

*Intention of the Event, actually and necessarily to be accomplished; but (which Alone is consistent with the nature of Moral things,) an Intention of all the Means, necessary on His part to the putting That Event into the Power of the proper and immediate Agents. For instance: With intention that all men should act reasonably, God indues them with the Faculty of natural Reason. The Event, whether after This they will act reasonably or no, must depend upon their own Choice and Care: Because the very Faculty or Power of acting reasonably, does necessarily and essentially include in it a Power of acting likewise unreasonably. The case is the very same with respect to the Method of bringing men to Salvation by the Gospel. God has commanded the Gospel to be preached to the whole World. The merciful Conditions, and the gracious Means and Assistances of the Gospel, are sufficient to bring all men to Salvation; except such as either wilfully reject it, when fairly and reasonably proposed to them; or who professing to embrace it, yet obey it not. For, as for Those to whom it was either*

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S E R M. never *at all*, or (which is much the same thing,) never *reasonably* preached, their case is exactly the same with regard to the *Gospel*, as the case of *such others* is with regard to *Natural Reason*, who either totally or in great measure want That natural Faculty. Every man shall be *accepted according to what he Hath, and not according to what he hath not*, 2 Cor. viii. 12. God therefore *willeth all men to be saved*; (just in the same manner as he willeth all men to act rationally:) And yet This does not hinder them from *destroying themselves* by wilfully *rejecting* That Salvation. For tho' *the Grace of God has indeed appeared to all men*, and is *sufficient* also to bring *all men to Salvation*; yet it effects This no otherwise than by *Teaching them*, as the Apostle *proceeds* in the Text, (which is the *Second Particular* I proposed to consider;) *teaching them*, in a *peculiar and emphatical* manner, *that denying Ungodliness and worldly Lusts, they should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present World.*

II. Now *How* the Gospel does This, S E R M.  
 is not a point which needs much *inlarge-* XII.  
*ment*. 'Tis what our Saviour and his  
 Apostles inculcate in the *whole New Te-*  
*stament*, from the One End to the Other:  
 The *Practise of Virtue*, or *Living sober-*  
*ly, rightcously, and godly*, is the *End* and  
*Design* of all Religion. God is Himself  
 a Being of infinite *Holiness* and *Good-*  
*ness*, and by no other way than by *imi-*  
*tating* these Perfections can Any Crea-  
 ture become acceptable in his Sight. By  
 the Light of *Nature and Reason* there-  
 fore, men are bound to the Practise of  
 these Virtues. But because their very  
*Best Performances* are always *defective*;  
 and Those who have *transgressed* in any  
 plain Instances, stand in need of parti-  
 cular *Pardon*; and *Methods* of mens *own*  
 Invention to appease the Anger of God,  
 had continually introduced numberless  
 vain and delusive *Superstitions*; therefore,  
 in compassion to the Weakness of Man-  
 kind, and to cure these Great Evils, God  
 was pleased to send them an Instructor  
 from Heaven, to *teach* them in a *more*  
*effectual* manner than any ever *before*  
 discovered,

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discovered, how that *denying Ungodliness and worldly Lusts, they should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present World.* The Gospel, I say, teaches us *This*, in a method *more effectual* than *Any* foregoing: *By* giving, even to the *Meanest* Capacities, the plainest and fullest, the perfectest and most distinct Account, of the Excellency and Extent of *Moral Virtue*; as in our Saviour's Sermon upon the Mount. *By* giving, even to persons of the *Lowest* Abilities, clearer Instructions concerning the *Nature and Perfections* of God, than were usually attained even by the most *Learned Philosophers* amidst the dark Superstitions of the *Pagan World.* *By* showing to all men, that God is a Being *of purer Eyes than to behold iniquity*; So far *hating Wickedness*, as that he did not think fit to pardon Sin without so great a Testimony against it as the Death of his Son; And yet, at the same time, of such essential *Mercy and Goodness*, that he would rather give his own Son a Ransom for Sinners, than not find a method of pardoning them, consistent with the Wisdom

dom of his infinite and eternal Govern-  
ment. By giving us consequently the  
*Example of Christ*, in his Life, and in  
his Sufferings; the *Assistances of his Spi-  
rit*; the Assurance of a *Reward for  
Virtue*, in a happy immortality; and a  
more exprefs declaration of his *Wrath  
from Heaven against all Unrighteousness  
and Ungodliness of men*. By *These Means*  
does the Gospel in the most effectual  
manner *Teach us, That denying Ungodliness  
and worldly Lusts, we should live soberly,  
righteously, and godly in this present World.*  
And to *Them* who are thus taught by it,  
and to *Them only*, it is *the Grace of God  
which bringeth Salvation*. 'Tis unto  
*Them*, as the same Apostle elsewhere ex-  
presses it, *the Savour of Life unto Life*;  
but unto the Wicked, *the Savour of Death  
unto Death*.

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~~~~~

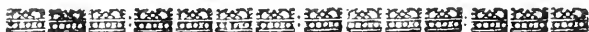






# SERMON XIII.

Of the GRACE of GOD.




PHIL. ii. latter part of the 12th,  
and the 13th verse.

*Work out your own Salvation with  
Fear and Trembling ; For it is  
God which worketh in you, both  
to will and to do, of his good  
pleasure.*



HERE is no one Question SERMON.  
in the whole System of Di- XIII.  
vinity, which has raised  
greater Controversies in the  
Church of God, than That  
concerning the Extent of the *Grace* of  
God

SERM. *God and the Power of Man. Some, in*  
 XIII. *order to vindicate God from being the*  
 *Author of Sin, have been so solicitous to*  
*maintain the perfect Freedom of Men's*  
*Faculties, and their Liberty of choosing*  
*Good or Evil, that they either have, or*  
*have been thought to have, diminished*  
*from the absoluteness of the Sovereignty,*  
*or from the Efficacy of the Grace of God.*  
*They have been thought, I say, to dimi-*  
*nish from the Grace of God. For whe-*  
*ther they have really done so, or only*  
*by their Adversaries been represented as*  
*doing so; is not very evident. In almost*  
*all Controversies, what Men say for*  
*Themselves, and what their Adversaries*  
*infer or represent them as saying, are ge-*  
*nerally two very different things: And*  
*they who will not be at the pains to con-*  
*sider distinctly what each side alleges for*  
*itself, but will judge of Either by the*  
*character or representation made of it by*  
*the Other only; will for ever be led into*  
*erroneous judgments concerning Men and*  
*Things, and continue unavoidably igno-*  
*rant of the True State of the Matter in*  
*Question, whatsoever it be. Whether*  
 therefore

therefore They who in Antient Times were represented as *Deniers* of the Grace of God, were rightly charged with so doing or no, does not certainly appear ; because the *Ground* of that charge, was only their asserting the *Freedom of the Will of Man* ; which though their *Adversaries* judged to infer a Denial of the Sufficiency of the Power or Grace of God, yet perhaps *They Themselves* saw no such Consequence of it. However That be ; Others, in the contrary Extreme, that they might be sure not to ascribe too little to the Efficacy of the Divine Grace, have supposed men to have *no natural Powers at all* of Acting or Willing, *no Use* of the original Faculties given them at their Creation, *no Liberty of Will* or Freedom of Choice, in matters of Morality and Religion. By which Doctrine they have consequently, (even themselves seeing and acknowledging the consequence,) introduced an absolute *Necessity* or *Fatality* upon Men's Actions. From whence it follows, in the next step of deduction, (though This indeed they are not so willing to see ;) but in Truth it *does* necessarily and unavoidably

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SERM. unavoidably follow; that *God himself*,  
 XIII. and not *Man*, will be the Author of  
 Sin.

SOMETHING not unlike to This, has happened in *another* Question concerning the *Liberty* of the Will of *Man*, and the *Prescience* or *Foreknowledge* of *God*. *Some*, considering that without Liberty of the Will, there can be no Religion, no Virtue or Vice, no just Punishment or reasonable Reward, have, in order to remove an Objection which they judged would otherwise lie hard against so important a Truth, *denied*, or *seemed to deny*, God's foreknowledge of future and free Events. *Others* on the contrary, intent upon magnifying the Glory of the Divine Attributes, and solicitous to secure the including all possible future Events within the Compass of God's Foreknowledge, have affirmed all the Actions of Men to be Necessary and Determined absolutely, by a Chain of certain and unalterable Causes. The Consequence of which unavoidably is, that Man in reality is no more capable of Morality or Religion,

Religion, than a Beast that perishes, or than a lifeless Machine.

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XIII.  


THE *Truth*, in *Both* these controversies, is; that there is Something in *Each* part of the *Question*, which must needs be acknowledged to be *True*; and yet 'tis equally necessary that it *be always so only* acknowledged, and *so only* understood, as to be consistent with what on the *Other* part of the *Question* must at the same *Time*, and for the same *Reasons*, of *Necessity* be acknowledged too. For otherwise, we do but endeavour to establish *One Truth* at the *Expense* of *Another*; which, at the conclusion of the *Argument*, is not indeed confirming *Either* of them, but destroying *Both*. Thus, for instance, the *Freedom of Men's Will*, whatever be the *Nature* and the *Degree* of that *Freedom*, must upon no account be any thing in any wise inconsistent with any of the *Perfections of God*; because the *Attributes* of the *Divine Nature* are *Necessary* in themselves, absolutely and unalterably, and antecedent to the *Production* of all created *Beings*. And on the other side, *no Attribute of the Divine Nature*,  
such

S E R M. such as *Foreknowledge* in particular, can  
 XIII. possibly be such as to take away the *Liberty*  
 of the *Will of Man*; because then it would consequently destroy some of the Other equally necessary Perfections of God, such as Justice and Goodness, which cannot possibly be destroyed. Since therefore neither the *Foreknowledge* of God, nor the *Liberty* of Man, can without a plain contradiction be denied; it follows unavoidably, that the *Foreknowledge* of God must be of such a Nature, as is not inconsistent with the *Liberty* of Man. That is to say; it cannot be a Knowledge of the same sort of Species, as is the Knowledge of necessary and determined Events, arising from a View of the whole Chain or Series of Necessary Causes producing those Events: but it must be a Knowledge quite of another Nature; a Power, difficult indeed for Us to frame a *clear* conception of, but yet not impossible to have a Notion of in general. For as a *Man* who has no influence over Another person's Actions, can yet often perceive beforehand what That Other will do; and a *wiser* and more experienced

perienced Man, will still with greater *probability* foresee what Another, whose *Disposition* he is perfectly acquainted with, will in certain *Circumstances* do; and an *Angel*, with still much less *degrees of Errour*, may have a farther Prospect into Men's future Actions: so 'tis very reasonable to apprehend, that *God*, without influencing Men's Wills by his Power, yet by his Foresight cannot but have as much *Certainer* a Knowledge of future Free Events, than either Men or Angels can possibly have, as the *Perfection* of *His* nature is greater than that of *Theirs*.

IN like manner, in that *Other* question, which is the Subject-matter of my Text: Whatever Power Men be supposed to have in the Use of their *natural Faculties*, 'tis evident it cannot be such as in any wise to diminish the Sense they ought to have of their continual *Dependance* upon *God*; because those *very* Powers and *natural* Faculties, are *themselves* entirely the Gift of God, and not any thing at all of *our own* procuring, as of *our selves*. So that those who have been

S E R M. charged with ascribing *the most* to the  
 XIII. Power of Men's own Wills, did not per-  
 haps (as their *Adversaries* conceived) *in-*  
 tend to derogate any thing from Men's  
 true Dependance upon God: For it can-  
 not be imagined that any reasonable Men  
 should contend, (neither did their Argu-  
 ment require it,) that any One should in  
 any Action, or in any Degree, be Inde-  
 pendent on his Maker. On the other  
 side; whatever be supposed to be the  
 Power and Efficacy of the *Grace of God*,  
 even where it has the most *effectual* Influ-  
 ence; yet it must upon no account be  
 understood to be such as to over-rule the  
 Liberty of Men's Will and Choice, and  
 render their Actions *necessary*; because  
 This would be to remove the whole  
 Foundation of Religion, by entirely de-  
 stroying the Morality of Men's Acti-  
 ons, and taking away the very Nature  
 of Virtue and Vice. Since therefore  
 neither the Influence of the *Divine*  
*Grace*, nor the proper *Power of Men* in  
 the use of their *natural* Faculties, can  
 without an evident contradiction be de-  
 nied; it follows unavoidably, that the  
 Grace



Grace of God must of necessity always be understood to have the nature of a *moral Assistance only*, which does perfectly agree with Men's *Free use of their Faculties*; and that it is *not* in the nature of a *physical compulsion*, which is altogether inconsistent with Men's doing any thing *themselves*. The Apostle perfectly expresses this whole Notion, in the Words of the Text: *Work out your own Salvation with Fear and Trembling; for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do, of his good pleasure*. He does not say, *Work out your own Salvation yourselves, as having no Need of the Grace of God*: Neither does he say on the contrary, *The Grace of God worketh All in you, and therefore ye need not do any thing yourselves*: But, ascribing to each part its proper Office, he says, *Work ye out your own Salvation, because the Grace of God (the Motives and Assistances of the Gospel) gives you Power so to do*.

THE principal Argument alleged by Those, who think the Influence of the Divine Grace to be *so* efficacious as to ne-

SERMON. XIII. *cessitate* Men's Actions, is, that it seems to Them *unworthy* of the Supreme Power, Sovereignty and Majesty of God to do any thing *ineffectually*, or to permit Any Act of His to be *resisted and frustrated* by the Power of frail and mortal Men. And, were the Power of God the matter in question, This Argument would indeed be undoubtedly good. But in *Moral* matters, where whatever is not done *voluntarily and without Compulsion*, is not done *at all*, the case is very different. For in *these* matters, to influence a Moral Agent with such an Efficacy as *cannot be resisted*, is entirely to destroy the Morality of the Action, to take away the whole Nature of Virtue and Vice, and to make all Reward or Punishment impossible or unjust. So far therefore is it from being unworthy of God, to *forbear* exerting his irresistible Power in *these* Cases; that, on the contrary, it would be altogether unworthy of him to *exercise* That Power; because it would be a subverting of his whole Design, in creating rational and intelligent Beings at all. *Moral Agents*, must be influenced only  
by

by *Moral Motives*; by Reason and Argument, by Perswasion and Conviction, by Hopes and Fears. The *Efficacy* therefore of the Grace of God, can consist *only* in laying before men *strong Arguments* for their *Conviction*, and giving them sufficient *Helps* and *Assistances* to overcome whatever would hinder them from acting according to such conviction. Any *other* influence than what is of this *moral* nature; any Influence that amounted to *Force*, and could not be resisted; far from being truly *efficacious* to make Men *good and virtuous*, would on the contrary make it as *impossible* for them to have any Virtue or Goodness at all, as it is that a *Clock* or a *Watch* should be virtuous and praise-worthy.

