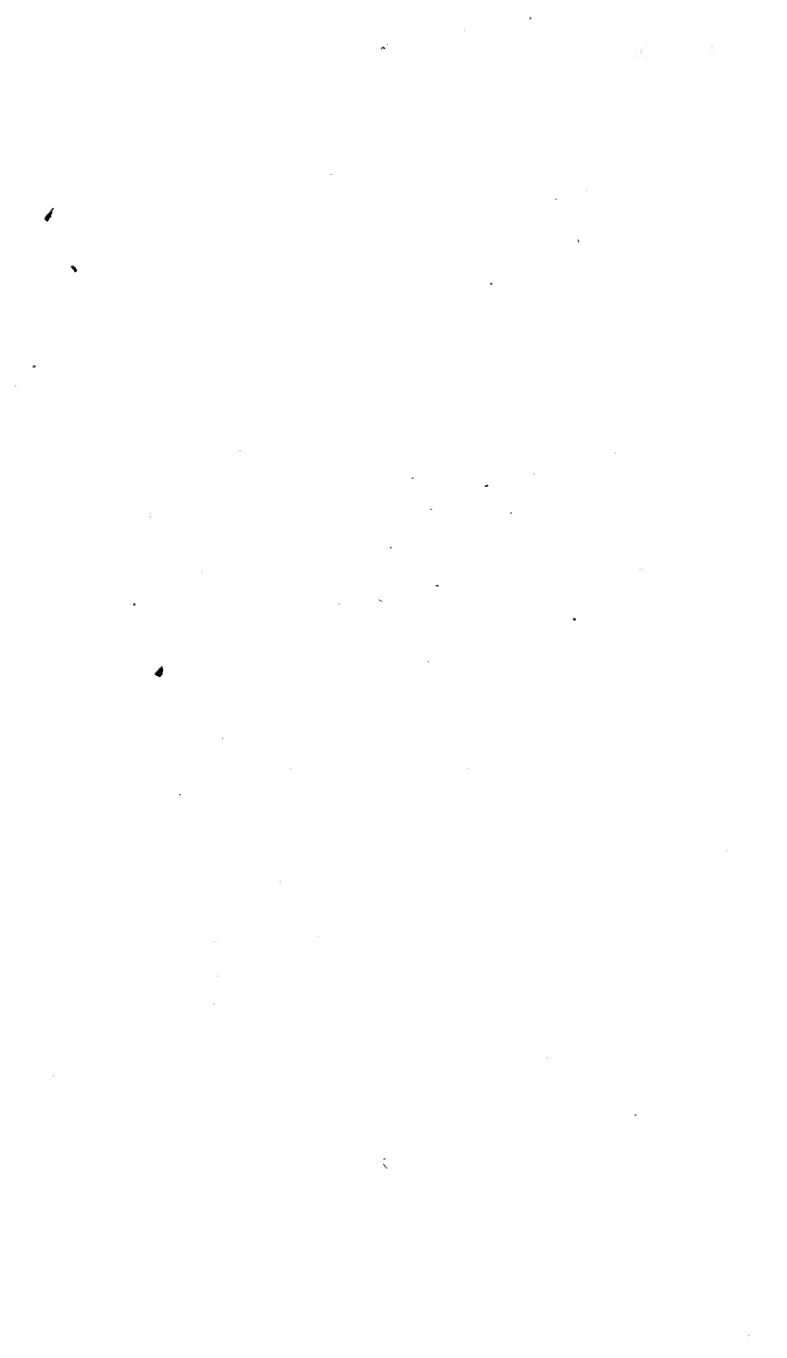
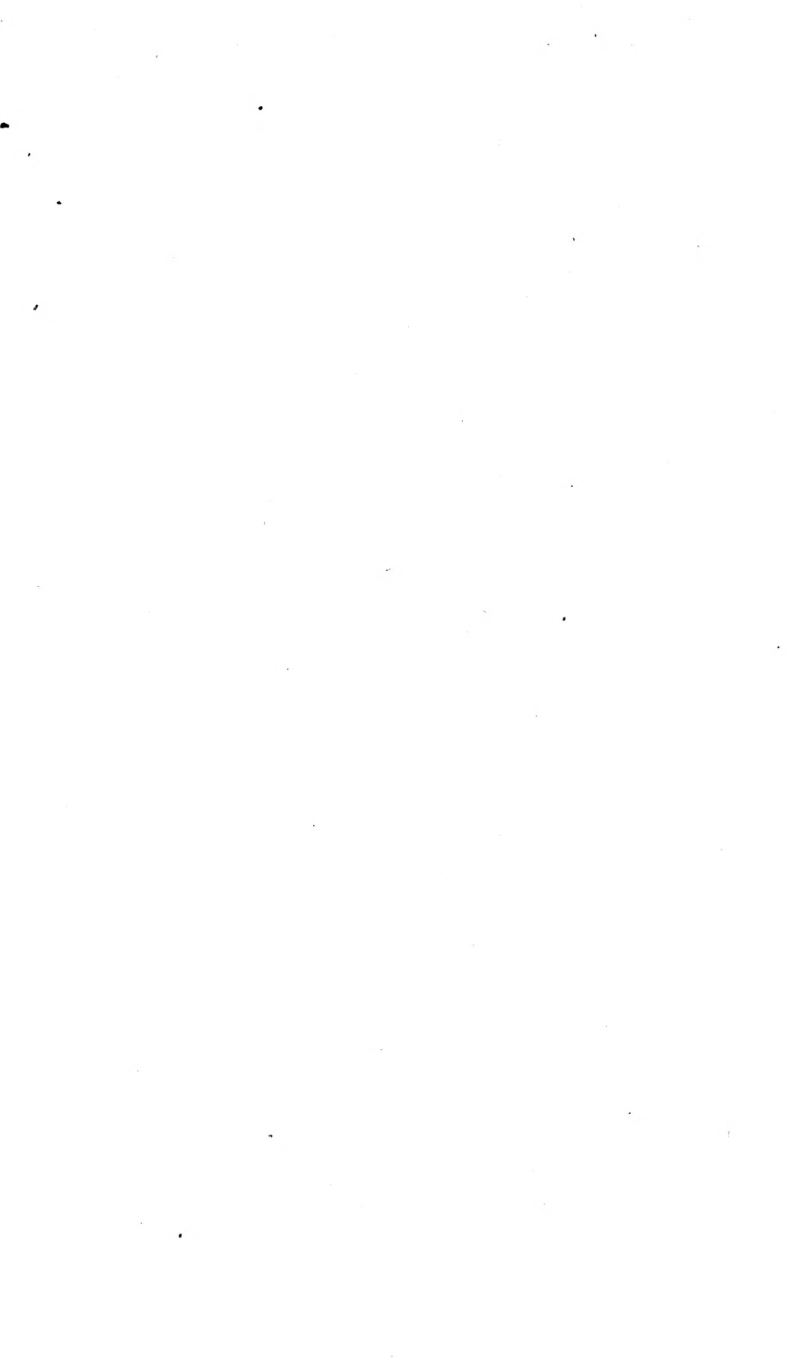




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# SERMONS

ON THE

Following SUBJECTS,

VIZ.

Against Persecution for Religion.

Against false Pretences to Religion.

Every Man is principally to regard his own proper Duty.

The Folly of losing one's Soul to gain the whole World.

Of the Necessity of Holiness.

Holiness of Life the most acceptable Sacrifice to GOD.

Of the unchangeable Difference of Good and Evil.

Of the Nature of Moral and Positive Duties.

Of the Difficulty of arriving at Truth.

Of the Nature of Religious Faith.

In what the Kingdom of GOD consists.

The Parable of the Rich Man and *Lazarus* explained.

Of the equitable Distribution of Things at the last Day.

Of GOD's disposing all Things to their proper Ends.

Of a Future Judgment.

That every Man shall finally receive according to his Works.

Of Future Rewards and Punishments.

---

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

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*Published from the AUTHOR's Manuscript,*  
By *JOHN CLARKE*, D.D. Dean of *Sarum*.

---

V O L. VII.

---

L O N D O N,

Printed by *W. Botham*, for *JAMES* and *JOHN KNAPTON*,  
at the *Crown* in *St Paul's Church-yard*. MDCCLXXXI.







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# S E R M O N I.

Against Persecution for Religion.



LUK. xiv. 23.

*And the Lord said unto the Servant, Go out into the High-ways and Hedges, and compel them to come in, that my House may be filled.*



Y Design in the following Dis-S E R M.  
course, is 1<sup>st</sup> to explain dis-I.  
tinctly the *true* Meaning of  
these words of our Saviour;  
and 2<sup>dly</sup> to show, to what an *impious*  
sense they have sometimes been perverted,  
by men of corrupt and ambitious minds in  
the *Romish* Church.

VOL. VII.

B

I. First,

S E R M.

I. *First*; OUR Saviour, in This Parable,

I.

compares the Kingdom of Heaven to a

Mat. xxii.

*King making a Marriage-feast for his Son;*

2. Luk. xiv.

To which the Guests *first invited*, were

16.

the *Jews*, God's original peculiar people,to whom the Gospel was *first* preached:

But They, upon sundry trivial Excuses,

refusing to come to the Feast; and going

carelessly elsewhere, one to his Farm, an-

other to his Merchandize; that is, the

*Jews* adhering to the vain Traditions of

their Elders, and refusing to embrace the

doctrine of the Gospel; *The master*, there-

upon being angry, said to his servant,

ver. 21. *Go out into the streets and lanes**of the city, and bring in hither the poor**and the maimed, and the lame and the**blind*; That is, as our Saviour elsewhere

Mat. xxi.

explains it, *Verily the publicans and the*


31.

*harlots go into the kingdom of God before**you*; For *the publicans justified God*, Luk.

vii. 29. that is, obeyed God's invitation

to Repentance; *But the Pharisees and**Lawyers rejected the counsel of God against**themselves*. After this, there being stillroom, *the Lord said unto the servant*, inthe words of the Text, *Go out into the**high-ways*



*high-ways and hedges, and compel them to* S E R M.  
*come in, that my house may be filled : Go,* I.  
not only into the streets and lanes of the   
City ; but also *out of the City, into the*  
*high-ways and hedges ;* that is, go even a-  
mong the *Gentiles, Aliens from the com-*  
*monwealth of Israel, strangers as yet to the*  
*covenant of Promise, and invite Them to*  
*come in : According to That explication*  
*given by our Saviour in another place,*  
*Many shall come from the East and from* Mat. viii.  
*the West, and shall sit down with Abra-* II.  
*ham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the Kingdom of*  
*God, and the children of the Kingdom shall*  
*be shut out. Go, and compel them to come*  
*in ; that is, not by Force of Arms, but by*  
*the force of Perswasion and earnest En-*  
*treaty : For so in this very parable, re-*  
*corded by St Matthew ; the words which* Mat. xxii.  
*we find here, compel them to come in ; are* <sup>9</sup>  
*there, only, go into the high-ways, and bid*  
*them to the marriage. The word, compel,*  
*is more emphatical ; expressing very affec-*  
*tionately the greatness of God's Goodness,*  
*or his earnest and sincere Desire of mens*  
*Salvation. And because in This place,*  
*'tis, by the Nature and Circumstances of*

S E R M. the whole Discourse, an expression of  
 I. such *Goodness* only, and not of *Severity*;  
 an invitation of men to a *Feast*, and not  
 a dragging them to *Punishment*; This  
 therefore evidently shows, what *sort* of  
 compulsion it is, that must here be un-  
 derstood to be meant. For there are ma-  
 ny ways of *compelling*, in the figurative  
 and moral Sense, very different from com-  
 pulsion by *Force of Arms*. *Perswasion* and  
*Arguments*, compel men; *Importunity*  
 and *Earnestness*, compel; *Promises* and  
*Threatnings*, *Hopes* and *Fears*, compel;  
*Kindness* and *Gratitude*, have a compul-  
 sive force; and *Reasons strong and clear*,  
 though they offer *no violence*, are yet, in  
 the *moral* sense, to understanding and un-  
 prejudiced persons, *irresistible*. And in  
 the *Scripture*, as well as in *common-speech*,  
 is the word, *compelling*, very frequently  
 thus used. Men are in the sacred Wri-  
 tings said to be *compelled*, sometimes by  
*importunity*: *Gen. xxxiii. 11.* *Jacob* urged  
*Esau*, (in the original it is, he *forced*  
 him,) to receive his present, and he re-  
 ceived it. *1 Sam. xxviii. 23.* *Saul's ser-*  
*vants, with the woman, compelled him,*  
 (that

*Against Persecution for Religion.* 5

(that is, prevailed with him by their importunity,) and he hearkned to their Voice, and did eat. 2 Kings iv. 8. The Sennamite constrained Elisha, (in the Hebrew it is, compelled him,) to eat bread. So likewise in the New Testament, Matt. xiv. 22. Jesus constrained his Disciples, (in the original 'tis the very same word with that in the Text, he compelled them,) to get into a ship. Luk. xxiv. 29. When Jesus made as though he would have gone further, the Disciples constrained him, (in the Greek it is, forced him; that is, not by violence, but by persuasion they forced him,) to go in and tarry with them. And Acts xvi. 15. the woman constrained us to go into her house; It is again, in the original, the same word, forced them; which yet is directly explained in the very same verse, to have been done only by her importunity in beseeching them. In other places, Diligence and Industry is represented as a sort of Compulsion; Matt. xi. 12. From the days of John the Baptist until Now, the Kingdom of Heaven suffereth Violence, and the Violent take it by Force: The Meaning is, what St Luke expresses in the parallel

S E R M.  
I.

6 *Against Persecution for Religion.*

S E R M. rallel place, ch. xvi. 16. *The Law and the*  
 I. *Prophets were until John; Since that time,*  
 the Kingdom of God is preached, and every  
 man presseth into it; that is, the Gospel is  
 now preached *publicly and universally;*  
 and even the *Gentiles* as well as *Jews*, are  
*diligent* to understand and receive it.  
 Sometimes *necessary* business is described  
 as *compelling* men; that is, *such* business,  
 as either they *cannot*, or fancy *they can-*  
*not*, without great inconvenience, neglect.  
 Thus in this very Parable, in the words  
 just before the Text, one of the guests  
 first-invited is introduced making This ex-  
 cuse, *I have bought a piece of ground, and*  
*I must needs go and see it;* In the original  
 it is the very same word, as in the Text  
 itself, I am *compelled* to go and see it.  
 And another answers immediately after;  
*I have married a wife, and therefore I*  
 cannot (the Greek is, *I am not able, to*)  
*come.* In *some* places, men are said to be  
*compelled*, by having an *earnest* desire of  
*mind* to do a thing; Job xxxii. 18. *I am*  
*full of matter, the Spirit within me con-*  
*straineth me:* And in *other* places, they  
 are compelled by *Fear and Distress of*  
*mind;*

*Against Persecution for Religion.* 7

mind; 1 Sam. xiii. 12. *Saul, being in distress, forced himself therefore, contrary to his duty, and offered a burnt-offering.* Sometimes strong and unanswerable *Reasons*, compel men: Job vi. 25. *How forcible are right words!* Sometimes, a *Sense of Duty*, compels men as it were *against* their own Inclination: 1 Pet. v. 2. *Feed the flock of God, not by constraint, but willingly;* And 2 Cor. ix. 7. *give, not as of necessity, but cheerfully.* At other times, men are represented in Scripture, as *compelled* by *fair and deceitful speeches*; Prov. vii. 21. *With much fair Speech she caused him to yield, with the flattering of her Lips she forced him.* Or, by *Error*, and the *Prevalency of a False Opinion or Doctrine*: Gal. vi. 12. *As many as desire to make a fair shew in the Flesh, they constrain you,* (here again the original has the very *same* word, as in my Text; they compel you) *to be circumcised, only lest they should suffer Persecution for the Cross of Christ:* And Gal. ii. 14. *Why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?* namely, by *perswading* them of the *Necessity of Circumcision?* Or, by


8 *Against Persecution for Religion.*

S E R M. the *Perverseness* of Others, men are sometimes said to be *compelled*, for the conviction of such gainsayers, to do things which they would otherwise dislike: *Gal. ii. 3. Neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised; And That because of false brethren, unawares brought in,-----to spie out our Liberty; And 2 Cor. xii. 11. I am become a Fool in glorying, ye have compelled me, viz. by your ill behaviour. Or, by mere Custom sometimes, are men represented as compelled: Luk. xxiii. 17. Of necessity he must release One to them at the Feast; that is, as St Matthew expresses it in the parallel place, he was wont to release One at That Time; or, in xxvii. 15. St John's words, they had a Custom, that One should then be released. Lastly, by the willing and agreeable compulsion, of Love and Gratitude powerfully working, in the motions of a free and generous Mind; are men elegantly said to be compelled: 2 Cor. v. 14. The Love of Christ, constrained us. And not of Men only, but even concerning God himself also, is the like figure of speaking sometimes used*

*Against Persecution for Religion.* 9

used in Scripture: *Is. lxii. 7. Ye that make* S E R M.  
*mention of the Lord, give him No Rest,* I.  
*till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a Praise in the Earth.* Here the  
holy Spirit represents God, in a most  
wonderful way of condescension, suffering  
himself to be *compelled* as it were, by the  
*importunate* Prayers of good men. And  
the same thing is still more lively set forth,  
in the History of *Jacob's* striving with the  
Angel, *Gen. xxxii. 24.* where our Trans-  
lation improperly expresses it by his *wrest-*  
*ling* with the Angel; But the Sense is;  
the Angel made as if he would have de-  
parted from him; but *Jacob* held him,  
and strove with him, and pressed him *im-*  
*portunately* for a Blessing, saying, *I will*  
*not let thee go, except thou bless me;* Where-  
upon he blessed him, and said, ver. 28. *As*  
*a Prince hast thou Power with God and*  
*with Men, and hast prevailed.* Which  
matter, the prophet *Hosea* thus sets forth,  
ch. xii. 3. *By his Strength he had Power*  
*with God; yea, he had Power over the An-*  
*gel, and prevailed; he wept, and made*  
*supplication unto him: The Strength* (says  
the Prophet,) *by which Jacob prevailed*  
*over*

S E R M. *over the Angel, was his weeping and making supplication unto him. From These,*

I.  and numerous other the like expressions in Scripture, as well as from the Nature and Reason of the thing itself, it is evident beyond controversy, that when our Lord in the Text, bids the Preachers of his Gospel, go into the highways and hedges and *compel* men to come in; his meaning is not, *Compel them by Force of Arms*; but, *compel them by irresistible Clearness of Reason, by Strength of Argument, and affectionate Admonition; convince, persuade, intreat them; set before them the Certainty of a Future Judgment, the Promises, and the Threatnings of the Lord; prevail with them by your own good Example; urge, press, inculcate upon*

<sup>2 Tim. iv.</sup> *them the Necessity of Religion; Preach the word, be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine: According to That of St Paul, 1 Th. ii. 10. Ye are witnesses, ---how holily, and justly, and unblameably, we behaved ourselves among you; As you know also, how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a*

*Father*



*Against Persecution for Religion.* II

*Father doth his children; That ye would* SERM.  
*walk worthy of God who has called you* I.  
*unto his Kingdom and Glory.* This is evi-  
dently the *true* and *full* meaning, of these  
remarkable words of our Saviour in the  
Text. It remains that I proceed now  
in the

II. *Second* place to show, to what a  
wicked Sense they have sometimes been  
perverted, by men of corrupt and ambitious  
Minds in the *Romish* Church. *Compel them*  
*to come in:* That is, (in *Their* explication,)  
*compel them by violence and Force of Arms,*  
by racks and tortures, by Dragoons and  
Inquisitions, by Fire and Sword. As if  
the Religion of Christ was intended to  
divest men of common humanity, and  
the Service and Glory of God could re-  
ally be promoted by the Destruction of  
Mankind: As if Religion, whose Great  
End is Peace and Love, the universal Re-  
conciliation of men to God and to each  
other, could itself be propagated by the  
highest Oppressions, and most inhumane  
Cruelties: and be made to authorize and  
to sanctify such Practices, the preventing  
whereof is indeed the very chief Design,  
of

S E R M. of All Religion both Natural and Revealed. But to be more particular.

I.



1st; IT is originally, in the very *nature of things*, inconsistent and absurd, to think that a right Sense of Religion can be put into mens Minds by Force of Arms. For *What* is Religion, but such a Perswasion of Mind towards God, as produces Obedience to his Commands; arising from a due *Sense* of him in the *Understanding*, a just *Fear and Love* of him in the *Affections*, and a *Choice or Preference* of Virtue in the *Will*? Now to attempt to influence the *Will*, by *Force*; is like applying *Sounds* to the *Eyes* in order to be *Seen*, or *Colours* to the *Ears* in order to be *Heard*. The Absurdity, in Both cases, is exactly the Same; For as nothing affects the *Eyes*, but *Light*; nor the *Ears*, but *Sounds*; so nothing affects the *Understanding* and the *Will*, but *Reason and Perswasion*. A man's *external Acts*, may indeed be *compelled*, or may be *restrained*, by *Force*; And, in many cases, 'tis very *fit* they should be so: But the *inward Acts* of the Mind, *cannot* be forced; nor is it *possible* for a man to be *compelled*, *against* his Will,

Will, to fear God, and be sincerely religious. A Robber or Murderer *may*, and ought to be, restrained by Force, from killing or pillaging his Brother; And This is the very End, for which Providence appointed Magistracy and Government in the World: But the man is not therefore at all the more religious in the Sight of God, because his hands are in Chains. 'Tis the *Heart* properly, that is the Seat of Religion; and where *That* concurs not, the *outward action* is of no consideration in the Sight of God. What is it then, that men can be compelled to by Force, in matters of Religion? Nothing but *Hypocrisy*, nothing but a *mocking of God*. That which *our Saviour in the Text* would have men compelled to, is a *good Heart*, and a *sincere Mind*; and therefore the compulsion here spoken of, must needs be that which compels, not the *Body*, but the *Mind*; And This, 'tis evident, can be no other, than *strong Reason* and *powerful Perswasion*; Meekness, and Charity, and good Example. For which reason, when the Guests were all come in, who are here by our Lord said (in this Sense) to have

S E R M.  
I.  
~~~~~

S E R M. been *compelled* to the Feast; yet the man  
 I. who had not on the Wedding-garment of  
 righteousness, was not *forced* to *put one*  
 on, but was cast out into outer-darkness  
 for coming in *without one*. God himself,  
 whose Power is infinite, yet *compels* and  
 over-rules no man in matters of Morality:  
 He invites, he exhorts, he intreats; But  
 if they will not be *drawn by these Cords*  
 of a Man, these proper Motives to ratio-  
 Rev. xxii. nal Creatures; then, *He that is unjust,*  
 11. *saith he, let him be unjust still; and he that*  
 Ezek. iii. *is filthy, let him be filthy still; And, He*  
 27. *that heareth, let him hear; and he that*  
 Gen. vi. 3. *forbeareth, let him forbear: His Spirit*  
*will not strive with them, by any other*  
 than rational and moral Motives; by  
 which if they *will not* be led to obey him,  
 Pf. lxxxii. than he *gives them up unto their own*  
 12. *Heart's Lust, and lets them follow their*  
*own imagination*. All our Saviour's Preach-  
 1 Cor xiv. ing, was with This Declaration; *He that*  
 38. *has Ears to hear, let him hear; and St*  
*Paul* in like manner, 1 Cor. xiv. 38. *If*  
*any man be ignorant, (after all reasonable*  
*means of instruction, ) let him be ignorant.*  
 Nay indeed, to suppose that even the  
 Power

Power of God, *can* compel men in moral S E R M. matters; is a manifest inconsistency in the nature of the *thing*. For the *essence* of religion or virtue, consists in the *free choice* of the Will; So that to *compel* a man in *this* case, by taking away his freedom; is indeed *destroying* the *Faculty itself*, or *removing* the *Subject*, in which Virtue was to reside. Wherefore the utmost that the Scripture ever represents God doing in this matter, is what is express'd, *Pj. lxxxix. 13. O that my people would have bearkened unto me! that Israel had walked my Ways!* and *Is. v. 4. What could have been done more to my Vineyard, that I have not done in it?* But

2dly, As Force is inconsistent with the nature of Religion in general; so is it much more opposite, to the Spirit of Christianity in particular. Our Saviour's whole Life and Character was, that he went about, doing good; humble and lowly, meek and merciful, and exhorting Sinners to Repentance; 'till at last he was led, as a Lamb, to the Slaughter. *If ye will be my Disciples, If any man will come after me,* was his stile in inviting men to receive the

S E R M.

I.  


the Gospel; Will ye also go away, was his manner of *expostulation*: *Blessed are the meek, Blessed are the merciful, Blessed are they which are persecuted, (not they which persecute;)* was his constant *Doctrine*: A *New, a particular, a distinguishing Commandment, give I unto you; Love one another, love even your Enemies, love even your Persecutors: By This shall all men know that ye are my Disciples, if ye have love one to another: To love God with all your Heart, and your Neighbours as your selves, these are the first and great Commandments; And if any man desires to distinguish the Preachers of Truth from the Teachers of Errour, by these Fruits (saith he) shall ye know them: Lastly, when some of his Disciples, with too high a Spirit of Zeal, would have called for fire from heaven, upon the Samaritans who contemptuously rejected their Master; though they were far from massacring them with their own hands, and desired only to have the *unerring* righteous judgment of God executed upon them, yet*

be reprov'd them, saying, *Ye know not what manner of Spirit ye are of; for the Son*


*of*

Luke ix.

55.

*Against Persecution for Religion.*

I 7

of Man came not to destroy mens Lives, S E R M.  
but to save them. Accordingly, in the first I.  
and uncorrupt Ages, such also was the   
Manner of the Apostles teaching, in imi-  
tation of their Master: Hereby know we, 1 Joh. ii. 5.  
saith St John, that we are in Him: If a iv. 20.  
man say, I love God, and hateth his Bro-  
ther, 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 St  
James: Who, says he, is a wise man? Jam. iii.  
let him show his Works with meekness of 13.  
Wisdom: But if ye have bitter envyings  
and strife in your hearts, glory not, and  
lie not against the Truth: For This wis-  
dom descendeth not from above, but is earth-  
ly, sensual, devilish: But the Wisdom that  
is from above, is first pure, then peaceable,  
gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of  
mercy and good Fruits: For, the Wrath ch. i 20.  
of Man, (and, much more, the Cruelty of  
Man,) worketh not the righteousness of God.  
St Paul likewise, tho' in his natural Tem-  
per the most zealous of All the Apostles,  
yet declares, that the very End of the Com- 1 Tim i.  
mandment, is Charity; that tho' a man 5.  
should speak with the Tongues of Men 1 Cor. xiii.


S E R M. *and Angels, and had Faith to remove*  
 I. *Mountains, and Zeal to give his Body to be*  
 burned, and Liberality to bestow all his  
 goods to feed the Poor, and had not Cha-  
 rity; that is, universal Love, Temper,  
 and Good-will towards Mankind; it  
 would profit him nothing. And accord-  
 ingly he exhorts Christians, to put on bowels  
 of mercy, kindness, meekness; forbearing  
 one another, and forgiving one another, if  
 any man have a quarrel against any; And  
 above all things put on Charity, which is  
 the bond of Perfectness, Col. iii. 12. Cha-  
 rity, the Bond of Perfectness; That is;  
 Not Unity of Opinion in the Bond of  
 Ignorance, or Unity of Practice in the  
 Bond of Hypocrisy, but Unity of the  
 Spirit in the Bond of Peace. And, with  
 regard to Unbelievers, 2 Tim. ii. 24. *The*  
*Servant of the Lord, says he, must not*  
*strive, but be gentle unto all men, apt to*  
*teach, patient, in meekness (not with Fire*  
*and Sword) instructing those that oppose*  
*themselves, if God peradventure will give*  
*them repentance to the acknowledgment of*  
*the Truth.* Particularly, in the case of an  
 unbelieving *Wife*, he commands the Huf-  
 band



band not to try to bring her over by ill usage and force, but by *kindness only* and good example; for *what knowest thou, O man, whether thou shall save thy Wife?* 1 Cor. vii. 16: And Husbands *that obey not the word*, 1 Pet. iii. 1. *may also without the word be won by the conversation and good example of the Wives while they behold your chaste conversation coupled with Fear.*

S E R M.  
I.  


DID the Professors of Christianity universally follow these Precepts of their Master and his Apostles, so that the *Labourers* were as *many* as the *Harvest* is *Great*; the whole World would soon be *filled with the Knowledge of the Lord*, as the *Waters cover the Sea*: And the *Gospel*, from a *grain of mustard-seed*, according to our Saviour's parable, would have waxed into a great *Tree*; which (in the Psalmist's expression) *having taking deep root, had filled* Ps lxxx. 9. *the Land*; *The Hills were covered with the Shadow of it*, and the *boughs thereof were like the goodly cedar-trees*; *She stretched out her branches unto the Sea*, and her *boughs unto the river*: Or in the Prophet *Daniel's phrase*, ch. iv. 11. *The Tree grew*

S E R M. *and was strong, and the height thereof*  
 I. *reached unto Heaven, and the Sight thereof*  
 *to the End of all the Earth; The leaves*  
*thereof were fair, and the fruit Much;*  
*and in it was Meat for all; The Beasts*  
*of the field had shadow under it, and the*  
*Fowls of the Heaven dwelt in the boughs*  
*thereof, and all Flesh was fed of it. Thus*  
*would the Gospel certainly be propagated,*  
*did its Professors every where promote it*  
*according to their Master's direction, and*  
*practise it in the Love thereof. But if*  
*the Gospel of Peace, be itself turned into*  
*an occasion of hatred and violences; the*  
*Name of God must needs be blasphemed*  
*among the Gentiles, thro' Us, as it is writ-*  
 Mat v 13. *ten, Rom. ii. 24. If the Salt itself has lost*  
 Mar. ix 50. *its Savour, wherewith shall things be sea-*  
 Mat. vi. 22 *soned? If the Eye, which is the Light of*  
 Job x. 22 *the Body, be itself Confusion; wherewith*  
*shall a man's steps be directed? If the*  
*very Light that is in thee, be darkness, (as*  
*our Saviour expresses it;) how great is*  
*that Darkness? If a man's Religion itself*  
*be wickedness, how great must his Wick-*  
*edness be?*

3dly, As *Force* is inconsistent with the Nature of *Religion in general*, and still more opposite to the Spirit of *Christianity in particular*; so it is in Scripture, still further, made the *distinguishing character of the great Apostacy* foretold by Christ and his Apostles. As, in the *literal Babylon*, *Nebuchadnezzar* commanded, that whosoever would not worship the King's golden Image, should be cast into the fiery furnace; so the description of *spiritual Babylon* is This, that *whosoever will not worship the Beast's Image*, that is, profess the idolatrous religion of false Christians, shall be killed, Rev. xiii. 15. Our Saviour foretold his Disciples from the Beginning, that he came not to send Peace on the Earth, but Fire and a Sword; that the Brother should deliver up the Brother to death, and the Father the Child; yea, the time cometh, saith he, that whosoever killeth you, will think that he doth God Service; And these things will they do, because they have neither known Me, nor my Father that sent me; that is, have neither understood the doctrine of Christ, nor the Precepts of natural Religion it-  
self.

S E R M.

I.



Luke xii.

49.

Mat. x. 21,


34.

Joh. xvi. 2,

3. and xv.


21.

S E R M. self. These Prophecies began *in some degree* to be accomplished, by the *Jews* persecuting the Apostles of our Lord: But the *Jews* were so far outdone in this Wickedness, by corrupt *Christians* afterwards; that in like manner as our Saviour testified concerning the *worst* Age of the *Jews*, that the *blood of all the Prophets which was shed from the foundation of the world, even from the blood of righteous Abel, down to the blood of Zacharias, should be required of That generation*; so concerning the most corrupt and persecuting part of the *Christian Church*, it is prophesied likewise, that *in Her shall be found the blood of Prophets and of Saints, and of All that are slain upon the Earth.*

I. 

Luk. xi. 50. It is very observable; that as *Moses*, in the conclusion of the *Law*, foretold such a dispersion of the *Jews* into All Nations, as no *False Prophet* could have invented, because 'tis such a thing as Never happened to any *other* People, and is therefore a great Evidence of the Truth of *Moses's* Inspiration: So in the *New Testament* there is clearly foretold such a Corruption of *Christianity*, so *unnatural*, so *incredible*,

Rev. xvii. 6. xviii. 24. Deut. xxviii. 64.

*incredible*, as could not have entred into S E R M.  
the reach of any *humane* Wisdom, to fore- I.  
see or suspect: That the Professors of   
*That religion*, whose distinguishing *cha-*  
*racter*, whose very *Essence*, is universal  
*Love* and Good-will towards Mankind;  
should some of them exceed, in *Cruelty*,  
even the most *barbarous* of the Heathens:  
That, in order to convert *Others*, they  
should *themselves* break the *greatest* of  
God's Commandments; and overturn *all*  
*his Laws*, for the Propagation (it seems)  
of his *Religion*: That Christianity, in-  
stead of making men partakers of the  
*Divine* Nature, should on the contrary  
become so corrupt, as to divest them of  
all Remains even of *Humanity itself*:  
That, instead of causing the *Sun* of Righ-  
teousness to arise in mens hearts, it should  
on the contrary extinguish That *Candle* of  
the Lord, which was *before* in their breasts  
by the Light of Nature; and make them  
even *ten times more the children of Wrath*,  
*than* if they had never received the Gos-  
pel at all, nor ever heard of *the way of*  
*Righteousness*.

SERM.

I.

IT will here, no doubt, be alledged, by those of the *Romish* Church, that *Protestants* also, have sometimes *persecuted* men, upon account of Religion: Which perhaps *may* indeed be True, just in the *same* sense, as *good men* may be said to have sometimes committed Robberies, or Murder, or other Crimes; that is, they have, in *so* doing, apostatized from their Profession. But *must* men then, (they will say,) be left *wholly at liberty* whether they will be religious or not? No certainly: We must exhort, convince, reprove, *be instant with them, in season, out of season*; setting before them, without ceasing, the Promises and the Terrors of the Lord. But *what* if all these things will not prevail with them? Why, then (our Saviour tells us) they must be unto us *as heathen-men and publicans*; that is, we must leave them to the righteous judgment of God. But must not the *Magistrate* then *punish* the Obstinate? Undoubtedly he must; that is, he must punish them for every Action which is *vicious and immoral*; and consequently *hurtful* to the *Publick*, which has a right of Self-

Self-defence against all Malefactors: But S E R M.  
to abuse the *Sword of Justice*, to an *un-*  
*just Compulsion* in matters relating wholly I.  
to God and mens own Consciences; this  
is the *Great Corruption* prophesied of in  
the whole *New Testament*.

*Lastly*, IT may be alleged by the Church  
of *Rome*, that there are in *Scripture* ap-  
proved Instances of men *put to death* upon  
account of Religion: But the plain An-  
swer is, that the Cases *There* mentioned,  
are All of them *exceeding different*, from  
Those which They are by Popish Writers  
brought to excuse. In the Law of *Mo-*  
*ses*, he that seduced men to worship other  
Gods, was commanded to be put to death:  
Because he seduced men to worship Stocks  
and Stones, the Gods of those abominable  
Nations whom the Lord had commanded  
to be extirpated; a Crime equally against  
all Natural, and all Revealed Religion;  
which no man's Conscience could inno-  
cently or erroneously lead him into; and  
the Punishment moreover was grounded  
upon, and justified only by, the *particu-*  
*lar express* Command, given by God at  
That time to the *Jews*, under a severe  
Law,

S E R M. Law, and under a *political Theocracy* even  
 I. with respect to their *civil* Government ;  
 and was therefore a Case, not to be imi-  
 tated, but when exactly under *all* the *like*  
*Circumstances*, and with the *like* particu-  
 lar *express* Command from God. *Elijah*  
 destroyed men with Fire from Heaven :  
 But 'twas God's own miraculous Interpo-  
 sition, and not any Action of the Prophet,  
 that killed them. He slew also at another  
 time the Prophets of *Baal* : But it was  
 upon an *express* Command of God, war-  
 ranted and proved to him by an imme-  
 diate *Miracle* of Fire from Heaven upon  
 his *Burnt-offering*. *Phinebas* suddenly kil-  
 led a man and a woman in their Sin : But  
 the Text tells us, 'twas according to a  
*special Command* given to *Moses* upon That  
 very occasion : And he that will do the  
 like, must show the like *Inspiration* and  
 the like *Command*. *Ananias* and *Sapphira*  
 fell down dead at the Apostle's feet ; but  
 'twas by the miraculous Judgment of *God*,  
 not by any Action of the *Apostles them-*  
*selves*. He that, from these instances,  
 thinks he may *kill* all men that differ from  
 him in Religion ; will bring in all Enthu-  
 siasm



fiasm and all Wickedness into the world. S E R M.  
Can *Christians* show, that *they* have any I.  
such Command? have they not the very ~  
*contrary* declared to them, in our Savi-  
our's telling his Disciples, when they  
wished for Fire from Heaven, that they  
*knew not what Spirit they were of?* There  
is not therefore, in all the Prophecies  
through the whole Scripture, any *One*  
more certain mark of Antichristian Cor-  
ruption, than the Spirit of *Persecution*:  
*Come out of her, my people, that ye be not*  
*partakers of her Sins, and that ye receive*  
*not of her plagues.*

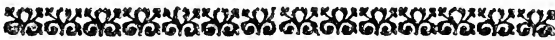






# S E R M O N II.

Against false Pretences to Religion.



MATT. xxii. 11, 12.

*And when the King came in to see the Guests, he saw there a man which had not on a Wedding-garment: And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having a Wedding-garment? and he was Speechless.*



THESE Words are part of the S E R M  
II.  
conclusion of a Parable, in  
which our Lord represents the  
*Kingdom of Heaven*, or God's  
gracious Declarations to Man-  
kind in the *Gospel*, under the Similitude  
of

S E R M. of a King sending forth his Servants at  
 II. different times, and inviting his Subjects  
 to the *Marriage-Feast* of his Son. Not  
 only by the Light of *Nature* and *Reason*,  
 has God given men the Knowledge of  
*Himself*, a Sense of the essential and eter-  
 nal Differences of *Good and Evil*, a ne-  
 cessary and unavoidable Expectation of a  
*Future Judgment*, and of *Rewards and*  
*Punishments* in a *life to come*; but more-  
 over by *Revelation* also, at *sundry times*  
 and in *divers manners*, to the *Patriarchs* and  
 the *Prophets*; and at last by the Preaching  
 of *Christ himself*, and of his *Apostles and*  
*Ministers* sent forth even unto the *Ends*  
 of the World; has he continually *repeated*  
 his *Admonitions*; and without ceasing *in-*  
*vites, perswades, urges, presses* men, with  
 all the *possible Arguments* both of *Reason*  
 and *Authority*, to accept the Gracious and  
 Necessary Terms of Salvation. The *in-*  
*sensibility* of men, in not understanding  
 their true Happiness; their *Negligence*, in  
 refusing to receive instruction in the ways  
 of Virtue; and their *Perverseness* in pre-  
 ferring the momentary Pleasures of Sin,  
 before the Happiness of Eternity; is affec-  
 tionately

*Against false Pretences to Religion.* 31

tionately set forth by our Saviour in *That* S E R M.  
*part* of the Parable, where he describes II.  
the Temper and Disposition of the persons invited to the Wedding, ver. 3, and  
5, that they would not *come*, but *made*  
*light* of the invitation, and *went* their  
*ways*, one to his Farm, another to his  
*Merchandize*. The Goodness and Long-  
*suffering* of God, in bearing patiently with  
Sinners, and giving them space for Re-  
pentance, and exhorting them with all  
earnestness to flee from the Wrath to  
come; is, in a very lively manner, ex-  
pressed in the *following part* of the Pa-  
rable, ver. 9; where the King says to his  
Servants, after they who had been before  
invited refused to come; *Go ye into the*  
*high-ways*, and *as many as ye shall find*,  
*bid to the Wedding*: Or, as St Luke ex-  
presses it still more pathetically, *Go out*  
*into the Streets and Lanes of the City*,-----  
*go out into the High-ways and Hedges*, and  
*compel them to come in*, *that my house*  
*may be filled*: *Compel* them; that is, be  
*pressing*, be very *urgent* with them, use *all*  
*possible Arguments* of Perswasion, give  
them *no Rest*, 'till they be convinced of  
their

S E R M. their Folly, and prevailed upon to understand their own True Happiness: The  
 II. *Effect* of these earnest and repeated invitations, was; ver. 10. that *the Servants gathered together all, as many as they found, both Bad and Good; and the Wedding was furnished with Guests*: That is; By the continual Preaching of the Gospel, *Many* are prevailed upon to make *Profession of Religion*, and to seek after the Happiness of the Life to come. But though God *does indeed, with all the Earnestness and Affection* expressed under these Similitudes in the Parable, *invite* men into his Kingdom of Glory; Though he *really* would have *All men to be saved, and to come to the Knowledge of the Truth; not willing that Any should perish, but that All should come to Repentance*: Yet 'tis, above all things, to be here carefully observed, that all these *earnest, repeated, pressing* Invitations, are in no degree any encouragement to any man to expect the *End* without the *Means*, but they are merely Invitations to the *Means* in order to the *End*. God calls no man to *Salvation*, without a *Life of Righteousness*: But he *invites, persuades,*

*perswades, exhorts, presses men, with all the possible Arguments both of Reason and Authority, to live virtuously in order to their eternal Happiness. And This is what our Saviour teaches in the words of the Text, at the conclusion of the Parable. When the King, (says he) came in to see the Guests, he saw there a man which had not on a Wedding-garment: And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having a Wedding-garment? and he was speechless. Then said the King to his Servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer Darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of Teeth. For Many are called, but Few are chosen.*

S E R M.  
II.  


IN the following Discourse, I shall *first* explain the Ground and Meaning of this figurative expression, of *having on a wedding-garment*: And *Then* I shall make some useful and practical *Observations* upon the Text.

I. IN the *first* place; The Original and Ground of this figurative expression, of *having on a wedding-garment*, is very easy and natural. The *Mind* of man being *invisible*, and the *Temper* or *Disposition* of

S E R M. a *spiritual Substance* not being discernible to Sense; its *Qualifications* consequently can no otherwise be described in words, than under *figurative* expressions drawn from the *Similitude* of *corporeal Objects*. *Pure* and *Impure*, *Clean* and *Unclean*, when applied to the *Soul* in the *Moral* Sense; owe the *clearness* and *expressiveness* of their Signification, to the known meaning of the same words when applied in their *literal* Sense to things *corporeal* and *sensible*. The *Habits* of the *Mind*, are very aptly and strongly represented to our imagination, by *Figures* taken with justness and propriety from the *Habit* of the *Body*. And the constant, prevailing, habitual *Temper* or *Disposition* of any man's *Spirit*, can no way be set forth more expressively and affectionately; than under the similitude of *Bodily* garments, so investing the person, as to be his *proper* and *distinguishing Attire*. The invisible, and inaccessible *Glory*; the inexpressible *Greatness* and *Majesty*; the inconceivable *Purity* and *Holiness*, of *God Himself*; is in *Scripture* described, after This manner, by his *putting on glorious Apparel*; by his being *Clothed with Majesty*



*jesty and Honour, and decking himself with* S E R M.  
*Light as with a Garment, Ps. xciii. 1; civ.* II.

2. The Good, and the Evil Qualities, of Men; the *habitual* ones, which determine and distinguish the person's *Whole Character*; are, through all the Scriptures, perpetually represented under the *same Figure*. A *malicious, uncharitable, persecuting Spirit*; is, in the *Psalmist's* description, one that *Clothes himself with Cursing*; To whom it is as the *Cloke that he has upon him, and as the Girdle that he is always girded withal*, Ps. cix. 17. And when, on the contrary, he is to express the perfectest and most compleat character of spotless Virtue; he does it in the *same manner*; *Let thy Priests be Clothed with Righteousness*, Ps. cxxxii. 9. In That beautiful and affectionate Apology which *Job* makes for himself, in That passage where he maintains his past Innocency, and describes his virtuous Behaviour in the days of his Prosperity; he likewise makes use of the *same Metaphor*: ch. xxix; ver. 15, 16, 14. *I was Eyes to the Blind, and Feet was I to the Lamé: I was a Father to the Poor; and the Cause which I*

S E R M. II. *knew not, I searched out: I put on righteousness, and it clothed me; my Judgment was as a Robe and a Diadem.* The Prophet *Isaiab*, describing the Redeemer of *Israel*, speaks after the same Fashion, ch. lix. 17. *He put on Righteousness as a Breast-plate,--- and was clad with Zeal as a Cloke.* And concerning the People Redeemed by him, ch. lxi. 10; *He has clothed me (says he) with the Garments of Salvation, he hath covered me with the Robe of Righteousness, as a Bridegroom decketh himself with Ornaments, and as a Bride adorneth herself with her Jewels.*

FROM *These* figurative Expressions so frequently occurring in the *Old Testament*, the same manner of speaking has descended to the Writers of the *New*. In the Book of the *Revelation*, the Elders before the Throne of God, in *St John's* Vision of the Church in Heaven, are represented  
 Rev iv. 4. to him as sitting, *clothed in white Raiment*: And the Nations of them that are saved, as standing before the Throne,  
 ch. vii 9. *clothed with white Robes.* And our Saviour, in the same Vision, is accordingly  
 xvi. 15. introduced pronouncing; *Blessed is he that*

*that Watcheth, and keepeth his Garments: S E R M. II.*  
And, They that have not defiled their  
Garments, shall walk with me in white,  
for they are worthy. Now These Garments,  
the Text expressly tells us, *ch. xix. 8.* are  
The Righteousness of the Saints. The  
Whole Passage is exactly parallel to the  
Parable in the Gospel, of which my Text  
is a Part; and in particular it most distinctly  
explains, what is there meant by  
the person *not having on a Wedding-Garment.* ver. 7. *The Marriage of the Lamb*  
*is come; ----- and to Her (to the Church)*  
*was granted, that she should be arrayed in*  
*fine linnen, clean and white; for the fine*  
*linnen is the Righteousness of the Saints:*  
*And he saith unto me, Write; Blessed are*  
*they which are called to the Marriage-*  
*Supper of the Lamb.* From This description  
'tis evident, that the *man*, whom  
the King in the Parable, when he came in  
to see the Guests whom he had invited to  
his Son's Marriage-Feast, saw *Not having*  
*on a Wedding-garment;* This *man* (I say)  
is every person, who, making profession of  
the Christian Religion, yet practises not the  
Virtues of a Christian life; Every person,

S E R M. who, expecting to be *Saved by Christ*, yet regards not the *Conditions on which That Salvation depends*; In a word, every *Profane*, every *Unjust*, every *Unrighteous*, every *Debauched* person, whom the repeated *Invitations of Christ in the Gospel*, bring not to a timely and an effectual *Repentance*.

HAVING thus explained the *Principal Phrase* in the Text; I shall here, before I proceed, observe by the way, how great a Light may be given, from the explication of this *One phrase*, to *Many other passages of Scripture*, in which the *same figure of Speech* has extended itself into a *variety of other Expressions*. Thus when *St Paul* exhorts, *Eph. iv. 22, 24. Put ye off, concerning the former conversation, the Old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful Lusts: And put ye on the New man, which after God is created in Righteousness and true Holiness*: 'Tis evident how by phrases literally expressing a *Change of the Habit of the Body*, and of the external *Appearance of the Person*, he emphatically describes a *Change of the Moral Habit and Disposition of the Mind*.

Again,

Again, *Col. ii. 11.* and *ch. iii. 8, 9, 10, 12, 14.* Put off *the body of the Sins of the Flesh*: Put off *all these*; *anger, wrath, malice, and the like*: Seeing that ye have put off *the Old man with his deeds*; and have put on *the New man, which is renewed in Knowledge, after the Image of him that created him*: Put on therefore, (*as the elect of God, holy and beloved,*) *bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering*: And above all these, put on *Charity, which is the Bond of Perfectness*. His Meaning is: Cloath yourselves with all Moral and Christian Virtues: Make them the *Habit* of your *Minds*; the constant *character*, by which ye may be known and distinguished from men of different Principles. The same figure of Speech, he carries still higher, *Gal. iii. 27.* *As many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ*: And *Rom. xiii. 14.* Put ye on *the Lord Jesus Christ*; and make not provision for the *Flesh, to fulfil the Lusts thereof*. The phrase is highly significant and expressive: Let your Minds be habitually invested with all Moral and Christian

S E R M. *stian* Virtues, defending yourselves continually against the Approaches of Temptations, and against the Enticements of a vicious and debauched World.

II.

II. *Secondly*, THIS being premised by way of *Explication*, I proceed now to make some *useful and practical Observations* upon the words of the Text. And

*1st*, BY our Lord's representing the King in the Parable, as coming in to view his Guests, and to see whether Any of them had not on a Wedding-garment; is intended to be set forth to us, how *absolutely and indispensably* God *expects and requires*, that every man who hopes to be admitted into the Kingdom of Heaven, should have his Mind endued (and as it were *cloathed*) with those *habitual virtuous Qualifications*, which can no otherwise be acquired than by righteous Practice. To appear in the *Presence* of a *Prince*, upon any publick and most solemn Occasion, in an improper, indecent, and absurd Dress; is a direct Indignity, and Affront. Now *Sin*; that is, every *moral Impurity*, every *Wickedness* whatsoever, is infinitely more odious in the sight of *God*,  
than

than *Any natural Indecency* can be offensive before *Men*. As therefore, even in the *present* time, (to use the words of the Author of the Book of *Wisdom*, ch. i. 5.) *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:* So, much more, in the *future State*, into the *heavenly Jerusalem*, there shall in no case enter *Any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh Abomination, or maketh a Lie.* Rev. xxi. 27.

2dly, BY the *Question* the King here puts, to the man who had not on a Wedding-garment; *Friend, how camest thou in hither? upon what Pretence, upon what Ground, with what Assurance, with what Expectation* camest thou in hither, not having on a Wedding-garment? by *This question*, I say, our Lord plainly intimates to us, in way of Admonition or Warning; that there is such a thing as a False or ill-grounded Hope; that there are deceitful Expectations, which may betray men

S E R M. men into Perdition. And 'tis of the  
 II. highest importance in the World, not to  
 be led by them into a groundless Pre-  
 sumption. When men who live in the  
 habitual Practice of Virtue, are, by any  
 particular melancholy and erroneous No-  
 tions, led into Great Fears and unreason-  
 able Despondencies ; the ill Effect in This  
 case, provided they continue to live vir-  
 tuously and religiously, is nothing more  
 than the Trouble itself which arises from  
 such Fears. But on the *other* hand, when  
 men who live not a virtuous life, have  
 yet a presumptuous Hope, founded upon  
*Other* Expedients, and built upon *Any*  
*other* Grounds whatsoever ; here the Er-  
 rour is *Fatal*, and directly leads men to  
 Destruction. And therefore our Saviour,  
 in *This* Point, is always very plain and  
 explicit ; that no one, even of the meanest  
 capacity, can possibly misunderstand him.  
 The *Wedding-garment*, is a *Virtuous Life* :  
 Without This, whosoever pretends to any  
 Hope in Christ, upon what presumption  
 soever it be ; to *Him* is the Question put  
 by our Lord ; *Friend, how camest thou in*  
*hither ?* Many are the Expedients, which




men of corrupt minds have invented, to deceive themselves in This matter. Some satisfy themselves with the *Zeal* they express for the *Profession* of the True Religion, tho' they dishonour That Profession by Unrighteous Works. Others expect to obtain Salvation by the Strength of their *Faith*; utterly mistaking the *very Meaning* of the word, *Faith*; apprehending it to signify *Credulity*, instead of *Fidelity*; and that they shall be accepted for being *Confident*, instead of *Faithful* Servants. Some depend upon certain Things that can be done for them by *Others*; as if any thing could, in the *religious* Sense, be of Advantage to any man, which does not at all make him the *Better man*. Others rely upon the *Merits of Christ*; deceiving themselves with an expectation that Christ will rescue them from *Punishment*, though they reject all the Motives by which His Gospel proposes to rescue them from *Sin*. These, and all other Expedients of the like nature; all Expedients whatsoever, intended to supply the Want of the One thing necessary, which is a virtuous Life; are what our Saviour here represents to us,

S E R M.  
II.  
~~~~~

S E R M. us, by the Person *not having on a Wedding-*  
 II. *Garment.* 'Tis the same thing, as what  
 he elsewhere compares to a man's *building his House upon the Sand*, instead of founding it *upon a Rock*. 'Tis the same thing, as what he elsewhere warns us of, when he tells us, that *Many shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able*: For, when they shall say unto him, *Lord, Lord, open unto us*; his Answer will be, *I know you not whence ye are; Depart from me, all ye workers of Iniquity.*

3dly, BY the following Observation; that, when the King asked, *how camest thou in hither, not having a Wedding-garment?* the man *was speechless*: By *This* observation (I say) our Lord teaches us, that the Judgment of God will be *according to Right*; *According to Right*, in the Sense that *We* understand Just and Right; in the Sense, that even the *Wickedest of men* shall not be able to deny, is according to Righteousness and Justice. The man convicted, was *speechless*. He had *nothing to plead* in his own behalf. He was condemned by the Verdict of his *own conscience*, as well as by the righteous Sentence

Sentence of *God*. This evidently shows, S E R M.  
how absurd and unreasonable all those II.  
men's notion of *God* is, who look upon   
him not as a just and equitable Judge, but  
as an Arbitrary Lord ; condemning or ac-  
quitting men according to certain absolute  
Decrees of *his own*, and not according to  
*Their* Behaviour. Which Doctrin if it  
had been true, the person here in the Pa-  
rable might very justly have pleaded in  
his own Excuse, that it was not possible  
for him to have a Wedding-garment, be-  
cause the King had not been pleased to  
give him One. And our Saviour, by lay-  
ing, on the contrary, a particular Stress  
upon the man's having *no apology* to make  
for himself ; clearly warns us against en-  
tertaining any such dishonourable Notions  
of *God*. The condemnation of Sinners,  
is wholly from *Themselves* : And the Scri-  
pture, by perpetually insisting that it *is*  
so, urges upon all wicked men, in the  
most affectionate manner, the destructive  
Consequences of their vicious Courses, and  
the indispensable necessity of effectual Re-  
pentance and Reformation of manners ;  
And at the same time, it affords the strong-  
est

S E R M. II. *ent Assurance to Those who sincerely endeavour to live virtuously, that by That method certainly, and by That method only, they shall obtain the eternal Favour of God. The reason why even wicked Heathens shall be condemned at the last day, is because they did things (as our Saviour expresses it) worthy of stripes; things in their own nature worthy of stripes; things contrary to the dictates of their own consciences, contrary to the Light of universal Reason, contrary to their natural Knowledge of God: So that they are without Excuse, Rom. i. 20. Without Excuse; That is, in the language of my Text, Speechless. And This is what the Scripture elsewhere declares, when it tells us that the mouth of all Wickedness shall be stopped, Ps. cvii. 42: And, Rom. iii. 19. That every mouth may be stopp'd, and all the World become guilty before God. The Meaning is: When God shall finally judge the Secrets of all Hearts, he shall be justified in his Sentence, even Sinners themselves being Judges; and every mouth shall be stop't before him, not by the force of arbitrary and irresistible Power,*

but

but by the undeniable evidence of the Justice and Equity and Righteousness of the Judgment.

S E R M.  
II.  


4thly, BY the *Benignity* of the *appellation*, wherewith our Saviour here represents the King treating his unworthy Guest; Friend, *how camest thou in hither, not having a Wedding-garment?* Hereby, I say, is affectionately set forth to us the *Reality* of the Concern God has for the Salvation of men. He, as the Apostle expresses it, *willeth All men to be saved; not willing that Any should perish, but that All might come to Repentance.* And when men continue obstinately impenitent, he condescends to represent himself as *Grieved* with their iniquities. And he *argues* with them, in the most *affectionate* manner, by his Prophets and by his Ministers: *Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: For, - Why will ye die, O ye House of Israel?*

5thly, BY what follows in the *next words* after the affectionate expression in the Text, Our Saviour adds a *very moving Admonition*, how dreadful at last will

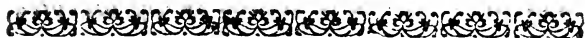
S E R M. will be the State of all Those, whom  
 II. the great Goodness and Long-suffering  
 of God have not been able to bring to  
 Repentance, and to effectual Amendment  
 of Life and Manners. When the man  
 who had not on a Wedding-garment,  
 was *Speechless*, and had *no Excuse* for  
 his Total Want of the absolutely neces-  
 sary and indispensable Qualification of  
 Virtue and Holiness; *Then said the King  
 to his Servants, ver. 13. Bind him hand  
 and foot, and take him away, and cast him  
 into outer darkness; There shall be weep-  
 ing and gnashing of Teeth.*

*Lastly:* BY the concluding words,  
 with which our Lord closes the whole  
 Parable, ver. 14. *For Many are called,  
 but Few are Chosen:* By These words,  
 I say, our Lord clearly and distinctly  
 declares, that the *Chosen* or the *Elect*  
 of God, are not persons originally and  
 unconditionally from the Beginning,  
*decreed* to be saved; but all such as  
 shall at the End be found *having a  
 Wedding-garment*, that is, Clothed with  
 Righteousness, having led *a Holy and a  
 Virtuous Life.*



## S E R M O N III.

Every Man is principally to regard  
his own proper Duty.



J O H. xxi. 22.

*Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he  
tarry till I come, what is That to Thee?  
Follow Thou me.*



**I**N the Beginning of This S E R M. III.  
chapter, our Lord appearing  
to his Disciples after his  
Resurrection, and making  
himself known to them by  
a miraculous draught of Fishes, ver. 6, 7,  
II. takes That occasion to give a *parti-  
cular Admonition* to Peter, to be as dili-  
gent

S E R M.  
III.

*gent for the time to come in propagating the Doctrine of Christ, as he had in time past been faulty in denying of Christ himself. For which reason he repeats his Question no less than Three times successively; Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? till Peter was grieved at it, ver. 17. and his heart smote him with Regret, at the Justness of the Reproof, and at the Earnestness of the threefold Repetition. Yet at the same time it could not but be matter of Comfort to him, and an assured Token of his Repentance being accepted; that our Lord was pleased, in so particular and distinct a manner, to inquire into the Sincerity of his Love, and to lay upon him such a repeated Command to feed his Flock. The Church of Rome, has built upon these words a very extraordinary Consequence: That, because our Saviour commanded St Peter to instruct men diligently in the Christian Faith, and St Peter was afterward martyred at Rome by the Heathen Emperor; therefore the Bishop of Rome has a perpetual Right to require what doctrines he pleases, to be received implicitly by the whole Christian Church;*



Church; without being at all able to prove, that those Doctrines were ever taught either by Christ or by St *Peter*.

S E R M.

III.



Which is just such another Consequence, as their inferring the Supremacy of the Bishop or Church of *Rome*, from our Lord's styling St *Peter* a Rock, or a Firm and Solid part in That *Foundation of the Apostles and Prophets*, upon which the *Church of Christ* was to be built. But though neither the One nor the Other were indeed *any* Emblem of *Authority* at all, but of *Duty* only, and of *Success in his Labours*; yet, as being prophetick Declarations of *great Success* in those Labours, they could not but be matter of great *Encouragement* and *Satisfaction* to his mind. And therefore our Lord, (according to his constant Custom of adding Arguments of *Humility* to all his Promises;) as, in the *former* case, after the Promise of *building his Church upon This Rock*, and *giving to Peter the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven*, (Matt. xvi. 18, 19, 21.) to prevent his Disciples being puffed up with a sudden expectation of That Kingdom, he immediately proceeds to a

S E R M. Prediction of *his own Sufferings*, of the  
 III. Sufferings *our Lord himself* was to submit  
 to; so, in this *Latter* case, after having  
 given *This Command* to *Peter* to *feed his*  
*Sheep*; immediately he proceeds in the  
 very next words, to foretell what *Suffer-*  
*ings Peter himself* likewise should under-  
 go. *Verily, verily, I say unto thee; when*  
*thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and*  
*walkedst whether thou wouldest;* (alluding  
 to the *Readiness*, wherewith *Peter*, when  
 he heard that it was the *Lord*, girt his  
*Fisher's Coat* about him, and cast himself  
 into the *Sea*, ver. 7.) *But when thou shalt*  
*be old, saith he, thou shalt stretch forth*  
*thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and*  
*carry thee whither thou wouldest not;* that  
 is, should carry him to be crucified. Up-  
 on *This, Peter turning about, and seeing*  
 the *Disciple, whom Jesus loved, following*  
 them; he saith to *Jesus, Lord, and what*  
*shall This man do?* The Question was a  
 matter of mere *Curiosity*; and therefore  
 our *Lord* answers it accordingly in the  
 words of my Text, *If I will that he tar-*  
*ry till I come, what is That to Thee?*  
*Follow thou Me.* Modern Expositors have  
 imagined,

imagined, that our Lord by these words S E R M. meant to foretel, that St *John* should live III. till after the *Destruction of Jerusalem*, which they fancy is sometimes stiled *The Coming of Christ*. In the *Apostles* days, the same words were understood by some of the *Disciples*, as a Prediction that St *John* should not *die at all*, but should continue alive till the *Day of Judgment*; which those, who thus understood the words, in all probability apprehended to be much nearer than it was. *Then went this Saying abroad among the Brethren*, ver. 23. that *That Disciple should not die*. Yet *Jesus* said no such thing, as that *That Disciple* should continue alive, either till the *Destruction of Jerusalem*, or till his *Final Coming to Judgment*, or to *any other* determinate time; but only that it concerned not *Peter* to inquire *at all*, what the *Divine Providence* had thought fit to determine concerning his *Fellow-Disciple*. It was foretold to *Peter* for *particular reasons*, that he himself should *die a Martyr*: Possibly to *support and comfort* him under the uneasy Thoughts, of his having before so shamefully denied his Master: Possibly also for a *contrary* reason, to

S E R M. *humble* him, and keep him from being  
 III. *puffed up* with the preheminance that  
 seemed in Some manner to be given him  
 above the rest of the Disciples: Or for  
 any *Other reason*, which the Wisdom of  
 God thought proper. But as to That  
*Other Disciple*, says our Lord; whether  
*He also* shall die by the hands of *Violence*,  
 or whether he shall die a *Natural Death*,  
 or *how* and *when* he shall die, or whether  
 he shall *die at all*; *What is That to Thee?*  
*Follow Thou Me.*

THE words of the Text being thus explained; the *Observations* naturally arising from them, are briefly as follows.