THE Sum is This: In order to give God his due Honour and Glory, and to keep up in Men's Minds a just Sense of their continual Dependance upon him; 'tis necessary that we at all times acknowledge, that all our Powers and *natural Faculties themselves* are entirely at first *derived* to us from God's free Goodness, and continually *preserved* to us merely by

S E R M. the same good pleasure ; and that neither  
 XIII. our *Being*, nor *any Power* we have, is  
 ~~~~~ in any wise owing to Ourselves: That,  
 much more, every *supernatural* Sufficiency,  
 every *extraordinary* Degree of Assistance,  
 every *revealed* Means of Knowledge,  
 every *New Motive* to Virtue or Deter-  
 ment from Vice, every *Direction* or *Gui-*  
*dance in the way of Life* which we re-  
 ceive from the Knowledge of things *in-*  
*visible*, and from the kind Influence of the  
*Divine Spirit* ; is wholly the *Gift*, or *Grace*  
 of God: That the *Promise* of *Heaven* and  
 of *eternal Happiness* at all, as the Reward of  
 our best *Endeavours* and most perfect *Ser-*  
*vices*, if such were *possible* to be performed  
 by us ; that even *This* also is merely God's  
*free Bounty*, and *undeserved Gift*, to un-  
 profitable Servants: All This, I say, is of  
 necessity to be acknowledged, in order to  
 give God his *due Honour* and *just Glory*.

AT the same time, that the *Nature of*  
*Virtue and Vice* may not be taken away ;  
 'tis also of no less necessity to be acknow-  
 ledged, that as the natural *Faculties*  
 wherewith God hath originally endowed  
 Men, are in their own Power either to  
 make


*make use of* or to *neglect*; so the supernatural *Assistances* afforded Men by the Revelation of the Gospel, and by the Influence of the Divine Grace, are still *but* in the Nature of *Assistances*, which may either be *complied with* or *rejected*: And the Gift of eternal Life, as 'tis the *free* Gift of God, which Men could not possibly deserve, or claim, by virtue of any Work or Duty which they were capable of performing; so it is *not* a *forced* Gift, *imposed* upon them whether they will or no; but *such* a *free* Gift, as requires the *concurrence* of their *own Endeavours*, in *applying* and *making Use of* the Divine Assistance which inables them to obtain it. For this reason, the Apostle St *Peter* exhorts men to *grow in Grace*, as a Duty depending upon their *own Endeavours*, 2 *Pet.* iii. 18; and St *Paul* admonishes Men, *not to quench* or *grieve* the *Holy Spirit of God*, who *will not* forcibly *strive* with Those which resist his good Motions; And Men are frequently blamed in Scripture for *receiving the Grace of God* in vain; for resisting *the*

S E R M.  
XIII.  
~~~~~

S E R M. *Holy Ghost, and for rejecting the Counsel  
XIII. of God against themselves.*




THE Cause of erroneous Opinions, in This and most other questions about which there have at any time been raised any controversies, is generally This; that Men attending to *One* point only, and being solicitous to oppose strongly some *particular* Errour, have been apt to do it in such a manner, as has carried them out beyond the Truth of the Argument, and prevented them from guarding against being exposed to Errour in some contrary Extreme. Thus in disputing against the Errours of the Church of *Rome*, incautious persons have frequently been betrayed by an unwise Zeal to make use of such Arguments, as they were not aware might at the same time be alleged by Others of an opposite Perswasion, with the same Force against themselves. And nothing is more common, than for Others on the contrary, in the heat of Controversy with some of their Brethren who differ from them, to draw such Arguments from Church-Authority, and General Councils, and the like;

like; as they are not enough sensible S E R M.  
 may on any other occasion be used a- XIII.  
 gainst Themselves by Those of the   
 Church of *Rome*, with at least as Great  
 and perhaps Greater Force. Thus in  
 like manner in the present case; If Any  
 persons, sollicitous to maintain the Liber-  
 ty of Man's Will, have at any time as-  
 serted such a Power in Men's Use of their  
 natural Faculties, as to make them *not*  
*dependent* upon God; or such as may of  
*Right* claim the Reward of Heaven, and  
 not of *Free Grace* and *undeserved Pro-*  
*mise*; These indeed, (if any Such have  
 been, and they have not rather been *mi-*  
*staken* by their Adversaries,) These, I say,  
*going about to establish* their own *righte-*  
*ousness*, (in the Sense St Paul blames,  
*Rom. x. 3.*) and *not submitting themselves*  
*unto the righteousness of God*, have in-  
 deed *frustrated the Grace of God*, (as the  
 same Apostle speaks again, *Gal. ii. 21;*)  
*For if righteousness comes by This way,*  
*then undoubtedly Christ is dead in vain.*  
 But then Others on the *contrary part*,  
 sollicitous (as they conceived) to main-  
 tain God's absolute Sovereignty in all  
 I things,

S E R M. things, and the Efficacy of Divine Grace;  
 XIII. to magnify the work of God in Men,  
 and to depress and humble the Vanity of  
 Those who assume Any thing to themselves as *of themselves*; have almost perpetually urged such Arguments against their Adversaries, as they were not aware might by the Enemies of all Religion, the Asserters of Necessity and Fate, be with equal Strength alleged against *Themselves*. And by *exalting*. (as They thought) the Grace of God into an *irresistible Efficacy*, they have consequently made it, in truth and reality, to be of *No Efficacy at all*. For, in matters of morality and religion, That *only* is of any Effect, which makes men, in the *moral* sense, *better* than they would otherwise be: And then *only* are they morally *Better*, when by *moral* Motives, by conviction of *Truth* and *Reason*, by well grounded *Hopes* and just *Fears*, they are perswaded and prevailed upon to love and to chuse freely what is *Right* and *Good*. If by any *irresistible* Influence they are *compelled* to do it, the best Action in the World has no longer any Goodness in it; being not  
 done



done by *Them*, any more than by any S E R M.  
*material* or *unintelligent Instrument*, to XIII.  
 which no man ever ascribes either *Good*   
 or *Evil*. The *Truth* therefore is plainly  
 This: If we will frame to ourselves right  
 Notions of Religion, Notions which truly  
 tend to the Glory of *God*, and to pro-  
 mote Virtue and Obedience in *Men*; the  
*Power* ascribed to *Men*, must neither on  
 the one side be supposed to be such, that  
 thereby men can *Merit* any thing, as of  
*themselves*; neither on the other side must  
 the Influence of the *Power* or *Grace of*  
*God* be imagined to be such, as will make  
 vain and needless our own Endeavours.  
 But the *Grace of God*, manifested in the  
*merciful Terms of the Gospel*, in the *clear*  
*Revelation of a Future State*, and of a  
*Judgment to come*, in *God's declared Ac-*  
*ceptance of Repentance through Christ*, and  
 in the *promised Assistance of the Holy Spi-*  
*rit*; This *Grace of God*, I say, effectually  
*enables* men to perform their Duty.  
 And the *Power and Will of Man*, apply-  
 ing and making *Use* of that Assistance to  
 an actual Improvement in Virtue, brings  
 forth on *its* part, those acceptable Fruits  
 of

S E R M. of the Spirit, which wicked men are  
 XIII. *therefore* justly condemned for not bring-  
 ing forth, because *They also* had the means  
 of Grace offered and proposed to them,  
 but wilfully and obstinately refused to be  
 amended thereby. God hath, of his good  
 pleasure, or of his free Grace, given them  
 both to will and to do; and yet, through  
 their own perverseness and obstinate dis-  
 obedience, they work not out their own  
 Salvation.

WHEN therefore the Scripture tells  
 us that *by Grace we are saved*, and yet  
 that at the same time we *work out our  
 own Salvation*; 'tis plain that these dif-  
 ferent Phrases are only different represen-  
 tations of one and the same thing, under  
 different respects: Just as *Height* and  
*Depth* are one and the same thing, confi-  
 dered only in different Positions. Men  
 are saved by *Grace*, because without God's  
 gracious Assistance and Acceptance of  
 their imperfect Endeavours, they could  
 not of themselves attain unto Salvation;  
 and at the same time 'tis no less true,  
 that they *work out their own Salvation*,  
 because without their leading a Life of  
 Virtue

Virtue and Obedience through a diligent S E R M.  
 Use of those means which the Grace of XIII.  
 God affords them, the *Grace of God* alone will in no wise force them to be saved. Thus *God's working in or with Us*, and *our working together with God*, are promiscuously expressed in Scripture, as Causes concurrently producing the same Effect. And mens being *hardened*, or *wicked*; *hardened of God*, or *hardening themselves*, are phrases used in like manner to signify one and the same thing under different Respects. They harden *themselves*; because 'tis by their own Obstinacy and Perverseness only that they become obdurate. And they are hardened of *God*, not by any proper Act or Efficiency of his, (except perhaps in some extraordinary judicial Cases;) but by his justly ceasing to strive with them any longer, giving them up *unto their own hearts lusts*, (as the Scripture expresses it,) *letting them follow their own imaginations*, and giving them over *to a reprobate mind*, *to work all unrighteousness with greediness*. Lastly; 'Tis very remarkable to This purpose, that the very *same Acts and Habits*,  
 which

S E R M. which are known by the Name of *Moral*  
 XIII. *Virtues*, are also in Scripture stiled *Graces*  
 or *Gifts of the Spirit*: *Moral Virtues*, as  
 they are seated in the Mind of Man, di-  
 recting his Intentions, and appearing in  
 his Practice: And, at the same time,  
*Gifts or Fruits of the Spirit*; as they are  
 promoted by the *Arguments of revealed*  
*Religion*, by the *Assistance of the Spirit*  
*of God*, and by being *practised in express*  
*Obedience to the Divine Commands*. The  
*Fruit of the Spirit*, (saith St Paul, Eph.  
 v. 9.) *is in all Goodness and Righteous-*  
*ness and Truth*. And Gal. v. 22. *The*  
*Fruit of the Spirit, is Love, Joy, Peace,*  
*Long-suffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Faith,*  
*Meekness, Temperance; against Such, there*  
*is No Law*.

AND NOW, having *premised* a large  
 explication of the *general Doctrine*, up-  
 on which the exhortation in the Text is  
 founded; I should in the *next* place have  
 proceeded to consider *distinctly*, the sever-  
 al *particular* expressions made use of in  
 the Text: *What* is meant, by *working*  
*out our Salvation*; *what* it is, to work it  
 out *with Fear and Trembling*; and *why*,  
 in

in *That* manner : *What* is meant by God's S E R M.  
*giving us both to will and to do, of his* XIII.  
*good pleasure ; and how This* consideration  
is a Motive to *Us*, to endeavour to *work*  
*out* our own *Salvation*. But the distinct  
Consideration of *These* particulars, must  
be referred to a following opportunity.



S E R M O N





# SERMON XIV.

Of the GRACE of GOD.



PHIL. ii. latter part of the 12th,  
and the 13th verse.

*Work out your own Salvation with  
Fear and Trembling; For it is  
God which worketh in you, both  
to will and to do, of his good  
pleasure.*



IN a foregoing Discourse upon S E R M O N  
these words, I premised a XIV.  
large Explication of the ge-  
neral Doctrine, upon which  
the Exhortation in the Text

is founded. I shall now proceed to con-

S E R M. *sider distinctly, the several particular Ex-*  
 XIV. *pressions made use of in the Text: What*  
 is meant by *working out our Salvation*; *what it is, to work it out with Fear and Trembling*; and *why, in That manner*; *what is meant by God's working in us both to will and to do, of his good pleasure*; and *How This consideration is a Motive to Us, to endeavour to work out our own Salvation.*

I. IN the *first* place I am to consider *what* is meant, by *working out our Salvation*. The word, *Salvation*, originally and in its *general* Notion, signifies *Deliverance* from any great and imminent Danger; especially *such* Deliverance or Escape as is accomplished not without labour and hazard. And from hence it comes in Scripture to be applied in the *Spiritual* sense, to signify *particularly* and by way of *eminence*, the *Great and Final Deliverance* of virtuous and good men from that *general* Destruction, which, in the nature of Things, and by the righteous appointment of God, must at last overwhelm a wicked and incorrigible world. *The whole World, saith St John,*  
*lieth*



*lieth in Wickedness*, or, as the Original S E R M. has it, *under the Power of the wicked One*, XIV.  
 1 ep. v. 19; that is, The greater part of Mankind, through their easiness in yielding to the Temptations of Unrighteousness, their negligence in not correcting the Corruptions of their Nature, and their Perverseness in chusing wilfully the Ways of Wickedness and Debauchery; are altogether incapable of that State of Happiness, which is in Scripture stiled *The Kingdom of God*. For, what St Paul affirms in the *literal* Sense, that *Flesh and Blood*, mortal and corruptible Bodies, cannot inherit the Kingdom of God, is in the *spiritual* Sense still more necessarily true, that *wicked and corrupt* Minds shall in no case enter therein. *The new Heavens and new Earth*, which we look for according to his Promise, are such wherein dwelleth only *Righteousness*; that is, Meekness and Justice, Purity and Holiness, Faithfulness and Truth. And therefore our Saviour, speaking of the resurrection of the Saints unto eternal Life, elegantly stiles it *The Resurrection of the Just*, Luk. xiv. 14. God is of purer eyes,  
 VOL. II, X 2 than

S E R M. *than to behold iniquity; and therefore in*  
 XIV. *to the heavenly Jerusalem there shall in*  
 ~~~~~ *no wise enter any thing that defileth, nei-*  
*ther whatsoever worketh abomination or*  
*maketh a Lie: There shall be admitted*  
*no Fraud or Violence, no Arbitrariness*  
*or Injustice, nor Debauchery or Impurity*  
*whatsoever; but the Spirits of Just men*  
*only, made perfect by the Practice of Vir-*  
*tue, and by the influences of the good*  
*Spirit of God. Now the Bulk of the*  
*wicked and corrupt World, being (in*  
*the nature of Things) incapable of in-*  
*heriting This Kingdom of Righteousness,*  
*must of necessity, not by any Cruel and*  
*Severe Decree of God, but of necessity in*  
*point of Wisdom and Good Government,*  
*they must be excluded out of Heaven,*  
*and, by the righteous and impartial Sen-*  
*tence of the unerring Judge, be in such*  
*a manner, as shall be exactly suitable to*  
*each of their respective Demerits, sent*  
*into Destruction. From which Destruction,*  
*They who (as our Lord expresses it),*  
*shall be thought worthy to obtain That*  
*Life, and the Resurrection from the Dead,*  
*shall be Saved. Not that all Others also*  
 shall

shall not equally rise from the Dead; S E R M.  
 but that *That only* deserves to be truly XIV.  
 and *emphatically* stiled the *Resurrection*  
*from the Dead*, which is a *Resurrection*  
*unto Life and Glory*. This Deliverance  
 therefore of all just and good men, by  
 the Mercy of God, and through the In-  
 terposition of Christ, from that final De-  
 struction which must naturally and of  
 necessity, under the Government of a  
 Wise and Righteous Judge, fall upon a  
 wicked and corrupt World; this, I say,  
 is what the Scripture calls *Salvation*.  
 The *Consequence* of which *Salvation* is  
 indeed moreover mens being admitted  
 into That incorruptible *Inheritance*, that  
 unspeakable and never-fading *Happiness*,  
 which is the Free Gift of God through  
 Christ, to Those whom in his unerring  
 Judgment he shall think fit to advance  
 beyond their natural and original capaci-  
 ties, to be *Heirs of God*, and *Joint-Heirs*  
*with Christ*, in his eternal Kingdom of  
 Glory.

BUT the *Primary* Notion of *Salvation*,  
 according to the *proper* signification of  
 the word, is *Deliverance from Destruction*.

S E R M. And the *Greatness* of this Deliverance  
 XIV. is, in the *New Testament*, lively repre-  
 sented unto us by several remarkable  
 Types. 'Tis represented *first*, by the  
 Salvation of *Lot* out of *Sodom*; when  
 God with Fire from Heaven overthrew  
 those wicked Cities, *setting them forth*  
*for an example*, having destroyed them  
 with an irreparable Destruction, which  
 St *Jude* calls *the Vengeance of eternal*  
*Fire*, ver. 7. 'Tis represented in the *next*  
 place, by the Salvation of the *children of*  
*Israel* out of *Egypt*; when God over-  
 verthrew *Pharaoh* and his whole Army in  
 the Sea, but led his own people safely  
 through the Sea and through the Wil-  
 derness, into the promised *Canaan*. 'Tis  
 represented *again*, by the Salvation of  
 those who escaped at the final destructi-  
 on of *Jerusalem*; concerning which our  
 Saviour foretold, *Matt. xxiv. 40.* that  
*then should two men be together in the*  
*field; the one should be taken, and the*  
*other left; And that two women should*  
*be grinding together at the mill; the one*  
*should be taken, and the other left.* Last-  
 ly, 'Tis represented by the Salvation of  
*Noah*

Of the Grace of GOD.

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Noah and his Family in the Ark; when God destroyed at once the whole impenitent World with a Deluge of Water. For so St Peter expressly applies the similitude, 1 ep. iii. 20. *The like figure whereunto, even Baptism* (saith he) *doth also Now save Us.* Only, least by *Baptism* any man should be so weak as to think he meant the bare outward Form or Ceremony, the mere Name or Profession of a Christian; he adds in the very same verse this most important caution, that thereby he understands, *not the putting away of the Filth of the Flesh,* (not the mere *Washing* or the Ceremony of *Baptism*,) *but the Answer of a good Conscience towards God* in the course of a virtuous and a Christian Life.


Now This being the true Notion of the word *Salvation*, the Duty of working out *this Salvation*, which is what we are so earnestly exhorted to in the Text, must consequently signify the making use of those *Means* which are proper and sufficient to obtain This *End*: That is, it must signify the *whole Progress* of our Deliverance, by a Life of *Virtue* and

S E R M. true Religion, from the *Power and Tyranny of the Devil*, from the *Dominion and Slavery of Sin*, and from the *Punishment of Death*.

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MEN in the State of Heathen ignorance and wickedness, being as it were habitually subject to a Spirit of Delusion, of Impiety, and of all kinds of Debauchery, are in Scripture represented as being in *Slavery to Satan*; who is therefore stiled the *Prince of This World*, and the *God of This World*, the *Prince of the Power of the Air*, the *Spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience*. From This *Tyranny of the Devil* men are saved, by forsaking the *Idolatry of the Nations*, and returning to the *worship of the true God of the Universe*, as taught in the *Gospel of Christ*: Being delivered, as St Paul expresses it, *from the Power of Darkness, and translated into the Kingdom of God's dear Son*, Col. i. 13.

LIKEWISE those, who having embraced the *Gospel of Christ*, yet live unworthy of their Holy Profession by means of *Any Habit of Unrighteousness or Debauchery*, are represented in Scripture

as being *Slaves to Sin*, and still in the *Snare of the Devil*. The expressions of S E R M. XIV.  
 This kind are very frequent and elegant;   
 that such persons are *Servants of Sin*;  
 that *Sin has the Dominion over them*;  
 that they are *overcome by it*; and *brought in bondage to it*; that they are the *Servants of Corruption*, and the like. And because the Devil is the *Head* of this Corruption, who *Tempt*s men into it, and *delights* in it; therefore, whosoever lives in Sin, notwithstanding his professing himself a *Disciple of Christ*, is still in reality *the Servant of Satan*: 1 Joh. iii. 8. *He that committeth Sin, is of the Devil; for the Devil sinneth from the Beginning*. Whosoever is so false to himself, as not to be able to resist the *Temptations of Unrighteousness*, imitates, and is subject to, the *Great Enemy of God and Goodness*; is *in the Snare of the Devil, and taken captive by him at his Will*. Now the Design of Christ's coming into the World was to *destroy these works of the Devil*; to *save men from their Sins*, Matt. i. 21. to *perswade them, and to enable them, to save themselves*

SERM. *selves from amongst a wicked and cor-*  
 XIV. *rupt generation; to deliver them from the*  
 ~~~~~ *bondage of corruption into the glorious*  
*Liberty of the children of God. Working*  
*out our own Salvation* therefore, (con-  
 sidered as an Exhortation given to such as  
 are already Christians,) signifies *making a*  
*diligent use of the Means and Encou-*  
*ragements which God has afforded us in*  
*the Gospel, to assist and enable us effectually*  
*to reform every evil Habit, and to*  
*improve in the Practice of every Virtue,*  
*perfecting Holiness in the Fear of God.*  
 The *Consequence of which Salvation from*  
*Sin, is Salvation also from the Punish-*  
*ment which God has denounced against*  
*Sinners. And not only so, but upon them*  
*who shall be thought worthy to escape all*  
*these things that shall come to pass, and to*  
*stand before the Son of Man, shall be con-*  
*ferred moreover God's free Gift of Eter-*  
*nal Life and Happiness.*

THE Exhortation therefore in the  
 Text, to *work out our own Salvation*, is  
 of the same import with That of St. Pe-  
 ter, 2 ep. i. 10. *Brethren, give diligence*  
*to make your Calling and Election sure;*  
 for



for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: for so an Entrance shall be ministred unto you abundantly into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. From which Admonition of St Peter, compared with This in the Text, it follows plainly and undeniably, that Men (by God's Assistance) have a Power, as well as an Obligation, to work out their own Salvation; and that their election, that is, their being chosen and approved of God, depends upon That diligence and sincere indeavour of their own, which the Apostle expressly exhorts them to make use of to this purpose, that thereby they may secure their being elected of God.

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II. I AM to consider in the second place, *what* is meant by working out our Salvation *with Fear and Trembling*; and *why* it must be done in That manner.

Now the words *Fear and Trembling*, are not put here to express a *Passion*, but to denote *Care and diligence* in our *Actions*, in opposition to *Presumption*, *Remissness*, or *negligent Confidence*. According to those *other Admonitions* in Scripture;

SERMON. ture; be not high-minded, but fear; and,  
 XIV. let him that thinketh he standeth, take  
 heed lest he fall. The wise man observes,  
 Prov. xxviii. 14. *Happy is the man that feareth, that is, who is cautious, always; but he that hardeneth his Heart, that is, who is careless and negligent, shall fall into Mischief.* And, *To this man will I look,* saith God himself by the Prophet, *If. lxvi. 2. even to Him that is poor and of a contrite Spirit, and trembleth at my word.* St Paul, though so eminent an Apostle, yet speaks thus concerning his own Practice upon This Head: *I keep under my Body,* says he, *and bring it into subjection,* 1 Cor. ix. 27. *lest by any means, when I have preached to Others, I my self should become a cast-away.* And Phil. iii. 11. *If by any means, says he, I might attain unto the Resurrection of the dead; Not as though I had already attained, or were already perfect;-----But this One thing I do; forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press towards the Mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.*

THE *Reasons* why we are exhorted to work out our Salvation after this manner, with *Fear and Trembling*; that is, with *Caution and Diligence*, with *Care and Earnest Application*; are,

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1<sup>st</sup>, BECAUSE 'tis of *all* others the thing of the *greatest importance* to us. 'Tis the *One thing necessary*; the Preservation of *ourselves*, of our *Souls*, of our *Life*, of our *Happiness for ever*. What *Naaman's* Servant said to his Master upon *another* occasion, is *much more applicable here*; *My Father, if he had bid thee do some Great thing, wouldst thou not have done it? how much rather then, when he saith unto thee, wash and be clean? Skin for Skin, and all that a man has, will he give for his Life; for the preservation of this short, this transitory life: What then shall he give in Exchange for his Soul, in Exchange for his portion in Eternity? If therefore no wise Man, according to our Saviour's Argument in the Parable, attempts to build a Tower, without first sitting down and counting the Cost of it; how much more does it behove every reasonable person to be solicitous*

S E R M. citous before all things, that he be well  
 XIV. assured in his *own* Understanding, and not  
 by mere hap-hazard rely blindly upon  
*Others*, in order to find *which* is the True  
 Way of Salvation; and that he be accord-  
 ingly *diligent*, in walking in That Way!

2dly, ANOTHER reason why we are  
 required to work out our Salvation *with*  
*Fear*, is because of the *Difficulties* we  
 must expect to meet with in the Work.  
*Difficulties*, not in the Nature of the  
*thing it self*: For Christ's *Yoke is easy*, and  
*his Burden light*. *Virtue* is of all things  
*the most natural and the most reasonable*;  
 and the *Commandments of God*, in them-  
 selves *no way grievous*. But great *Diffi-*  
*culties* often arise by the perverse oppo-  
 sition of *wicked men* from *without*, and  
 the corrupt inclination of *unreasonable*  
 and *ungoverned Appetites* from *within*.  
 Infomuch that even *the righteous*, saith  
 St Peter, *scarcely are saved*: And St Paul  
 speaks of Men being *saved, so as by fire*;  
 that is, escaping with difficulty, as out  
 of a House which is in Flames: *saved*  
*with Fear, pulled out of the Fire*, so  
 St Jude expresses it, ver. 23. The *Flesh*  
 lusteth

lusteth against the Spirit ; warring against the reason and law of our Minds ; so that we cannot, without some Pains and Care, do the things that are most reasonable. And when we have perfectly conquered *ourselves* ; yet still, through the Difficulties brought upon us by *Others*, by the *Profane Persecutor*, or the *Superstitious Bigot* ; by the Blenders of *humane Authority* with *Divine* ; and those who mingle and confound together the *Powers of This World* and the *Doctrines of Men*, with the *Commands of God* ; by These is the *Gate* often made *strait*, and the *Way narrow*, so that through *tribulation only* can we possibly *enter into the Kingdom of God*.

3dly, A *third* reason, why we are directed to work out our Salvation *with Fear*, is, because it is a Work that can be done but *Once* ; and if we *Once* miscarry, we have lost ourselves for ever. *It is appointed for Men Once to die, and after That, the Judgment* : And when *Once the master of the House is risen up and hath shut to the door*, there is no more *Admission*. This Argument is represented to us under a very

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~

S E R M. very elegant Similitude by one of the  
 XIV. most *antient* Writers next to the Apostles  
 times: *As a Potter*, says he, *while the Clay*  
*is moist and soft; moulds it over and over*  
*again, if it pleases him not at first; but*  
*after it has been once hardened in the Fire,*  
*its shape can be mended no more: So in the*  
*present life, God affords Men from time to*  
*time Space and Means of Repentance; but*  
*after Death and Judgment has once passed*  
*upon them, and they be cast into the Fire,*  
*there is no more Remedy for ever.*

4thly, W E are exhorted to work out  
 our Salvation *with Fear*, and to be *perpetually*  
 upon our guard, because we are  
*continually* in danger of *New Temptations*,  
 and *at no time* secure from their Assaults.  
 Temptations of one sort or other, *perpetually*  
 surround us; and the Negligent, or  
 Presumptuous, cannot fail of being frequently  
 betrayed into Sin. From hence  
 are those repeated Admonitions of our  
 Saviour and his Apostles, to *watch* and to  
 be *ready always*, to *stand fast in the Faith*,  
 to *quit ourselves like men*, to be *strong*, to  
 be *sober* and *vigilant*, to *take heed lest there*  
*be in any of us an evil heart of unbelief;*  
 and

and to exhort one another daily, while it is called to day, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his Rest, any of us should seem to come short of it.

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*Lastly*: ANOTHER reason why we are required to work out our Salvation with Fear, is, because whatever progress in Virtue we have already made, yet if hereafter we fall back into unrighteous Practices, we lose our reward. *The Just, faith God, shall live by Faith; but if any Man draws back, my Soul shall have no pleasure in him: For no Man putting his hand to the plough, and looking back, is meet for the Kingdom of God.* As in a Race, All run, but he only that perseveres, obtains the Prize; and in a warfare, All fight, but he only that overcomes gains the Crown of Victory; so, in the spiritual Combat, he that endures to the End, faith our Lord, the same shall be saved. For to them who by patient Continuance in well-doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, to Them only is made the Promise of eternal Life. Wherefore, as St Paul admonishes, we ought to give the more earnest Heed to the things which we

S E R M. have heard, lest at any time we should let  
 XIV. them slip, Heb. ii. 1.

III. T H E *Third* thing I proposed to consider in the Text, was, *what* is meant by God's *working in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure*. Now the plain and full meaning of This, is;

1st, T H A T God is to us the only *Author* of all those *Powers and Faculties*, which we vulgarly call *Natural*. In Him we *Live, Move, and have our Being*. From Him we are indued with *Reason and Understanding*, with the *Faculty of discerning between Good and Evil*, with the *Power of Willing and Choosing what is Right*. We are not *sufficient of ourselves* to think *any thing as of ourselves*; but our *Sufficiency is of God*, 2 Cor. iii. 5. Weak therefore is That distinction so often found in the Writings of Divines, between *Nature and Grace*; as if *One* was not equally the Gift of God, as the *Other*.