I. *First*; That every person, in every station of life whatsoever, wherein the Providence God thinks fit to place him, has always some *plain* and *certain Duty*, which 'tis his present proper Business to attend to. *Follow Thou Me.* Attend (says our Lord,) to the Doctrine which I am now teaching you; That, when I am ascended into Heaven, you may instruct Others therein with Fidelity and Diligence, which is *Feeding my Sheep*. This was St *Peter's* Duty, at the time of our Lord's speaking these words to him: And the Admonition

is recorded, as the rest of our Saviour's S E R M.  
Discourses were, upon account of the III.  
*Universality* and *Perpetuity* of its *Appli-*  
*cation.* 'Twas not in *One single case* on-  
ly, that our Lord gave this Intimation;  
*What I say unto you, I say unto All,*  
*Watch:* But, in general, the same was  
intended to be understood in almost *all*  
his Instructions. *Follow thou Me;* is an  
Admonition to *Every man*, at *all Times*  
and in *all Places*, and in *every Circum-*  
*stance of Life*, to be *intent upon* his pro-  
per Duty, whatsoever it be. God has  
been pleased to distribute among men ve-  
ry different Gifts, to each one his proper  
Talent; and an Account will be expected  
from every one, *according to what he hath,*  
*and not according to what he hath not.* In  
the right Use of those Capacities and Fa-  
culties, those Abilities and Opportunities,  
whatsoever they be, wherewith God has  
intrusted every particular person; in *This*  
consists That person's proper and peculiar  
Duty. They who are indued with *Riches,*  
*Power,* and *Authority* in the World; are,  
by the great Weight and Influence of their  
Example, to promote *Justice, Equity,* and  
E 4 *Charity*

S E R M. *Charity among Mankind.* They who are  
 III. *Poor and Afflicted*, have a particular Call  
 to the Virtues of *Patience* and *Contentment*; which, in their proper place, do no less truly and effectually promote the Glory of God, than the more conspicuous Virtues of those in higher Stations. Those who have *Learning* and *Knowledge*, are to spread the Light of *Truth* with Fidelity and Diligence, and to apply the Arguments of *uncorrupt Religion* and the Motives of *Virtuous Practice*, with all the Clearness and Strength they are able. And Those of the *Lowest* and *Meanest* Capacities, even the most *Ignorant* of all, have still a plain way of Duty before them; to adhere stedfastly to those *Few Truths* they know, those most *Important Truths* which no man can innocently be ignorant of: *Living soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world*, because *God has appointed a Day in the which he will judge the World in Righteousness*: And taking heed not to be imposed upon with things they *cannot understand*; by which the World has been led into the inextricable Labyrinth of endless and unintelligible  
 Super-

Superstitions. Before the Will of God S E R M. was made clear by Revelation, the Light III. of Nature was mens Guide, and the Obligations of right Reason were the Rule of their Duty and their Guard against Superstition. Since That time, whosoever has had the Doctrine of the Gospel reasonably and credibly proposed to him, to Him does our Lord say, as to St Peter in the Text, *Follow Thou Me.* He is in general to follow Christ, in the universal Practice of all Christian Virtues; and in particular he is to attend to that proper and peculiar Duty, whatsoever it be, which is the right Use of those Talents wherewith Providence has intrusted him. Every man, saith the Apostle, *hath his proper Gift of God; one after This manner, and another after That,* 1 Cor. vii. 7. *To one is given by the Spirit, the word of Wisdom; to another, the word of Knowledge;-----to another, Faith;-----to another, Prophecy; to another,-----divers kinds of Tongues,* 1 Cor. xii. 8. *Having then gifts differing, according to the grace that is given to us; whether Prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of Faith; (That is, let*

S E R M. us teach the Will of God *faithfully*, according to the degree of the *Ability*, the *Talent*, the *Trust* committed to us: That is the Meaning of the word, *Faith*, in This place:) Or (whether it be) *Ministry*, let us wait on our *ministring*; or be that teacheth, on *Teaching*; Or be that exhorteth, an *Exhortation*; He that giveth, let him do it with *Simplicity*; be that ruleth, with *diligence*; be that sheweth mercy, with *cheerfulness*, Rom. xii. 6. Or in the words of St Peter, 1 Pet. iv. 10. *As every man has received the Gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good Stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any man speak, let him speak as the Oracles of God: If any man minister, let him do it as of the Ability which God giveth.*


THIS is the *First* Observation I would draw from the words of the Text: That every person, in every station of life whatsoever, wherein the Providence of God thinks fit to place him, has always some *plain* and *certain* Duty, which 'tis his present proper Business to attend to: *Follow thou Me.*





II. THE *Second* thing observable in the words of the Text, is; that when *Peter* put a Question to our Lord, upon a matter which did not at all relate to his own *proper* and *particular* Duty; the Answer our Lord gives him, (*what is That to Thee? Follow thou Me;*) is Such an Answer, as he constantly gave at all *other* Times to *any* of his Disciples upon *any* the like occasion. It was his *General* Method, through the whole History of the Gospel; whatever *Discourse* was raised, or whatever *Question* was put to him, which had no relation to the particular *Duty* of the persons that proposed it; it was his constant and general Method, instead of satisfying their *Curiosity* by a direct Answer, to turn the Discourse into an occasion either of instructing them in the *Knowledge* of their *Duty*, or of exhorting them to the *Practice* of it. Thus, when his Disciples asked him, *Matt. xxiv. 3. When shall these things be? and what shall be the Sign of thy Coming, and of the End of the World?* His Answer is, *Watch* ver. 42. *YE, and be ye ready always; for in such* <sup>44.</sup> *an hour as you think not, the Son of Man cometh.*

S E R M. *cometh.* When one asked him, *Luk. xiii. 23.* *Lord, are there Few that be saved?* instead of satisfying the person's Curiosity, he exhorts both Him that asked the Question, and as many Others as were present, to take care that *They themselves* be found in the number, *whatever That Number be: Strive YE to enter in at the strait gate.* And again: When his Disciples asked him, *Matt. xviii. 1.* *Who is the Greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven?* instead of naming, according to *Their* expectation, some among themselves, who had conversed with him most intimately here upon Earth, (which Expectation showed forth itself particularly in the Request of the Mother of *Zebedee's* children, that *One of her Sons* might sit on his Right hand, and the Other on his Left in his Kingdom;) instead of This, I say, he tells them *Which* was the *Only Way*, whereby they could attain to the Kingdom of Heaven *at all.* *Setting a little Child in the midst of them,* he said; *Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.* Thus, in general,  
 whatever

whatever Question or matter of Discourse S E R M.  
had no relation to the proper and neces- III.  
sary *Duty* of the *persons themselves* who   
moved the Discourse; our Lord always  
turned it from a matter of mere Curio-  
sity, into some real *Instruction* or useful  
*Exhortation*.

III. A *Third* thing to be observed in  
the words of the Text, is; that our Lord  
does here discourage *in particular*, a *Cur-  
iosity of Inquiry* into *Other mens Affairs*.  
'Twas upon *Peter's* inquiring concerning  
*Another Disciple* which followed him,  
*and what shall This man do?* that our  
Lord made to him the Reply in the Text,  
*What is That to Thee? Follow Thou Me.*  
The Inquiry was *innocent*; And there is  
no reason to suppose that our Lord was  
*angry* with *Peter* for making it. But he  
was willing to take This opportunity,  
(according to his Custom upon all Other  
occasions,) of inculcating upon *Peter his  
own Duty*, and of discouraging all *need-  
less Curiosity* concerning the Affairs of  
*Others*. What was *innocent* in *St Peter*  
in the *present case*, and may in *numberless*  
*Instances* be *innocent* in *Any man*; is yet  
a matter

S E R M. a matter which *may* grow into a *Vice*,  
 III. and, by becoming a *Habit*, may lead to  
 things very *detrimental* to a right Temper  
 and Disposition of Mind. The *Evil* of  
*Vain Curiosity* does not appear at first sight,  
 either to *Others*, or perhaps to the *Person*  
*himself*; but when indulged habitually, it  
 frequently terminates in an *idle*, *worthless*,  
 and *unprofitable* Temper: Such as is de-  
 scribed by St Paul, 1 Tim. v. 13. *They*  
*learn to be idle, wandring about from house*  
*to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also,*  
*and busy-bodies, speaking things which they*  
*ought not:* Or, as St Peter expresses it,  
 1 Pet. iv. 15. *Busy-bodies in other mens*  
*matters.* This Temper, though *in itself*  
 it may seem only *trifling* and *worthless*,  
 yet in its consequences it leads very na-  
 turally to *Other* and *Greater Vices*; to  
*Envy, Strife, Contentiousness, Pride, Cen-*  
*soriousness, Discontent,* and numberless o-  
 ther troublesome and mischievous Effects.  
 Persons of This disposition, are extremely  
 apt to be continually *pulling Motes out of*  
*their Brother's Eye*, while a *Beam* remains  
 unperceived *in their Own*; That is, to  
 be perpetually *magnifying* the *Faults* of  
 Others,

Others, and altogether *insensible* of their S E R M.  
*Own*. They are very apt, either to III.  
*undervalue* and *despise* the *Talents* and *Abi-*  
*lities* wherewith God has been pleased to  
 endue Others; which is what *St Paul*  
 represents under the similitude of *The Eye* I Cor. xii.  
*saying unto the Hand, I have no need of* 21.  
*Thee; and again the Head to the Feet, I*  
*have no need of You*: Or else, in the con-  
 trary Extreme, they will *envy* and *repine*  
 at the *Advantages* that Others enjoy;  
 Which is what our Saviour reproves in  
 his parable of the Labourers, *Is Thine Eye* Mat. xx.]  
*evil, because I am Good?* The same Tem- 15.  
 per it is, that moves persons of different  
*Seats*, to be inquisitive about the possibi-  
 lity of mens Salvation in *Other Communi-*  
*ties*, rather than attentive to discover and  
 amend any Errors in *their Own*. Whether  
 a *Heathen*, to whom the Light of the  
 Gospel was never made known, can be  
 saved by obeying the Law of *Reason*; and  
 whether Salvation is attainable in such  
*Christian Societies*, as are greatly corrupt  
 in very important *Doctrines*; are *Questi-*  
*ons*, to which our Saviour would have re-  
 plied, *What is That to Thee? Follow Thou Me.*

But

S E R M. But one thing is very certain, that no man  
 III. can be saved, who does not sincerely endeavour to find out the *Truth* for *Himself*; who *wilfully* propagates *known* Errors; and has no sollicitude to reform his *Own* Vices, and (as far as lies in *His* Power) the Vices of his *Companions and Friends*.

IV. *Fourthly*, As our Lord in the Text expressly discourages all needless Curiosity of inquiry into other men's *Affairs*; so, by Analogy, the same Caution may in its Application reasonably be extended likewise to a Curiosity about *Doctrines* not of importance to Religion. Whatever *Notions* do in their Consequences affect the *Worship* of the *True God*, or have any direct influence either in promoting or hindring the Practice of *True Virtue and Goodness* among *Men*; These indeed can never be too carefully *inquired* into, or too thoroughly examined. But Speculations which are of no such Consequence, the Fewer of them Religion is concerned with, the better. They are generally matter of Contention only, and uncharitable Animosity; and have brought great Scandal and Reproach upon Religion.

A Fond-

A Fondness of determining things not all certain, or not clearly understood; and a Shame of departing from what could not reasonably be maintained; has been the Ground and the Support, the Cause both of the Rise and of the Continuance, of almost all the Sects, with which the *World* has been divided, and the *Religion* of Christ dishonoured. Could men prevail with themselves to be more zealous about things confessedly of Universal Importance, than about the distinguishing Notions of Particular Sects; which, in the common Methods of the World, are so much the *more eagerly* contended for, as they are *less reasonable* or *more uncertain*: Could men, I say, prevail with themselves to be *less solicitous* about things uncertain, and *more diligent* in the Practice of undisputed Virtues; the State of Religion in the World, would soon have a very different Aspect; and the Effect of its influence upon mens Lives and Manners, would be unspeakably great, with respect both to the Happiness of the *Present Life*, and of That also which is *to come*.

S E R M.  
III.  


S E R M.  
III.



V. *Fifthly and Lastly*; THE Last Observation I shall raise from the words of the Text, is; that we are not to draw *Inferences* from *particular Expressions* in Scripture, different from the evident *Intention* of the *Whole Discourse* in which Such Expressions are found. From our Lord's saying to St Peter, *If I will that That other Disciple tarry till I come, what is That to Thee?* immediately *This Saying* went abroad among the *Brethren*, that *That Disciple should not die. Yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but, whether he shall die or no, what is That to Thee?* In like manner; he who from the Parable of the *Ten Virgins*, whereof *Five* are represented as being *Wise*, and *Five Foolish*; should infer that the *Number* of those who shall be *Saved*, will be exactly *Equal* to that of *Those* who *Perish*; when the Parable was not intended to describe the *Number*, but the *Qualifications* of *Them* which shall be saved; would be found to make a very inconsequent Deduction. And the like would be the Argument, of Him who, from the Parable of the *Talents*; (wherein the *Servants*, who with *Ten*, and with *Five*, and



and with *Two Talents* committed to them are represented as being proportionally rewarded for their proportional Improvement of these respective Sums; while *He only* was punished, who hid in a Napkin his *One Single Talent*;) should infer, that *Those only* will perish, who have but *Small Abilities*; though the Scripture on the contrary expressly declares, that *to whom much is given, of Him will be the more required*. All Arguings, I say, of This Kind, from single *incidental* Expressions of Scripture; are mere groundless Imaginations: Nor can Any thing ever be of real Use in the Religion of a Christian, but our being careful in the *Profession* of *Those Doctrines*, and in the *Practice* of *Those Duties*, which are evidently the *intentional* Aim and View of our Lord's *whole Discourses*.

S E R M.  
III.  
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# S E R M O N IV.

The Folly of losing one's Soul to  
gain the whole World.



MATT. xvi. 26.

*For what is a man profited, if he shall  
gain the whole World, and lose his own  
Soul?*



OUR Saviour in his Parable of S E R M.  
the Sower, represents to us IV.  
the incredible *Carelessness* of  
men, in the most important  
matters of Religion, by a  
very remarkable Comparison: As *some*  
*seeds*, says he, *fall by the way-side, and*  
*the fowls come and devour them up; so*  
*when any one heareth the Word of the*

S E R M.  
IV.

*Kingdom and understandeth it not, i. e. attends not to it, nor fixes his Mind upon it, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away That which was sown in his Heart.* The Meaning is; not that the Devil has Power *literally*, to steal mens Knowledge out of their minds, and rob them of their religious Notions; but that men are frequently so *careless*, even in things which they themselves *well know* to be of the utmost importance to them; that the *degree* of their negligence cannot be Truly represented by any lower figure, than by supposing them to have even lost *out of their Minds* Those Notions, to which they give so little attention. St Paul has a Phrase no less expressive, *Gal. iii. 1; O foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you; that you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ has been evidently set forth, yet should not obey the Truth?* That men should have the Truth *evidently* set before them, and yet *not obey* it; is so great an Absurdity, that he represents it elegantly by That *unusual* Phrase, *Who has bewitched you?*

THAT, in *temporal* affairs, a man should accept *any thing* in exchange for his *Life*, is a Folly never heard of. *Skin for Skin, yea,*

yea, all that a man hath, will he give for S E R M.  
 his Life, Job ii. 4. In *spiritual Concerns*, IV.  
 the Argument is as much stronger, as *E-*  
*ternity* is of more importance than *Time*,  
 and *Immortality* of greater Consequence  
 than this *transitory Life*. Our Saviour,  
 with great Propriety of expression, com-  
 pares the Kingdom of Heaven to a *Trea-*  
*sure hid in a Field*, which when a man hath  
 found, for joy thereof he goeth, and selleth  
 all that he hath, and buyeth that Field;  
 Matt. xiii. 44; and to a *goodly pearl of great*  
*price*, (ver. 46.) which when a man had  
 found, he went and sold all that he had,  
 and bought it. To part with this inesti-  
 mable Treasure, for a *Trifle*; and accept  
 any thing, that the pleasures of Sin can  
 afford a man, in exchange for his own  
 Life, in exchange for his future and *eter-*  
*nal* life; is the Folly our Saviour intend-  
 ed to expose in the words of the Text,  
*What is a man profited, if he shall gain*  
*the whole World, and lose his own Soul?*

THAT there is *no profit* in such an Ex-  
 change, is a Proposition that wants no  
*Proof*. For there is no man so stupid, as  
 not to be sensible of this Truth; no man  
 so ignorant, as not to think it needless for

S E R M. Another to go about to convince him of  
 IV. it. Yet so it is, that even This very  
 Reason, the indisputable *Certainty* of so  
 great a Truth, and its being without contro-  
 versy and of necessity acknowledged by  
 all, comes in the event of things to be  
*itself* an occasion, that makes men stand  
 in need of *more earnest exhortations*, to  
 persuade them not to forget or neglect it.  
 For, as the *strongest* Objects, which make  
 perpetually an equal and *continued* Impres-  
 sion upon our Senses, are apt, by reason of  
 their *constant* Presence, to affect us *little*  
 more, than if they made *no* Impression  
 upon the Sense at all: So the *absolute* and  
*evident Certainty* of this great Truth, lea-  
 ving *no room* for Inquiry or Debate, makes  
 careless men almost as much lay aside the  
 Thoughts of it, as if the Certainty were on  
 the *other* side of the Question; and as if they  
 really thought it a *sufficient Profit*, to gain,  
 not the *Whole* World, but even some of  
 the most *inconsiderable* of its enjoyments,  
 at the Expence of their own Souls. 'Tis  
 very evident, *no man* can possibly so think:  
 'Tis very evident that *every man*, who pre-  
 tends to believe any thing of religion at  
 all, must of necessity acknowledge the  
 inexpressible disproportion between things  
 tempo-

temporary and eternal. Nevertheless, they S E R M. are not *influenced* by this great Truth, according to the importance of it; but shake off the Thoughts of it, as if it were of no moment to meditate upon what they think they are *already sufficiently convinced of*; and look upon it as a troublesome importunity, to be always reminding them of *That*, which they *well knew* and were satisfied of *before*. They *know* it indeed very well; But *That Knowledge* of theirs, without frequent and serious Meditation, is *like* unto Ignorance; because it has *no Effect*, and makes *no Impression*. 'Tis like the *speculative* knowledge of a Truth that concerns them not; or like the *habitual* Understanding of a mathematical Demonstration, never recollected. Most reasonably therefore does our Saviour put to us the Question, and expects that we should frequently put it to *ourselves*; *What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole World, and lose his own Soul?*

THE *occasion* of the words, was his discoursing to his Disciples concerning the expectation of *Persecution*. He had told them, ver. 21. how many things *he himself*

S E R M. *self* was to suffer at the hands of the  
 IV. *Jews*; and he goes on to tell them, ver.  
 24. that *They also* must expect to suffer  
 in like manner: *If any man will come  
 after me, he must deny himself, and take  
 up his cross, and follow me; For whosoever  
 will lose his Life for my sake, shall find it;  
 and whosoever will save his Life, shall lose  
 it: That is, whosoever parts with his  
 virtue and good conscience, to save his  
 temporal life; shall lose that which is  
 eternal; and by escaping the first Death  
 for a time, shall incur the penalty of the  
 second Death for ever. And This explains  
 the meaning of those difficult words  
 which follow in the 28th verse, Verily,  
 I say unto you, there be some standing here,  
 which shall not taste of Death, 'till they see  
 the Son of Man coming in his Kingdom.  
 By these words, there be some standing here,  
 'tis probable he had Regard particularly  
 to Judas: And it seems to have been his  
 intention, to represent natural or temporal  
 Death so inconsiderable, as if They only,  
 who fell under the second Death, could  
 with any propriety be said to Taste the  
 Bitterness of Death at all. They shall  
 not taste of Death, 'till they see the Son of  
 Man*



Man coming in his Kingdom. And This *increases* the Strength, of the Argument he intended to inforce in the words of the Text; *What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole World, and lose his own Soul?*


THE *Argument* our Saviour here uses, is one of *That* kind, which by taking into the Supposition much *more* than *is* or *can be true*; concludes so much the *more undeniably*, and with the *greater Strength*, in all *cases* which really *are true*. He puts the *Supposition*, that a man by losing his Soul, *could* gain the *whole World*: And if he *did* so, his Gain would be *nothing*. The *Conclusion* he intended we should draw from hence, is this; How much more *foolish* then are sinful men; who *lose* their Souls, and yet, in the exchange, gain *not the whole World* neither; nor indeed, any considerable *part* of it?

FOR, *what* is it, that *Sinners* generally enjoy in the World, more than the *righteous*? Not a *longer Life*: Very often a *shorter*, being cut off by their own Folly in the midst of their days. Not a *healthier Body*: Most usually a more *infirm* one, made so by their own debauched  
and

S E R M. and intemperate Living. Not a more  
 IV. *satisfied Mind*: On the contrary, a Mind  
 very Uneasy for the most part, and full of  
*perplexity*. In a word, they enjoy in reality,  
 more than the Righteous, nothing but the  
*bare perverseness*, nothing but the *mere ir-*  
*regularity* of those very pleasures, which  
 really and in Truth are *much* more plea-  
 sures when accompanied with innocency.

BUT to be *more distinct and particular*,  
 in considering, 1<sup>st</sup>, the *Supposition*, which  
 our Saviour puts; and 2<sup>dly</sup>, the *Conclusion*,  
 which he intends we should draw from  
 it.

I. *First*; Our Saviour puts the *Supposi-*  
*tion*, that a man, by losing his Soul, could, in  
 exchange, gain to himself the *whole World*:  
 And, upon That Supposition, proposes  
 the Question; *What would it profit him?*  
 The Answer, *that it would profit him no-*  
*thing*, is what every man's natural Sense  
 immediately suggests to him. The *Doc-*  
*trine* therefore *included* in our Saviour's  
*question*, and *asserted* in the *Answer*, is  
 This: that, could a man, by being *wick-*  
*ed*, gain to himself absolutely *all the good*  
 things of this present life; and, on the  
 contrary, by being conscientiously *religi-*  
*ous*,


ous, were certainly to suffer all the Evil, S E R M. IV. 

that this present World can inflict; (which, generally speaking, is by no means the case: But, supposing it were;) yet still the *Wicked* man's Choice would be infinitely *foolish*, and the *Virtuous* man's truly *Wise*.

FOR, what is it, that a *virtuous* man, even upon *This* Supposition, can possibly suffer? All the *Evils* of this present life; All the *external* Evils, which are the *only* ones that can befall a righteous man; are *poverty* of condition, *Contempt* in the opinion of *wicked men*, and *Pain* or *Uneasiness* of *Body*: Things very grievous indeed to *Flesh* and *Blood*, and which may and ought by all *lawful* means to be carefully avoided. But they are all of them *natural* Calamities; incident to the *wicked*, as well as to the *righteous*: Sometimes, they can by *no means* be avoided; neither by any *lawful*, nor by any *unlawful* Practices. But when they can be avoided, by deserting our *Duty*; 'tis by no means worth while to do it, at the expence of our *Souls*. For *these* Evils, at the *worst* that can be supposed, are all *Temporal*; and, when at the greatest extremity, not *Tem-*

S E R M. *poral only, but even very short also. My*  
 IV. *Friends, saith our Saviour, Be not afraid*  
 Luk.xii.4. *of them that kill the Body, and after That*  
*have no more that they can do: But I will*  
*forewarn you, whom you shall fear; Fear*  
*Him, who, after he has killed, has power*  
*to cast into Hell; yea, I say unto you,*  
*Fear Him. The Argument used by the*  
*Lepers in the Siege of Samaria, 2 Kings*  
 vii. 4. *is very applicable to This case: If*  
*we enter into the City, said they, the Fa-*  
*mine is in the city, and we shall die; and if*  
*we sit here, we die also; and if we fall*  
*unto the Host of the Syrians, and----- they*  
*kill us, we shall but die. A man in the*  
*worst of Circumstances, and under the*  
*severest Persecutions, by adhering to the*  
*Cause of Truth and Virtue, can lose but*  
*his temporal Life: And so he must how-*  
*ever, perhaps by a Disease more painful,*  
*than the Death his Persecutors would in-*  
*flict; and his Mind, at the same time, not*  
*supported, with the Hopes of a glorious*  
*Immortality.*

ON the other hand; *what* is it, that a  
*wicked* man, even upon the *high* Supposi-  
 tion our Saviour puts, can possibly attain?  
 All the *good* things of this *whole* World,

are *Riches, Honour, and Pleasure*: Now S E R M.  
were it possible that a man, in exchange IV.  
for his Soul could gain to himself the   
whole Compass of these sensual Enjoy-  
ments; (Which yet is indeed very far  
from any wicked man's case; But suppose  
he *could*;) *Suppose* he could, in *Riches*,  
exceed the Glory of *Solomon*; and, in  
*Power*, extend his Dominion from one  
Sea to the other, and force all Nations to  
do him Service; and, in his *personal* ca-  
pacity, enjoy a continued series of the  
greatest and most uninterrupted *pleasures*;  
and All this, even to the Age of *Methu-*  
*salem*; yet still these things would be but  
*Temporal*; and, when past, though after  
the *longest* duration, they would all seem  
but as a *shadow that departeth, and as a*  
*Dream when one awaketh.* *Riches would* Prov. xi.  
*not profit the man, in the day of wrath;* <sup>4.</sup>  
and the Time must at length come, when  
it would be said unto him, *Thou Fool, this*  
*night shall thy Soul be required of thee*; and  
his having been clothed in purple and fine  
linnen, and having fared sumptuously every  
day, would be no comfort to him, when  
he finally *lift up his eyes in Torment.* Be-  
sides, that, even in this *present* life itself,  
such

S E R M. such a Possessor of the *whole* World, could  
 IV. enjoy *really* but a very *small* part, of what,  
 in *fancy and imagination only*, would be  
 his own *property*. He who knew and enjoyed more of it, than any other mortal man; concluded more than once, that even in the highest Pitch of temporal Prosperity, *All is Vanity and Vexation of Spirit*.


THUS have I put the Case, according to our Lord's *Supposition* in the Text, not as things usually *are*, but to the *greatest* advantage on the side of Wickedness; that a man, in exchange for his Soul, could gain by unrighteousness the *whole* World; or, by adhering to Virtue, would on the contrary *suffer*, all he can *here suffer*. By considering the *Recompence*, which will attend the Choice of *either* part; we may be enabled to judge, of the *Truth* of our Lord's assertion; that the *wicked* man's Choice, even upon this extraordinary *supposition* of gaining the *whole* World, would be very *foolish*; and the *virtuous* man's, very *wise*. For, to enter into the *particulars*; Suppose a religious person, is by his adhering to the ways of Virtue, reduced to extreme *Poverty*;

erty; (which however is very seldom the SERM. Case, except in times of Persecution only;) IV. yet there is a worse Poverty, which at the same time he avoids by that very Choice; a State of Exclusion from the Love and Favour of God, which Loss, even in this present Time, is an anticipation of outer darkness: Rev. iii. 17. *Thou knowest not, that thou art wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked.* This Poverty, the virtuous man, even under the severest Persecutions, is sure to escape; and under the greatest pressure of temporal Wants, secures to himself the truer and more certain Riches of Virtue and Contentment; the Merchandise whereof is better than the Merchandise of Silver, and the gain thereof than fine Gold. He secures to himself That Pearl of great price, of which our Saviour affirms, that He was a wise man, who sold all that he had, and bought it. He is numbered with Those, concerning whom St James declares, that though they are poor in this World, yet they are rich in Faith; and Heirs of the Kingdom, which God has promised to them that love him. He, with Moses, esteems the reproach of Christ, Heb. xi. 26. greater

S E R M. greater Riches *than the treasures in Egypt*; and may justly apply to himself our Saviour's words to the Church of Smyrna, Rev. ii. 9. *I know thy works, and tribulation and poverty, but thou art rich. He has laid up for himself treasure in Heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, nor Thieves break through and steal, nor any Anxiety of Mind disturbs the enjoyment of it.*

AGAIN: If a truly religious man, does, by being such, fall under the *greatest* Contempt, in the Opinion of wicked men; yet there is a *worse Dishonour*, which he at the same time avoids, even the *Shame and Dishonour of Sin*, to his own *Conscience here*, and in the presence of the *whole World hereafter*; when they that sleep in the dust of the earth, shall *awake, some to everlasting Life, and some to Shame and Everlasting Contempt*, Dan. xii. 2. And, under the *highest unjust Reproaches* of Men, he is secure in the Possession of true *Worth*; of *That Worth*, which God himself the Judge of All, will vouchsafe to honour in the presence of the Holy Angels; when Christ shall present those who suffer for his sake, as *Kings and Priests un-*



*to God even his Father; and they shall* S E R M.  
*reign with Him for ever; crowned with* IV.  
*Glory and Immortality; being made Sons*   
*of God, and equal unto the Angels; among*  
*whom, they that be wise, shall shine as*  
*the brightness of the Firmament, and they*  
*that turn many to righteousness, as the*  
*Stars for ever and ever.*

*Lastly, IF a virtuous and good man*  
*suffers in his Person, even unto Death it-*  
*self; (which very seldom is the Case;)*  
*yet there is a Calamity greater than Death,*  
*which he avoids by choosing the present*  
*temporal Suffering. He avoids the Sting*  
*of a guilty Conscience, the insupportable*  
*Terrour of a wounded Spirit, and the*  
*future inexpressible Pains of Hell. And*  
*he gains at present That Peace and Joy*  
*in the Holy Ghost; which can be exceed-*  
*ed by nothing but That which follows*  
*after it, even That Happiness of Heaven,*  
*which Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard,*  
*neither hath it entered into the Heart of*  
*man to conceive; a Happiness prepared for*  
*them that love him, by Him in whose pre-*  
*sence there is Fulness of Joy, and at whose*  
*right hand there are Pleasures for ever-*  
*more.*

S E R M.

IV.

Luc. xii.  
21.

2 Th. i. 9.

ON the other hand; Could a *wicked* man, by being wicked, gain to himself (as our Saviour here puts the Supposition; could he *certainly* gain to himself) the *whole* World; yet *where* would be the Wisdom and Advantage of *His* Choice, who thus *laid up Treasure for Himself, and was not rich towards God?* For, by choosing *Temporal* Wealth, Honour, and Pleasure, upon the Terms of unrighteousness; he forfeits That unspeakable Happiness which is *Eternal*: and by avoiding the *short and transitory* Evils, of *present* Poverty, Contempt, and Pain; he chooses the same *future* evils, to continue *for ever*; where the worm dieth not, and the Fire is not quenched, in which the foolish and impenitent Sinner *shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his Power.* This Consideration, sets forth in few words, the extreme Folly of the Man that loses his own Soul, even upon that *High Supposition* our Saviour puts, of his gaining in exchange for it the *whole World.* Which was the *First* thing to be considered. But


II. *Secondly;*

II. Secondly; The *Principal* Design of our SERM.  
Saviour in This Argument, was, by taking IV.  
into the Supposition much *more* than *is* or  
*can be true*; to conclude so much the  
*more undeniably*, and with the *greater*  
*Strength*, in all *cases* which really are  
true. He puts the *Supposition*, that a man  
by losing his Soul could gain the *whole*  
*World*: And if he did so, his Gain would  
be *nothing*; For, *What* would it *profit*  
him? The *Conclusion* he intended we  
should draw from hence, is; how much  
more *foolish* are sinful men; who *lose*  
their Souls, and yet, in the Exchange,  
gain *not the whole World* neither; nor in-  
deed, any considerable *part* of it? *Gene-*  
*rally speaking*, they lose, both *their own*  
*Souls*, and the best part of the enjoy-  
ments even of this *present World* too.  
*They that have done wickedly*, (as 'tis ele-  
gantly expressed in the *second Book of Es-*  
*dras*, ch. vii. 18.) *have suffered the strait*  
*things*, and yet *shall not see the wide*; that  
is, they *suffer*, by their Folly, in the *pre-*  
*sent Life*; and yet obtain not *That which*  
*is to come*. But *good men*, both secure to  
themselves *That which is to come*; and at  
the same time, (excepting *always* the case

S E R M. of *Persecution*, which hath its *peculiar*  
 IV. *Promises*,) they enjoy the *present* good  
 things, at least *equally*, with the wicked.  
 To be particular: The *Religious* man, *be-*  
*lieves in God*; *worships, loves, fears, and*  
*trusts in him*: What detriment is This to  
 his *temporal* affairs? Nay, on the contra-  
 ry, it gives him Assurance and Peace and  
 Satisfaction of Mind in the whole course  
 of his Life *here*, at the same time that it  
 secures to him eternal Rest *hereafter*.

HE is *just and righteous, equitable and*  
*charitable* in his dealings with all Man-  
 kind: What loses he by That, *at present*?  
 Nay, generally it gains him *Trust, and*  
*Confidence*; the *Love, Honour, and Esteem*,  
 at least of Wise and Good Men. In the  
*present* time, the righteous is more ho-  
 nourable than his Neighbour; and in the  
*End* he attains a glorious Immortality.

HE is not *covetous* to heap up inordi-  
 nate Riches; but with Diligence and Fru-  
 gality, with Piety and Charity, gets and  
 uses them: What disadvantage is This to  
 him in the *World*? Nay, on the contrary,  
 by This, saith Solomon, shall *his barns be*  
 Prov. iii. filled with plenty, and the Soul of the libe-  
 10; xi. 25. *ral shall be made fat*: The Bread that he  
 scattereth

scattereth upon the Waters, shall he find S E R M.  
again after many days; and he lays up for IV.  
himself, *besides*, in *Heaven*, an incorruptible treasure. 

- *Lastly*, HE moderates his *Appetites and Passions*, by the Rules of Reason and true Religion: And what damage is That to him in the *present* Life? Nay, generally speaking, he is Master of *all lawful and valuable enjoyments*; with better Health of *Body*, and more Satisfaction of *Mind*: Prov. iii. 7, 8, 17. *Fear the Lord, and depart from Evil; It shall be Health to thy Navel, and Marrow to thy Bones. The Ways of Wisdom, even in the present time, are Pleasantness, and all her Paths are Peace; and in the End they lead, to Fulness of Joy, and Pleasures for evermore.*


ON the other hand; The *wicked and debauched* person, either *disbelieves* all religion, or neglects and *despises* it; living in contempt of God, and in habitual profanation of the Laws of his Maker: What gains he by That *Here*? Fears and Terrors, Horror and Despair, Uncertainty and anxious *Doubtfulness* at least, about what is to come hereafter. *Is. lvii. 20. The wicked are like the troubled Sea, when*

S E R M. *it cannot rest; whose Waters cast up mire and dirt; there is no Peace, saith my God*  
 IV. *to the wicked: And for This it is, that he exchanges his Soul hereafter.*

HE is *unjust and uncharitable, false and unfaithful, cruel and oppressive: What Benefit is This, even to his temporal affairs? Generally, it brings upon him Hatred and Distrust, Shame and Dishonour, among Men: And for This, he parts with his Soul for ever.*

HE is *Covetous and insatiabable in getting, or profligate and profuse in wasting: What Fruit has he of these things at present? Anxiety, and no enjoyment of what he has heaped up, saving the beholding it with his Eyes; or else Poverty and Want, after he has wasted it in rioting and Debauchery: And for This it is, that he exchanges his immortal Treasure.*

*Lastly, HE is under the Dominion of ungoverned Appetites, disorderly Passions, and unlawful Pleasures: What Happiness has he in this licentiousness at present? Slavery and Vexation of Mind, always; and generally, in his Body, acute Diseases, and a speedy Death: Her house is the way to Hell, going down to the Chambers of*  
 2 *Death,*

Death, Prov. vii. 27: And for *This*, he S E R M.  
 parts with his Hope of future Immor- IV.  
 tality. 

*THIS is the portion of a wicked man from God, and This the Heritage appointed unto him, Job xx. 29.* From all which, the Folly of choosing the ways of Wickedness is so extremely apparent; that, as if (comparatively speaking) there were *no other* Folly in the World, the Scripture with great reason uses the words, *Folly and Wickedness*, promiscuously for one and the same thing: And 'tis not a *Tautology*, but a most *elegant* Description of the extreme Folly of Sinners, which *Solomon* gives us, *Prov. xiv. 8, 24. The Folly of Fools is Deceit, and the Foolishness of Fools is Folly.*

*THE cause* of so great a Stupidity among rational Creatures *can* be nothing, but either *Unbelief* of the Government of God, and of a Judgment to come; which is contrary to all Principles of Reason: or else such *extreme Carelessness*, as *St Peter* describes, when he compares some men to *natural brute Beasts made to be taken and destroyed, 2 Pet. ii. 12:* or such  
*want*

S E R M. *want of consideration*, as our Saviour, in  
 IV. the Parable of the Sower, describes by a  
 very elegant Figure, when he represents  
 the Devil *stealing away* out of mens minds  
 the Notions that had been taught them:  
 Or else, lastly, it must be such an obsti-  
 nate *Madness*, in resolving *knowingly* to  
 prefer things temporal before eternal; as  
*Esau* was a figure of, when *for one mor-  
 sel of Meat he sold his Birthright*; or  
 such as St *Paul* describes in the 7th to  
 the *Romans*, when he introduces a man  
*doing what he allows not; and what he  
 hates*, (that is, what his *Reason* hates,)  
 he in his *Folly* does. Whenever this  
 case is represented to a wicked man in  
 the person of *Another*, or set forth un-  
 der the Circumstances of a *worldly* af-  
 fair; he can hardly believe it *possible*,  
 that any rational creature should act so  
 absurdly, 'Tis with him, as it was with  
*David*, when the Prophet *Nathan* sur-  
 prized him, saying, *Thou art the Man*;  
 or as it was with *Hazael*, when he said  
 to *Elisha*, *Is thy Servant a Dog, that he  
 should do this thing?*

SINCE



SINCE therefore, in *Reason and Speculation*, This whole matter is so clear and indisputable; let us, in order more effectually to influence our *Practice*,

S E R M -  
IV.  


1<sup>st</sup>, SERIOUSLY and frequently meditate, upon the *True Weight and Importance* of Things; that we suffer not ourselves to be deceived by *perpetual Inadvertency*, and ruined by *habitual Negligence*, after the Example of a careless and inconsiderate World.

2<sup>dly</sup>, LET us accustom ourselves to consider, *what* Notions *Other* men Now have, and we are sure *we ourselves* shall have, of these things; when the Deceits of this World shall be removed from before our Eyes, at the Hour of *Death*, and in the day of *Judgment*. For This is not an *imaginary*, but a *real* Event; towards which *Wise men* always look forward, that it may never surprize them unprepared.

3<sup>dly</sup>, LET us be Thankful to God, that, generally speaking, he puts upon us no *harder* Terms of Salvation. What the Servant said to *Naaman the Syrian*, may well be applied to *Us*: *If the Lord had bid thee do some Great thing, wouldst thou*  
not

S E R M. *not have done it? How much more when he*  
 IV. *only saith unto thee, wash and be clean!*

When we consider what the *Martyrs* suffered of old for *Religion*, and what *Austerities* many in the World now undergo thro' mere *Superstition*; shall we think it much to mortify an unlawful *Lust*, and deny ourselves a sinful *Pleasure*, for the honour of *God* and the *Salvation* of our *Souls*?

*4thly* and *lastly*; LET us consider that the prize is worthy: Let us fortify ourselves with resolutions to undergo the *hardest* conditions Providence shall think fit to lay upon us; and this will enable us *cheerfully* to perform the *easier* ones.





# S E R M O N V.

Of the Necessity of Holiness.



H E B. XII. 14.

*Follow peace with all men, and Holiness,  
without which no man shall see the Lord.*




THESE words contain a most S E R M. V.  
powerful motive, to *Holiness*  
of life; drawn from the con-  
sideration of the Nature of  
our *Religion* and the Condi-  
tion of our *Happiness*. The absolute and  
indispensable Condition of *Happiness*, is  
the practice of true Religion; and the  
true nature and essence of *Religion*, is Ho-  
liness of Life: *Without Holiness, no man  
shall see the Lord.*

I N

S E R M. IN the words we may observe ; 1<sup>st</sup>, A  
 V. Representation made, of the *true nature*  
 of Religion, under the name or character  
 of *Holiness*. 2<sup>dly</sup>, An Exhortation given  
 us, to put That Holiness in practice ;  
 (*Follow peace, and Holiness.*) 3<sup>dly</sup>, An  
 Assurance or Connexion of Happiness, as  
 the proper consequence of such Religious  
 Practice. And 4<sup>thly</sup>, A Representation  
 of the nature of That Happiness, under  
 the notion or character of *Seeing God*.

FROM which Observations there natu-  
 rally arise the following Propositions : 1<sup>st</sup>,  
 That the true and ultimate Intent of all  
 the Laws and Institutions of Religion, is to  
 make men holy. 2<sup>dly</sup>, That it *is possible*  
 for us to be really holy, according to the  
 true Intent and Meaning of those Laws.  
 3<sup>dly</sup>, That God has made it the indispen-  
 sable Condition of our Happiness, that we  
 become *thus* holy. And 4<sup>thly</sup>, That the  
 nature of that Happiness is such, that it  
 is not possible to be enjoyed, but by those  
 who actually *are* thus holy.


I. *First*; THE true and ultimate Intent  
 of all the Laws and Institutions of Religion,  
 is to make men holy. Man is a rational  
 creature, made capable of knowing and  
 of

of obeying God, and of conforming his S E R M.  
life to the Pattern and Imitation of the V.  
divine Perfections. This Obedience to   
the Commands, and Imitation of the Na-  
ture and Life of God, is the true Essence  
of Religion. And as it is the indispen-  
sable duty of all Created Beings, to *en-*  
*deavour* after this Purity, so 'tis the high-  
est excellency and perfection of their na-  
ture, 'tis their greatest possible improve-  
ment, to *attain* it. The greater degrees  
of such Holiness any Being is endued  
with, so much the higher rank does it  
obtain in the order of Creatures. The  
highest *Angels*, so much as they obey the  
Will of God *more entirely*, and imitate  
the divine Life *more perfectly* than *men*  
do; so far are they exalted *above* men,  
and have a nearer approach to the im-  
mediate Presence and Enjoyment of God.  
And so much as *one Man* in this life  
arrives at a greater degree of Holiness  
than another, so much shall he obtain  
a more excellent degree of Happiness in  
that life which is to come.

To assist men in their Endeavours after  
this *Holiness*, God has, *at sundry times*  
*and in divers manners*, appointed several  
forms

S E R M. forms or institutions of Religion ; which  
 V. we ought carefully *so* to distinguish from  
 Religion itself, as we would do the *means*  
 of obtaining any thing, from the *end* to  
 be obtained. For *Religion* itself, is that  
 Purity, or that virtuous temper and dis-  
 position of mind, which exerts itself in  
 a constant endeavour of being like unto  
 God, and of obeying his Commands :  
 But the *institution* of Religion, is only  
 that outward establishment or *form* of  
 worship, which is the Means of acquiring  
 such a Holy Disposition. And these out-  
 ward forms, which in their own nature  
 are changeable, have never been valued  
 in the sight of God, any otherwise than  
 as they promoted the End they were de-  
 signed for ; *viz.* That Holiness, which is  
 eternally and unchangeably the same.  
 This was the original religion of Para-  
 dise, and before that, even of Heaven  
 itself. This was the End of God's re-  
 vealing himself to the Patriarchs, and se-  
 parating them from the idolatrous World.  
 This was the End, of his giving the law  
 to the *Jews* ; that they might be a *Holy*  
*people* unto the Lord their God. To  
 This all their Sacrifices, all their Purifi-  
 cations

cations led them; and were of no value S E R M.  
 in *comparison with This*, but only *in order* V.  
 to it. *Wherewith shall I come before the*  
*Lord, saith the Prophet, and bow myself*  
*before the high God? Shall I come before*  
*him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a*  
*year old? Will the Lord be pleased with*  
*thousands of rams, and ten thousands of ri-*  
*vers of oyl? Nay, but He hath shewed thee,*  
*O man, what is good, and what doth the*  
*Lord thy God require of thee, but to do*  
*justly, and to love mercy, and to walk hum-*  
*bly with thy God? Micah vi. 6.* And  
 whensoever they failed of having this de-  
 sired effect, of making the persons lives  
 more holy; God declares that he even ab-  
 horred all their religious Exercises; *He*  
*that killeth an ox, is as if he slew a man;*  
*he that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off*  
*a dog's neck; he that offereth an oblation,*  
*as if he offered swine's blood; and he that*  
*burneth Incense, as if he blessed an Idol;*  
*yea they have chosen their own ways, and*  
*their soul delighteth in their Abominations:*  
*Isai. lxvi. 3.* And, concerning the *Chri-*  
*stian Institution* it is still more expressly  
 evident, that the design of *the grace of God*  
*which bringeth salvation*, i. e. of the Gos-  
 pel's

S E R M. *pel's appearing unto all men, was to Teach*  
 V. *us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts,*  
 *we should live soberly, righteously, and god-*  
*ly in this present world. And nothing can*  
*be a greater contradiction, than the prac-*  
*tice of such persons, as hope to answer*  
*the design of Christianity by any other*  
*method whatsoever, instead of purifying*  
*themselves from all filthiness both of flesh*  
*and spirit, and perfecting holiness in the*  
*fear of God. The Apostles in their E-*  
*pistles give us several representations of*  
*Religion under figurative and metaphorical*  
*expressions, but all agreeing constantly in*  
*this; that the Substance and the End of*  
*all Religion, is Virtue or Holiness of life.*  
*Sometimes 'tis called the New Man, i. e.*  
*a being changed from Wickedness to*  
*Righteousness; Ephes. iv. 22. Sometimes*  
*it is called a New Creature, Gal. vi. 15.*  
*In Christ Jesus neither Circumcision a-*  
*vaieth any thing, nor Uncircumcision,*  
*but a New Creature, i. e. a life of real*  
*Holiness and renewed Obedience to God's*  
*commands; For so the Apostle explains*  
*his own words expressly, 1 Cor. vii. 19.*  
*Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision*  
*is nothing; but the keeping the command-*  
*ments*



ments of God. In some places, a religious life is called *Sanctification*. In other passages 'tis represented under the titles of *Repentance* and *Conversion*, *Regeneration* or the *New Birth*, *Purification* and *Holiness*. All which, and many other the like Terms made use of in Scripture, do manifestly tend to this; that the Life and Substance, the End and Design of Christian Religion, is, that men turn from a life of Sin unto a life of Righteousness, in order to have a *Conscience void of offence both towards God and towards Men*.

S E R M.  
V.  


II. I proceed in the *second* place to show, that, as the main Design of Religion is to oblige men to Holiness, so it is possible for us, to be really holy, according to the true intent and meaning of the laws of our Religion. And indeed, since God is not a hard master, expecting to *reap where he has not sown*, and to *gather where he has not strawed*, it cannot be conceived that he should impose any commands on us, which it were not possible for us to obey. But because, when we think of the infinite Purity of God, who cannot behold Iniquity; and consider the corrupted and degenerate state of humane

S E R M. nature; this may be apt to make us more apprehensive than is reasonable, of the difficulty of our Duty; it is therefore here to be observed particularly; *1st*, That God does not ordinarily require more of us, than what a sincere mind, notwithstanding the corruption of our nature, is well able to perform; *2dly*, That whensoever he requires more than this, he never fails to afford us proportionably great assistance, to enable us to perform what he so requires; and *lastly*, That if at any time we are surprized into the commission of Sin, he accepts real Repentance and a renewed Obedience instead of an uninterrupted course of Holiness.

*1st*, God does not ordinarily require more of us, than what a sincere mind, notwithstanding the corruption of our nature, is well able to perform. The condition of the Gospel-covenant is not perfect unfinning Obedience, but a sincere endeavour to obey all the Commands of God to the utmost of our power. Upon which account, St *John* justly affirms, that the *commands* of God are not grievous; and our Saviour himself calls his *yoke easy*, and his *burden light*. What the Servant said to *Naaman* the Syrian

Syrian is very applicable upon this Argument: *My Father, if the Lord had bid thee do some great thing, wouldst thou not have done it? how much more, when he only saith unto thee, Wash and be clean!*

The Commandments, in their general and most proper sense, are so far from being impossible to be observed, that on the contrary a man cannot easily transgress them, without a hardened conscience and deliberate choice. But because, in *some* particular cases and circumstances, things *more difficult* are enjoined us, such as our Saviour compares to pulling out a right eye, or cutting off a right hand; therefore I add,

*2dly*, That whensoever God requires more of us than we are naturally able to perform, he never fails to afford us proportionably great assistance, to enable us to perform what he so requires. Our Saviour assures us, that if a tender mother cannot deny the son of her love any reasonable request, much less *will God deny his Holy Spirit to them that ask him*; and *St Paul* declares, that all good Christians *have* the Spirit of God dwelling in them, except by their wilful Sins they quench,

S E R M. and grieve, and drive it from them. So  
 V. that however weak and imperfect our  
 Nature be, yet with this *assistance* we are  
 sure that the Power which is for us is  
 greater than that which is against us; and  
 a sufficient encouragement it is, to *work  
 out our own salvation with fear and trem-  
 bling, to consider that it is God that giveth  
 us both to will and to do of his good plea-  
 sure, Phil. ii. 13.* There are some parti-  
 cular Temptations, which humane nature  
 seems more peculiarly unable to resist;  
 and when any of these assault us, God  
 has promised that he will with the Tem-  
 ptation also make a way to escape, that  
 we may be able to bear it; and that he  
 will afford us a support proportionable  
 to the Difficulty we are obliged to en-  
 counter. The primitive Christians, are a  
 wonderful instance of this Truth: They  
 were tried with the most cruel tortures,  
 that either the wit of man could invent,  
 or the malice of the devil could prompt  
 men to inflict: *They were stoned, they were  
 sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain  
 with the sword; they wandered about in  
 sheep-skins and goat-skins, being destitute,  
 afflicted, tormented:* Yet so powerfully were  
 they

they supported by the influence of God's Holy Spirit, that they suffered all the Barbarities of their inhumane Persecutors with *less* concern, than we can even endure to hear or to read of them. And in the case of the *contrary* Temptation, of great and uninterrupted *worldly Prosperity*; (which is almost as dangerous, and apt (by softening and debasing mens minds) to seduce them and withdraw them insensibly from their Duty, as Persecution is by violence to drive them from it;) concerning This, when our Saviour had affirmed, *that it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God*: He immediately adds, *With Men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible*; i. e. By the assistance of the grace of God, which he is always ready to afford to those that *believe* and desire to *obey* his Gospel, this temptation of great Prosperity *may* be overcome; and not only so, but even further, That Power and Riches which are to most men an occasion of falling, may become the matter of a more excellent Virtue, and an advantage of doing much more good in the world.

S E R M.  
V.  
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SERMON. To Us, humanely speaking, in a state of great Prosperity, the Dangers are so great, and the Errors so numerous, that *that which is crooked cannot be made straight, and That which is wanting cannot be numbered*: But to the grace of God revealed in the Gospel, all things are possible. But

V.



3dly, If through the frailty and infirmity of our Nature, we be at any time, notwithstanding our sincere endeavours to the contrary, surprized into the commission of Sin; God accepts real Repentance and a renewed Obedience, instead of an uninterrupted course of Holiness. *If any man sin, saith St John, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our Sins, 1 Joh. ii. 1.* God takes no delight in the death of a Sinner; but uses great forbearance and long-suffering towards us, that we may be led to Repentance; And if we *do* so sincerely repent, as *indeed* to amend our lives and forsake our sins, God has sworn by himself that we *shall* live; for, *have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die, saith the Lord God, and not that he should rather turn from his ways and live?* Ezek.

xviii. 22. With those Limitations, it is S E R M. abundantly evident, that as the true and V. only design of the laws of the Gospel, is to make us holy and undefiled, so it is possible for us to be really holy according to the true Intent and Meaning of those laws. Wherefore, as the excellent Nature and Design of our Religion, sufficiently recommends it to our judgment; so the possibility of obeying it, is a most powerful encouragement to us, to set in earnest about the practice of it. But then we must always consider, that as God requires nothing *more* of us, than a sincere obedience according to the gracious terms of the Gospel-covenant; so he will not accept of any thing less: As it is *possible* for us to be holy and undefiled, according to the true intent of the laws of our Religion; so God has made it the *indispensable* condition of our Happiness, that we actually and in reality become such holy Persons: Which was the

III. *Third* Head I proposed to speak to. Our Saviour by his Death and Sufferings *has* purchased this grace for us, that real Repentance and sincere renewed Obedience shall be accepted instead of Innocence; but *without* this  
Repentance

S E R M. Repentance and renewed Obedience, we shall  
 V. never be accepted upon any terms. God *has*  
 established a new and gracious Covenant  
 with us, upon the mediation of Christ;  
 but the absolute and indispensable condi-  
 tion of our enjoying the benefit of this  
 new Covenant, is our sincerely renewing  
 our Obedience. *Not every one that saith*  
*unto me, Lord, Lord, (says our Saviour,)*  
*shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven,*  
*but he that doeth the will of my Father*  
*which is in Heaven.* In like manner St  
 Paul, 1 Cor. vi. 9. *Know ye not that the*  
*unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom*  
*of God? Be not deceived; neither fornicators,*  
*nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor*  
*thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor*  
*revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the*  
*kingdom of God.* Again, Ephes. v. 6. *Let*  
*no man deceive you with vain words, for*  
*because of these things cometh the wrath of*  
*God upon the children of disobedience even*  
*in the Heathen-world.* And Gal. v. 19.  
*The works of the flesh are manifest; of the*  
*which I tell you before, as I have also told*  
*you in time past, that they which do such*  
*things, shall not inherit the kingdom of God.*  
 So Rev. xxi. 27. and xxii. 15. Notwith-  
 standing



standing all which most exprefs and repeated declarations of Holy Scripture, there are yet two sorts of persons especially, who are very apt to deceive themselves in this matter. The one is of those, who think their *Faith* sufficient to save them, without Works of Holiness. To whom we may answer in the words of St *James*, ch. ii. ver. 14. *What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works; can faith save him?* And this he illustrates by a most elegant similitude, ver. 15. *If a brother or sister be naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, depart in peace, be you warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit; Even so faith, (says he,) if it hath not works, is dead being alone; Dead, i. e. fruitless, without life or profit. But what faith the same Apostle? Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their afflictions, and to keep a man's self unspotted from the world,* Jam. i. 27. The other sort of persons, who are very apt to deceive themselves in this matter,

matter,

S E R M. matter, are those who living wickedly,  
 V. yet design to repent before they die. And  
 to these we may very well apply the Similitude of the same Apostle. If our saying to a poor man, Depart in peace, be you warmed and filled, (without giving him any thing to supply those Necessities,) can satisfy his Hunger and relieve his Wants; then also in like manner may a dying man's *wishing* that he *had* so lived, *be indeed* living a holy life. But the folly of these pretences will be yet more manifest, if we consider in the

IV. *Fourth* and *last* place, that the very nature itself of the Happiness promised to holy and virtuous men is such, that it is not possible to be enjoyed, but by those that actually *are* holy. And this the Apostle St Paul hints to us (in the Text, *Heb. xii. 14.*) by giving us a representation of that Happiness, under the notion of *Seeing God*. And *Rev. xxii. 4.* *And they shall see his face, and his name shall be in their foreheads.* Now to *see God*, is not, seeing him as with bodily eyes; or understanding his metaphysical nature; This, as no creature now *can*, so 'tis probable they never *will* be able to do. But to  
*see*

*see God*, is to be admitted into his glorious presence, and to enjoy that Satisfaction which must necessarily arise, from the contemplation of his perfections, and from the sense of his favour: For in his presence is fulness of joy, at his right hand there are pleasures for evermore. And thus to see God, necessarily implies a perfect love of him, and, as far as is possible, a likeness or resemblance to him. For so St John argues, in his first epistle, ch. iii. ver. 2. *It doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.* This therefore is the Happiness promised to holy and good men: They shall be admitted into the immediate presence of God, and into the society of Angels and of the Spirits of just men made perfect; *Ye are come, saith St Paul, Heb. xii. 22. unto mount Sion, unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new Covenant.*

They

S E R M.  
V.  


S E R M. *They who shall be thought worthy to obtain that life, and the resurrection from the dead, shall for ever behold the face of God in glory, and by that blessed Vision their hearts shall be filled with a most ardent Love of God, and their Souls shall be transformed into his image and likeness. And if this be the case; then nothing is more evident, than that this Happiness is of such a nature, as is not possible to be enjoyed, but by such as actually are holy and undefiled. For what agreement can there be, between a sensual, wicked, or malicious soul, and the pure society of the Spirits of just men made perfect? We see even in this life, how ungrateful the Society of good men is, to such as are obstinately and incorrigibly wicked; and as it is in this, so, much more, will it be in the other world. Such persons, as have been wholly given up to the sinful pleasures of a debauched world, can never be fit company for those spiritual and refined minds, whose Desires and Enjoyments are as far exalted above every thing that is gross and sensual, as Heaven is above Earth: And malicious tempers, whose delight upon Earth*

was

*Of the Necessity of Holiness.*

III

was in nothing, but Hatred, Envy, and Revenge, can never converse in *Heaven* with those blessed Spirits, who feed and live upon no other pleasures, but those of Goodness, Holiness, and Love. Again, what can be more impossible, than for wicked and debauched minds to be made happy by the Vision and Fruition of God, who is Purity and Holiness itself? Salvation, must be begun *here*: Grace and Glory, are but different degrees of one and the same state: And 'tis a very remarkable expression of Scripture, according to the true rendring of the Original, that *God adds to the Church daily, not such as should be, but such as are saved.* So that unless God should work a miracle for profane persons, and when he removes them into another world, should transform them also into new Creatures; 'tis no more possible for *Them* to enjoy the Happiness of Heaven, than for *Body* to enjoy the pleasures of *Spirit*, or for *Darkness* to have communion and agreement with *Light*. I will not presume to affirm, (though some have done it, not without appearance of reason,) that if God should transplant such persons  
into

S E R M.  
V.  


SERM. into Heaven, he *could* not make them  
V. happy there; but so long as they are thus  
exceedingly indisposed for it, nothing is  
more certain than that he *never will*:  
For, *without Holiness, no man shall see the*  
*Lord.*





# SERMON VI.

Holiness of Life the most acceptable Sacrifice to God.



ROM. xxii. 1.

*I beseech you, therefore, Brethren, by the Mercies of God, that ye present your Bodies a living Sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God; which is your reasonable Service.*



THE Apostle St *Paul* in the SERMON VI. former part of this Epistle, having shown that the *Gentiles* by departing from the Law of *Nature*, and the *Jews* by transgressing the Law of *Moses*, had Both of them become obnoxious to the Wrath of God ;

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S E R M. from thence infers the obligation incumbent upon *Both*, to have recourse to the Grace and Mercy of the *Gospel*, by believing in *Christ*, and returning to God in *That way* of Faith and Repentance, which the Apostles were sent forth to preach both unto *Jews* and *Gentiles*. Against This great Doctrine of the *Gospel*, the *Gentiles* had nothing material to object, any further than as the Antient Customs of their Forefathers, and the habitual Corruption of their own Manners, made them unwilling to reform. But the *Jews*, to whose Ancestors God had made singular Promises of *eternal* Blessings, and to whom (as a peculiar people or nation) he had been pleased to give a *particular Law* by immediate Revelation; These were extremely averse to believe, that he would ever put an end to That institution, and receive the *Gentiles* to his Mercy in common with the *Jews*; nay, and *reject* the nation of the *Jews*, for not receiving the *Gospel* in common with the *Gentiles*. To remove this Great Prejudice therefore; the Apostle from the *third chapter* of this Epistle to the end of the *eleventh*, argues with singular strength and earnest-





earnestness, that the Great Father of the *Jewish Nation*, even *Abraham* himself, received the Promises of God, not upon account of the *Law*, which was not then given; nor upon account of the Seal of *Circumcision*, which had not as yet been commanded him; but upon account of the *like Faith*, and the *like obedience*, as was afterwards required by the *Gospel*. That as God, the Maker and Lord of all, had an undoubted Right to *chuse* the *Posterity of Abraham* to be his peculiar people and the Standard of true religion, without doing thereby Any Wrong or Injury to the rest of Mankind; so he had evidently the very same Right, whenever he pleased, to *remove* again That partition-wall, and admit the *Gentiles* to be Partakers of the same external Advantages with the *Jews*; nay, and to *cast off* the *Jews* for refusing That Method of Salvation, which he had *now* commanded to be preached equally to *All*. Lastly, the Apostle argues, that in *all* these various dispensations of Providence, the *Design* of God was merciful towards *All men*; leading them, by the Motives both of Severity and Goodness, to Repentance and Reformation of Life. Casting

S E R M. off the *Jews* for their impenitency, and  
 VI. offering mercy to the *Gentiles*; intending  
 finally, through the Fulness of the *Gentiles*, to bring in also the *Jews* again. For  
 so he summs up his *whole* Argument, ch. xi.  
 30. *As Ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through Their Unbelief; even so have These also now not believed, that thro' your mercy they also may obtain mercy: For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon All: O the depth of the riches both of the Knowledge and wisdom of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!*

HAVING thus concluded his *Argument*, he proceeds in the words of the *Text*, according to his usual *Method* in all his *epistles*, to draw an *inference of exhortation* from what he had before said, to perswade men to the *Practice of Virtue and Righteousness*. *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your Bodies a Living Sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God; which is your reasonable Service.*

*I beseech you Therefore: The word, Therefore, shows the connexion of the present*

*sent* exhortation, which his *foregoing* Argument. God in *all* the dispensations of his Providence, both in the *merciful* and in the *severe* parts of it, has set forth to us the Necessity of Repentance and Amendment; Therefore, (says he) *I beseech you, brethren*, let This Consideration have its due effect upon you, that you neither despise his Mercy, nor provoke his Severity.

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VI.  