2dly, G O D's giving us *both to will and to do*, signifies his affording us moreover *Supernatural Helps*. Such is, the *Revelation of the Gospel*; which is therefore frequently



frequently in Scripture called, *The Grace* S E R M.  
*of God*; Tit. ii. 11. *The Grace of God* XIV.  
*which bringeth Salvation, hath appeared* Col. i. 6.  
*to all men.*

UNDER which general Grace, are included more particularly, the following Supernatural Helps. A clear and distinct Knowledge of our Duty, more distinct than could be discovered by the Light of Nature alone. A more plain and express bringing of Life and Immortality to Light, by the particular Revelation of a judgment to come. Exceeding Great and precious Promises; by the Faith and expectation of which, we are enabled to overcome the World, to quench all the Fiery darts of the Devil, and to become partakers of the Divine Nature by perfecting righteousness and true Holiness. An Assurance of the Forgiveness of past Sins upon Repentance; which is what the Scripture emphatically calls Grace; *The Law came by Moses, but Grace and Truth came by Jesus Christ.* The Assistance of the Divine Spirit in the constant and ordinary practice of our Duty; by which we are renewed, justified, sanctified, and have

S E R M. *the Love of God shed abroad in our*  
 XIV. *Hearts.* Not that the Spirit of God acts upon us by way of necessary *compulsion*, forcibly and irresistibly; (for the exhortations given us, not to *quench* and *grieve* and drive him from us, evidently show the contrary;) But he *helps our Infirmities*, in the way of *Moral Assistance*, *Perswasion*, *Direction* and *Concurrence*; but will not always *strive with men* who obstinately resist his good Motions. *Wisd.* i. 4. *Into a malicious Soul Wisdom shall not enter, nor dwell in the body that is subject unto Sin; For the Holy Spirit of Discipline will flee deceit, and remove from Thoughts that are without Understanding, and will not abide when unrighteousness cometh in.*

Lastly, UNDER *Extraordinary Trials*, the Gospel assures us of still more *particular and extraordinary Supports*: that God will never leave us, nor forsake us; but will with the *Temptation* always make a way to escape, that we may be able to bear it; and particularly, that in time of great *Persecution*, it shall be given us in that  
 same

same Hour what we shall speak and what we shall do.

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THESE are, over and above our *natural Powers and Faculties*, the *Supernatural Helps and Assistances* afforded us by the Gospel: *Both* of which are included in the Assertion in the Text, that 'tis *God which worketh in us both to will and to do.*

THE *last* words added in the Text, *ὕπὲρ τῆς εὐδοκίας*, of his good pleasure, do not signify, as *Some* have imagined, that God works all these things *arbitrarily*, without any regard to the Dispositions and Qualifications of Men. But the True meaning of the words is, that he does all these things *through his Goodness*; That is the Sense, of the word which we render *good pleasure*. 'Tis God's *Goodness* which moves him to *work in us both to will and to do*; to give us both the *Faculties of Nature*, and the *Supernatural Assistances of the Gospel*, to lead us unto Life and Happiness.

IV. THE *Fourth and Last* thing I proposed from the Text, was, to show *How* This consideration of God's *working in us both to*

S E R M. *will and to do*, is an Argument or Motive  
 XIV. to *Us* to *work out our own Salvation*.  
 ~~~~~  
*Work out your own Salvation*, For it is  
 God that *worketh in you both to Will and*  
*to Do of his good pleasure*. The Meaning  
 plainly is; not, that *God* does *All* for us;  
 For then the *Contrary* consequence must  
 needs have been true, that we could do  
*nothing for ourselves*: But *God*, of his  
 great Goodness gives us *Power*; therefore  
*We may and ought to Act*. And we may  
 depend also, that if we be sincere in the  
 Use of the Powers he has given us, our  
 Endeavours shall not be in vain. For,  
*Greater is He that is in Us, than He that*  
*is in the World*; and *if God be for us,*  
*who can be against Us?* The Exhortation  
 therefore in the Text, is of the same Im-  
 port with that in Eph. vi. 10. *Finally,*  
*my Brethren, be strong in the Lord, and*  
*in the Power of his might*.


THE *Inferences* proper to be drawn  
 from the whole of what has been said,  
 are:

I. FROM hence we may observe,  
 how little Foundation there is in Scrip-  
 ture for those Men's Opinion, who un-  
 derstanding

derstanding figurative Expressions literally and absurdly, contend that wicked Men have no Power to do any thing towards their own Conversion; and consequently ascribe the Cause of Men's Impenitency, to God's not giving them (as they call it) the *Grace to Repent*. Which is a very great Abuse of a Scripture-expression. For, God's *giving* or *granting* Men *Repentance*, signifies (in Scripture) his granting them the Favour to have their *Repentance accepted* to the Forgiveness of past Sins, or *allowed* instead of Innocence; and not his *conferring* Repentance upon them, as an external Donation: Which is altogether unintelligible. Nor is it less absurd, from those passages where very bad Men are said to be dead in *trespasses and sins*; and that when they amend, *God creates in them a new Heart*; to conclude literally, that wicked Men have no more Power to *amend their manners* than to *raise themselves from the dead*, or to *create themselves anew*. Which Doctrine, must of necessity make Men very *slothful* Servants.

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S E R M. 2dly, T H E *second* Use proper to be  
 XIV. made of the explication now given  
 of the words of the Text, is to Exhort Men to be *diligent* in working out their own Salvation by the Use of those Means which God has worked or implanted in them. Which exhortation cannot be better expressed, than in the words of the Author of the Book of *Wisdom*, ch. i. 12. *Seck not Death in the Errour of your life; and pull not upon yourselves destruction with the works of your own hand. For God made not Death, neither has he pleasure in the destruction of the living. But ungodly Men with their works and words called it unto them. And Ecclus. xv. 11. Say not thou, the Lord has caused me to err; for he hath no need of the sinful man. The Lord hateth all abomination; and they that fear God, love it not. He himself made Men from the beginning, and left them in the hands of his counsel; if thou wilt, to keep the Commandments, and to perform acceptable Faithfulness. He hath set fire and water before thee; stretch forth thy hand unto*  
 whether

whether thou wilt. Before man is Life SERM.  
and Death; and whether him liketh shall XIV.  
be given him. For the Wisdom of the   
Lord is great; and he is mighty in  
Power, and beholdeth all things. And  
his Eyes are upon them that fear him,  
and he knoweth every work of Man. He  
hath commanded no man to do wickedly,  
neither has he given any man licence to  
sin.









# SERMON XV.

Of the KINGDOM of GOD.




MATT. vi. 10.

*Thy Kingdom come.*



HOUGH every Christian ac-  
 knowledges this Prayer of our  
 Lord's composing to be a  
 complete Pattern and Direc-  
 tion, as to the *Subject-mat-  
 ter* of the things we are to pray for;  
 yet Many, very Many, 'tis to be feared,  
 perpetually repeat the *Words*, with very  
 little Attention to the *Sense* expressed by  
 them: Not considering, that All Devotion

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SERM. votion consists entirely in the Applica-  
 XV. tion of the *Mind* to God with an *Un-*  
 *derstanding* of what it desires; and not  
 at all in the mere repeating with the  
*Lips* certain customary *Forms of Words*.

OUR Lord in the *former* part of this  
 Prayer, after having taught us that the  
 True and Proper Object of Worship, to  
 whom our Petitions ought constantly  
 (through *His* Mediation) to be directed,  
 is *the Father which is in Heaven*; (that  
 is, *the Most High*; he who, not in *Place*  
 or *Situation*, but in *Dignity and Domi-*  
*nion*, is *Supreme over All* :) Our Lord, I  
 say, in the *former* part of this Prayer,  
 after directing us to the True Object of  
 Worship, our *Heavenly Father*, instructs  
 us to pray in the *first* place for Blessings  
*spiritual and eternal*; and then, in the  
*following* part of the Prayer, to ask for  
 the *Comforts and Necessaries* of this *pre-*  
*sent Life*. In the *former* part, among  
 the Petitions for Blessings of a *Spiritual*  
 nature, and one of the *Principal* of  
 Those Petitions, are the *Words of the*  
*Text*: Words of a very large and exten-  
 sive signification; comprehending in brief,  
 I almost

almost the *Whole Notion* of True Religion; and, therefore, *particularly* worthy to be the Subject of our Meditations: *Thy Kingdom come.*


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GOD is *by Nature King* over All; and his *Kingdom* is the *Universe*. His *Dominion* is infinite and everlasting, his *Power* absolute and irresistible, his *Glory* inexpressible and inconceivable. *Of him, and Through him, and To him, are all things,* Rom. xi. 36. That is, *For his Pleasure,* all things were *created*; *By his Providence,* all things are *preserved*; *To his Glory,* all things *terminate*. The *Heavens declare the Glory of God,* and the *Firmament sheweth his Handy-work*. The whole *Frame* of Nature obeys his *Commands*; and all the *Powers* of the *Universe* depend entirely upon the *Word* of his *Mouth*.

BUT because the *True Greatness* and *Dignity* of a *Governour* consists chiefly in the *Obedience* of them that can *disobey*: Because 'tis more *excellent* to be obeyed by *Reason and Understanding,* by *Will and Choice,* than by mere *necessity of Nature*: Because 'tis more *noble* to go-

vern

S E R M. *vern Free Agents by moral considerations,*  
 XV. *by the Knowledge of what is intrinsically*  
 ~~~~~ *Good or Evil, by a Sense of the Excel-*  
*lency of Truth and Virtue, by the Wisdom*  
*of reasonable and useful Laws, and by*  
*the Views of proper Rewards and Punish-*  
*ments, than to have Power over infinite*  
*Systems of inanimate Matter which has*  
*no Sense of the Regularity of his own*  
*Motions, nor capacity to perceive the*  
*Wisdom and Glory of its Creator: There-*  
*fore the Kingdom of God principally con-*  
*sists, in his Government of reasonable and*  
*intelligent Creatures; in his being served*  
*and obeyed by those, who at the same*  
*time are capable of disobeying; who by*  
*their own Actions set forth his Glory, and*  
*not merely in their being Acted upon by*  
*Him; who in their several Stations and*  
*Degrees, according to the Light that is*  
*afforded them, discern what is Right, and*  
*approve what is Good, and act by their*  
*Free Power, and are conscious of the Ex-*  
*cellency of Virtue, and Love him whom*  
*they Obey, and are made Happy by the*  
*participation of his Perfections. This is*  
*That, wherein principally consists the*  
 King-

*Kingdom of God*: A Kingdom, wherein S E R M. shines forth the *Goodness*, and *Justice*, and XV. *Wisdom*, and *Holiness*, of the Supreme Governour, as clearly as his *Power and Dominion* does in his ruling the whole material Universe. 

By *Sin*, This Kingdom of God, This his Government over the *Hearts and Wills* of the rational part of the Creation, is *opposed* and *withstood*. For his *natural Kingdom*, the Kingdom of his *Power*, *cannot* be resisted. In *This* respect, the whole World is in his Hand as a Dust of the Ballance; He can withdraw from all things their very *Being* itself, and, with a Blast of his mouth, whenever he pleases, reduce them all into Nothing in a Moment. So that 'tis a very *absurd* Notion, which some have entertained, from certain figurative expressions of Scripture very much misunderstood; as if the Devil had attempted to oppose the Almighty with *Force*, and had contended with him for the *Dominion of the Universe*. No: Such representations as These are only the Fictions of Poets. But indeed the *Devil rebelled* against God, in the same

S E R M. same Sense wherein *wicked* men rebel a-  
 gainst him. Not by thinking to resist  
 his *Power*, but by presumptuously ven-  
 turing to disobey his *Will*, in those things  
 wherein the Nature of Virtue and Vice,  
 and the very Effence of Moral Govern-  
 ment, necessarily requires that they should  
 not be over-ruled and compelled by Force.  
 For here, the Thing that God requires  
 is the *Free Consent of the Will*; which,  
 in the nature of things is not subject to  
 Compulsion; *Obedience itself* being *No*  
*obedience*, where there was no possibility  
 of having *disobeyed*. By *Sin* therefore  
 this *Moral Kingdom of God* began to be  
 opposed; by the *Sins of Evil Angels*, and  
 by the *Sins of Wicked men*: Among  
 whom, as they corrupted themselves by  
 degrees, in departing from the Living  
 God; the Devil set up a Kingdom of  
 Idolatry and Great Wickedness, in oppo-  
 sition to the Righteous Kingdom of God.  
 In order to *destroy* which *Works of the*  
*Devil*; (to *destroy* them, not by the ex-  
 ercise of *Omnipotence*, but by the esta-  
 blishment of *Virtue and True Religion*,  
 which is the *Proper* and the *Only proper*  
 Destruction

Destruction of Immorality and Vice;) S E R M .  
XV.  
 God was pleased to give assistance and strength to the Light of Nature and Reason, by making Revelations of himself from time to time to the degenerate world, and of the true manner of worshipping him; first by the *Patriarchs*, whom he appointed to be *Preachers of Righteousness* both before and after the Flood; and then by *Moses* and the *Prophets*; and at last by his *Own Son*; who came into the World, and was *manifested* (as *St John* assures us) *for This Cause, that he might destroy the Works of the Devil*; that is, that he might root out Idolatry and Superstitious Worship, and reform men from Debauchery and all Unrighteous Practices; that by the Knowledge, Worship, and Love of the One True God and Maker of all things, in Purity and Holiness of Life, in Justice, Meekness, and universal Charity and Good-will towards each Other, he might bring them back from a state of general corruption, to become Worthy and Obedient Subjects of his Father's Kingdom of Righteousness.

SERM.


XV.