AND because the *finishing point* in which his Argument terminates, is the observation, that *all* the Great Dispensations of Providence are with unsearchable Wisdom designed finally to issue in Events of *Mercy*; (God *hath* concluded *All in Unbelief*, *that he might have Mercy upon All*;) for This reason 'tis with great eloquence of affection, that the Apostle lays the Stress of his exhortation upon *That* particular Motive: *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the Mercies of God*. The like expression he again uses, 2 Cor. x. 1. *I beseech you by the Meekness and Gentleness of Christ*. His Sense, in Both places is: Let the Mercy and Goodness of God, manifested and declared to you by the Gospel of Christ, prevail with you to live as *becometh* the

S E R M. Gospel, to live *worthy* of the Grace and Benefits ye have received.

VI.



THAT ye *present your Bodies*, (that is, *yourselves*;) a living Sacrifice; a Sacrifice as much more valuable in the Sight of God, than the Sacrifices of Beasts offered up upon the Altar, as a *Man* is more valuable than an *irrational Animal*; as a *Living Man* is more valuable, than a *slain Beast*; as the *Moral Perfections* of a *Man*, are more excellent than a *Sacrifice free from mere natural Blemishes of the Body*; as, lastly, the *thing signified itself*, is always preferable to a *Mere Representation*. That ye present yourselves unto God, such a *Living Sacrifice* as This; Holy, not with a mere *legal, external, nominal* Holiness, consisting purely in things being *set apart* (by *consecration* or *solemn denomination* only) to such or such particular Uses; but Holy, by a *real, moral, intrinsic* Sanctity, of which the *Legal* Holiness was but a *Type* or a *Shadow*; Holy, by *real Purity* and *Goodness of Manners*; in the Sense wherein *He* is *Holy*, who is of *purser eyes than to behold iniquity*; Holy, in this *true and spiritual* Sense; And consequently, as the Text  
 goes

goes on, acceptable *unto God*; acceptable, not merely by Virtue of *institution and Command*; but acceptable in the *nature of the thing itself*; acceptable, as being in *Agreeableness and Conformity to the Nature of God*; acceptable, as being a fulfilling of the *essential and unchangeable Law of everlasting Righteousness*. For *thus* even the Light of *Reason* taught the *Wiser Heathens*, that by *No Offering* could God be so acceptably worshipped, as by the Oblation of a *Heart free from Unrighteousness and Iniquity*. Thus also the *Prophets* among the *Jews*, in order to draw That people, as they were able, to a rational notion of religion; *Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt-offerings and Sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than Sacrifice; and to hearken, than the Fat of Rams.* And *Thus* likewise our *Saviour himself*, who came to restore the Purity of uncorrupted religion; *Thou art not far*, says he, *from the Kingdom of God*; expressing his High Approbation of a certain Scribe's profession, that for a man *to Love God with all his Heart, and his Neighbour as*

S E R M.

VI.




S E R M. *himself, is more than all whole Burnt-offerings and Sacrifices.*

VI.

IN the *last* place therefore, the Apostle adds, as a *conclusion* of his *whole* exhortation in the Text; that This spiritual Sacrifice, this Moral Purity and Holiness of Life, is our Reasonable Service: Reasonable, in point of *Gratitude*; upon account of what he had before alledged concerning the *Mercies of God*, or the merciful and gracious Dispensations of his Providence towards men: Reasonable, in the *nature of Things*; as being *in itself* of eternal and unchangeable Obligation: Reasonable, with regard to the nature of *God*; who is a Being of essential Purity and Holiness: and Reasonable, with regard to the nature of *Men*; as being the *Proper Duty and Service*, of *Rational* Creatures.

THE words of the Text being thus explained; the principal *Particulars* therein, which deserve to be more largely and distinctly considered, are; *1st*, Whence it comes to pass, that the Apostle here expresses our *whole* Christian Duty, by the *particular* phrase of presenting our Bodies Holy,

Holy, acceptable unto God: and *2dly*, S E R M. VI.  
What is the full intent, of his styling this  
our Service *a Living Sacrifice*. 

I. *First*; WHENCE comes it to pass, that the Apostle here expresses our *whole* Christian Duty, by the *particular* phrase of presenting our Bodies Holy, acceptable unto God? He does not say, present *yourselves*, but your *Bodies*, a living Sacrifice, Holy, acceptable unto God. Now the reason of This, seems to be, that having in the *former* part of this epistle described the great *depravity* and *corruption* of manners among the *unbelieving Gentiles*, principally in the instance of those Works of the Flesh, to which God had judicially given them up as a consequence of their gross idolatries, so contradictory to the plain Light of Nature and Reason; in the *latter* part of the epistle he accordingly *suits* his exhortation to the *converted* Gentiles, to *purify themselves from all filthiness both of Flesh and Spirit, perfecting Holiness in the Fear of God*; and that, in the *first* place, they should be sure to cleanse themselves from those *Works of the Flesh*, which were the Great Cause of God's Anger even against the  
Heathen

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Heathen World; and by forsaking of which, they might in a particular manner be said to present their *Bodies* a living Sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God. The Sins of *This* kind, are what ought not indeed to be once *named* among Christians: *Eph. v. 3. Fornication and all uncleanness, let it not be once named amongst you, as becometh Saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient; but rather, giving of Thanks: For This ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, hath any inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ, and of God: Let no man deceive you with vain words; For because of these things, cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience; or, as it in the margin, upon the children of Unbelief; that is, even upon the Heathen world itself. Where, by the way, 'tis very observable, that the Apostle, speaking of the Heathen-nations, does not say, as Some in later Ages have done, that their being ignorant in Unbelief is the cause of all their Actions being sinful and displeasing to God; but, on the contrary, that the Sinfulness and Wickedness of their Actions, in opposition to*


That



That degree of Light they enjoy; is the S E R M. true and only cause, of their being hateful to God: *For because of These things* VI. (says he,) *cometh the Wrath of God upon the Children of Unbelief.* Now if among those who *knew not God*, that is, who had no *express Revelation*, nor *any other Declaration* of the Will of God, than what the mere Light of *Nature and Reason* afforded; if among *These* (I say,) all Sins of This kind were so justly punishable; how much more among *Christians*; whom (as the Apostle expresses it) God hath called *unto Holiness*, that is, has by a *particular Revelation*, by *peculiar Promises*, and by *extraordinary Assistances*, appointed to be unto himself a *chosen generation*, a *royal Priesthood*, a *Holy Nation*, a *peculiar people*! For, *This is the Will of God*, 1 Th. iv. 3; *this is the will of God, even your Sanctification*; *That every one of you may know how to possess himself in Sanctification and Honour*: *Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God*:--- *Because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we have also forewarned you and testified*:---- *He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not Man, but God,*


S E R M. *God, who bath also given unto us his Holy*

VI. *Spirit. Given unto us his Holy Spirit : That*

 is, has given us all the extraordinary *Motives*, and all the peculiar *Assistances* and *Advantages* of the *Gospel*, in order to our *Sanctification*. Infomuch that the same Apostle, by a very elegant and expressive similitude, stiles the *Bodies* of Christians, *Temples of God*, and *Temples of the Holy Ghost*; and from thence draws a strong and affecting argument, to perswade them to the *Virtues* of *Sobriety* and *Holiness*. *Know ye not* (says he) *that ye are the Temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the Temple of God, him shall God destroy; For the Temple of God is Holy, which Temple ye are.* And again: *Know ye not that your Body is the Temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a Price; Therefore glorify God (glorify the Lord who bought you with the precious blood of his dear Son; glorify him) in your Body, and in your Spirit, which are God's: (1 Cor. vi. 19.)* In very corrupt and degenerate Ages of the World, there will always be *Some profligate* persons, who will pretend indeed they cannot discern the

the

the Great *Wickedness and Immorality* of S E R M.  
some of the Practices against which these VI.  
exhortations are directed; as (they must  
needs confess,) they evidently enough do,  
in the Instances of Many *Other* sorts of  
Crimes. But how unwilling soever they  
are to *perceive*, wherein lies the heinous  
nature of these Vices, when they are the  
*guilty persons themselves*; yet they are al-  
ways very sensible of it, when they *them-*  
*selves suffer* by the Guilt of *Others*; when  
any Dishonour of this kind is done to  
their *own Families*, or even to *remote Re-*  
*lations*. Then they see plainly, how de-  
structive all these Debaucheries are, to  
Human Society, and to the publick Wel-  
fare; how irreconcilable they are with  
All Serious Thoughts, and worthy Acti-  
ons; how they cover men with Shame,  
and Baseness of Spirit; how they sepa-  
rate the nearest and most close Relations,  
lay a ground for inextricable confusions  
and implacable Diffensions in Families,  
and very frequently occasion Murders, Se-  
ditions and publick Devastations: So that  
hardly from *Any Other* Cause, have sprung  
such *Tragical* and calamitous Events, as  
from the Sins and Debaucheries of *This*  
fort.

S E R M. fort. One part of these ill consequences, is excellently described by *Solomon*: Prov. VI.  vi. 32. vii. 22. *He that doth these things, destroyeth his Own Soul: A wound and dishonour shall he get, and his Reproach shall not be wiped away. He goeth after a strange woman, 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.-----For her house is the way to Hell, going down to the Chambers of Death.* This is an Argument drawn from the *natural Tendency* of things, and from the *Wise Observations* which *Solomon* had made upon the Course of the world, and upon the Ways and Practices of Men. But the Argument is *doubly* enforced, by the considerations of the *Gospel*; which, to the general Motives of *Nature and Reason*, has added this *further* peculiar Obligation, great and more powerful than all; that having a Promise given us of an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled in the Heavens, we are now, as *Strangers and Pilgrims* in this present World, required to restrain all inordinate Desires which

*war*

war against the Soul; that is, which would tempt men to exchange their *eternal Happiness* for the *transient and momentary pleasures of Sin*. Heb. xii. 16. *Lest there be Any Fornicator, or profane person as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his Birthright; For ye know that afterwards, when he would have inherited the Blessing, he was rejected; for he found no place of Repentance, tho' he sought it carefully with Tears.* The Meaning is; not that True Repentance, which produces real Amendment and effectual Reformation of Manners, will ever be rejected; but that, at the time of Judgment, when the Blessing comes to be inherited, and they who have sold their Hopes of it for the Pleasures of Sin, shall say, *Lord, Lord, open unto us*; then will our Lord reply, *I know you not whence ye are, Depart from Me all ye Workers of Iniquity.* I conclude This head therefore with That excellent exhortation of St Paul, Rom. xiii. 12. *Let us cast off the Works of Darkness, and put upon us the Armour of Light: Let us walk honestly as in the day, (that is, as becometh those who enjoy the Light of the Gospel;) not in rioting and drunkenness,*  
*not*

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S E R M. *not in chambering and wantonness, not in*  
 VI. *strife and envying; But put ye on the Lord*  
 Jesus Christ, (that is, live as becomes the  
 Disciples of Christ,) *and make no provi-*  
*sion for the flesh, to fulfil the Lusts thereof.*

II. *Secondly; THAT* which remains, is, to consider in the *next* place, what is the true and full Intent of that *Other Phrase* the Apostle uses in the text; when this Duty of *presenting our Bodies Holy, acceptable unto God*, is here stiled by him a *Living Sacrifice*. For the clear understanding the ground of which expression, 'tis to be observed, that the proper Punishment of Sin being *Death*, and yet God resolving to have Mercy on such as should repent and amend; he thought proper, in the Wisdom of his Government, to declare and establish, to confirm and ratify this Covenant of Mercy, by the *Sacrifice of the Death of Christ* once offered for ever. As a *Type* of which, and as an *Emblem* of the true Demerit of Sin, and as the Sinners *Acknowledgment* of his Guilt, and Profession of Repentance; God was pleased, in the early Ages of the World, to accept the *sacrificing* of Beasts. In which matter, when impartially considered,

sidered, it cannot be said there was any thing unworthy of God. For since they are all, creatures which God has *freely* created, and *freely* given them *Life*; since they are moreover created *necessarily subject* to *Death*; and fitted in the very *Course* and original *Design* of their nature, to be slain for Food, to *Men* and to *each other*; it cannot be said there is any thing *incongruous*, in their having been appointed to be used as *Sacrifices* in the Service of *God*. Nevertheless, since these *Sacrifices* were never in any *other* respect acceptable unto God, but merely as *Figures* and *Shadows*; as *Types* of *Christ*, and as Acknowledgments or Professions of the Sinner's *Repentance*; 'tis evident, that from the *Beginning*, the real and true *Sacrifice* most pleasing to God, always was the *person's* dedicating *himself* to the *Service* of God, by such a *Death unto Sin*, as the *slaying* of the *Sacrifice* represented; and by such *Amendment of Life* for the future, as was typically signified by the *Sacrifice* being *without Blemish*. From whence, even in the *Old Testament*, the Prophet, speaking comparatively, *Behold*, says he, *to Obey is better than Sacrifice*,

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S E R M. *and to hearken than the fat of Rams. The*

VI. Psalmist likewise, *Thou desirest not sacrifice, says he, else would I give it thee, but thou delightest not in burnt-offerings: The Sacrifices of God are a broken Spirit, a broken and contrite heart (O God) thou wilt not despise. And under the New Testament, That spiritual Worship, and That Christian Practice of Moral Duties, which succeeded in the place of literal Sacrifices, is hence very elegantly stiled A Sacrifice or Offering. By Malachi, 'tis before-hand stiled prophetically, a Pure Offering, ch. i. 11. By the Apostle, after its establishment, 'tis called a Spiritual Sacrifice; an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God, (Phil. iv. 18.) And in the epistle to the Hebrews, ch. xiii. 15. we are Thus exhorted; By Him therefore, that is, By or Through Christ, let us offer the Sacrifice of Praise to God continually, that is the Fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his Name: Also to do good and to communicate, forget not; for with such Sacrifices God is well-pleas'd. From which manner of speaking, 'tis very obvious to observe, by the Way; how absurdly some Modern Writers, from the An-*



*cients* styling the *Eucharist* an *unbloody Sa-* S E R M.  
*crifice*, have inferred that 'tis in *some real* VI.  
*and literal Sense* a *Sacrifice*: Whereas the  
*Ancients*, on the contrary, used the word  
*Sacrifice* in the same Sense here, as the  
*Apostle* calls *Praise* and *Works of Charity*  
*a Sacrifice*; nay, in the same Sense, as by  
 a still more sublime figure, he says of  
*Christians*, Phil. iii. 3. that *We are the*  
*circumcision*; That is, that *Christians* are  
 by real *Holiness purified* unto God a *pecu-*  
*liar people*, more truly than the *Jews*  
 were by the typical *Ceremony of Circum-*  
*cision*.

*Lastly*, THE Moral Purity and Virtue  
 of sincere Christians, is in the Text stiled,  
 not only a *Sacrifice*, but a *Living Sacri-*  
*fice*; to express more emphatically, how  
 much the Service of a *rational living per-*  
*son* is more valuable in the Sight of God,  
 than the Sacrifice of a *slain Beast*. By the  
 same Analogy of Speech, Christians are  
 stiled by St *Peter*, *Living Stones*, 1 Pet. ii.  
 5; to signify their being parts of That  
*Spiritual Building* or *Temple of God*,  
 which is his *Church* or the Whole Body  
 of his Faithful Servants, much more pre-  
 cious in his Sight than any Temple lite-

S E R M. rally built with hands. After the same  
 VI. manner *Christ*, in opposition to the *Jews*  
 typical Approach to God in the Holy  
 Place through the Veil of the Temple, is  
 stiled a *New and Living Way*, Heb. x. 20.  
 And in general, *all outward Forms and*  
*Ceremonies* whatsoever, are in Scripture  
 called a *dead letter*; in comparison with  
 the *Spirit and reality*, of true *Virtue and*  
*Righteousness*. Which *real Virtue and*  
*Righteousness* in the whole course of mens  
 lives, is, in the fullest and most com-  
 plete Sense of the phrase, *presenting them-*  
*selves unto God a Living Sacrifice*: Rom. vi.  
 11, 13. *Reckon ye yourselves*, says the A-  
 postle, (with which exhortation I shall  
 conclude,) *Reckon ye yourselves to be dead*  
*indeed unto sin, but alive unto God, thro'*  
*Jesus Christ our Lord*;--- *yielding your-*  
*selves unto God, as those that are alive from*  
*the dead; and your members as instruments*  
*of righteousness unto God.*



# SERMON VII.

Of the unchangeable Difference of  
Good and Evil.



ISA I. V. 20.

*Wo unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter.*



THE reasonableness of Religion, S E R M. VII.  
is the great condemnation of Sinners; and the Folly of Wick-  
edness is most evidently reprov-  
ed, by showing it to be con-  
trary both to the Nature of *Man* and to  
the Reason of *Things*, as well as to the  
positive Will and Command of God. The

S E R M. Distinction of Moral Actions is in itself  
 VII. as necessary and as manifest, as the Differences of natural and sensible Objects; and 'tis a greater and juster reproach to the Understanding of a Man, not to discern these *its* proper Objects; than 'tis a weakness and defect in the Organs of the Senses, not to distinguish Theirs. Light and Darkness are so absolutely contrary to each other, and Sweetness so sensibly different from Bitter, that no man can mistake or confound these things, without having wholly lost the use of those Senses, by which they were intended to be discerned. Pain and Pleasure are so directly opposite, that nothing less than the loss of Life itself, can make us insensible of *Them*, or hinder us from preferring the one, and avoiding the other. Moral Good and Evil, Virtue and Vice, the Happiness and the Diseases of the Mind, are as truly and as widely different in their own nature; as the Perceptions of our outward Senses: And God has endued us with Faculties of the Soul as well fitted to distinguish them, as the Bodily Senses are to discern corporeal Objects. If any man, notwithstanding this, will obstinately

ly call Evil Good, and Good Evil, and will deny all Distinction between Virtue and Vice; he must as much have laid aside the use of his natural Reason and Understanding, the Judgment and Discernment of his mind; as he that would confound Light and Darkneſs, muſt contradict his Senſes, and deny the Evidence of his cleareſt Sight. And when ſuch a perſon falls finally into unavoidable Miſery and the juſt Punishment of Sin, he will no more deſerve Pity and Compaſſion, than one that falls down a Precipice becauſe he would not open his Eyes to diſcern that Light, which ſhould have guided and directed him in his way. Miſery and Deſtruction muſt neceſſarily be the effect of neglecting thoſe Rules, on which both God and Nature have made the Life and Happineſs of the *Soul* to depend; as certainly as the Deſtruction of the *Body* muſt be the ſpeedy Conſequence of neglecting the difference between things whoſome and poiſonous. And ſo much the more deſerved and the leſs pitiable is the Deſtruction of wilful and impenitent Sinners, by how much the clearer the difference is between Good and Evil; and

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by how much the more obstinately they must shut their eyes, that they may not see the strong Light of Reason and Conscience, the Excellency and Necessity of Virtue, and the plain and only way to true Happiness. *Wo unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter.*

IN the following Discourse upon which words, I shall endeavour to show, *1st*, That there is originally in the very *Nature* of things, a necessary and eternal Difference between Good and Evil, between Virtue and Vice; which the Reason of things does itself oblige men to have a constant Regard to. *2dly*, That God, by his supreme and absolute Authority, and by express Declaration of his Will in Holy Scripture, has established and confirmed this original Difference of things; and will support and maintain it by his immediate Power and Government in the World. And *3dly*, I shall draw some Observations from the whole, which may be of use to us in Practice.

I. *First*; There is originally in the very Nature of things, a necessary and eternal Difference between Good and Evil, between Virtue and Vice; which the Reason of things does itself oblige men to have a constant Regard to. This is *supposed* in the Text, by the Prophet's comparing the Difference between Good and Evil, to that most obvious and sensible Difference of Light and Darknefs. And 'tis not without great Reason, that he supposes this Difference of Good and Evil to be so plain and self-evident, as if it could not be proved by any thing more clear and manifest than itself. For in like manner as any man, who should be so absurd as to contend, that there was no Difference between Light and Darknefs; could not be confuted by any Argument more strong, than the Evidence of his own Senses: So to any one who will perversely deny all Difference between Good and Evil, it is not easy to offer any better Argument, to convince him of this great and fundamental Truth; than by appealing to the Reason and Conscience of his own Mind. Not because there is any real Difficulty or Obscurity in the Thing itself to be proved;

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S E R M. proved; but on the contrary, because it  
 VII. is so very plain and evident, that scarcely  
 any foreign Argument can by the strictest  
 Proof make it more clear and certain than  
 it was before. When men will deny a Truth,  
 which is as evident, as the Difference be-  
 tween Light and Darknes; Punishment  
 then is the only proper remedy for such  
 Obstinacy; and very justly may those men  
 be excluded from all the Benefits of hu-  
 mane Society, who will not have any  
 regard to that Difference of things, on  
 which alone all the Happiness of Society  
 depends. *Natural* Good and Evil, in  
 such instances wherein we are personally  
 concerned, and where the Effect is not  
 very remote, we are always sufficiently  
 sensible of, and abundantly able and care-  
 ful to distinguish. Death and Life, Sick-  
 ness and Health, Pleasure and Pain, Po-  
 verty and Riches, Honour and Disgrace,  
 are Differences of condition, concerning  
 which there is no dispute, and no danger  
 that men will be careless or negligent.  
 Death and Life, Pain and Pleasure, Hap-  
 piness and Misery, men cannot but distin-  
 guish; and must of necessity always pur-  
 sue the one, and endeavour to avoid the  
 other.



other. Yet in these very things is originally founded the Difference of *Moral* Good and Evil, which they are so apt to neglect; And 'tis only for want of attending to the Issues and Consequences of things, that men are ever guilty of so fatal a Mistake. That which tends truly and universally, to the Perfection of humane Nature, and to the general Happiness of Mankind; is Moral Good, as well as Natural: And Moral Evil, is that which corrupts and depraves and dishonours our Nature, and renders it truly miserable; which disquiets mens Minds, and weakens their Bodies; which ruins their Estates, and destroys their Reputation; which breaks Laws, and disturbs good Government, and disorders and confounds the World. These respective Effects are sometimes remote indeed, and at a distance; and This is that which deceives and imposes upon men: But they are nevertheless most certain, and necessary Effects; and of direct, proper, and natural consequence: So that even in Nature, Virtue and Vice, Wisdom and Folly, are as necessarily distinct, and as unalterable as Happiness and Misery themselves.

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selves. God hath so constituted our Nature, that the same things which truly and universally promote our Happiness, are likewise the chief instances of our Duty; and the universal performance of our Duty, is plainly the most natural and direct means to attain true and lasting Happiness. The Accidents of this World, and the extreme Wickedness of Men, make it sometimes indeed prove otherwise for a short season: But the *final* Event of things, is always such as I have now described; and the Order of Nature *tends* to make it be so likewise, even in all the *present* intermediate spaces of time. The Fear and Love of God, the Imitation of his Nature, and the Obeying of his Commands; the Sense of *His* present and future Favour, who is the supreme Lord and infinitely powerful Governour of the whole World; is evidently the only foundation of solid Peace and Satisfaction of Mind, in which a rational and immortal Spirit can possibly acquiesce: Piety therefore towards God, is as necessarily good in itself, and of as unchangeable Obligation in Nature and Reason; as the Creator is of necessity infinitely superior to his

his Creatures; and as settled peace and Satisfaction of Mind, which can only arise from the sense of *his* Favour, is necessarily the ground and condition of our Happiness. Temperance and Sobriety, Diligence and Patience, the due government of our Appetites, and restraint of our Passions, are the only *natural and most certain* means of preserving the health of our Bodies, of improving the faculties of our Minds, and of keeping ourselves constantly in such Temper and Disposition, as is necessary to qualify us for the regular performance of all other duties of Life. He that suffers himself to be deprived of his Reason, either by violent Passion, or by great Intemperance and Excess, has no guard left, that can secure him from falling into the greatest Crimes. Such government of ourselves therefore, is as necessarily good and obligatory in the nature of the thing itself, as it is confessedly useful and excellent in its Effects. Justice and Righteousness, Goodness and Charity, Faithfulness and Truth, Subjection to Government, Obedience to Laws, due Respect to Authority, according to *mens* several Qualities  
and

S E R M. and Stations in the world ; are the only  
 VII. possible means, of preserving the Peace  
 and Welfare of the Publick, the Order of  
 Societies, and mutual Protection and Support ; on which depends all our Happiness, all our Enjoyments, and whatsoever is most valuable amongst men : These things therefore are as unchangeably Wise and Good, and the practice of them as indispensably enforced upon us by the eternal Reason of things, and of as indispensable Obligation ; as it is natural and necessary for us to desire both our own private Happiness, and the publick Welfare of Mankind. Wicked and unreasonable men, who will be governed by no rule, but their present Appetites ; look not so far before them, as to make true judgments and take right measures concerning their proper Happiness. Whatever gratifies their present Lust or Passion, That they chuse as Good and conducive to their Happiness ; not considering that in the course of things it may be the greatest Evil in the world, either directly to themselves, or consequentially by being injurious to other men, destructive of publick Peace, and Order, and Government,  
 and

and so in the end pernicious even in this present world to themselves also. For want of this Consideration it is, that they confound the natural and eternal Differences of things; judging of Good and Evil, by no other measure, but by their own sudden Passions, changeable Appetites, disorderly and unreasonable Lusts. If they get beyond this, and are forced to confess that the Necessity of things, the very Nature and Constitution of the world, lest every thing should run immediately into the utmost Confusion, obliges them to be under some kind of Rules and Restraints; yet, far from having any generous and noble principles of true Virtue and Goodness, they will go no further than they are compelled, nor acknowledge any other Difference between Good and Evil, than what is forced upon them by the Authority of Law or Custom. And yet concerning These also, it is as evident, that Good and Evil, are things prior and superiour to all humane Laws, and which they cannot alter; as that the Difference of Light and Darkness does not depend upon the Will and Pleasure


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S E R M. Pleasure of men, and cannot be changed  
 VII. by them. The true and only reason of all  
 humane Laws, is to enforce and secure  
 the practice of such things, as are before  
 in their own Nature good, and useful, and  
 profitable to Society. For, if this were  
 not the case, it would not be of any im-  
 portance, whether these or the very con-  
 trary practices were enjoined by Laws.  
 'Tis not therefore barely the Force and  
 Obligation of the Law, which makes  
 a thing become good and reasonable  
 to be practised; (though in all indiffe-  
 rent things, This is indeed a sufficient  
 Obligation;) but 'tis the Wisdom and  
 Goodness of the Things themselves, that  
 is the Ground and Foundation of all wise  
 Laws; and which makes it necessary,  
 that men should by Authority and by  
 Laws be compelled to do that, which if  
 there had been no Law at all, it would  
 nevertheless have been reasonable and good  
 for them to do. We are infinitely obliged  
 by Nature and Reason, to worship God  
 and adore, to pray and to give thanks, to  
 the Supreme Author and Preserver of our  
 Being; and to do all the Good we can  
 to

to Men, in our several Stations; promoting universally the Happiness of our Fellow-creatures, and the Peace and good Order of the World. 'Tis fit the Fear and Authority of Laws, should prevent such men from opposing and hindering this great End, who perhaps would not otherwise be restrained by the Obligation of right Reason, or by the Fear of God: But the Obligation of right Reason would still have been the same, though no humane Laws had laid any such Compulsion upon men: Nay even, if it could be supposed that all positive Laws and all humane Authority whatsoever, should require us to act the contrary part; destroy and do all evil to each other without difference or respect; If all the Nations in the world, should conspire in having such a False Notion of Honour and Glory, as to account it truer greatness to destroy and ruin, than to protect Mankind and preserve the Liberties of Nations, and the common Rights of humane Societies; yet it would neither be wise nor good, nor reasonable, neither truly great nor honourable so to do; any more than mens agreeing to call poison wholsom, would make

S E R M. it really be so ; or the opinion or declaration of any number of Men, could make  
 VII.  Darknefs put on the Nature of Light. Wicked and unreasonable men, powerful Tyrants and Oppreffors, the greateft Debauchees and Purfuers of unlawful Pleaſures ; when they are above the cenſure of all humane Laws, and have little or no reverence for thoſe that are divine ; yet often know that they do evil, and cannot deny but that it would be better to do otherwiſe. They are ſenſible that the practice of Virtue and Goodneſs, is infinitely more reaſonable than Debauchery and Injuſtice ; And though their Luſts and Paſſions have ſuch Dominion over them, that they cannot forbear doing unjuſt and unrighteous Actions ; yet they ſee at the ſame time a more excellent Law, they know better things, and cannot but approve them as more wiſe and reaſonable. This is a true Obligation upon them, to return into the ways of Virtue and Religion : The Senſe of this Obligation they cannot get rid of ; the Uneaſineſs which it gives their Minds, they cannot ſhake off: 'Tis This makes them paſs a ſevere Judgment upon their own paſt  
 Actions,




Actions, whenever they reflect on them; and to chuse even the present Pleasure or unjust Acquisitions with difficulty and remorse: The reproach of Conscience imbibbers all their sinful Enjoyments; and they secretly condemn themselves, where the Laws of men have no power to condemn them. The crimes they commit, are a continual slavery and burden upon their Minds. And were it not, that evil Habits and ungoverned Lusts keep them by an unwilling choice in a perpetual bondage; they would infinitely rather chuse the satisfaction of being innocent, and wish always that they could separate the Pleasure or Profit from the Crime. The Actions of men that live virtuously and religiously, they cannot but approve of; and condemn in others the very same Practices, which they are guilty of themselves. They will trust a virtuous man in any business of importance, much rather than the promoters and partakers of their Vices; and desire always to have their affairs managed, by men of Uprightness, Righteousness, and Integrity. In fine, they *at last* wish themselves

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S E R M. *selves* always in the *place* of the Righteous; and, however they have *lived*, yet  
 VII. *O that they could but die at least the death of the righteous, and that their last end might be like his; and thereby clearly acknowledge the Excellency of Virtue, its Necessity in order to the publick welfare of Mankind, and the Unchangeableness of its Obligation. By all these things, the wickedest of men do themselves give Testimony to the Truth of this 1<sup>st</sup> general Proposition, viz. That there is originally in the very Nature of things, a necessary and eternal Difference between Good and Evil, Virtue and Vice; which the Reason of things does itself oblige men to have a constant regard to.*

II. *Secondly; G O D* has moreover, by his supreme and absolute Authority, and by express declaration of his Will in Holy Scripture, by his positive Will and Command, established and confirmed this original Difference of things, and will support and maintain it by his immediate Power and Government in the world. The former Proposition, *viz.* the natural and unchangeable Difference of Good and Evil, is contained in the *Supposition* in the  
 Text,

Text, wherein this Distinction is *presumed* S E R M.  
 to be equally evident with that of Light VII.  
 and Darknefs. The latter Proposition, 

*viz.* God's interposing moreover his supreme Power and Authority, to confirm and support this same original Difference of things; is contained in the *positive declaration* in the Text, wherein a severe *Wo* is denounced against all such as shall attempt to confound them. *Wo unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter.* That such is the Will of God, as well as the Nature of things; may in good measure be gathered even from what we *naturally* know concerning him. For God being the alone Author and Creator of all things; 'tis plain their Natures are respectively such as he was pleased to make them; and their relations one to another are the result of that Constitution, which the Creator in his Wisdom has thought fit to establish; the *Nature* therefore of things is the *Law* of God; and whatever is agreeable or disagreeable to right Reason, must be so likewise to the Will of the Author of Nature. Wherefore

S E R M. fore since Good and Evil, as has been  
 VII. already shown, are necessarily and eternally different in the Nature of things, as Light and Darkness are in the Frame of the World, and in the Judgment of our Senses; 'tis manifestly the Will of God, that the one should be the rule and determiner of our Moral actions, as the other is the guide and direction of our Natural ones. *The Light of the Body is the Eye*, as our Saviour himself expresses it, St *Matt. vi. 22.* meaning to signify by an easy similitude, that our Minds ought to be guided by Reason and Truth, as our Bodies are by the Sight of the Eyes. In this respect, the Light of Nature itself sufficiently condemns all the workers of Unrighteousness; making it appear that the practice of Iniquity in every instance, is as truly and for the very same reason a direct contempt of the Authority of God, as it is an absurd confounding of the natural Reasons and Proportions of things. The Order and Harmony of God's Creation, depends upon every Creature's acting according to the law of its Nature: And this Law of Nature to *Men*, is, our Obligation to govern ourselves by that particular

particular Understanding and Knowledge, S E R M. whereby we are distinguished from the VII. inferiour part of the Creation; whereby we are enabled to discern between Good and Evil; and by which, as 'tis expressed in the book of *Job*, *God has taught us more than the beasts of the field, and made us wiser than the fowls of heaven.* God has indued us with Faculties, by which we are able to see and distinguish what will promote the Welfare and Happiness of the world; and he has given us those Faculties for that very End, that by distinguishing things rightly, we might direct our choice to such Actions always as are most universally useful and beneficial to Mankind. God himself, in his government of the World, does always what in the whole is best; that is, what tends most to the Good of the whole Creation; and so far as *We* are capable of understanding his Attributes and manner of acting, so far 'tis manifest *we* are obliged to imitate *his* Nature; and in our several stations to conform ourselves to the likeness of so excellent an Example, by the study and practice of all Goodness and Holiness, Righteousness and Truth. This is the first

S E R M. ground and foundation of all Religion :

VII. This is that Knowledge of God and of his Will, which Nature implants, and Reason confirms, and all the Wisdom in the world centers in, and all the Happiness of rational Creatures depends upon.

BUT because the vain Curiosity and sceptical Discourses, the vicious Inclinations and unreasonable Passions, the evil Affections and perverse Disputings of men of corrupt minds, have sometimes as it were raised a dust to obscure this clearest of all *natural* Truths; Truth, concerning the necessary and eternal Difference of Good and Evil; even in like manner as certain ridiculous Philosophers of old, undertook by subtil intricacies to confound the plainest Differences of natural and sensible things, to prove that Snow was black, or, as the Text expresses it, that Light is the same with Darknes, and Bitter with Sweet; therefore God in all the *supernatural Revelations* he has made of his Will, and most expressly in this last Revelation of the Gospel, has placed the Sum of affairs in restoring Virtue and Goodness which is the Image of God, and in rooting out Vice in which consists  
the



the Kingdom of the Devil; in ascertaining the Difference of Good and Evil, and assigning to each of them their proper Reward. *Wo unto them, saith he, that call evil good, and good evil; that put darknes for light, and light for darknes: If. v. 20. that rebel against the light, Job xxiv. 13. that love darknes rather than light, because their deeds are evil; St Joh. iii. 19.* This eternal Difference of Good and Evil, God has now confirmed with new Authority, illustrated with greater Light, distinguished with plainer and clearer bounds, and enforced mens Observation of this Rule, with new Motives and stronger Obligations. For this he sent his Son into the world, to be born, to live and to die for us; that he might effectually destroy the works of the Devil, and overthrow the kingdom of Darknes: For this he has expressly revealed his Wrath from Heaven, against all Ungodliness and Unrighteousness of Men; that the eternal Difference of Good and Evil, when men had neglected to be moved by the voice of Nature and Reason, might be supported by divine Authority and by God himself speaking.

S E R M. speaking. To this all the precepts of the  
 VII. Gospel tend, and all our Saviour's Ser-  
 mons terminate in it. To this all his mercies, all his patience leads; and all his judgments are intended to compel us. To this all his promises gently invite and draw us, and all his threatenings loudly command and press us. This is the End, to which all other things are directed as the Means. This is finally good and profitable unto Men. On this depend all the Blessings of the present Life, and all the Happiness of a future Eternity.

III. I proceed in the *Third* and *last* place to draw some Observations from the whole, which may be of use to us in Practice. And

*1st*, FROM what has been said we may observe, that Religion and Virtue are truly most agreeable to Nature, and that Vice and Wickedness are of all things the most contrary to it. 'Tis naturally the part of understanding and reasonable Beings, to observe the differences that are in the Natures of Things; and therefore if Good and Evil, be naturally and necessarily different; 'tis manifest it must needs be agreeable to Nature (unless strangely corrupted




corrupted with evil habits,) that men should live religiously by discerning and choosing what is good, and avoiding what is evil. Men do indeed frequently err in this matter, and are wilfully blinded by innumerable Corruptions, by customs and evil habits, by pleasure and interests, by false opinions and loose practices; and then, to excuse and vindicate themselves, they take refuge in the Follies of Infidelity, and presumptuously call *Light Darknes* and *Darknes Light*; And as a *Palate* vitiated by a long disease, ceases to be able to distinguish between Sweet and Bitter; so these hardened Sinners mock at all difference of Good and Evil: But still the natures of things remain unalterably what they were, and cannot but justify themselves to the reason and understanding even of those very men that unreasonably deny them. 'Tis not Nature, (as they weakly and falsely reproach it,) but unnatural and corrupt inclinations, that lead them to Wickedness. Nature and Reason, as well as Revelation, call upon Men to be religious; and Virtue and Goodness are as truly agreeable to the Mind, as Light is to the Eyes, or Sweetness to the Taste.

S E R M.  
VII.  
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S E R M. Taste. Their own Consciences reproach  
 VII. them as often as they act otherwise; and  
 no worldly Advantages whatsoever, no  
 Power upon Earth, can ever discharge  
 them from this Obligation. *Solomon* had  
 greater Experience, and made more Ob-  
 servations upon these things, than any o-  
 ther man that ever lived; And the Sum  
 of all *his* Observations, is the Reflexion,  
*Eccles. ii. 13. Then I saw that Wisdom*  
*excelleth Folly, as far as Light excelleth*  
*Darkness.*

2dly, FROM what has been said, it  
 follows, that the knowledge of the most  
 important and fundamental Doctrines of  
 Religion, must be very easy to be attained;  
 and that gross ignorance of our Duty, can  
 by no means be innocent or excusable;  
 our Minds being as naturally fitted to un-  
 derstand the most necessary parts of it, as  
 our Eyes are to judge of Colours, or our  
 Palate of Tastes. *If any man will do his*  
*Will, he shall know of the Doctrine whe-*  
*ther it be of God.* To discover that we  
 ought to Fear and Love, to worship and  
 obey the great Creator of all things, the  
 Author and Preserver of our Beings, and  
 the Giver of all things we enjoy or hope  
 for :

for : To understand that Justice is better S E R M.  
than Iniquity, and Love and Charity than VII.  
Violence and Oppression ; doing good to   
Mankind than conquering of Nations,  
and preserving the World than ravaging  
and destroying it : To find out that Tem-  
perance and Sobriety, is more excellent  
than Debauchery ; and wise and reasonable  
Counsels, than the sudden impulses of  
Lusts and Passion ; These things require  
no great depth of Knowledge, no nice  
and tedious disputes, nothing that can  
perplex or confound the understanding  
even of the meanest person : They are  
easy and obvious, plain and self-evident,  
and visible as the clearest day-light : Yet  
these are the things of the greatest im-  
portance, and which are of the highest  
concernment for all men to know and un-  
derstand : These are the things by which  
the World subsists ; by which alone all  
Order and Government is maintained.  
Men that have time and abilities may  
lawfully and commendably and to very  
excellent purposes, study some things of  
greater difficulty. There is variety enough  
in the *Works* of God, to employ the  
whole capacity of men and angels to all  
eternity ;

S E R M. eternity; There are depths and secrets in  
 VII. the dispensations of *Providence*; There  
 are *some* difficulties in some circumstances  
 of the *Laws* of God, and in the Revela-  
 tions of his Will; And these are a wor-  
 thy employment for the most enlarged  
 understandings upon Earth. But the things  
 which are of absolute and indispensable  
 necessity to the happiness of men, these,  
 under the Government of a Just and Wise  
 and Good God, it cannot be imagined  
 but they must be universally level to the  
 capacities of all Mankind.

3dly, FROM hence it appears, that the  
 judgments of God upon impenitent Sin-  
 ners, who obstinately disobey the most  
 reasonable and necessary Laws, in the  
 World; are true and just and righteous  
 judgments. Had God commanded us  
 things only in their own nature indiffe-  
 rent; yet *even here* Obedience to the Su-  
 preme Lord of all things, would have  
 been highly reasonable; and all Creatures  
 could not but confess his Justice, if they  
 were severely punished for Disobedience  
 to *such* Commands. But when the Su-  
 preme Power and Authority of God, im-  
 poses scarcely any thing upon us, but  
 what

what the very nature of the things themselves makes necessary, what the Consciences of Sinners themselves cannot but approve as most reasonable and excellent, and what the Happiness of man immediately and directly consists in, as well as the Law of God makes it his Duty to observe; how much more must Sinners now confess before all the World the righteousness of God's judgments manifested in their destruction, if they will not by his Goodness be led to Repentance!

*4thly*, FROM hence we may conclude, that what ever Doctrine is contrary to the nature and attributes of God, whatever is plainly unwise or wicked, whatever tends to confound the essential and eternal differences of Good and Evil, every such Doctrine, how plausibly soever it may be supported, must necessarily be false. By this rule the Heathens might have discovered the Folly of that Idolatry, which taught them to worship such Gods, as they themselves had first feigned like to the most wicked men. And by the same Rule, men of Understanding and Probity will easily condemn most of the corruptions both in Doctrine and Worship,  
which

S E R M.  
VII.  


S E R M. which have in many places among Chri-  
 VII. ftians themselves crept in under a false pre-  
 ~~~~~ tence of divine Revelation. And at the same  
 time, it is a credible and excellent evidence  
 of the Truth of the pure and uncorrupted  
 Doctrine of the Gospel as delivered in  
 Scripture; that, besides the Authority of  
 Miracles and Prophecies, it is inwardly  
 in the Nature of the thing itself, a con-  
 formity to the divine Nature and Attri-  
 butes, a confirmation and improvement of  
 our natural Notions of Good and Evil,  
 and of the Rewards and Punishments in  
 a future state, and Assurance of the Re-  
 conciliation of God to repenting Sinners  
 through the Mediation of Christ, and a  
 direct Promoter of the universal Happi-  
 nefs of Mankind.

*Lastly*; FROM what has been said it  
 is certain, that every Person or Doctrine,  
 which would separate Religion from a  
 holy Life; and make Religion to consist  
 merely in such speculative Opinions, as  
 may be defended by an ill Liver; or in such  
 outward Solemnities of Worship, as may  
 be performed by a vicious and wicked  
 man; does greatly corrupt Religion. The  
 design and the very effence of Religion, is

to

to make men good and happy: The design of the Revelation of the Gospel, is to destroy Superstition, and to restore the Truth of Religion, by correcting mens Opinions and reforming their Manners, by introducing Repentance, and securing to us the Acceptableness of it through the merits of Christ. If without this, men will pretend to be religious by any other method, they wholly mistake the Nature of Religion, and the design of the Gospel of Christ. If they will not add to their Faith Virtue, but think it sufficient that they hold the Truth, though it be in Unrighteousness; they are like the man who, our Saviour tells us, *built his house upon the Sand*: Their very Faith itself will but increase their Guilt; and the Truth which they profess, will but the more severely condemn them for being workers of Iniquity. *Which Condemnation that we may all escape, God of his infinite mercy grant, &c.*

S E R M.  
VII.  
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# SERMON VIII.

Of the Nature of Moral and Positive Duties.



MATT. xxii. 40.

*On these two Commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.*



THESE words are part of our Saviour's answer to a captious Question proposed to him by one of the Pharisees; Which *was the great Commandment in the Law?* It appears from the parallel place in *St Mark*, ch. xii. ver. 33. that *the comparison* was made between the eternal and unchangeable Duties of

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S E R M. Piety and Righteousness on the one hand,  
 VIII. and the external Precepts of the Law of  
 Moses, burnt offerings and sacrifices, on  
 the other. For when our Saviour had  
 given this Answer to the Question propo-  
 sed; that the first and great commandment  
 of all, was this, *Thou shalt love the Lord  
 thy God with all thy heart, and with all  
 thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with  
 all thy strength*; and that the second was  
 like unto it, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour  
 as thy self*; and added, that *on these two  
 commandments hang all the Law and the  
 Prophets*; that is, that these are the ulti-  
 mate End and Design of religion; and all  
 positive precepts, only subordinate to  
 these, and as means to these great Ends;  
 The Pharisee convinced with the clear-  
 ness, and pleased with the goodness of the  
 Answer, replies, ver. 32, 33. *Well, Mas-  
 ter, thou hast said the Truth; for there is  
 one God, and there is none other but he;  
 And to love him with all the heart, and  
 with all the understanding, and with all  
 the soul, and with all the strength; and to  
 love his neighbour as himself, is more than  
 all whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices.*

OUR Saviour's determination of the Question proposed to him, was plain and clear, full and decisive; that there was no Comparison at all, between the excellency of ritual and of moral Duties. The Love of God and of our Neighbour, are the Life and Essence of true Religion; the highest improvement and the greatest possible perfection of our rational Nature; The Summ and Fountain, *in* which all other moral Duties are contained, *from* which they all spring, and *to* which they may all be reduced; and they are the ultimate *End*, for the Security of which, all *positive* Commandments, were ever given at all. All the precepts of the Law of *Moses*, tend to this great End; All the Exhortations of the Prophets, are directed to the same Design; and nothing is truly valuable in the sight of God, but what is derived from these Fountains, and terminates in these excellent Ends.

IT may perhaps justly be wondered, how the *Jews* in our Saviour's time could possibly be so ignorant of the nature of true Religion, and so possessed with false Notions concerning it; as to make *Any* competition, between the value of mere

S E R M. external Forms, and the Real Practice of  
 VIII. True Virtue; after God had so frequently  
 declared to them by his Prophets, that  
 their *Sacrifices and oblations, their wash-  
 ings and purifications, their feasts and so-  
 lemn assemblies, their fasts and severest hu-  
 miliations, were so far from being accept-  
 able in his sight, if not accompanied with  
 the practice of Justice, Truth, Righteous-  
 ness, and charity; that on the contrary,  
 without these virtues, these very rites,  
 though of his own institution, were the  
 greatest abomination in his sight; as being  
 only evidences, of a deeper hypocrisy.  
 To what purpose is the multitude of your  
 Sacrifices unto me, saith the Lord? I am  
 full of the burnt-offerings of rams, and the  
 fat of fed beasts, and I delight not in the  
 blood of bullocks or of lambs or of he-goats:  
 But Wash ye, make you clean, put away  
 the evil of your doings from before mine  
 eyes, cease to do evil, learn to do well, seek  
 judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the  
 fatherless, plead for the widow; Then  
 though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be  
 white as snow; though they be red like  
 crimson, they shall be as wool. *Isaiah i. 11.**

BUT yet, notwithstanding these plain S E R M. and frequent declarations of the Prophets, VIII. 'tis evident in the whole History of the Gospel, that the most eminent and famous men, men of the greatest character and esteem for learning and piety among the Jews, Scribes and Pharisees, Doctors, and expounders of the Law, were, in our Saviour's time, almost universally fallen under this great and fatal mistake. They were very strict and zealous even to the highest degree of superstition, in observing the outward rites and ceremonies of the Law; concerning which, our Saviour, with great exactness of expression, says, *that they ought not indeed to be left undone: But at the same time they neglected the practice, of the great and weightier and more indispensable Duties, of Truth and Righteousness and Goodness towards all men.* They were very strict and superstitious in outward Purifications, in the washings of pots and cups, and the like; while they took no care at all to purify their own Minds, from unrighteousness and all uncleanness. And if we duly consider the corrupt estate of humane Nature; it may not perhaps be very difficult, to give

S E R M. an account *whence* all this Evil arises. For, VIII. to men of corrupt affections and indulged vicious habits, nothing is so difficult as the practice of virtue and true Religion; To mortify long-indulged Appetites, to cleanse themselves from all filthiness both of flesh and Spirit, to conquer vicious inclinations, to root out confirmed habits, to govern unruly passions; these things *are like cutting off a right hand, and pulling out a right eye*; or, as *Nicodemus* expresses it, *like a man's being born again when he is old*. And yet, in order to keep up a reputation in the World, 'tis absolutely necessary, that Men have *some* pretence of zeal for Religion. Corrupt Minds therefore, who will not be at the pains to practise true Virtue, and yet desire to serve themselves of the temporal advantages which the name and credit of religion is apt to gain in the World; *must* call something else, *must* call certain Forms or Opinions, by the Name of religion, instead of That which really and only is so. They *must* make religion to consist, in things *more visible* to the eyes of the vulgar, and better fitted to procure the applause of the World; than the sincerest


Love

Love of God, and of our neighbour; than S E R M.  
meekness and simplicity, Justice and Cha- VIII.  
rity, Holiness and Purity of Mind, and  
the Practice of other the like excellent  
Virtues; which are so much the more sin-  
cere and of the greater value in the sight  
of God, as they are seated in the heart  
and soul itself, and are less exposed to the  
eye of the world. This *One* Mistake, is  
the great and general corruption of man-  
kind: This has at all Times and in all  
Places been the First and the Last Errour  
in matters of Religion. Thus did the  
*Pharisees* in our Saviour's days: And Thus  
among *Christians*, in all places, especially  
where Popery has prevailed, and in Other  
places in proportion as the same Spirit  
has gained ground, How has the worship  
of God been corrupted, and almost wholly  
turned into Pomp and Superstition? How  
have the empty forms and appearances of  
Religion, shut out the true Love of God,  
which consists in Imitation of his Nature  
and in Obedience to his holy and divine  
Commands? How hath false zeal for vain  
and corrupt doctrines, for the doctrines  
and Traditions of particular *Men* or *Sects*  
and *Bodies of Men*, turned Christian Love,  
Meekness

S E R M. Meekness and Charity, those prime and  
 VIII. fundamental Duties, into that which is  
 the *most directly opposite* to the whole End and Design of *all* Religion, even into the greatest and most inhumane Cruelties? How have vain penances, and repeated confessions and absolutions, and other weak and deceitful observances, been substituted in the room of true repentance and reformation of Life? In a word, how numberless have been the inventions of men, and what pains have they not been willing to take, to reconcile the *Name* of religion with the *practice* of wickedness, and to make great zeal for God, consistent with being workers of Iniquity? And how totally have been neglected those Great and Eternal Duties, which are briefly summed up in the *Love of God and of our neighbour?* on which two *Commandments our Saviour* (in the Text) affirms, *that all the Law and the Prophets depend:* That is; All Christian Duties are either *contained in* these; or are *subservient to* them: All *moral* Duties may be reduced to these Heads, and are contained *under* them; and all *positive* Injunctions are  
 only



only subservient *to* them, and but as means S E R M.  
to these Ends. VIII.

I. *First*; ALL *moral* Duties are contained   
*in*, and may be reduced *to*, these two  
Heads; the Love of God and of our  
Neighbour.

GOD, is a Being of infinite and unli-  
mited Perfections; the Fountain of all  
Goodness and Happiness; who contains  
in himself all things that are excellent,  
all things that are truly worthy of Admi-  
ration or Love; and from whom, as from  
their only Fountain, are derived all Ex-  
cellencies, that are found in the *whole* or  
in any *parts* of the Creation. To *Love*  
God therefore, is to have always fixt up-  
on our minds a just regard to the Per-  
fections of his Nature; and a due Sense  
of his inestimable Goodness, in commu-  
nicating so much Happiness to his Crea-  
tures. And This, if carefully attended to,  
so as to produce its just Effect and natural  
consequence, must necessarily have such  
an Influence upon our Practice, as to cause  
us to Praise and to Adore him continually;  
to devote our selves wholly to *his* Service,  
who is the only Author of our Being,  
and

S E R M. and of whatever Good we enjoy or hope  
 VIII. for; to worship him constantly, and him  
 only, who alone has the Power of all things in his own Hands, and employs that Power under the Direction of infinite Goodness, only for the Benefit and Welfare of all his Creatures, according to their several Capacities. How inconsistent with this Love of God is it, to prefer sinful and corrupt enjoyments, short and transitory and unrighteous Pleasures, before that infinite and eternal Happiness, which God has proposed to us in the fruition of himself? and how will This naturally oblige us to govern our Passions, to moderate our Appetites, to restrain all unreasonable Desires, to despise all the allurements of Sin, and (in a word) to apply our selves wholly to the Observation of his just and righteous Commands? Thus all the Duties of the first Table, which relate to God; and also all those Duties which respect our selves, or the Government of our Passions and Appetites by the Rules of Reason and Religion; spring from the Love of God, as from their true Fountain; and are all necessarily

rily contained in it, and may easily be reduced to it.

S E R M.  
VIII.

IN like manner; The Duties of the second table, are all as plainly contained *under*, and may be reduced *to*, the Love of our *Neighbour*; as the Duties of the first Table, are to the Love of *God*. God created and sent us into this World on purpose, to do Good one to another; to love and to assist each other, in all the necessities and exigences of human life. In this, all his commandments terminate; for this, he proposes to us the example of his own infinite Goodness; This End whoever constantly aims at, and steddily pursues, will never greatly fail in the particulars of his Duty. He that loves his neighbour sincerely as himself; and is willing to do to all men, as he desires they should do to him; that thinks himself sent into the World on purpose to do Good to others, and looks upon it as the Summ and End of his Duty, to promote the universal peace and happiness of mankind; will certainly upon this Principle regularly and uniformly perform all the parts of his Duty towards men; And this  
universal

S E R M. universal Love of his Neighbour, will as  
 VIII. naturally spread itself into all the branches  
 of a truly Christian conversation in the world, as a root or stock will in a fit and proper soil, regularly send forth branches, leaves and fruit, agreeable to its proper nature and kind. From this Fountain of universal Love and Charity, will certainly flow all those streams of virtue and good works, in which consists the Life and Beauty and Usefulness, and the true Excellency and Glory of Religion. Whoever is under the guidance of this one Principle, will naturally behave himself well in all relations, and perform the part of a wise and good man in all the different accidents and circumstances of Life. Such a one, will not fail to make it his business, to promote the publick Good; and delight to contribute as much as possible towards the Peace and Welfare of the World. He will naturally treat his Superiours with chearful Submission, his Benefactors with gratitude and all decent respect, his Equals with affability and readiness to do all offices of kindness, his Inferiours with gentleness, moderation,  
 and

and charity. Thus evidently, under the Love of our Neighbour, are contained all the Duties of the second Table; and from it, as from their root or fountain, they all naturally and regularly flow. This is what the Apostle teaches, *Gal. v. 14; For, all the Law is fulfilled in one word, even in This, Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thy self.* And still more expressly, *Rom. xiii. 8. Owe no man any thing but to Love one another, for he that loveth another, hath fulfilled the Law:* For every particular precept, such as, *Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet, and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in This saying, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thy self: Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the Law.* And our Saviour himself, *St Matt. vii. 12. Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for this is the Law and the Prophets; or, as it is in the words of the Text, on these commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets;*

S E R M. *Prophets*; that is, in this are contained, in  
 VIII. this do terminate, all the Commandments  
 of God.

HAVING thus shown, which was the first thing I proposed, that all *Moral* Duties of life may be reduced to these two Heads, the Love of God and of our Neighbour. I proceed in the

II. *Second* place, to show that all *Positive* and *ritual* Injunctions, though in their proper place they *ought not to be left undone*, (as our Saviour himself expresses it,) yet they are but subordinate to These, and subservient to them; And this may abundantly be made appear by the following considerations.

1st, THAT the *moral* Duties of life, the *Love of God and of our Neighbour*, are things in their *own Nature* good and excellent, of eternal and necessary Obligation; which receive not their power of obliging, merely from their being commanded; but their obligation is eternal and absolutely unchangeable, as is the Nature of the things themselves. Our Obligation to Love God, arises from the Nature and Attributes of God himself; and

and therefore That Obligation can no more cease or be altered, than the Divine Nature and Attributes can be subject to change. In like manner, our Obligation to Love and do right to our Neighbour, arises from the Nature of Man, and from our relation one towards another; from that state and condition, wherein God has created us; from the exigencies of Life, the necessity of societies, and the equity, reason, and proportion of things. So long therefore as these things continue the same; so long this Obligation also must continue unalterable. These Moral Duties therefore, are by necessity and in their own nature, good and excellent: They are indispensably necessary, to preserve the Order and Happiness of the World; they are necessary to the improvement and perfection of our own Minds; they are necessary to Qualify us and make us capable of that State of Glory, to which God has designed us hereafter; But all ritual and ceremonial Observances, have no intrinsic goodness in the nature of the things themselves; nor any Obligation, but what arises merely from their being positively

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S E R M. and occasionally enjoined. Their Obligation therefore is of a changeable Nature, depending wholly on the good Pleasure of him that commands them; and consequently though 'tis our Duty to perform them *when* and *where* they are enjoined, yet they can never be compared or come in competition with Those Duties, whose Obligation is necessary and eternal; and the Practice of which, has an intrinsick goodness and unchangeable excellency absolutely, in the Nature of the things themselves.

*2dly*, ALL Positive and ritual injunctions whatsoever, can be but subordinate to the Practice of moral virtues; because these latter are the End for which the former are commanded, and the former can be considered only as Means to the latter. In the Perfection of Virtue and Goodness, consists the Image of *God*; and in the same likewise is Placed the Chief Happiness of *Man*. In this therefore consists our Chief Good, on this depends our final Happiness, in this lies the Excellency and Perfection of our Nature. Consequently this must of necessity, be our ultimate End; this must be the principal scope



scope of all our actions; and nothing else S E R M.  
 can be truly valuable or worthy of esteem, VIII.  
 but only so far as it may be a means and   
 assistance to attain this End. Ritual Ob-  
 servances in Religion, if they be such as  
 truly increase our Devotion towards God;  
 if they enlarge our Charity and Good-  
 will towards Men; if they be such as are  
 significant and remind us of our Obliga-  
 tion to Purity and Temperance in our-  
 selves; they are then indeed of excellent  
 Use, and (so far as they are commanded,)  
 of indispensable Obligation. *Baptism*, as  
*St Peter* affirms, *does indeed save us*; 1 Pet.  
 iii. 21; but it does so by being, not bare-  
 ly a washing away the filth of the flesh,  
 but the answer of a good Conscience to-  
 wards God. The Sacrament of the Lord's  
 Supper likewise confirms our Title to e-  
 ternal Life; but it does so by renewing  
 our obligation and our vows, to obey that  
 Covenant upon which eternal Life was  
 promised us in Christ. Circumcision in  
 like manner, and the Purifications appoint-  
 ed under the Law, were means of Salva-  
 tion to the *Jews*; yet not by any virtue  
 in the things themselves, but as Instances  
 of Obedience to the Will of God, and as


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representations of their Obligation to Purity and Holiness. Where these Observances are not used as Means to this End, they become altogether useless and unprofitable; *commandments which are not good, and precepts by which men shall not live*; as the Prophet expresses it. *Circumcision, to them that obeyed not the Law, was accounted uncircumcision*; Baptism and the Lord's Supper, to them that obey not the *Gospel* in the course of a virtuous life, is but as washing a dead Corps in hopes to infuse life into it, and an attempting to please God by profaning his Feast and despising his Ordinances. *The End of the commandment, saith the Apostle, is Charity, out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned: 1 Tim. i. 5.* In a word; *The Kingdom of God, saith our Saviour, is within you; St Luke xvii. 21: Every man's Religion is, not what he professes, or what show he makes in external observances; but what influence it really has upon the Man himself, in the habit of his mind, and in the course of his Actions, in his Family, in his Business, in his dealings with all Mankind, in his common conversation and even in his*

very

very Diversions themselves, as well as in S E R M.  
 his more solemn Acts of Prayer and De- VIII.  
 votion. For, in like manner, as in our   
 Saviour's Parable, *not the eating with un-*  
*washed hands, or any thing else that cometh*  
*from without, can make a man morally un-*  
*clean: but only the wicked dispositions*  
*that are within the heart of the man him-*  
*self: So on the contrary also, no rites*  
*or ceremonies, nor any thing else that is*  
*without the man, can make him truly*  
*holy and religious; but that inward habi-*  
*tual virtuous Disposition of mind, the*  
*fruits of which appearing in his Acti-*  
*ons, determine the man's true Character*  
*and Denomination. Were this One Fun-*  
*damental Truth sufficiently attended to;*  
 Christians could not be so absurdly im-  
 posed upon, as to make their Religion,  
 whose *Essential* Character is universal  
 Goodness and Charity, become on the  
 contrary *itself* an occasion of Hatred,  
 Quarrels, and Contentions. Which is,  
 by catching at the *Shadow*, to lose the  
*Substance*; and by contending about the  
*Means*, to neglect the *End*.

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3dly, THE same thing appears further from hence, that Moral Duties or the Practice of true Virtue, will continue for ever; but all positive Commandments are but of temporary Obligation. The Love of God and of our Neighbour, are Qualifications which will remain and be perfected in *Heaven*; but all ritual Observances, are appointed only for the assistance and improvement of our Religion here upon *Earth*. When that which is perfect is come, then these subordinate Institutions are to be done away; And not these only, but even those *Virtues* themselves also, which are of a secondary rank, and whose excellency does not ultimately terminate in themselves. Hope, and Faith itself, and all other Graces and Gifts of the Spirit, which are in order to these, must at the consummation of things, necessarily and of course cease: *Whether there be Prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away: But Charity only, never faileth: Our Love of God, will be as much more perfect*

fect in heaven than it is here ; as our knowledge of him will then be increased, SERM.  
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*when we shall see him as he is:* And our Love of our Neighbour will then be as much improved beyond what it can now arrive to, as the nature of Angels is at present more excellent than that of frail men.

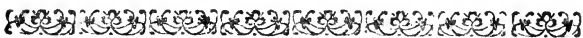






# SERMON IX.

Of the Difficulty of arriving at  
Truth.




St J O H. iv. 11.

*The Woman saith unto him; Sir, Thou hast nothing to draw with; and the Well is deep; From whence then hast thou that living Water?*



THE former part of this Chap-S E R M.  
ter contains a very remark- IX.  
able History of our Saviour's  
Conversation with a Woman  
of *Samaria*. The *accidental*  
*occasion* whereof, as to humane appear-  
ance,

SERM. IX.  ance, was, his retiring out of *Judæa*, to avoid the hatred of the *Pharisees*; least they should apprehend and kill him before his appointed Time: But in reality, the *gracious Intention* of Providence in disposing That seemingly accidental Occasion, was, that the Gospel might be preached to the *Samaritans* also, as well as to the *Jews*. And as, upon *other occasions*, our Saviour usually introduced his Doctrine under the veil of a Parable, that he might open it by degrees as men were able and disposed to apprehend it, and not surprize them with more Light at once than they were able to bear; so *here likewise* he took occasion from things that seemed to offer themselves in common Discourse, to instruct first the Woman, and afterwards a whole City, in the great Doctrines of the Gospel. For, in his passage out of *Judæa* through the Country of *Samaria*, sitting, as it were by chance, and being weary with his journey, on the side of a Well, (near the City of *Sicbar*,) called *Jacob's-well*, because supposed to have been anciently digged by that Patriarch; he desires a Woman, who came out of



the City to draw Water, that she would give him to drink, ver. 7. The Woman, perceiving *Jesus* by his Speech and Garb to be a *Jew* and not a *Samaritan*; and knowing that the *Jews* and *Samaritans* were at such irreconcilable Enmity against each other, upon account of their Differences in Religion, that they had no Communication nor Converse one with another; she seemed surprized with Wonder, and said; *How is it, that Thou being a Jew, askest drink of Me, who am a Woman of Samaria?* ver. 9. *Jesus* replied; *If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldst have asked of Him, and he would have given thee living Water,* ver. 10. Meaning, by an easy similitude taken from the Occasion of their discoursing together, that he would have taught her the *Doctrine of Salvation* contained in the Gospel; which is more truly refreshing to a Mind well-disposed and desirous of Instruction, than Water to a dry and thirsty Body. The Woman, not understanding the Metaphor, but imagining that *Jesus* spake of real Water, answers in the words of  
the


## Of the Difficulty of

S E R M. the Text, ver. 11. *Sir, Thou hast nothing to draw with, and the Well is deep; From whence then hast thou That living Water?* Jesus, opening and explaining the Figure to her by degrees, replies, ver. 13. *Who-soever drinketh of this Water, (the natural Water of the Well, to quench his bodily Thirst,) shall thirst again; But who-soever drinketh of the Water that I shall give him, shall never thirst; but the Water that I shall give him, (the Doctrine of eternal Salvation proposed in the Gospel,) shall be in him a Well of Water springing up into everlasting Life.* And thus having prepared her by degrees, to remove her Prejudices; he then proceeds to tell her some of the most secret Actions of her Life, to convince her of his Power and Knowledge; and, after That, expressly owns himself to be the Messias; and then declares to *her*, and, upon the same opportunity, to the *whole City*, that not the *Samaritan*, but the *Jewish* worship, was, at that time present, the true Religion; but that both the one and the other were shortly to be superseded by the institution of the *Christian*, when the true Worshippers,


shippers, according to the Doctrine of S E R M. the Gospel, should worship the Father, neither after the way of the Jewish Ceremonies, nor the Samaritan, but in Spirit and in Truth. IX.

THE Occasion and Design of the whole History being thus briefly explained; I return now to that particular portion of it, which is contained in the words of the Text: *The Woman saith unto him; Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with; and the Well is deep; From whence then hast thou that living Water?* The words were spoken by the Woman, (being yet ignorant of our Saviour's Intention,) they were spoken by *Her* in their *literal* Sense. But our Saviour in his Answer, immediately applying them to a *figurative* signification; and calling his own *Doctrine*, the Doctrine of Truth and of eternal Life, by the Name of *living Water*; will justify *Us* likewise, in considering the words and discoursing upon them, according to that figurative Sense or spiritual Interpretation, which our Saviour himself was pleased to put upon them. Allegorizing of Scripture, and putting figurative Senses upon

S E R M. upon plain and literal Expressions, according to every man's particular Imagination or Conceit; is indeed a thing of dangerous Consequence; and has in former Ages, been the occasion of many vain Disputes in the Church of God; whilst men of warm imaginations have, by such a method of interpreting, found Doctrines in Scripture which never were there; and contended earnestly for their own Fancies, instead of that Form of Sound Words which was once delivered unto the Saints: But, where our Saviour himself has made the Interpretation, and the Sense is justified by the Design of the whole Discourse; there we need not fear least we should mistake in our Explication, nor scruple to follow the guidance of such an unerring Instructor. In discoursing therefore upon these words, *Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the Well is deep: I shall propose the following Considerations.* 1<sup>st</sup>, Whence it comes to pass, that *Truth*, (for that's what our Saviour in this Discourse calls *living Water: Whence, I say, it comes to pass, that Truth*) which seems so necessary for *every man* to know, should

should yet generally be so difficult for S E R M. *any man* to come at: *The Well is deep,* IX. *and we have nothing to draw with.* And  *2dly,* By what means *every* sincere person, may yet certainly attain to such a *Degree* of Knowledge, or the Discovery of *so much Truth*, as is necessary for his own particular Salvation.

I. *First*; Whence it comes to pass, that *Truth*, which seems so necessary for *every man* to know, should yet generally be so difficult for *any man* to come at: *The Well is deep, and we have nothing to draw with.* It has been an ancient complaint from the beginning of the World, among the Philosophers of all Nations, who have professed to employ themselves in the Study of *Nature*; that *Truth* hath lain buried in *so deep a Pit*, that they have never been able to discover the Bottom of it. And the like Complaints we meet with, even in the *Scripture itself*. In the book of *Job*: *There is, says he, a vein for the silver, and a place for gold where they mine it; iron is taken out of the Earth, and brass is molten out of the stone:----- But where shall Wisdom be found, and*  
*where*

S E R M. *where is the place of Understanding? ----*  
 IX. *There is a path, which no fowl knoweth,*  
 *and which the vulture's eye hath not seen;*  
*The lion's whelps have not trodden it, nor*  
*the fierce lion passed by it:----But whence*  
*cometh Wisdom, and where is the place of*  
*Understanding; seeing it is hid from the*  
*eyes of all living, and kept close from the*  
*fowls of the air? ch. xxviii. 1, &c. And*  
*Solomon, whose Largeness of Understand-*  
*ing exceeded all that went before him,*  
*and was never equalled by any that came*  
*after him, yet even he complained, Ec-*  
*cles. iii. 11. No man can find out the work*  
*that God maketh, from the beginning to*  
*the end. For, as thou knowest not the way*  
*of the Spirit, nor how the bones do grow*  
*in the womb of her that is with child; even*  
*so thou knowest not the works of God who*  
*maketh all; ch. xi. 5. and ch. viii. 16, When*  
*I applied mine heart, (saith he) to know*  
*wisdom, and to see the business that is done*  
*upon the earth; Then I beheld all the work*  
*of God, that a man cannot find out the work*  
*that is done under the Sun; because though*  
*a man labour to seek it out, yet shall he*  
*not find it; yea further, though a wise*  
*man*

man think to know it, yet shall he not be able to find it. But these things are spoken, of *natural* Knowledge; of the Knowledge of the Works of God in the Frame of Nature; which is that part of Truth, wherein we are least concerned to be accurately instructed. In that which concerns us more, and seems to be of more importance for us to understand; the Works of God in the *moral* World, the Dispensations of his Providence towards the Righteous and the Wicked; even in *This* also there are Difficulties, which the Wisest of men have very hardly been able to surmount. Atheistical and profane Spirits, have been willing to give it over, as irreconcilable with the Belief of a Divine Being; and Holy and Pious men themselves have been perplexed in their own Minds, when they could not find out the Explication. *My feet, says the Psalmist, were almost gone; my treadings had well-nigh slipt; when I was grieved at the wicked; and saw the ungodly in such Prosperity; I thought to understand this, but it was too hard for me, Pf. lxxiii, 2, 15.* And the prophet *Jeremy, ch. xii. ver. 1.*

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S E R M. *Righteous art thou, O Lord, when I plead*  
 IX. *with thee; yet let me talk with thee of thy*  
 judgments: *Wherefore doth the way of the*  
*wicked prosper? wherefore are all they*  
*happy, that deal very treacherously? And*  
*Solomon himself, Eccles. iv. 1. I returned*  
*and considered all the oppressions that are*  
*done under the sun; and behold, the tears*  
*of such as were oppressed, and they had no*  
*comforter; and on the side of the oppressors*  
*there was power, but They had no comfort-*  
*er. But This also is of less importance*  
*than that which follows. For even in*  
*that very thing, which of all others is of*  
*the highest concernment to us, the know-*  
*ledge of our Practical Duty itself, the*  
*knowledge of what is incumbent upon*  
*ourselves in particular, and of Necessity*  
*to be done by us; even in This likewise*  
*there may seem at first sight, (to persons*  
*not very considerate) to be no small Con-*  
*fusion; and to persons not very confide-*  
*rate, the Fountain of Truth may appear*  
*very deep, and that they have nothing to*  
*draw with. For among that vast Variety*  
*of Religions that are professed in the*  
*World, how shall a sincere person of or-*  
 dinary



dinary capacity find *Which* is alone the true one? and if he is satisfied that *Christianity* is the true Religion, yet among Christian Churches damning and anathematizing each other, and among Sects even of *Christians* fastening all Names of Contumely and Reproach upon each other, how shall he know *Which* 'tis his Duty to adhere to? The Church of *Rome* tells him, he must blindly follow *her* Authority; or else he forsakes his only Infallible Guide: All *Other* Sects of Christians tell him, he must follow the *Scripture* only, as the compleat Rule of Faith and Manners; and yet in interpreting the meaning of that Rule, *They* also differ from each other; and Every one assures him he is not in the way of Truth, unless he stedfastly adheres to *Their* Interpretation. The Disputes about Religion are infinite, and yet it is of infinite importance not to be deceived: And *what shall* a sincere person *do to be saved?* This is the ground of Complaint; *The Well is deep*, and we *have nothing to draw with*: And now the Question is, (which was the 1<sup>st</sup> thing I propos'd;) whence comes it to pass, that


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S E R M. *Truth*, which seems so necessary for every  
 IX. *man* to know, should yet generally be so  
 difficult for any *man* to come at? And  
 first, There is necessarily in the Nature  
 of *Things themselves* some *Difficulty*, and  
 in our *Understandings* much *natural Im-*  
*perfection*: Which is a just and conti-  
 nual ground of Humility, and Meekness  
 of Spirit. *Some* things, are intirely above  
 the reach of our Capacities; and *others*  
 not to be attained to, without much la-  
 bour and study. *Some* things we can at  
 most arrive but at a *probable* Knowledge  
 of; and even *That*, not without such pe-  
 culiar Advantages, as very few men ever  
 are Masters of. And in those things  
 which are the most *level* to our Under-  
 standings, and which in their plain and  
*general* acceptation are of the greatest im-  
 portance for us to know, there are yet  
*at the bottom* some accurate Niceties, some  
 subtle Intricacies of Nature, which limit  
 the *Degree* of our Knowledge, even in  
 those very matters which we know the  
 most; and set bounds to our Search even  
 in those things, whose Nature we seem to  
 apprehend the most thoroughly. In the  
 clearest

clearest and most unbounded Prospect, there is a distance beyond which no Eye can reach; and in the inmost Nature even of the plainest and most intelligible parts of all the Works of God, there is a depth into which no finite Sagacity can penetrate. But then these secrets are no *part* of *that* Truth, which 'tis necessary for us to know; and therefore we have no just reason to complain, that they are hid from our imperfect Understandings. There is *some* pains and industry, *some* labour and study, at least *some attention* and serious consideration requisite, to the understanding even of the most obvious and necessary Truths; And this is a just and reasonable Obligation upon every man, according to the degree of his Capacity, to look about him and consider with due *Attention of Mind*, which is the true way to *eternal* Salvation; even in like manner as the Providence of God has wisely and reasonably made *some Labour* of the *Body* necessary, to the preservation and support of this *Temporal* Life. *With* such serious Attention, how mean soever a man's Capacity be, he shall certainly find out (as

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S E R M. will presently be made appear more distinctly) *so much* of *Truth*, as is necessary for his own particular Salvation: But, *without* Care and Attention, he must unavoidably continue *Ignorant* even of the most *necessary* Truths; because, in the very *Nature* of Man, our Understandings are necessarily slow and imperfect; and in the *Nature* of Things *themselves*, how plain soever in comparison, yet there is always *some* Degree of *Difficulty* to apprehend them thoroughly. And This is the *first* occasion of *Truth's* being *difficult to be discovered*. But then, how great Care and Attention soever men apply, and how large soever their Capacities be; yet if they amuse themselves in searching out things *above* their Faculties; or if, about things in the main sufficiently intelligible, they presume unnecessarily and where *Practice* is not concerned, to enter into such Intricacies and subtle Speculations, as are *beyond* their Depth; thus also they will run into Error and Uncertainty. And This is a *second* occasion, why Truth becomes difficult to be discovered; namely, mens *perplexing themselves*, by aiming at things

things *not necessary* to be known, that is, S E R M. which relate not to Christian *Practice*; IX. or at such *degrees* of Knowledge, as are  not possible to be arrived at. Of This, those persons are a great instance, who while they have lost themselves in the Labyrinth of an imaginary *secret* Will of God, have neglected to obey, or perplexed the Obligations of obeying, his *declared* Will and Commands. Which is just as if a Mariner in a cloudy night, should neglect his Compass, and resolve to sail by the Stars which cannot be seen. Of the same kind were the reasonings of those *Jewish* Doctors, who by their vain Traditions made void the Commandments of God, and taught for Doctrines the Opinions of Men. Under the same Denomination fall all those Speculations concerning the *metaphysical* Nature of the *Liberty* of Man's *Will*, and the like; which, while *Wise men* could not explain *wherein* their *Liberty* consisted, have made *Foolish men* doubt whether they had any *Liberty of acting* at all. The Church of Rome, by pretending to explain *philosophically* that which our Saviour spoke *morally*, concerning

S E R M. cerning the *Bread and Wine in the Sa-*  
 IX. *crament being his Body and Blood*; perplexed the Truth to such a degree, that  
 ~~~~~  
 at last, after many Disputes, they fixt upon That to be true, which of all other things was the most impossible to be so; and made all intelligent persons in their Communion, of necessity to become Scepticks, and, so long as they continue in That Profession, to look upon Truth not only as a thing difficult to come at, and hid as it were in a very deep Abyfs, but in reality not to be found any where at all. The Scholastick Writers in the middle and disputing Ages of the Church, by presuming to explain metaphysically, how the *Son and Holy Spirit* of God, derived their Being from the Father; ran sometimes even into Blasphemy, against him from whom they Both proceeded; instead of taking care, by the Sanctification of the *Spirit*, and through the redemption of the *Son*, to reconcile themselves to the *Father* and Supreme Lord of all things. *Lastly*, To mention no more instances upon this Head; the Contentions which have disturbed the World, about *Autho-*  
*rity*