FOR This reason, the *State* of the *Gospel*, the *Religion* of *Christ*, the *Obedience* of *Faith*, is in *Scripture* perpetually stiled the *Kingdom* of *God*: That *Kingdom* of *God*, which we are commanded to *seek* in the *righteousness* thereof: That *Kingdom*, which our *Saviour* told the *Jews*, when he began to preach, was *Then come unto them*: Which he elsewhere declared to the *Pharisees*, *cometh not with observation; neither shall they say, Lo here, or lo there; for behold, the Kingdom of God is within you*: Which, he assured his *Disciples*, *whosoever did not receive* with the *Meekness* and *Inoffensiveness* of a *little child* should not enter *thercinto* at all: and which, he threatens, in case of mens unworthiness, should be *taken from One Nation, and given to Another* that would *bring forth the Fruits* thereof: That *Kingdom*, which, in his *Parables*, our *Lord* represents under *various similitudes* of a *moral* signification; setting forth, by apt and proper *Comparisons*, its different *States* in the present *World*; and *out of which*, he tells us, shall finally be *gathered All Offences, and they*



they which do iniquity: That Kingdom, S E R M. XV. which God Thus described of old to Moses, *Exod. xix. 6. Ye shall be unto me a Kingdom of Priests, and an Holy Nation: And the Prophet Thus, Ps. xlv. 6. A Sceptre of Righteousness is the Sceptre of thy Kingdom: And the heavenly Host in the Revelation Thus, ch. xii. 9, 10. Now is come Salvation and Strength, and the Kingdom of our God; for That old Serpent-----which deceiveth the whole World, (that is, the Devil, the Spirit of Errour, the Spirit of Idolatry and Debauchery in All Nations,) was cast into the Earth, (that is, was thrown down low, and destroyed,) and his Angels were cast out with him: Lastly, That Kingdom, which the Apostle St Paul tells us, is not in Word, but in Power; is not Meat and Drink, (Forms and Ceremonies,) but Righteousness, and Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghost.*

THIS, in the *New Testament*, is the frequent and usual acceptation of this Phrase, *The Kingdom of God*; It signifies the *State of the Gospel*, or the establishment of *true Religion* in the World.

SERM. From which Use of the Phrase in Scri-  
 XV.  pture, we may by the way observe, how  
 greatly all such *Enthusiastick* persons err, who under the Notion of the *Kingdom of God* represent to themselves either the *Saints* exercising *Temporal Authority and Dominion* in *This World*, or *God himself* influencing the Minds of Men by his *absolute and irresistible Power*. As to the former Notion, That of the *Saints* exercising *Temporal Authority and Dominion* in *This World*; in *This* Sense, our Saviour has expressly declared, that his Kingdom is *not* of *This World*; And the True Prosperity of the Church of God, 'tis plain, does not at all consist in the Increase of *Temporal Grandeur*, which tends always to corruption; but in the Increase of *True Holiness and Virtue* only, in the Hearts and Lives of Men. And as to the *Other* Notion, That of *God's* influencing the Minds of Men by his *absolute and irresistible Power*; *This* also is a very erroneous apprehension concerning the manner of *God's ruling* over *Moral Agents*: For the True Greatness and Glory of a Prince reigning in his Kingdom,

dom, is the Willing *Obedience* of his Subjects, not their *Weakness and Incapacity of resisting him*: And in all things relating to *Religion and Morality*, 'tis not magnifying the Glory and Majesty of God, to suppose *Him* acting upon and over-ruling mens *Wills* by his *Power*, but to suppose *Them* (like *reasonable creatures*) *choosing* to obey his *Commands* by their *Wills*, and *loving* the Practice of *Virtue and Goodness*.

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THIS therefore is the *usual Meaning* of the *Kingdom of God* in Scripture: It denotes the *State of the Gospel*, or the Prevalency of *True Religion* among Men.

NEVERTHELESS, Since, at the Best, *all that can here be done* in this *imperfect State* towards establishing God's Kingdom of *Virtue and Righteousness*, and consequently of *True Happiness* among his *Creatures*: Since, I say, *All that can be done* towards these great Ends in this present *frail and imperfect State*, is *only in order* to a more *complete and perfect State* hereafter, when God shall have *put down all Rule and all Authority and Power*; and when *All Enemies, Satan, and Sin, and Death*, shall be entirely *de-*

S E R M. *stroyed*; and his *Saints* shall reign with  
 XV. him in *Glory* for ever: Therefore to *That*  
 future and perfect State it is, that This  
 phrase, *The Kingdom of God*, always has  
 reference, even when 'tis applied to the  
*state of the Gospel Here*: And *That Hea-*  
*venly State* it is, which ultimately and  
 properly is stiled *the Kingdom of God*;  
 Wherein the *Righteous* shall shine forth as  
 the Sun, in the *Kingdom of their Father*;  
 Into which Kingdom, there shall in no  
 case enter any thing that defileth, neither  
 whatsoever loveth or maketh a Lye; but  
 they who overcome, (that is, they who  
 so resist the Temptations of Covetous-  
 ness, Ambition, and Sensual Pleasure, as  
 in the midst of a degenerate and de-  
 bauched World, to follow Truth, and  
 Right, and Charity, fearing God, and  
 keeping his Commandments;) *These* shall  
 receive the *Kingdom prepared for them*  
*from the beginning of the World*, and (ac-  
 cording to the gracious Promise of their  
 Father) shall inherit it for ever. This  
*Heavenly State*, I say, it is, to which  
 That phrase, *The Kingdom of God*, always  
 has reference, even when 'tis expressly  
 applied to *the State of the Gospel here*.

And

And 'tis with Great Propriety of expref-  
 S E R M.  
 sion, that *Both* thefe States are, as well  
 X V.  
*ſeparately* as *jointly*, included under this  
 One Denomination: They being indeed,  
 not *Two diſtinct* States, but One the *con-*  
*tinuation only* of the Other; differing  
 from each other no otherwiſe, than as  
 Seed-time from Harveſt, or as Childhood  
 from the perfection of Man's eſtate:  
*Virtue*, and *Goodneſs*, and the *Love of*  
*God*, and *Obedience* to him at *preſent*,  
 being the *Beginnings of Happineſs here*;  
 and the *Glories of Heaven* hereafter being  
 nothing elſe but the ſame *Virtue*, and  
*Goodneſs*, and *Love of God*, and *Obedience*  
 to him, completed and made perfect  
*There*, by an aſſurance of his uninter-  
 rupted Favour and Preſence for ever.  
 And This Notion, by the way, ſhows  
 the extreme Folly and Abſurdity of All  
 Thoſe, who (fundamentally erring from  
 the Truth and Nature of Things,) found  
 their *Religion here*, and their *expectations*  
*of Happineſs hereafter*, in any thing elſe  
 (whatſoever it be) *diſtinct* from *Virtue*,  
 and *Righteouſneſs*, and *Charity*, and *True*  
*Holineſs*; which things are, not only the  
*Characters* and *Marks* of, but they are

S E R M. themselves necessarily and immutably the  
 XV. *Very Essence of the Kingdom of God.*

FROM what has been hitherto said in explication of this phrase so very frequently met with in the *New Testament*, it appears therefore, that there are *Three* Senses, to which the full Notion of the *Kingdom of God* extends. There is his *Kingdom of Nature*, by which he ruleth with irresistible Power, absolutely over *All*: There is his *Kingdom of Grace or Virtue*; by which he reigneth in the *Hearts of Moral Agents*, who obey him *willingly* or of *Free Choice*: And there is his *Kingdom of Glory*; wherein he shall finally be for ever adored by Those, who, through a Life of Virtue and True Holiness, shall be found *meet to be Partakers of That Inheritance of the Saints in Light*.


AND according to these *several* senses of the Phrase, must the Petition in the Text, *Thy Kingdom come*, be in like manner understood, to extend to different Significations.

I. IN the *first* place, as to the Natural *Kingdom of God*; *This* indeed we cannot with *Any Propriety* pray that it *may come*,  
 because,

because, by *Necessity of Nature*, it always S E R M.  
*is, and cannot but be, actually present.* XV.

'Tis necessarily, from *everlasting to everlasting*; a Kingdom of absolute and irresistible Power; without *Limits*, and without *Interruption*; In *all* Places alike, without distinction; and that cannot *come* at *one* Time more than at *another*. Nevertheless, though the Kingdom of God, in *This* sense, is what we cannot pray *may come*; yet we *may* and *ought* to rejoice in the Thoughts of its being always Present: *Pj. xcvi. 1. The Lord reigneth, let the Earth rejoice; let the multitude of the Isles be glad thereof.* 'Tis matter of great and just satisfaction to reasonable Minds, to consider that the Government and Sovereignty of the Universe, the Alone Truly absolute and uncontroulable Power, is in the hands of unerring Wisdom and of perfect Goodness; and that things are not under the uncomfortable Dominion of Blind Chance, or of inexorable and unrelenting Fate. But


2dly, THAT therefore which our Saviour principally directs us to desire and pray for in This Petition, is the establishment

S E R M. blishment of God's Kingdom of *Grace*  
 XV. or *Virtue*. That as his *Kingdom of Na-*  

*ture* ruleth *Always absolutely* over All  
*things*, so his *Kingdom of Grace* or *Vir-*  
*tue* may in *due Time* be *universally* esta-  
 blished over its *proper Subjects*: As his  
*natural Power* is *absolute and uncontroula-*  
*ble*, so his *spiritual Dominion* over the  
 Hearts and Wills of rational Creatures,  
 may *prevail* finally against all the Oppo-  
 sition of Sin and Satan: As his *Glory* es-  
 sentially is *infinite and immutable*; so *re-*  
*latively* also, it may in *due time* be pro-  
 moted and acknowledged by all reasonable  
 Creatures. *This* is the *principal* sense of  
 our praying for the *Kingdom of God* to  
*come*. 'Tis expressing our earnest Desire,  
 that the Gospel of Christ, the true Reli-  
 gion of God, in its native and uncorrupt-  
 ed Simplicity, may spread and prevail o-  
 ver the whole Earth, as the *Waters cover*  
*the Sea*; and that *all the Kingdoms of the*  
*World* may become the *Kingdoms of our*  
*Lord and of his Christ*; May become his  
*Kingdoms*, not by conquest of Temporal  
 Power, but by Perswasion and Force of  
 Truth, by the Power, and Demonstration  
 of



of the Spirit. And that all they who *have* S E R M. XV. embraced the Gospel in Profession, may *let the Kingdom of God rule in their Hearts*, by *living as worthy Subjects* of it. For 'tis in the *willing Subjection* of the Mind to *Truth and Right*, and in the regulating consequently all *Actions, Passions, Appetites, and Affections*, according to the Divine Laws; in *This* it is, that this *Kingdom of God* principally consists. By his *Power*, he can *at all times* subdue all *things* unto himself; and by *This* irresistible Dominion, the whole material unintelligent World is perpetually governed, and obeys it *necessarily*, without *any possibility* of *disobeying*: But 'tis the *Will of God*, that *Intelligent and Rational* Beings should not obey *his Will*, but by *their own*; should not obey by *necessity of nature*, but by the *free Choice and unconstrained Compliance* of the *Will*. The *material Universe* therefore, the whole *Frame of Nature* is subject to the *Power of God*; but reasonable *Creatures only* are subject to his *Laws*. By *This* they become *accountable*, and *capable of being judged*: By *This*,

S E R M. This, they are rendred either *acceptable*  
 XV: to him, and capable of *Reward*; or *ob-*  
 ~~~~~ *noxious*, and *liable to be punished*. This  
 Trial, This Probation he puts upon them  
 suitable to their rational Nature: And  
 'tis the *Perfection* of their *Nature*, and  
 the *highest Improvement* of their *Virtue*,  
 to *chuse* to obey him *cheerfully and rea-*  
*dily*. The more *excellent* the *Nature*,  
 and the more *perfect* the *Virtue* of any  
*reasonable Creature* is, the more does it  
 delight in obeying the most perfect Will  
 of God, who is *Perfection* and *Goodness*  
*itself*. For this reason, the *Angels in*  
*Heaven* are stiled in Scripture, by way of  
 eminence, *those Servants of His that do*  
*his Pleasure*. And our Saviour, as it  
 were by way of *explication* of this Peti-  
 tion, *Thy Kingdom come*, directs us to  
 proceed in the following words, *Thy Will*  
*be done in Earth as it is in Heaven*: And  
 elsewhere sets before us, to the same  
 End, *his Own still more perfect Example*,  
*Job. iv. 34. My Meat is to do the Will of*  
*Him that sent me, and to finish his Work.*  
 But

3dly and *Lastly*, THERE is still another S E R M. sense of this Petition, which was very XV, much insisted on in the Primitive Church:  And That is, that God's *Kingdom of Glory* might *come speedily*; and that being *quickly* delivered from the Miseries of this sinful and corrupt World, they might *soon* attain to That *Blessed Hope* of the *Resurrection from the Dead*. It was an Opinion which *prevailed generally* in those early Ages, that at the Resurrection every man should arise *in Order* according to the *degree* of his Goodness; and that they who were raised and judged *first*, should *themselves* have a part in *judging* those which followed. Whether there was *just ground* for this opinion, or not, I shall not here take upon me to determine: But the *Texts* on which they built it were these which follow; 1 Cor. xv. 23. *Every man in his own order; Christ, the First-fruits; afterward they that are Christ's, at his coming: and Then cometh the end.* 1 Thes. iv. 16. *The dead in Christ shall rise first.* Rev. xx. 6. *Blessed and holy is He that has part in the first Resurrection.* 1 Pet. iv. 17. *Judg-*

S E R M. *ment must begin at the House of God.*

XV. I Cor. vi. 2. *Do ye not know that the Saints shall judge the World? ----- and that we shall judge Angels? Jude 14. The Lord cometh with ten thousand of his Saints to execute Judgment. Matt. xix. 28. Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me in the Regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit in the Throne of his Glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel: And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my Name's sake, shall receive an hundred-fold, and shall inherit everlasting Life: In St Luke it is, shall receive manifold more in This Present time, and, in the World to come, Life everlasting, ch. xviii. 30. Lastly, Rev. xx. 4. I saw Thrones, and they sat upon them, and Judgment was given unto them; and I saw the Souls of them that were beheaded for the testimony of Jesus, and for the word of God, and----they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.*

'Tis remarkable, the Text does not say,  
that

that *Christ* came down and reigned upon *Earth* a thousand years; as Many have imagined without *Any* ground: But only that the Martyrs *reigned with Christ* a thousand years; *whatever* be the meaning of that Prophetical, and perhaps figurative, period of Time. These are the Texts upon which in the Primitive times was built That general Opinion, that at the Resurrection every man should arise *in Order* according to the *degree* of his Goodness; and which made them therefore in their Prayers petition for an early Resurrection. Whether there was in the Texts sufficient foundation for the Opinion in *This particular* or no, (which 'tis not at all needful for *Me* here to determine,) yet *in the general* 'tis certain, that they who lived in such continual State of Persecution as the Primitive Christians did, and had such a lively sense as they always had upon their Minds of the Glory and Happiness of Heaven, had very good reason to pray earnestly and constantly, that the *Kingdom of God* (in this Last and most perfect Sense of the phrase) might

S E R M.  
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S E R M. might speedily come; that it would  
 XV. please God *shortly to accomplish the*  
 Number of his Elect, and to hasten his  
 Kingdom: According to that pathetick  
 conclusion of the book of the *Revelation*,  
 ch. xxii. 20. *He which testifieth these*  
*things, saith, Surely I come quickly:*  
*Amen; even so come Lord Jesus.* And  
 though (God be Thanked) *We* are not  
 Now under such *continual* and such *se-*  
*vere* Persecution, as the *Primitive and*  
*Better* Christians were; yet whosoever  
 has a just sense of the *Vanity* and *Dis-*  
*orders* of this *present* World, and the  
*Glory* of the World to come; whosoever  
 observes what St Paul foretels, 2 *Tim.*  
 iii. 12. *Yea, and All that will live godly*  
*in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution;*  
 and considers the Difficulties continually  
 arising to *upright and sincere* men in  
 Every Station of Life, from the nume-  
 rous Errors and Corruptions, evil Cus-  
 toms and debauched Practices, of an  
*ignorant, superstitious, and tyrannical*  
 World; will see reason to think it  
*still and ever,* a most natural and pro-  
 per part of the Prayer of every Good  
 Christian,

Christian, that the *Kingdom of God may* S E R M.  
*come*; even That *New Heavens and New* XV.  
*Earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.*

To which, that we may All at length  
arrive, *God of his infinite Mercy grant,*  
&c.



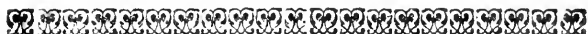






# SERMON XVI.

Of the KINGDOM of GOD.




St MATT. vi. 33.

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



OUR Saviour in the 24<sup>th</sup> S E R M.  
verse of this chapter, warns XVI.  
his Disciples of the absolute  
Impossibility of their being  
at the same time servants of

God, and slaves to the pleasures of this

S E R M. present corrupt World. *No man, says he,*  
 XVI. *can serve two Masters; No man can at*  
 one and the same time obey two Persons  
 of a contrary disposition; The Judgment and Affections of his Heart and Soul cannot at once be fixt and settled upon things of a different and inconsistent nature: *For either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other.* He must of necessity, by obeying the one, disobey and neglect the other; and then, *his* Servant only he is to whom he obeys. *Ye cannot serve God and Mammon; ye cannot be truly religious and sincere servants of God, while your Hearts and Affections are too intently and inseparably fixt upon the vanities of the present sinful World; For in all probability there will sometime or other arise a competition between them; and then he that cannot part with those enjoyments of the World which are inconsistent with his Religion, must neglect his duty towards God; and he that will upon no Account neglect his Duty towards God, must be content to part with*  
 all

all the contrary Interests in the present World. S E R M.  
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THIS therefore being the case, that we cannot attend wholly to two contrary things at once; and that it cannot be imagined, but that one or the other of them must in many circumstances and upon many occasions be postponed; our Saviour proceeds to advise us, ver. 25. *which* of the two opposite Interests 'tis of the greatest importance for us to secure. He admonishes us, that our main and principal Intentions ought always to be fixed upon our Chief, that is, our future Happiness; without being unreasonably and anxiously solicitous concerning the transitory Injoyments of this present life; *Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for the body, what ye shall put on.* With respect to the *Apostles*, to whom these words were more immediately directed, they are to be understood in the *strict* and *literal* Sense; that being in a perpetual Progress from one place to another to preach the Gospel, they were not to make any provision at

S E R M. all for their own maintenance, but to rely  
 XVI. ly entirely upon the Providence of God,  
 by whose appointment they were im-  
 ployed in that spiritual work. But as the  
 words express the duty of *Christians at all  
 times and in all places*, they must be un-  
 derstood in a larger and less strict Sense;  
 to signify, that, after we have used a rea-  
 sonable industry to obtain the necessaries  
 of this present life, we ought not to be  
 any further anxious and solicitous about  
 them; but to rely on the Providence  
 of God for a continual supply of these  
 things by his blessings upon our *just* In-  
 deavours, and to be content with what  
 proportion of them he is pleased to be-  
 stow upon us in the ways of Righte-  
 ousness.


THE Reasons or Arguments, *why* we  
 ought thus contentedly to rely upon the  
 Providence of God, our Saviour adds in  
 the 25<sup>th</sup> and following verses: *Is not  
 the Life more than meat, and the Body  
 than raiment?* He that first gave you  
 Life and Being, without your contribu-  
 ting any thing towards it yourselves; will  
 he not much more bestow upon you, in  
 the

the ways of Virtue and Integrity, things S E R M.  
 necessary for the support and preservation XVI.  
 of that Life? *Behold the fowls of the Air; for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; they foresee not their own Wants, nor are able to make any provision against them; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them; Are ye not much better than they? And why take ye Thought for raiment; Consider the Lillies of the Field how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin; and yet God gives them a continual increase, and clothes them with inimitable Beauty; so that even Solomon himself in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these: Wherefore if God so clothe the grass of the Field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little Faith?*

AFTER which Reasonings he repeats again the admonition itself, ver. 31. *Therefore take no Thought, saying, What shall we eat, or what shall we drink? or wherewithal shall we be clothed? (for after these things do the Gentiles seek;) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye*

S E R M. *have need of all these things*; (Which admonition, if it be applied, not to the then present circumstances of the Apostle's only, but to all Christians in general; it must be understood with some limitations in the sense before explained;) And then he adds, in the Words of the Text, *But seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.*

THE *Kingdom of God*, in Scripture-phrase, signifies, sometimes the Glory and Happiness of *Heaven*; sometimes the state of the Gospel, the establishment of the Religion of Christ upon *Earth*; and very frequently *Both* of them together; they being in reality one and the same thing, differing only in time and in degree. For God carries on one uniform and regular design of bringing all his Creatures to Righteousness and Happiness; and these are inseparable the one from the other. Righteousness is the only possible foundation of true Happiness; and Happiness is, both in the nature of things and by the appointment of God, the Fruit and the Effect of Righteousness. They differ

differ only, as Seed-time and Harvest, as S E R M. Childhood and the State of a Man; XVI. *Grace or Virtue*, being the beginning,  the ground and principle of *Happiness*, growing up and improving towards the Perfection of *Glory*. The *Kingdom of God* therefore, when it signifies *Both*, is not used in different Senses, but in its most proper and natural signification: On the contrary, when it seems restrained to *One* signification, it is *then rather* taken figuratively, and put only as a Part for the Whole. In the Text, it is of little importance in *which* of the two Senses we understand it: For, if by the *Kingdom of God*, be meant the state of the Gospel or the Religion of Christ here; yet without doubt 'tis principally with regard to its final issue and perfection in Heaven: And if thereby be meant the Glory and Happiness of Heaven, yet this always presupposes the foregoing establishment of true Righteousness and Holiness upon Earth. Or, they may seem *Both* to be expressed in these words of our Saviour, *The Kingdom of God and his Righteousness*; the *Glory of Heaven*, and the

S E R M. the *Way* that leads to it ; the *End* to be ultimately aimed at, and the necessary and indispensable *Means* of attaining it.

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To *Seek* these things, is to value and esteem them ; to fix our Thoughts and Meditations upon them ; to propose them to ourselves as the most valuable End, towards which all our Actions ought to be directed ; to be diligent in inquiring and studying the Means by which they may best be attained ; and to be as zealous and hearty, as sincere and steady in our indeavours after them, as the *Gentiles*, i. e. as worldly men, are, in seeking after the Pleasures and Profits, in pursuing the Interests and Injoyments of the present Life. This is to *seek* the *Kingdom of God*, and his *Righteousness*: Using our utmost indeavours, imploying all our Powers and Faculties, to promote the Interest of true Religion and the Practice of Virtue among Men, which is the beginning of the *Kingdom of God* on *Earth*; in order to secure to Ourselves and Others a portion in that eternal state of Happiness, which



is the final establishment of his *Kingdom* S E R M.  
in *Heaven*. XVI.



SEEK ye *first*; i. e. seek these things *before*, and in *preference* to all other things; seek them with greater diligence and more earnest labour, with steddier zeal and with a warmer affection, with greater care and deeper concern, with a more constant and unwearied application: Seek them as things of greater moment, even of infinite importance; so as in competition always to prefer them clearly before all other Interests and Designs whatsoever: Considering that there is no proportion between things finite and infinite, no comparison between things temporal and eternal: that it will be unspeakably a greater Happiness to be judged worthy of the meanest portion of that eternal inheritance, where *neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through and steal*, than to be put in possession of all the short-lived empires of this World, and of all those transitory Riches, which of themselves moulder away in few years into that dust from whence they were originally taken:

that

S E R M. that 'tis *even here* infinitely a greater pleasure to *save a Soul from Death by converting a Sinner from the Error of his Ways*, than Sensual and Voluptuous Persons ever find in the highest gratifications of Sense, or worldly minds in the possession and injoyment of the largest Treasures.

S E E K ye *first* the Kingdom of God; *i. e.* not so as wholly to exclude the care of other things; For That is impossible in this present Life, and to pretend to it, is but Enthusiasm, and hinders the spreading of true Religion: But seek *this* chiefly and in the first place; Make *this* your principal and main care; Suffer nothing to interfere or come in competition with it: Do this *above* and *before* all other things, and yet other things need not to be left undone. The very Command itself of seeking this *first*, implies that other things also may be sought *afterwards*; that other things likewise may be taken care for, in their proper *place* and *subordinate* Rank; with a due and moderate degree of affection, such as may always be consistent with this  
ultimate

ultimate and great design. And with *This* S E R M.  
*Limitation*, if not to the *Apostles them-* XVI.  
*selves*, yet at least so far as they can be  
a general precept to *all Christians at all*  
*times*, must the Words (as I before hint-  
ed) of necessity be understood.



THE Words being thus explained,  
we may observe in them these three  
things:


I. A *Precept*, or the *Duty* command-  
ed, *Seek ye the Kingdom of God and his*  
*Righteousness*.

II. THE *manner* and *degree* of the Ob-  
ligation, *Seek it first*.

III. THE *Promises* even of a *temporal*  
*Reward* annexed. *And all these things*  
*shall be added unto you*.

I. THERE is in the Words a *Precept*,  
or the *Duty* commanded, *Seek ye the*  
*Kingdom of God, and his righteousness*.  
And here without doubt, there is no Man  
who with any the least degree of Sincerity  
calls himself by the Name of Christian,  
but *professes* and *thinks* that he seeks the  
Kingdom of God. The very title and  
profession of a Christian, implies as  
much as his being a Candidate for Hea-  
ven;

S E R M. ven; And so long as he continues a member of the Church of Christ *here*, he is apt to believe that he retains his title, and is going forwards towards his inheritance in the glory that shall be revealed *hereafter*; especially if he be constant in his outward Profession; if he be zealous for Notions which perhaps he understands not, and which tend not much to influence practice; and if he be diligent in attending the external rites and services of Religion. But 'tis observable that our Saviour tells us, St *Luk.* xiii. 24. that there are *many* that seek *to enter in*, who *shall not be able*; And in the expression of the Text itself he plainly enough intimates, that Men may *in vain* seek the Kingdom of God, if they seek it not according to the righteousness thereof. Since therefore there *is* such a thing as *Seeking* without *Effect*; and to fall finally short of what we profess to Seek for is at least an equal, perhaps a greater Misery, than never to have sought after it at all; it cannot but be a Subject worthy our most serious Consideration, to inquire into the full meaning and extent

ment of this precept of our Saviour; S E R M.  
 which unquestionably is not obeyed in its XVI.  
 true Sense, unless we *so Seek* as to be able   
 to *Find*. St Paul, 1 Cor. ix. 24. compares the life of a Christian to a *Race*, wherein *they that run, run all, but one receiveth the prize*; and thereupon he exhorts his *Corinthians so* to run, that they might *obtain*. In like manner our Saviour in the Text, when he commands us to seek the Kingdom of God, and directs us to seek it in the way of righteousness, and elsewhere warns us that many who seek it shall not be able to find it; he cannot but be understood as exhorting us to seek it earnestly and effectually and in *such* a manner, as that we may not finally fail to attain it.

FOR our clearer direction therefore in obeying this precept, 'tis to be observed, that seeking any thing sincerely and effectually, implies in it the following particulars.

I. HAVING a just *value and true esteem* for the thing we profess to seek after. For the desires and indeavours after any object, must of necessity always  
 be

S E R M.

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be proportionable, not to the real and intrinſick value of the thing itſelf, but to the degree of the *impreſſion* it makes upon our mind, and of the affection it conſequently excites in it. There are great numbers of thoſe who call themſelves Chriſtians, who though they are afraid indeed of the puniſhment of Hell, and cannot bear the terror of eternal torments; (which makes them therefore not dare to be openly profane;) yet they have no real Eſteem for the ſtate of Heaven, no earneſt deſire after that Happineſs, which conſiſts in the likenes of God and in the Perfection of Virtue. To prevent the ill Effects of which Remiſſneſs, the Scripture uſes great variety of Arguments to excite in us a juſt Regard and true Value for the greatneſs of that Happineſs, which God has vouchſafed to prepare for them that love and obey him; repreſenting it to us under the Notion of a *Pearl* of ſuch great price, that that Perſon is ſpoken of as acting very wiſely, who immediately ſold all that he had to purchaſe it; under the ſimilitude of a *Crown* that never fades;

of

of a *Kingdom* that will continue for ever; of a *Prize* which no Labour can be too much in contending for; of a *Glory* shining forth as the Sun, as the Brightness of the Firmament, and as the Stars for ever and ever; of a *Treasure* that can never waste, nor be diminished either by violence or fraud; of *fulness of joy* without intermission, and *pleasures* that will last for evermore; of *seeing the Face* of God, and being made like unto him, and being assured of his Love and Favour for ever. And yet all these are but figurative expressions, Comparisons, and very imperfect representations; For, after all that is or can be said, yet *Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, neither hath entered into the Heart of man to conceive, the things that God hath prepared for them that love him.* In which One elegant Image there is contained *much Variety* under a most beautiful Gradation. Great is the Diversity of glorious Objects which entertain the *Eye* in contemplating the beautiful Order and exquisite proportion of the Works of God; and yet this is far exceeded by the hearing

SERM.  
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SERM. of the Ear, and by the larger compass of  
 XVI. Other men's observations joyned with  
 our own. Many are the Glories which  
 the *Ear* hath heard of, in the descrip-  
 tion of all parts of the World at present,  
 and in the Histories of the Ages that  
 have past before us; and yet these like-  
 wise are still far excelled, by what the  
 Heart of man is able to conceive, and  
 the Mind can represent to itself in the  
 Imaginations of the Thoughts. Vastly  
 great, and even unlimited are the Glo-  
 ries, which a vigorous and comprehen-  
 sive *Imagination* can frame to itself as  
 possible; and yet even these likewise (says  
 the Apostle) are as far excelled by the glo-  
 ry that shall be revealed in the *Kingdom*  
*of God*, as the Seeing of the Eye is by  
 the Hearing of the Ear, or the Hearing of  
 the Ear by the Imagination of the Heart.  
 But because these things after all are in  
 their own nature *spiritual*, and can only  
 be *spiritually discerned*; 'tis still a matter  
 of considerable Difficulty, and requires  
 frequent and serious Meditation, to pos-  
 sess our minds with a just value and due  
 esteem of them; which is absolutely ne-  
 cessary,



cessary, in order to our seeking them worthily, and with that earnestness and diligence they deserve. The Affections must be drawn off from vain Imaginations, and the Mind reconciled to the Love of Truth and Goodness: We must *hunger and thirst after righteousness*, as our Saviour expresses it; or, in the Psalmist's Phrase, *thirst after it*, even as the *Hart panteth after the Water-brooks*. Otherwise, what wonder is it that men fall short of the Kingdom of God, both here and hereafter; that they attain not to its Righteousness here, and to the Glory of it hereafter; if their Desires after it be weak, their indeavours careless, and they *seek* it as if they sought it not?

2. SEEKING any thing heartily and effectually, implies that we *fix our Attention* continually, *i. e.* habitually upon it. 'Tis not sufficient that our judgment be convinced of the importance and necessity of Religion, unless our Passions and Affections likewise be in some measure interested. Nor is it enough that our Affections be moved once or seldom, but our zeal must be renew'd by frequent me-

S E R M. ditation. *We must give earnest heed to*  
 XVI. *the things which we have heard, lest at*  
 any time we should let them slip, Heb. ii. 1.  
 For, as in matters of Sense, Objects at a distance appear small and imperfect; and nothing but reasoning and judgment can correct the errors and deceptions of the Sight; so in matters of Religion and of spiritual concern, nothing but frequent consideration and earnest and serious meditation can represent those things as *present* to us, so as to cause them to make vigorous and lasting impressions upon our Minds, which yet we all know *cannot be very far distant* from Us: For *Death* is not remote from the longest Liver in this transitory World; and *That* conveys us if not immediately, yet without any farther Change of our State, it conveys us unto Judgment. To prevent our Attention being diverted from these things, the Apostles are perpetually exhorting us, to raise our thoughts from the Vanities of this transitory and uncertain World, to the Glories of that Heavenly and eternal Kingdom which we profess to seek as our ultimate End: to *set*  
*our*

*our affections on things above, not on things* S E R M.  
*in the Earth.* And our Saviour in his XVI.

Parable of the Sower warns us, how the Word of the Kingdom, notwithstanding the unspeakable Weight and Importance of it, may yet very possibly make no more impresson on the Minds of careless and inconsiderate Persons, than Seed cast upon the hard high-way can enter into the Earth and grow; or if the Word preached *does* make some impresson at first, yet that it may easily be drowned by the Cares and Business and Pleasures of a corrupt World, as Corn is choked and over-run, by a multitude of Weeds. And This without question is the true Reason, why in so great a number of Christians who seem in speculation to believe the great doctrines of Religion, and profess zealously to seek the Kingdom of God; yet in reality these things have little more influence upon their Lives and Practice, than a Demonstration of any Truth laid aside and neglected after it has once been understood; or than a passage of a History, forgotten after it has been once read; than a Dream,

S E R M. when one awaketh ; or than a past  
 XVI. Thought that is never recollected. This  
 sort of Persons, are excellently described  
 by *Ezekiel*, ch. xxxiii. 31. *They come un-*  
*to thee, as my people cometh, and they sit*  
*before thee as my people, and they hear thy*  
*words, but they will not do them ; for with*  
*their mouth they shew much love, but their*  
*heart goeth after their Covetousness. And*  
*lo, thou art to them as a very lovely song,*  
*of one that has a pleasant voice, and can*  
*play well on an instrument ; for they hear*  
*thy words, but they do them not.*

3. SEEKING any thing heartily and effectually, implies, that we be *diligent and impartial in inquiring after the best and most certain means of attaining it.* He that in earnest seeks the Kingdom of God, must not be bent upon choosing his own ways and doing his own pleasure, upon gratifying his own inclinations and indulging his own Passions ; but on the contrary must resolve to submit entirely to the Will of God, to embrace Truth where-ever he finds it, and to be always sincere in the Search after it. *Trust in the Lord with all thine Heart, and lean not to thine*

*thine own Understanding,* Prov. iii. 5. S E R M. XVI.  
 Zeal without Knowledge, Heat in the Passions without Light in the Understanding, is like travelling in a wrong road; which the faster a man goes, and the further he proceeds in it, the farther he is from his journey's End, and with the greater difficulty will he return into the Way that truly leads to it. The first Disposition necessary in him that with Effect would *seek* the Kingdom of God, is, that with a Meek and Unprejudiced Mind he consider and study the *Means* by which God has directed him to obtain it, and with simplicity and purity of Intention receive the *ingrafted Word*, which is able to *save his Soul*: following the Example of Holy *David*, whose study all the day long was in the Law of God, and in the night-season also he meditated on the same. For Want of this desire of true instruction it is, that so many blind Superstitions, so many absurd unintelligible Doctrines, and so many unreasonable Practices, have in several Ages of the World crept in under pretense and in the room of Religion; ma-

S F R M. king void the plainest Reason of things  
 XVI. and the most exprefs Commandment of  
 God, through the Corruptions and Disputes of Men ; and fulfilling that Prophecy of our Saviour, that many should *seek to enter in*, (seeking in vain and wrong ways, in ways of their own inventing and agreeable to their own corrupt affections,) many should in this manner *seek to enter in, and should not be able*. The only safe, certain, and general direction, by which persons of all capacities may guide themselves in this matter, in the midst of a divided and contentious World, is to adhere stedfastly to the *two great Rules* which God has given us to walk by ; *viz.* never allowing ourselves in any Action contrary to our *Reason* and *Conscience*, which (as the Wise man elegantly expresses it) is the *Candle of the Lord* ; or contrary to *Scripture*, which is the brighter and clearer Light of Revelation. And herein we must first take care, not to fail in the *foundation* ; in those *plain* and *certain* things, wherein no man can innocently mistake, but *he that runs may read them* ;  
 in

in those great commandments, those weightier matters of the Law, the Love of God and of our Neighbour: and then we may with more safety proceed to consider the *Superstructure*, of doctrines more speculative and less certain, of rites more difficult and of less importance. But for any man who is profane and a blasphemer of the Name of God, who is unjust and unrighteous towards his Neighbour, or who lives in the Habitual Practice of Intemperance and Debauchery; for such an One to pretend to seek zealously the Kingdom of God, in matters of external form, or in contending for Laws and Doctrines of Men, is like labouring to set in order the garments upon a *dead* Body; or like watering a Plant, whose very roots are dead. 'Tis contending about the *Name* of Religion, where the *Thing* is not; and for the *Shadow*, where there is no *Substance*. And here comes in that great and never-failing Rule of our Saviour, *By their Fruits ye shall know them*. Whoever is more concerned for particular Forms and Ceremonies, for Doctrines of a Sect or Party, for Dominion

S E R M. Dominion over other men's Consciences,  
 XVI. for any thing that depends on temporal  
 Authority, than for the Discovery of  
 Truth and the Practice of Virtue; very  
 sure we may be, that That Man's reli-  
 gion is Vain.

4thly and lastly, S E E K I N G any thing  
 heartily, sincerely, and effectually, im-  
 plies, that we immediately *Practise and*  
*put in Execution*, what we are once fa-  
 tisfied is the true Means to obtain it.  
 Resting in the speculative part of Religi-  
 on is as if a man should hope to ar-  
 rive at his journey's end, merely by in-  
 structing himself in the knowledge of  
 the Way. No: He that in earnest *seeks*  
*the Kingdom of God* must not only know  
 and understand, but must in the course  
 of his Life put in *Practise* also the *Right-*  
*cousness thereof*. *Though I speak* (saith  
 St Paul) *with the Tongues of Men and of*  
*Angels, and have not Charity, I am be-*  
*come as sounding brass or a tinkling cym-*  
*bal: and though I have the gift of Pro-*  
*phesy and understand all mysteries, and all*  
*knowledge; and though I have all Faith,*  
*so that I could remove mountains, and have*  
 not



not Charity, it profiteth me nothing. The Pharisees understood, the Scribes disputed well about the Law; and many at the day of judgment shall say, Lord, have we not taught in thy streets, and in thy name done many wonderful works; and yet he will say unto them, I know ye not; depart from me all ye workers of Iniquity: For, not he that knows, but he only that does righteousness, is righteous. And this is evidently the Work, not of a few hours, but of a whole life: So that they who put off their Repentance to their Death-bed, far from seeking first, do plainly seek only in the last place the Kingdom of God and his righteousness: i. e. they are the greatest neglecters and despisers of it: And consequently they shall be least in the Kingdom of Heaven; i. e. in Scripture-Phrase, far shall they be from ever arriving there. Which brings me to the II<sup>d</sup> thing I proposed to speak to, viz. the manner and degree of the Obligation; Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.

S E R M.

XVI.





# SERMON XVII.

Of the KINGDOM of GOD.



MATT. vi. 33.

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



THIS is a very lively and affecting description of Providence, which our Saviour gives us in his excellent discourse to his Disciples in this chapter: That our heavenly Father knoweth what things

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S E R M. *we have need of before we ask him ;*  
 XVII. and is at all times able and willing to  
 supply us with what his infinite Wis-  
 dom knows to be needful and conveni-  
 ent for us ; that not only *men* who are  
 endued with reason and forecast, and  
 have the advantage of their own labour  
 and industry ; but even the *Ravens* and  
*Fowls of the Air, which neither sow nor*  
*reap, which neither have storehouse nor*  
*barn, have yet a plentiful provision made*  
*for them, and are continually fed by his*  
*bountiful Providence : Yet not a Spar-*  
*row, one of the meanest of Birds, falls*  
*to the ground without him, i. e. without*  
*his direction or permission ; not one of*  
*them, as St Luke expresses it, is forgotten*  
*before God : That not only Creatures en-*  
*dued with Life and Sense, but still fur-*  
*ther, even the Grass and Flowers of the*  
*Field, which can contribute nothing to-*  
*wards their own support, nor are at all*  
*sensible of what is done for them, have*  
*yet in them more and greater marks of*  
*the inimitable workmanship of the great*  
*Creator of all things, than ever the*  
*Courts of the greatest Princes, even that*  
 of

of *Solomon* himself, had of humane artifice and earthly glory: Nay, further, that even things of a still lower degree than either Plants or Animals, those very things which of all others seem to us the least valuable and least to be regarded, even *these* are not beneath the care and inspection of Providence, but the very *hairs of our heads are all numbered* before God.

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THE Use our Saviour makes of this lively Description of Providence, is to teach us to rely at all times upon the Care and Protection of God, without unreasonable anxiety, diffidence, and distrust. And indeed, were not the noble Subject carelessly and inconsiderately passed over in mens thoughts, without attention and serious meditation; or were there not secretly in the breasts of men *an evil Heart of Unbelief*, it is not possible but this excellent Argument would generally produce in the Minds and Lives of men its just and natural effect. Men who study and contemplate the *Phænomena* of Nature, which are the Works of God, the further they carry their

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their inquiries, and the deeper discoveries they make, the More, and the more undeniable Evidences they perpetually find, that the Works of Nature are not the Blunders of Chance, or the blind Effect of Unintelligent Fate ; but the continual Operations of God who governs all things, by the uninterrupted care and interposition of an All-wise Providence which *neither slumbers nor sleeps*, and from whose direction nothing is exempted, at any time or in any place. Christians, who according to their Profession, believe the *Scriptures*, find our Saviour in the passages now recited, declaring fully and in few words this great Truth, confirming it by his Divine Authority to those who have not capacities or opportunities of observing it in the nature of the things themselves ; and making infinitely a better improvement of it, to cause us to put our Trust worthily in God who governs all things, than ever was made by any of the Philosophers in any Age of the World : *If God, saith he, so feeds the Birds of the Air, and clothes the Grass of the Field ;*

*how*

*how much more will he take care of you,* SERM.  
*O ye of little Faith?* XVII.

BUT our Saviour's Argument does not end here : The consideration of the Care of Providence over us teaches us to trust in God for a supply of all things necessary *here* ; and This our Trust in him for things necessary *here*, is in order to enable us with greater earnestness and less distraction of Thought, to attend upon the one thing necessary, the securing our portion in the eternal Happiness of the Kingdom of God *hereafter* : That our Hearts being weaned from an over-fond Love and Affection for the transitory enjoyments of this present World, may be *there* more surely and steddily fixed, where is laid up our true and lasting treasure ; even *that treasure in the Heavens that faileth not, where no thief approaches, neither moth corrupteth.* Take no thought therefore, says our Lord ; *i. e.* be not eager and sollicitous, anxiously and unreasonably careful, for these things which the *Nations of the World seek after*, even the *Gentiles which know not God* : But rather *seek ye the Kingdom*

SERM. of God ; so it is expressed in St *Luke* ;  
 XVII. or in the words of the Text, *Seek ye*  
 first *the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness* : You, saith ye, who have the Happiness to *know God*, and to whom his Glory has been particularly revealed ; you who are blessed with the knowledge of his true Religion, of the Purity and Excellency of his divine Laws, and the great and eternal Reward which will attend the Practice of them ; Live ye suitably to so excellent a Belief, and answerably to so great a degree of Knowledge : Let your affections be raised above things earthly and temporal, to those which are spiritual, heavenly, and eternal ; *Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness* ; and all these things, these earthly and temporal blessings, so far as the Wisdom of God sees necessary for your present comfortable subsistence, shall be added unto you.

IN a foregoing Discourse upon these Words, I observed in them these three things :



I. A Precept or Duty commanded ; S E R M.  
*Seek ye the Kingdom of God and his* XVII.  
*Righteousness.*

II. THE manner and degree of the  
Obligation ; *Seek it* first.

III. THE Promise even of a *temporal*  
Reward annexed ; *And all these things*  
*shall be added unto you.*

I. IN discoursing upon the Precept or  
Duty commanded *Seek ye the Kingdom*  
*of God and his Righteousness* ; I observed,  
that Seeking any thing heartily and ef-  
fectually, implies these four things :

1st, THAT we have a just *value and*  
*esteem* for the thing we pretend  
to seek after.

2dly, THAT we *fix our Attention* con-  
tinually, *i e.* habitually upon  
it.

3dly, THAT we be *diligent and im-*  
*partial in inquiring after the*  
*best and certainest means* of at-  
taining it. And

4thly, THAT we *immediately practise*  
*those Means, and heartily put*  
*them in Execution.* And these  
I have already enlarged upon.

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I proceed now in the II<sup>d</sup> place, to consider the particular *manner and degree* of our Obligation to this Duty; contained in the *comparative* expression, Seek ye *first*, or (as 'tis expressed in St Luke,) Seek ye *rather* the Kingdom of God. And here (as I before took notice in the Explication of the Text,) it is reasonable to observe, that the Word *first*, or *rather*, as in the *comparative* Sense it *heightens* the Obligation of the Duty, and signifies that we are bound to seek the Kingdom of God *more heartily, more earnestly, more zealously, with greater constancy, with greater diligence, with stronger and more intense affections,* than can reasonably be employed about any temporal concern; so, on the contrary, in the *absolute* Sense, 'tis a *relaxation* or *diminution* of the strictness and rigour of the Duty; signifying, that we are not obliged to seek the Kingdom of God *wholly and only*, in a *total and absolute* exclusion of all other desires, (as some melancholy well-disposed persons may be apt to imagine;) but only that we are to seek it *chiefly* and in the *first* place;

place ; as being infinitely of more value and of greater importance to us, and consequently infinitely worthier of our highest care and concern than any temporal and worldly affairs. But the very Word itself, *Seek this first*, implies in the proper notion of it, that *other* things also may be desired *afterward*, i. e. in their due place, and with a subordinate affection. The Words immediately foregoing, *Take no thought, saying, what shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or wherewithal shall we be clothed*, seem indeed to be spoken absolutely and without restriction : And perhaps to the Apostles themselves, the immediate Hearers of this Discourse of our Lord, who were to have no settled habitation or abode, but were to preach the Gospel from one Nation and Kingdom to another ; to *them* possibly this instruction was *intended* so to be understood, in the absolute and unrestrained Sense. But as the Circumstances of Christians in following times necessarily made the strict and literal Sense of those words altogether impracticable ; so the Words of the Text im-

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mediately following them, evidently give us room to interpret them in such a manner, as to be a prohibition *only* of *immoderate* and *excessive* Cares; of *such* Cares and Sollicitude for the things of the World, as is unworthy of the Character, and inconsistent with the Zeal and Diligence of those whose Heart and whose Treasure is in Heaven. 'Tis not forbidden us to desire and to use moderately the things of the World; but we must with our *first* and *greatest* care seek the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness.

THE *Limitations* therefore of this Duty, or the particular *Degree and Manner* of the Obligation expressed in the Text, may be set forth in the following particulars.

*1st*, SEEKING in the *first* place the Kingdom of God signifies, in the least and lowest sense, that we must *not delay and put off to the future* our designs and intentions of living religiously. The Apostles were obliged, when they were first called by our Saviour, to leave all that they had and follow him; and we find

find that some who desired only to take leave of their Friends, or to have time but for the burial of a nearest Relation, were not allowed the indulgence even of so short a delay. The Person who when he was commanded by our Saviour to follow him, answered readily, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell which are at home at my house, St Luk. ix. 61, was told, that no man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is meet for the Kingdom of God: The expression 'tis plain is figurative; but the Sense is, He who, when he is convinced of the Truth of Religion, is not willing immediately to comply with the Obligations thereof, but desires still a longer and a little longer delay, is not worthy to be admitted to enjoy the benefit of it at all. And this refusal to allow of any delay, was at a time when our Lord himself had not where to lay his Head; and when the Circumstances of things were such, that no man could become a Disciple of Christ, but he must necessarily part with not only the *sinful*, but even all the

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S E R M. *innocent* also and most allowable enjoy-  
 XVII. ments and comforts of Life; at a Time  
 when a man that had kept all the com-  
 mandments from his Youth, according  
 to the usual extent and interpretation of  
 the Law, was dismissed by our Saviour  
 with a very severe intimation of the  
 danger even of not-ill-gotten possessions;  
 because he was not willing to *sell all  
 that he had, and give to the poor*: In a  
 word, when no man could embrace the  
 Christian Religion, but he must at the  
 same time resolve to lose all that he had,  
 and very probably even his life itself also  
 for the sake of the Gospel. How much  
 more *Now*, when God is pleased to re-  
 quire of us a much easier Obedience;  
 when we are required, not to part with  
*all* that we have, but only to retrench  
 our vain and sinful expences; not to  
 sell *all* and give to the Poor, but to be  
 charitable out of the Superfluities of our  
 plenty and abundance; not to lay down  
 our *lives*, or leave even the *comfortable  
 Enjoyments* of life, but only to forsake  
 the unreasonable and unfruitful Pleasures  
 of Sin, the Madness and Follies of Pro-  
 fuseness,

fufeness, the unprofitable Gains of Un-<sup>S E R M.</sup>  
 righteousness, the hurtful and mischief-<sup>XVII.</sup>  
 ous extravagancies of Intemperance, the  
 malicious and unmanly pleasures of Pride  
 and Arbitrariness, of Oppression, Unchar-  
 itableness, and Revenge: *How much*  
*more*, I say, *in these days*, when God is  
 pleased to exact of us only so easy an  
 Obedience; *how much more* unreasonable  
 is it, that men should *delay* complying  
 with so good, so gentle, so necessary an  
 Obligation? *How much more* unreasonable  
 is it that men should *first* desire to satif-  
 fy themselves with the enjoyments of Sin,  
 and then hope to mock God by *at last*  
 desiring to enter into his Kingdom? And  
 how unworthy must they needs be *at the*  
*End of their lives* to be admitted into his  
 Kingdom, who would not be perswaded  
 to employ the *beginning and best* of their  
 days in seeking the Righteousness there-  
 of? 'Tis no advantage to God if we are  
 righteous and obedient to him, nor is  
 there any accession made to *his* Self-suf-  
 ficient Happiness, by *our* becoming Sub-  
 jects of his Kingdom: 'Tis for our *own*  
 benefit only, that he commands us to do  
 Righte-

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Righteousness; and therefore, if we slight and neglect and carelessly let slip the opportunities of preparing and qualifying ourselves to be members of his Kingdom, 'tis very just in *him* to exclude us therefrom. Not that any man, when he first comes to a true sense of Religion, how late soever it be, hath reason absolutely to despair; but that those who are better instructed in their early days, should have no encouragement to defer their Obedience.

2dly, SEEKING *first* the Kingdom of God signifies, that though our *actual* intention may often lawfully be employed upon the things of the World, yet our *habitual, principal, and greatest* regard must always be fixt upon the Life that is to come. I have *before* shown, that *seeking any thing heartily and effectually*, necessarily implies among other things, that we *fix our attention continually*, i. e. *frequently and habitually upon it*. And now to apply this, in the *comparative* Sense, to the Precept in the Text: 'Tis manifest, that seeking the Kingdom of God *first*, or *before* the things of the World,



World, necessarily implies, that even S E R M.  
*while* we are employed in worldly affairs, XVII.  
 in providing for the present necessities  
 of life ; yet our present and main In-  
 tention must always habitually be di-  
 rected towards our Ultimate and Great  
 End. *Whatsoever thou takest in hand,*  
 (as the wise Son of *Sirach* excellently  
 expresses it,) *remember the End, and*  
*thou shalt never do amiss,* Ecclus. vii. 36.  
 Thus a Traveller may employ his *imme-*  
*diate and present* Thoughts upon the  
 conveniencies of his journey and the ac-  
 commodations at his Inn ; but yet at the  
 same time, his *principal and chief* View  
 will continually be upon the End of his  
 Journey, and his safe arrival at home ;  
 and all other things will in course be  
 directed with a subordination to That  
 chief Design. And in *this* Sense, a man  
 may be *at all times* seeking the Kingdom  
 of God ; without any way neglecting,  
 or at all withdrawing himself from se-  
 cular Business : Which was the original  
 Error of those who first ran into the  
 Superstition of a Monkish retirement ;  
 and, in order (as they weakly thought)  
 to

S E R M. to become more religious towards *God*,  
 XVII. put themselves out of all capacity of  
 doing any good amongst *Men*. There is  
 no employment wherein a man may not  
 perpetually be doing something for the  
 Honour of God, for the Good of Men,  
 or for the Improvement of the Virtues  
 of his own Mind: There is no Business,  
 nay, there is no innocent Diversion,  
 wherein he may not make it his chief  
 and constant care to act always like a  
 reasonable man and a good Christian.  
 There is no state of life wherein he may  
 not keep a constant Eye upon a future  
 state, and so use the things of the pre-  
 sent World, as that the great and ulti-  
 mate scope of all his Actions may al-  
 ways respect that which is to come:  
 He may stedfastly propose to himself one  
 great design of his life, and endeavour  
 to act always regularly upon that De-  
 sign: He may constantly fix his main  
 Intention upon his chief and ultimate  
 End; and in every thing he does, be  
 careful always to maintain a just regard  
 to That. Every thing he undertakes may  
 be either directly conducive to that End,

or at least *not contrary to and inconsistent* with it. Which Method of acting, *sanctifies* all the *Business*, nay, even all the *Pleasures* and *Diversions* of life. And this is the

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3d THING, which the Phrase, (Seeking *first* the Kingdom of God,) necessarily implies, namely, that whenever there arises a *competition* between the Interest of Religion and that of the World, we always *prefer* the more important spiritual and eternal Interest, before any temporal and worldly concern. *If any man come to Me*, saith our Saviour, *Luk. xiv. 26. and hate not his Father, and Mother, and Wife, and Children, and Brethren, and Sisters, yea, and his own Life also, he cannot be my Disciple.* If he hate not Father and Mother, is, in modern language, a very harsh expression: But the meaning is, (according to the well-known Use of such ways of speaking among the *Jews*,) if he be not willing to part with *them*, when there is a Necessity so to do, rather than with his *Religion*. So our Saviour himself explains it, *St. Matt. x. 37. He that loveth Father or Mother*  
more

SERM. XVII. *more than Me, is not worthy of me ;--- and he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.* We have reason to bless God we are not *now* called to so severe a trial ; neither are we required to part with *all things* for his sake, as the Disciples in the primitive times were obliged to do : But we are *at all times* under the same Obligation to be in *Readiness* to lose all, to have an *indifferency* for the things of the World *comparatively* to our Religion ; and to be habitually in such a Disposition of Mind, as to be *always willing* to part with whatsoever shall at any time come in competition with our Duty. And of this there *are* Trials, even in our present circumstances, by which Men *may* judge, in great measure, of their own Sincerity or Insincerity in this particular. For instance ; If a man, rather than deny himself the unlawful and unreasonable pleasure of a Debauch ; if, rather than part with the unjust gains of Fraud and Deceit, of Oppression and unrighteous Judgment ; if, rather than restrain the foolish and unfruitful Vanity

of

of a profane Jest, of mockery and scoffing at Religion; he is willing *Now* to lay aside all his hopes of Heaven (as every vicious man plainly does, notwithstanding his profession of Christianity;) such a person may very easily judge, *how* ready he would be to leave *all*, even the *innocent* enjoyments of life, and even *life itself*, for the sake of that Religion which he *now* so slightly and upon every trivial an occasion openly dishonours. *He* indeed who *now* plucks out a *right eye*, or cuts off a *right hand*, who resists great temptations of unrighteousness, and, by the spirit of Religion, mortifies violent Passions and strong corrupt inclinations; such a one may reasonably pretend, and has good evidence, has just ground of hope within himself, that if it should please God to call him to so severe a trial, he *should* be able to lay down even his life for his Religion. But if a man be not faithful in that which is *least*, if he cannot prevail with himself to go through the *smallest* difficulty, what ground has he to pretend, that he would be faithful in that which

S E R M. is *much*, and undergo the *severest and*  
 XVII. *most difficult* trial ?

IN these particulars seem to be contain-  
 ed the full meaning and intention of the  
 Precept, Seek ye *first* the Kingdom of  
 God, and his righteousness.

IT remains that I proceed briefly in  
 the

III<sup>d</sup> and last place; To consider the  
 Promise annexed even of a temporal re-  
 ward; *and all these things shall be added*  
*unto you.* Now

FROM this Promise we may seem  
 reasonably to infer these three things.

I Kings  
 iii. 13.

I. THAT, *generally* speaking, God  
 blesses the endeavours of the righteous,  
 and of those who trust in him; at least so  
 far, as to supply them with the necessary  
 supports and conveniencies of Life. *I*  
*have been young, and now am old, saith*  
*the Psalmist, and yet saw I never the*  
*righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging*  
*their bread.* Which Observation, though  
 it was indeed more universally true un-  
 der the *Jewish* dispensation, than in the  
 Gospel-state; yet even *still* for the more  
 part, *Godliness*, as St Paul declares, *has the*  
*promise*

*promise even of the Life that now is* : And our Saviour, through his whole Argument in the Context, seems to suppose, that Providence, which secretly directs and over-rules all Events, is particularly concerned to make provision for those, who in the faithful discharge of their duty rely upon him.

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2. W H E N this happens *otherwise*, (as in the case of *Persecution* it necessarily must;) then from the Promise here annexed we may reasonably conclude, that, what a righteous man loses upon account of his Religion, shall by the Care of Providence be, Some other way, made good to him. *There is no man, saith our Saviour, that has left house, or brethren or sisters, or father or mother, or wife or children, or lands, for my sake and the gospel; but he shall receive an hundred fold now in this time, -----with Persecutions; i. e. he shall either in the course of Providence be restored, to more than he has lost; or he shall receive more than an equivalent in that peace and comfort and satisfaction of mind, that joy in the Holy Ghost, which arises from a Sense of a good Conscience and of the Favour of God.*

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3. W H E N *neither* of these are secured to a man, (as they can only be affirmed for the *most* part;) then it may certainly be depended upon, that his reward *hereafter*, shall be so much the greater. *Usually* he shall in the *present time* receive an hundred fold, *together with Persecutions*; but in the End *infallibly* eternal life. It was a noble Answer to this purpose, (wherewith I shall conclude,) which the three children of the *Jews* gave to *Nebuchadnezzar* King of *Babylon*, when they were commanded to fall down and worship the graven Image which he had set up, under pain of being cast alive into a burning fiery furnace; *Dan. iii. 17.* It was proposed to them to forsake the religion of their God for the Law of the King and the Religion of the country; and their Answer was; *If it be so; our God whom we serve, is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace; and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O King: But if not; (if he does not think fit to deliver us; yet) be it known unto thee, O King, that we will not serve thy Gods, nor worship the graven Image which thou hast*



*hast set up.* They depended upon God, SERM.  
if he did *not* think fit to deliver them XVII.  
from *temporal* Death, that he would re-  
compence it to them with Life and Hap-  
piness *eternal.*

*The End of V O L. II.*



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