rity and Power in making *Doctrines of Faith*, which yet none could ever agree in whom it ought to be placed; have frequently so far perplexed even those who know and profess the plain *Doctrine of Christ*, which he himself has expressly declared necessary, *to be the only Rule*; that they have hardly trusted themselves to act upon the Security, of so plain and evident and necessary a Truth. This therefore is the *second* Occasion of Truth's being difficult to discover; namely, mens perplexing themselves perpetually, by aiming at things needless and not necessary to be known. A *third* occasion, is, *Prejudice and Prepossession*; arising from the Custom of *Education*, and from mens depending on the *Opinion and Authority of particular persons*, without Examination. For 'tis very natural, for men to be fond of such Opinions, as they have been long accustomed to without contradiction; and which are maintained by such persons, for whom they have long been taught to have a great Veneration and Esteem. Hence in Popish and other Countries, wherever any Error has generally prevailed;

however

S E R M. however *contrary*, and however *apparent-*  
 IX. *ly* *contrary*, both to Reason and Scripture  
 the Error be; yet the greater Number of  
 Men, always steddily adhere to it; And  
 'tis very difficult, even for *reasonable* and  
*considerate* persons, so far to shake off  
 these Prejudices, as to come to *inquire*  
 and so much as *doubt* concerning an Er-  
 ror, which, if they had not been so pre-  
 judiced beforehand, they would hardly  
 have been perswaded that any man could  
 ever be so absurd as to have entertained  
 at all. This is plainly the Case of *Tran-*  
*substantiation*, and of all other the like  
 unreasonable Doctrines. *Fourthly* and *last-*  
*ly*; The last reason of Truth's being diffi-  
 cult to discover, is the *Wickedness* and  
*Perverseness* of Men; who, for their own  
 Interest and Worldly Ends, do sometimes  
 on purpose endeavour to conceal it. A-  
 theistical and profane men, have always  
 made it their business to confound the  
 World with Darknes and Sophistry; to  
 cast mists before the eyes of the Simple,  
 and Stumbling-blocks before the feet of  
 the Unwary. And even among Christians  
 themselves, there have in all Ages been  
*perverse*



*perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the Truth, supposing that Gain is Godliness:* 1 Tim. vi. 5.

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There have never wanted men, who for the support of known Errors, and for temporal Advantages, have discouraged all Learning and sober Inquiry after Truth, all study and diligent search into the Grounds and Reasons of things. Nay the whole Protestant World knows *who* have openly carried this matter so far, as to corrupt and falsify Histories, to forge some Books, and destroy or suppress others, to take away (as much as in them lay) the Key of Knowledge, and expressly to forbid the Reading even of the Scripture itself.

THESE are the several Ways, by which Errors are promoted and spread in the World, and from whence it comes to pass (which was the *first* thing to be explained,) that *Truth*, which seems so necessary for *every man* to know, should yet generally be so difficult for *any man* to arrive at. It remains that I proceed now in the

II. *Second* place to show, by *what means* every serious and sincere person, may

S E R M. may yet certainly attain to such a *Degree*  
 IX. of Knowledge, or the Discovery of *ſo*  
 much Truth, as is neceſſary for his own  
 particular Salvation. This is the Inquiry,  
 of the greateſt Importance in the World:  
 And the Answer to it, may in good mea-  
 ſure be gathered, from what has been be-  
 fore ſaid. For as Truth is contrary to  
 Error; ſo the Ways alſo by which they  
 are propagated, are contrary to each other:  
 And he that knows by what Means *Error*  
 prevails in the World, is by the ſame di-  
 rected in general to the beſt Method of  
 finding out the *Truth*. But to be more  
 particular: Becauſe this is a Matter, that  
 concerns Perſons of all Capacities; and  
 Men of the loweſt Abilities are equally  
 under Obligation to find out the Way of  
 Life, as the Learnedeſt Diſputers in the  
 World; from whence 'tis evident, that  
 the Method of finding out ſo much Truth  
 as is neceſſary for every particular man's  
 Salvation, cannot be a Matter of ſubtle  
 Speculation, but of Integrity and ſincere  
 Inquiry; I ſhall therefore propoſe what I  
 think needful upon This Head, in three  
 very plain and intelligible particulars. And

*1<sup>ſt</sup>,*

1<sup>st</sup>, HE that sincerely and seriously de- S E R M.  
 fires to discover so much Truth as is ne- IX.  
 cessary to his Salvation, must above all things take care, that he in the first place resolve to *do* the Will of God; and then he has a promise, that he *shall know* of the Doctrine, whether it be of God. The greatest impediment to the Discovery of Truth in matters of Religion, is a *vicious disposition*; which makes men hate to come forth into the Light, lest their deeds should be reprov'd. For, what St Paul says of the *natural* man, holds true of the *vicious* person much more; that he *receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned.* If a man deals sincerely with himself and suffers not himself to be blinded with the Love of any Wickedness, there is something in the Frame of the Mind of Man, and something in the Nature of Truth itself, which makes them agreeable and connatural to each other, as Objects are suited to their proper Organs; even as the Eye is fitted to distinguish Colours, or the Ear to judge of Sounds.

S E R M. Sounds. Besides which; such a person  
 IX. is secured moreover by the Promise of  
 God, that he shall by the guidance and  
 Direction of the divine Spirit, be led into  
 all necessary truth: that the *Secret of the  
 Lord shall be with them that fear him, and  
 that he will shew them his Covenant.* Pf.  
 xxv. 14. Which is the Foundation of  
 that excellent Advice of the Son of *Sirach*,  
 Ecclus. i. 26. *If thou desire Wisdom, keep  
 the commandments, and the Lord shall give  
 her unto thee; For the Fear of the Lord is  
 Wisdom and Instruction, and Faith and  
 Meekness are his delight.* This is the *first*  
 and principal Qualification, requisite to  
 the Discovery of truth in matters of Re-  
 ligion. The *second* is, that a man firmly  
 resolve with himself, never to be deluded  
 into the Perswasion of any thing, *contrary*  
 to plain and evident *Reason*, which is the  
 Truth of God's *Creation*; contrary to the  
 known *Attributes of God*, which are the  
 Truth of the *Divine Nature*; or contra-  
 ry to the *moral and eternal Differences of  
 Good and Evil*, which are the Truth and  
 Foundation of all *Religion in general*, and  
 are in *Scripture* constantly represented as  
 such,

such. Had men but kept steddily to this natural and plain Rule, this *Candle of the Lord* (as the Wise man stiles it,) which God has implanted in their very nature; men, even of the meanest capacities, could never have been imposed upon with the belief of *impossible* and absurd Doctrines, such as is *Transubstantiation*; or with *contradictory* and unintelligible Explications of *true* Doctrines, such as are most of the Schoolmens subtle and empty Speculations; Because these are plainly contrary to the Truth of God's *Creation*, and consequently cannot possibly be of *Divine Revelation*; for, *no Lie is of the Truth*; 1 Joh. ii. 21. Neither could they ever have been perswaded to believe, that God *absolutely and unconditionally*, without any regard to their Works, decreed from the beginning the greatest part of Mankind to *everlasting Torments*; which is contrary to the *primary Attributes* of God, and to the *Truth* of the *Divine Nature*. Neither could it ever have entered into the Heart of Man to conceive, that *Cruelty and Inhumanity* should have been *doing God good Service*; or that *Persecution* should have been

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S E R M. been set up in *his* Name and for *his* sake,  
 IX. who came into the World *not to destroy*  
 mens lives, *but to save them*; who himself  
 always *went about, doing good* only; and  
 the very *End* and the *greatest* of whose  
 Commandments, is *Charity*; that is, Uni-  
 versal Love and Good-will towards Man-  
 kind. Nor could it ever have been imagi-  
 ned, that *Any Wickedness whatsoever*, should  
 have been made part of *Any Religion*;  
 when all such things are directly contrary  
 to the moral and eternal Differences of  
*Good and Evil*; which are the very *Ground*  
*and Foundation* of *All Religion in general*,  
 and as unchangeable as the Nature of  
 God himself.

T H E R E are indeed in the *Old Testa-*  
*ment* some instances of the Actions of  
 great and good Men, which to weak per-  
 sons may seem contrary to this Rule; But  
 'tis for want of sufficient Care and Atten-  
 tion, to the particular Circumstances of  
 the History. *David*, the Man after God's  
 own Heart, was indeed guilty of some  
 Actions which are very far from being  
 justifiable; But then those Actions are ex-  
 pressly excepted, as being not *Parts*, but  
*Blots*

*Blots* in that Character. *Jacob* is represented as gaining the Blessing by an *Untruth*; But neither is that *Untruth* justified in the History; neither was it in reality altogether an *Untruth*, because he had before actually bought that Birth-right, to which was annexed the Blessing he then claimed; and at the buying the Birth-right, though that Circumstance is not indeed mentioned in the History of *Genesis*, yet it appears from what the Apostle assures us, *Heb. xii. 16.* that it was not a *real* but a *pretended* necessity, and merely the *profaneness* of *Esau*, that made him sell and *despise* it. *Abraham's* offering his Son, seems contrary at first sight to the eternal Law of Nature; But he is justified by the *immediate* Command of God, who has undeniably a supreme Right over all: A *Right*, not to make Virtue to be Vice, and Vice Virtue; but a *Right* over the *Life* of every man whom he has created: A *Right*, not to make it excusable in *Abraham* to *hate* his Son; but to make it commendable in him to be willing to part with the Son of *his Love*. In receiving which Command, the Patriarch could not

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be deceived, because he had been long accustomed to the *Manner* wherein God had been pleased to reveal himself to him; And he had moreover this peculiar security, that he was sure his own Heart was perfectly right; in which case he might depend God would not permit him to be inevitably deceived; the Thing that was to be done, being no gratification of any Lust or Cruelty, or any evil Inclination whatsoever, which is always the subject-matter of Temptations from the Evil One. The *Jews* at their coming out of *Egypt*, are represented as *borrowing* jewels of the *Egyptians*, without intention to *repay* them: And this is usually excused by *God's* expressly commanding them so to do; who, without all question, has a right to take from one and give to another, as he pleases: But (I think) the truer Answer is, that the Word in the Original does not signify to *borrow*, but to *demand*; and that, having now the Power in their hands, they refused to depart without being paid for that Work, which the *Egyptians* had hitherto unjustly compelled them to perform without



without Wages. But to draw to a CON-S E R M.  
clusion. IX.

*3dly and lastly*; THE next, and the infallible means of finding the Truth in all matters relating to Religion, is, that to sincere intention and virtuous practice, men add *diligent Study of the Holy Scripture*, as the only authoritative Guide in matters of positive *Revelation*. Whosoever he be, of how large, or of how mean capacity soever, that so studies the Scripture, as to resolve that he will *obey* all the plain *precepts* of Christ and his Apostles therein contained, and *believe* all the plain *doctrines* he clearly understands, and *not be contentious or uncharitable* about those he does *not* understand, but apply himself to such persons as he thinks most able to inform him better, not so as to depend implicitly upon *any man's Authority upon Earth* in a matter of Faith, but so as by *their* assistance to enlighten and inlarge *his own* Understanding of the Scriptures; This man has found an infallible Guide, that will either certainly lead him in the way of Truth, or at least secure him from all such *pernicious* Errors, as

S E R M. might endanger his Salvation. This man  
 IX. has discovered the *Fountain* of living Water; and has wherewith to draw, how *deep* soever it be. In a word: Notwithstanding all the Darknes and Confusion, all the Intricacy and Disputes, which the Ignorance and Folly, the Perverseness and Wickedness of Men, have introduced in the World; yet by this method, a sincere person may certainly avoid all the *corrupt Doctrines*, brought in by those who carelessly follow *humane Guides*; and all the *needless Divisions*, kept up among those who pretend to follow only the *Word of God*: And as many as endeavour to walk according to This Rule, Peace will be on them, and Mercy, and upon the *Israel* of God.





# S E R M O N X.

Of the Nature of Religious Faith.



JOHN XX. 29. *latter part.*

*Blessed are They that have not seen, and yet have believed.*



THIS is the Method of Scripture S E R M. X. in *general*, and of our Lord in his Discourses in *particular*, to take all Occasions of setting before men the Happiness both of Virtue *absolutely*, and of every degree of improvement in it *comparatively*. How much more valuable, *in general*, the *Love of Truth* and the *Practice of Virtue* is, than *any external Circumstances* or *Advantages* whatsoever;

S E R M. our Saviour expreffes in a very affectionate  
 X. manner; when, upon occafion of a certain woman crying out, *Blessed is the Womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou haft sucked*; he thus declares himfelf, *Luke xi. 28. Yea rather, blessed are they that bear the word of God and keep it.* How much every degree in particular, of improvement in virtuous Practice, either by more extenfive Habits of Goodnefs, or by overcoming greater or more numerous Temptations, or by doing what is Right with Fewer Helps and under greater Difadvantages, does comparatively increafe the Blessednefs of being Righteous; is fet forth to us diftinctly in fuch Paffages of Scripture, as thefe which follow. *They that be wife, fhall fhine as the Brightnefs of the Firmament; and they that turn many to Righteoufnefs, as the Stars for ever and ever: Dan. xii. 3. There is one glory of the Sun, and another glory of the Moon, and another glory of the Stars; for one Star differeth from another Star in glory: So alfo is the refurrektion of the Dead: 1 Cor. xv. 41. In a great Houfe there are-----Veffels of Gold and of Silver, and alfo*

also of Wood and of Earth: 2 Tim. ii. 20. SERM.

Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, X.  
and persecute you, and shall say all manner  
of evil against you falsely for my sake:  
Rejoice, and be exceeding glad; for Great  
is your Reward in Heaven. Matt. v. 11.  
And in the words of my Text: Where  
our Lord having overcome St Thomas's in-  
credulity by a singular condescension in  
permitting him to feel and handle his  
Body after his Resurrection, and having  
thereby extorted from him a Confession  
of his being thoroughly convinced; re-  
proves him afterwards, with this gentle  
Admonition; *Thomas, because thou hast  
seen me, thou hast believed; Blessed are  
they that have not seen, and yet have be-  
lieved.*

THE Words are plainly *comparative*,  
expressing the *greater Blessedness* of those  
who with *less Light* find the way of *Truth*,  
and with *fewer Helps and Assistances* do  
what is *Right*. Yet 'tis very evident, this  
is to be understood *only* of those, who in  
all *other respects* are in *like Circumstan-*  
*ces*, and of whom are required the *like*.  
*Instances of Duty*. For, not *All* who

S E R M. *have not seen and yet have believed, have*  
 X. *in the Whole the Advantage over Them*  
 who believed upon the Evidence of *Sight* ;  
 but *so far* only as their Circumstances  
 are in all *other respects* equal, *so far* is the  
 Blessedness greater of those who have be-  
 lieved *without seeing*. St *Thomas* was one  
 of those *Twelve*, to whom our Lord pro-  
 mised That high Preheminence, *Matt. xix.*  
*28 ; 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 *All* the Apostles, to whom  
 this *singular* Promise of *Glory* was made ;  
 were of Those who, *because they had*  
*seen, had believed*. 1 Joh. i. 1. *That which*  
*we have heard, which we have seen with*  
*our eyes, which we have looked upon, and*  
*our Hands have handled of the Word of*  
*Life ; this declare we unto you*. The Want  
 of this *Evidence of Sense*, which the A-  
 postles enjoyed ; most certainly our Savi-  
 our in my Text did not mean to affirm,  
 that it should give *every Believer* in the  
*latter Ages* of the World, a Title to a  
*greater* degree of Happiness in the life  
 to come, than the *Apostles* themselves. But

*So far forth*, as all *other* Circumstances S E R M.  
 are equal; *so far only* is it *more* advan- X.  
 tageous, to have believed *without seeing*.  
 The Apostles were intrusted with a High  
 and Excellent Office, endued with singu-  
 lar and extraordinary Talents, charged  
 with a very Great and Laborious Duty,  
 exposed to Dangers and Sufferings above  
 all men. Christians in the *latter* Ages of  
 the World, may very possibly have *some*  
*particular* Grounds of Blessedness, which  
 the Apostles had not: And yet it will not  
 at all from thence follow, that they are  
 therefore *in the Whole* more Blessed than  
 the Apostles. The Virtue of a *Man*, may  
 in some *particular respects*, or in some  
*single Points of View*, (as being in a State  
 of greater ignorance, and more Tempta-  
 tions,) be *more* valuable than the Virtue  
 of an *Angel*; and yet it will by no means  
 from thence follow, that men *are*, or that  
 they *ought to be*, more Blessed than An-  
 gels. The Virtue of a *Penitent*, may in  
 some *particular Respects* be *more* com-  
 mendable than That of one who *never*  
*offended*; and yet it will by no means from  
 thence follow, that Penitents *are*, or that  
 they

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S E R M. they *ought* to be, more Blessed than those  
 X. who need no Repentance. God intruſts  
 ~~~~~ all his Servants with what Talents he  
 Rom. xii. 3, 6. pleafes, and places them in different Sta-  
 tions, and *deals to every man--- Gifts dif-*  
 Eph. iv. 11. *fering according to his own good pleaſure.*  
 In the Church, he has given *ſome, Apoſtles;*  
*and Some, Prophets; and Some, Evange-*  
*liſts; and Some, Paſtors and Teachers.*  
 Of Theſe, St Paul affirms, that they are  
*Labourers together with God: 1 Cor. iii. 9:*  
 And of *All* Chriſtians in general, that they  
*are God's Husbandry, that they are God's*  
*Building.* That in This Building, one  
 ver. 10. *layeth the Foundation, and another build-*  
 ver. 6. *eth thereon.* That in This Vineyard, one  
 ver. 8. *planteth, and another watereth: And that*  
*every man ſhall receive his Own Reward,*  
*according to his Own Labour.* All, are not  
*Apoſtles: All, have not the ſame Gifts:*  
 All, are not called to the ſame *Obligations,*  
 or to the ſame *Poſſibilities.* As, in the  
 natural Body, *all members have not the*  
*ſame Office, Rom. xii. 4:* So in the *ſpiri-*  
*tual* Body of Chriſt, God who *does what*  
*he pleaſes with his own,* appoints to every  
 man his proper *Duty* or *Truſt;* ver. 3. The  
 words



words in *Our Translation* are here very S E R M.  
*absurdly* rendred; *God hath dealt to every* X.  
*man the measure of Faith*: But the Sense  
of the Apostle is, *God has dealt to every*  
*man his proper Trust*, a Trust committed  
to his *Fidelity* or *Faithfulness*. What every  
man's *Trust*, what every man's *Ability*,  
what every man's *Station* shall be; is the  
Appointment of *God*. But *in That Station*,  
*whatsoever* it be; so much the *more* accep-  
table shall his *Fidelity* be, as he has done his  
Duty under *greater Disadvantages* or with  
*fewer Helps*. What our Lord declares in  
the case of *Punishment*, that the Servant  
which knew his Master's Will, and did it  
not, shall be beaten with *Many Stripes*;  
is no less equitable in the case of *Reward*;  
that he who, under *any Circumstances*  
of *Disadvantage*, does what is  
*good and right*; shall, (not indeed *absolutely*,  
but) in *his proportion* and *Station*,  
*whatsoever* it be, whether great or small,  
be intitled to a *greater degree* of *Recom-  
pence*. *Blessed are they that have not seen,  
and yet have believed.*


HAVING thus explained *in general*  
the *Sense* of the *Words*, and the *Ground* of  
the *Doctrine* contained in the *Text*; I  
shall

S E R M. shall now proceed more *distinctly and particularly* to the Observation of certain remarkable and important Truths, either *necessarily supposed in, or clearly deduced from,* this Assertion of our Lord. And

*First*; W H A T our Lord here asserts, clearly supposes, that in the Nature of things, (contrary to what *Enthusiasts* have frequently imagined,) *Faith* or *Belief* cannot but be *less strong* in degree of Evidence, than either the *Testimony of Sense,* or *Proof by Demonstration.* Enthusiasts of all kinds have been very apt to imagine, that by magnifying the certainty and assurance of *Faith*, even *above* the Evidence of *Sense* itself, and *equal* to that of *Demonstration*; they could greatly promote the Glory of God, and the Honour of Religion: Not considering, that in reality on the contrary, by subverting the Nature of Things, they subverted the Foundation of That very Faith, which they fancied they were establishing. For *Faith* or *Belief*, in the nature of the thing, necessarily supposes that there is some *Reason for* believing; Otherwise 'tis not *Faith*, but groundless  
*Delusion*

*Delusion.* And this *Ground* or *Reason* of S E R M. Belief, whatsoever it be, cannot possibly X. but be always Somewhat, which we already *know* either by the use of our *Senses*, or by *necessary and demonstrative Certainty*. The *Certainty* of *Knowledge* therefore, of the things which we *know* by immediate *Intuition*, either of the *Eye* or of the *Mind*; must necessarily be *prior* to the Assurance of *Faith*, and consequently *more strong* in the degree of Evidence; as *every Foundation*, in any case whatsoever, *must* be of *Strength* to support what shall be built upon it. The *Credibility* of things *not seen*, cannot but depend upon the *Certainty* of the things that *are seen*: And *Faith* or *Belief*, in its highest possible degree of *Assurance*, can essentially be nothing more, than a well-grounded expectation of things *Future*, in consequence of what we see already *past*; or a rational Assent to the Reality of things *Absent and Invisible*, in consequence of what we have seen or known to be *Present*. To endeavour to raise the Evidence of Faith *higher* than this, is entirely to destroy it. For, what St *Paul* says concerning *Hope*, Rom. viii.

SER M. viii. 24. *Hope that is seen, is not Hope; for*  
 X. *what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope*  
 for? *But if we hope for that we see not,*  
*then do we with Patience wait for it: may*  
*with equal reason be applied to Faith.*  
 In a man's assenting to what he *sees*, or  
*knows*; there is nothing of *Faith*, but  
*Science* only. And therefore when our Sa-  
 viour, in the words before my Text, says;  
*Because thou hast Seen me, Thomas, thou*  
*hast believed: His Meaning was not, that*  
*Thomas believed what he Saw; but that*  
*by what he had Seen, he was convinced of*  
*the Truth of what he had not seen.* The  
 Scripture in *other* Places, always speaks  
 after the *same* manner; uniformly and  
 consistently throughout. When St Paul  
 says, *We walk by Faith, not by Sight,*  
 2 Cor. v. 7; his Meaning is not, (as some  
 Enthusiasts have imagined,) that the Evi-  
 dence of *Faith* is *stronger* than that of  
*Sense*; but on the contrary, that the  
 Grounds of *Faith*, tho' sufficient to com-  
 mand a reasonable man's *Assent*, and to  
 determine his *Practice*, yet are not equal  
 to the Evidence of *Sense*. And when he  
 tells us, that *the things which are seen, are*

temporal; but the things which are not S E R M.  
 seen, are eternal, 2 Cor. iv. 18; he plainly X.  
 balances the greater Importance of the   
 One, against the sensible Certainty of the  
 Other. For now, faith he, we know only 1 Cor xiii.  
 in part, and we prophecy in part;--- Now 9, 12.  
 we see through a glass darkly, as [*δι' ἑσό-  
 πη*] through a descrying-glass, which  
 makes some small and imperfect Disco-  
 very of things at a great distance: But  
 hereafter, when Faith shall terminate in  
 Knowledge, *Then* we shall see face to face;  
 as in a looking-glass, [*κατοπίριζόμενοι*, 2 Cor.  
 iii. 18,] which represents things distinctly  
 in their full and true Dimensions. To speak  
*otherwise* of Faith, and to represent it as  
 of Evidence *Superiour* to Sense or Reason;  
 is to open the Door to all the Absurdities  
 of Transubstantiation, and all other Ex-  
 travagancies of the wildest Fancy; in-  
 stead of causing Religion to *appear* to be,  
 what it really *is*, the most *Reasonable* as  
 well as the most important thing in the  
 World. For

*Secondly*; THOUGH Faith *has not*; and  
 indeed, in the nature of the thing, *cannot*  
*have* the Evidence either of Sense or De-  
 monstra-

S E R M. monstration; yet our Saviour, in pro-  
 X. nouncing those men Blessed, who *have*  
 not seen, and yet have believed; plainly  
 supposes, and 'tis evident in itself, that  
 Many things are very *reasonable to be be-*  
*lieved*, and cannot without extreme Wil-  
 fulness and Unreasonableness be rejected,  
 which yet are neither *Objects of Sense*,  
 nor capable of *Demonstration*. That ma-  
 ny *invisible* things are *real*, is evident  
 from the continual Effects of Nature,  
 which are all of them produced by *in-*  
*visible Powers*; And from thence the *Be-*  
*ing of God*, is strictly *demonstrable*. But  
 they who have *not* capacities to apprehend  
 the *Demonstration*; have yet sufficient  
*Reason*, from what they are able to ob-  
 serve and understand, to be *fully per-*  
*swaded* of the *Truth* of God's Being, and  
 of his Government of the World. And  
 every Atheist, who ridicules *This Faith*,  
 does himself at the same time *believe*, with  
 the most unreasonable Credulity, things  
 that can neither be *Seen* nor *Understood*.  
 The *Judgment to come*, and the *future*  
 permanent State of *Happiness* or *Misery*;  
 are things not *capable* of the Evidence of  
 Sense,

*Sense*, nor demonstrable in any other way than that of moral Certainty. Yet the *rational evidence* arising from the consideration of the *Perfections of God* and of the *Nature of Men*, confirmed moreover by the credible *Testimony of Revelation*; is such, in which every reasonable man ought to rest satisfied; 'Tis such, as is abundantly sufficient to justify every man's Discretion, in parting at any time with any Temporal Advantage, for the Hopes of a Happy Immortality; 'Tis such, as is really stronger, than what the wisest and most cautious men constantly go upon, in all the *Temporal Affairs of Life*. Hence the Apostle *St Paul*, (Heb. xi. 1,) defines *Faith* to be, what we render, *The Substance*; but the word in the Original signifies, *The well-grounded confidence or assured expectation, of things hoped for*; the *Evidence or rational persuasion of the Truth of things not Seen*. And argues, that though at present *we walk indeed by Faith only, and not by Sight*, 2 Cor. v. 7; yet we have sufficient ground to be *always confident* (ver. 6.) of the Truth of God's Promises, so as to be able to support our

S E R M.  
X.  
~~~~~

S E R M. Spirits under all Events, and in every condition of Humane life. The Apostles who saw our Lord's *Miracles*, and were *Themselves* indued with *Miraculous Powers*; had indeed a *Superiour Evidence* of the Truth of Christ's Doctrine, than We at This Distance of Time can have; And therefore they were sent forth upon a more *difficult* Duty. But to *Us* at This day, and to *all Christians* at *all times* to the end of the World; the *Character* of the *Persons* of the Apostles, and their *Sufferings* for their Testimony to the Truth of Facts within their own Knowledge, and the *Completion of Prophecies*, and the *Reasonableness and Excellency* of the *Doctrine*, and the *Agreement* and uniform corresponding *Series of Historical Facts*; and the *State* of the *Patriarchal*, and of the *Jewish* and *Christian Church*, from the Beginning of the World to This day; does and will give *credibility* to the *Miracles* recorded in the Gospels and in the Acts of the Apostles. And the absolute *Demonstrative Certainty* both of the *Grounds* and *Obligations* of *Natural Religion*, makes it extremely *reasonable* and *commendable* in men, to  
 have



have a *Disposition* to receive *That Confir-* S E R M.  
*mation and Improvement* of it by *Revela-* X.  
*tion*, which Christ and his Apostles so  
clearly taught, separate from the *Follies*  
and *Corruptions* wherewith it has been  
confounded in later Ages. *Blessed are they*  
*that have not seen, and yet have believed.*

*Thirdly*; THIS therefore is a *Third* Ob-  
servation I would make upon these Words  
of our Saviour. Such Belief as I am now  
speaking of; such in its Nature, and such  
in its Grounds, as I have now described;  
because 'tis *reasonable*, therefore 'tis *com-*  
*mendable*: And so much *the more so*, as  
there are at any time *more Temptations* a-  
rising, or *more Arguments* drawn, from  
*any thing except Reason*, in favour of *Un-*  
*belief*. A virtuous Disposition of Mind,  
naturally loving Truth, and desirous to do  
what is Right; apt to fear God, and to  
rely upon his Protection both present and  
future, as Father and Governour of the  
Universe; sensible of the necessary, the  
essential and unalterable Difference of  
Good and Evil, and moved perpetually  
with the Reasonableness of the Expecta-  
tion of a Judgment to come: *The more*

S E R M. *Temptations* it meets with to Infidelity,  
 X. from such Considerations as These; that  
 the things of another Life are remote in  
*Place*, and far distant in *Time*; that there  
 is always a Possibility of being *mistaken*  
 in things which are not at all the Ob-  
 jects of Sense; that there are often very  
 great *Present Advantages* to be obtained,  
 by transgressing the Rules which Religion  
 prescribes; and sometimes very great *Dis-*  
*advantages* necessarily to be suffered, by  
 adhering too strictly to the Obligations of  
 Morality: The *more Temptations*, I say, a  
 virtuous Mind meets with, from *Such*  
 Considerations as *These*, to be shaken in  
 its Faith concerning the great Truths of  
 Religion; *the more* valuable and praise-  
 worthy is its Stability in That Faith.  
 Hence the Scripture so frequently de-  
 clares, that *Blessed is the Man which en-*  
*dureth Temptation*; Jam. i. 12. Hence the  
 Example of the *Patriarchs* Faith, is so  
 highly recommended; in that they *saw*  
*the Promises only afar off*, Heb. xi. 13;  
 and *having here no continuing City, but*  
*seeking one to come, they endured, as seeing*  
*Him who is Invisible*; ch. xiii. 14; xi. 27.  
 Hence


Hence St Peter exhorts Christians to re-<sup>S E R M.</sup>  
joice in manifold Temptations; that the <sup>X.</sup>  
Tryal of their Faith being much more pre-  
cious than of Gold that perishes, though it be  
tried with Fire, may be found unto Praise  
and Honour and Glory at the Appearing  
of Jesus Christ: Whom (says he) having  
not Seen, ye love; in whom, though now  
ye see him not, yet believing ye rejoyce with  
Joy unspeakable, and full of Glory. 1 Pet.  
i. 7.

Fourthly; THE Fourth and Last Obser-  
vation I shall make upon the Words of our  
Saviour in my Text, is; that though a  
Disposition to receive and believe the  
Great Truths of Religion, however rela-  
ting to things at present *invisible* and *re-*  
*move from Sense*, is indeed highly com-  
mendable; yet to expect at any time, under  
pretence of Religion, to have things *con-*  
*trary to Sense or Reason*, entertained and  
believed; is greatly *absurd* and *impious*.  
The Reason is, because the *One* is found-  
ed in a *virtuous* and *good Temper* of Mind;  
the *Other* always proceeds either from  
deep and pitiable *Folly*, or from *tyranni-*  
*cal* and *unrighteous Views*. The Simple  
believeth

S E R M. *believeth every word, but the prudent man*  
 X. *looketh well to his going; Prov. xiv. 15.*



Our Saviour does not say, *Blessed are the credulous*: But *Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed*: Blessed are they who believe and willingly embrace things *reasonable*, and act honestly according to That Belief, tho' the things themselves be not at present visible to Mortal Eyes. To believe a *Judgment to come*, such as the Gospel of *Christ* has declared; is infinitely *reasonable*, tho' we yet *See it not*. To believe *Transubstantiation*, or any *Other Absurdity*, contrary either to *Sense* or *Reason*; is in the most profane manner to make Religion *ridiculous*, by taking away the very *Foundation* of *All Knowledge* and of *All Belief*, either in matters of Religion or in any thing else. For the Judgment of *Reason* being once set aside, there remains no possible means of judging whether any one thing whatsoever, be more *reasonable* or more *unreasonable* to be believed, than another; or whether, in Any case whatsoever, either Belief or Unbelief be in any degree *reasonable* or *unreasonable* at all. The Excellency of *Abraham's*

ham's Faith, consisted in This, that *against* S E R M. X.  
*Hope he believed in Hope*; Rom. iv. 18.   
 But the *Ground* of this Faith, was; that  
 his own *Senses* assured him, of the reality  
 of God's *Promise*; and his \* *Reason* assu- \* λογισά-  
μεν.  
 red him, (so the Apostle expresses it, *Heb.*  
 xi. 19,) that the thing promised was *possible*  
*in itself*, though beyond the Bounds of all  
*natural Hope*. Had the *Object* of his  
 Faith been either *contrary* to *Sense*, or  
*contradictory* in *Reason*; the Motives for  
 his *not believing*, had been stronger than  
 for his *believing*; and his *Faith* had been  
 a *Credulity* founded upon *Nothing*. Who-  
 ever carefully considers this, will never  
 imagine that the words of our Saviour in  
 my Text, give Any Encouragement either  
 to the Impositions of Popish Tyranny, or  
 to the Extravagancies of Enthusiastick  
 Folly.





# S E R M O N XI.

In what the Kingdom of GOD  
consists.



ROM. xiv. 17.

*For the Kingdom of God, is not meat and  
drink; but righteousness, and peace, and  
joy in the Holy Ghost.*




THE greatest part of Christi-  
ans in the *Apostles* days, ha-  
ving been educated originally  
in the *Jewish* Religion, and  
but newly converted from it;  
'tis not to be wondred at, that whilst  
Some of them rightly understood the Na-  
ture

S E R M O N  
XI.

S E R M. ture and Excellency of the *Gospel*, Others  
 XI. of them, who were of weaker Judgments  
 and less clear Understandings, retained, for  
 a long time after their Conversion, many  
 of their antient *Prejudices* and *Scruples* of  
 mind, concerning distinctions of *Days*  
 and differences of *Meats*, which they had  
 been taught to look upon, not (according  
 to the true intention of the Law) as be-  
 ing *typically* and *figuratively* under the  
 then present dispensation, but as being  
*really* and *intrinsically*, *morally* and *per-*  
*petually*, *clean* or *unclean*. Ver. 2, *One*  
*man* (says he) *believeth that he may eat*  
*all things*; *another, who is weak, eateth*  
 ver. 5. *herbs*:----*One man esteemeth one day above*  
*another, Another esteemeth every day alike.*  
 The *Method* the Apostle takes in this case,  
 to prevent any Inconveniencies arising in  
 the Church, from this diversity of mens ap-  
 prehensions concerning indifferent things;  
 is by perswading them, that one of the  
 Great Ends and Designs of true Religi-  
 on, is the promoting among men univer-  
 sal peace and good-will towards each o-  
 ther; ver. 19, *Let us follow after the*  
*things which make for peace, and things*  
*where-*




wherewith one may edify another: And S E R M.  
 that the only way to obtain this most de- XI.  
 desirable peace, is to forbear censuring each   
 other upon account of things not in their  
 own nature vicious or immoral: Ver. 3,  
*Let not him that eateth, despise him that  
 eateth not; and let not him which eateth  
 not, judge him that eateth: ----- Let every  
 man be fully perswaded in his own mind:  
 He that regardeth the day, regardeth it  
 unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not  
 the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it:  
 He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he  
 giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not,  
 to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God  
 thanks. And ver. 13, Let us not therefore  
 judge one another -----; but judge this ra-  
 ther, that no man put a stumbling-block or  
 an occasion to fall, in his brother's way:  
 I know, and am perswaded by the Lord  
 Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of it-  
 self; but to him that esteemeth any thing to  
 be unclean, to Him it is unclean. And  
 then he adds in the words of the Text, as  
 an argument or reason for their thus bearing  
 with each other, drawn from the nature  
 and essence of true Religion; The King-  
 dom*

SERM. *dom of God* (says he) *is not meat and*  
 XI. *drink, but righteousness, and peace, and*  
 joy in the Holy Ghost.

IN the following Discourse upon which words, I shall *1st* explain distinctly the several phrases made use of in the Text: And *then* I shall proceed to draw some useful *Observations* and *Inferences* therefrom.

I. *First*; THIS phrase, *The Kingdom of God*, in its *original, literal, and proper* sense, signifies God's Supreme *Dominion* over the Universe; The whole course of *Nature*, in Heaven and in Earth, being merely the Effect of his Will and Pleasure; for *All things Serve Him*. But because the *principal* and most *valuable* part of Government, consists in the Subjection and *willing* Obedience of *rational and moral* Agents; hence, in Scripture, *the Kingdom of God* generally signifies That *State or Establishment of true Religion or Righteousness* in the World, which *would* have been fixed and settled in the State of *Innocence*; but which, by *Sin and Disobedience*, was removed from among men; and which, by *Repentance and Amendment,*

*mendment, is again in some degree restored* S E R M.  
*upon Earth; and will be perfectly and* XI.  
*for ever established in Heaven.*  And be-  
 cause the principal *Means*, by which This  
 recovery of sinful Creatures is accomplish-  
 ed, is the *Gospel of Christ*; therefore the  
*State of the Gospel*, the Spreading of the  
*Profession of true Religion*, and, above all,  
 the *real efficacy and influence of it upon*  
*the Hearts and Lives of Men*, is by our  
 Saviour and his Apostles frequently stiled  
*The Kingdom of God*. Thus when our  
 Saviour first began to preach Repentance,  
*The Kingdom of Heaven* (says he) *is at* Mat. iv. 17.  
*hand*: And when he confirmed his Doc-  
 trine with miraculous works, *then the* xii. 28.  
*Kingdom of God* (says he) *is come unto you*.  
 When the *Pharisees*, sollicitous, not for  
 the promoting of *Virtue and true Right-*  
*eousness*, but for the obtaining of *tempo-*  
*ral power and grandour*, demanded of him  
*when the Kingdom of God should come*; his  
 Answer was, *It cometh not with observa-* Luk. xvii. 21.  
*tion; neither shall they say, lo here, or lo*  
*there; for, behold, the Kingdom of God is*  
*within you*: And in like manner the  
*Kingdom of Satan*, is not an *external sen-*  
 sible

S E R M. sible Dominion, but the power of *Wick-*  
 XI. *edness* and *Immorality* reigning in the  
 Hearts and Lives of men. When our  
 Lord bids his Disciples to *seek* in the first  
 place *the Kingdom of God*, he explains his  
 meaning by adding in the next words,  
 and His righteousness: And tells them,  
 that *whosoever shall not receive the King-*  
 dom of God as a little child, (whosoever  
 shall not receive the doctrine of the Gos-  
 pel with Humility and Sincerity, with  
 Simplicity and Probity of Mind,) *he shall*  
*not enter therein*; that is, he shall not be  
 acknowledged as a Disciple of Christ at  
 all. And they who *do receive* it for a  
 time, but *continue not* to live worthy of  
 the Religion they profess; this *Kingdom*  
 of God (he threatens) *shall be taken from*  
*them, and given to a nation bringing forth*  
*the fruits thereof*. And if it be not taken  
 from them, yet, at the End, *the Son of*  
*man* (says he) *shall send forth his Angels,*  
*and they shall gather out of his Kingdom*  
 (out from among the Professors of *His*  
 Religion) *All that offend, and them which*  
*do iniquity; and shall cast them into a*  
*furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and*  
*gnashing of Teeth.*

Now

Now according to the analogy of *this* S E R M.  
*figure* of speaking, so often used by our XI.  
 Saviour, wherein he stiles the establish-  
 ment of his true religion the *Kingdom of*  
*God*; the Apostle *St Paul* in like manner  
 in *His* epistles, *The Kingdom of God*, says  
 he, (*1 Cor. iv. 20,*) *is not in word, but in*  
*power*: His meaning is; The religion of  
 Christ, does not consist in mere Outward  
 Professions and in Forms of Godliness,  
 but in the efficacy of a true Perswasion  
 upon the minds of men, bringing forth  
 real Virtue and Holiness in their Lives.  
 And in the words of the Text, *The King-*  
*dom of God* (says he) that is, the essence  
 of True Christian religion, *is not meat*  
*and drink; but righteousness, and peace,*  
*and joy in the Holy Ghost.*

THE phrase, *Meat and Drink*, is an  
 allusion to that distinction of Meats, of  
 clean and unclean, and other such like  
 external Observances, on which the *Jews*  
 laid so great a Stress in *Their* religion.  
*Heb. ix. 10,* *The first tabernacle,*-----  
 says the Apostle, *stood only in Meats and Drinks,*  
*and divers Washings, and carnal Ordinances,*  
*imposed on them until the time of re-*  
*formation.*

S E R M. *formation.* And because they were imposed *only until* the time of reformation, therefore, when the Gospel of Christ was established, these things were no longer to take place. *Col. ii. 16, Let no man judge you in meat or in drink, or in respect of an holiday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath-days; Which are a shadow of things to come, but the Body is of Christ: ----Why then are ye subject to ordinances, ----(which all are to perish with the using,) after the commandments and doctrines of men? Things of this nature, even during the Jewish dispensation, were by all reasonable persons understood to be in their own nature indifferent, however commanded for a time upon particular reasons. Matt. xv. 17, Do not ye yet understand, saith our Saviour, that whatsoever entreth in at the mouth, goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught? But those things which proceed out of the mouth, come forth from the heart, and they defile the man: For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: These are the things which defile a man; but to eat*

with unwashen hands defileth not a man  
 St Paul in like manner, 1 Cor. vi. 13,  
 Meats (says he) for the belly, and the  
 belly for meats; but God shall destroy both  
 It and Them. And again, ch. viii. ver. 8,  
 Meat (says he) commendeth us not to God;  
 (The Argument is universal, and held  
 good at all times and under all dispensa-  
 tions, with regard to the real and intrin-  
 sick nature of things. Meat commendeth  
 us not to God;) for neither, if we eat,  
 are we the better; neither, if we eat not,  
 are we the worse. Even, therefore, un-  
 der the Jewish dispensation itself, things  
 of this nature, though very strictly com-  
 manded, in order to the more compleat  
 separation and legal Holiness of that par-  
 ticular people; yet were not really per-  
 fective of them that did the service, as  
 pertaining to the conscience; any otherwise  
 than as types, having their signification  
 verified by moral Purity and Holiness.  
 Heb. xiii. 9; It is a good thing that the  
 heart be established with grace, not with  
 meats, which have not profited them that  
 have been occupied therein. And if, even  
 to the Jews themselves, the case was Thus;

S E R M. *much more* were those *Christians* to blame, whom St *Paul* writes to in this epistle to the *Romans*, and in his first to the *Corinthians*; who, professing a religion not appointed for the separating of *one* particular nation, but in which *all* nations were to agree, yet desired to lay too great a *stress* upon such particular Observances with regard to things in their own nature indifferent, as could have no other tendency than to promote Divisions among Christians, and uncharitableness in their *judging one another*; Which are the great Hindrances of That Glory of God, which consists in the universal establishment of true Virtue and Righteousness amongst men. Against *these persons* therefore he directs himself, when he so earnestly exhorts, 1 *Cor.* ix. 31, *Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.* And ch. iv. 20, *The Kingdom of God, is not in word, but in power; not in mere forms of Godliness, but in the effectual practice of true Virtue.* And in the words of the Text; *The Kingdom of God, is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.*


THE



THE terms, *Righteousness, and Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghost*, are here put by way of *eminence*, as Parts for the Whole; as being the *principal* Virtues in which true religion consists, or (as our Saviour speaks) *the weightier matters of the Law*. The *reason why* the Apostle, in reckoning up these weightier matters of the Law, does not here mention That *first and great Commandment*, the *Love or Worship of God*; is because *That* is included in the *Subject* of his Proposition, *The Kingdom of God*. The *Kingdom of God*, that is, the religion of the sincere Worshippers of the True God, consists principally and essentially, not in the observation of mere external Forms, but in the practice of real and true Virtue, of *Righteousness, Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghost*. The word, *Righteousness*, comprehends the practice of those *moral and eternal* Virtues, *Justice, Equity, Truth, Fidelity, Holiness, Purity*, and the like; the Opposites whereof, are *all Injustice and Iniquity* towards *Others*, and *all Debaucheries* which men practise among *themselves*. The term, *Peace*, signifies That good Temper, That Charitable Spirit, and

S E R M.  
XI.  
~~~~~

S E R M. kind disposition of mind, by which Those  
 XI. who, with regard to *things in their own*  
 nature indifferent, have not exactly the  
 same Sentiments, yet through mutual forbearance and love towards each other, preserve nevertheless the bands of christian unity and concord: For, Peace and Concord among men there can possibly be, only by one or other of the three following ways: Either by the agreement of All, in a perfect and infallible Knowledge of the Truth: Or by a compulsive and hypocritical agreement, in the maintaining of Opinions which they understand not: Or lastly, by an agreement of mutual Charity and Good-will, among All who live in the sincere Inquiry after Truth, and practice of Righteousness. The first of These, is the Unity which is among Angels: The Second is That Unity, which is among profane, atheistical, irreligious, or very superstitious men: The Third, is the *Peace* mentioned in the Text; the Peace and Unity which is among Good and Sincere Christians; *walking in love*, as the same Apostle elsewhere expresses it; and *giving no Offence, neither to the Jews,*  
 nor

nor to the Gentiles, nor to the Church of S E R M.  
 God; Even as I (says he) please all men XI.  
 in all things; not seeking my own profit,   
 but the profit of many, that they may be  
 saved. Lastly; The phrase, Joy in the  
 Holy Ghost, signifies That delight and ta-  
 king pleasure in doing good, which is the  
 highest perfection of Christian virtue; and  
 That satisfaction even in suffering at any  
 time (if the Will of God be so) for  
 Righteousness sake, which is the highest  
 Evidence of Christian sincerity. Which  
 affection of mind, because it is (at least  
 in remarkable cases) worked in men by  
 the assistance and influence of the divine  
 Spirit, 'tis therefore called in Scripture  
 Joy of the Holy Ghost, 1 Th. i. 6. and, in  
 the Text, Joy in the Holy Ghost; while  
 at the same time, in other places, 'tis  
 mentioned under the more large and un-  
 limited expressions, of rejoicing evermore,  
 rejoicing in hope, rejoicing in the Lord;  
 and, in general, doing all things (*Acts* ii.  
 46,) with gladness and singleness of heart.  
 Nor is there Any inconsistency in thus  
 representing one and the same Christian  
 Virtue, as being both a good disposition

S E R M. of the *mind itself* in the *man* who possesses it, and yet also at the same time an influence of the *spirit* of *God*. For as, in true Philosophy, all *natural* Actions, when pursued, with the most sagacious exactness of Inquiry, through all their series of Second Causes, appear *at last* to the eye of the most exquisite Philosopher, as they do *at first* to the pious judgment of the meanest Christian, to derive originally from God: So in *spiritual* actions, those very Virtues, which, essentially to their being Virtues at all, must be the voluntary operations of a man's own mind; may yet, very consistently, have at the same time the *like* sort of dependence upon the Influences of the divine Spirit, as all our *natural* actions have upon that Concurrence of God, from which our Wills themselves, and all the Faculties of our nature, continually and every moment derive their Power of Acting. And This observation will very clearly account for all those passages of Scripture, wherein the *Virtues* of *Men*, and the *Gifts* of the Spirit of *God*, are promiscuously taken for each other. The *Fruits* or *Graces* of the  
*Spirit,*


*Spirit*, in St Paul's Catalogue, are individually the same as *moral Virtues*: And *Barnabas's* being a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost, are joined together as expressions of the same import: And what our Saviour in St Luke, ch. xi. 13, says of our heavenly Father giving his Holy Spirit, is, in St Matthew recording the very same words, understood of his giving good things to them that ask him. S E R M.  
XI.

II. Secondly; AND thus having distinctly and at large explained all the several expressions in the Text, *The Kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost*; The Observations I would draw from the Apostle's assertion in the whole, are briefly as follows.

First; THAT the Great and Principal End of true Religion, is the promoting and establishing among Men, the Practice of *moral Goodness and Righteousness*. God, is himself essentially a Being of infinite Purity and Holiness; and his future Kingdom in Heaven, is of such a nature, that there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever Rev. XXI.

S E R M. *worketh abomination, or maketh a lie.* Con-  
 XI. frequently those Virtues which are essen-  
 tially necessary to the enjoyment of the  
 Happiness of Heaven *hereafter*, cannot  
 but be the principal Constituents of the  
 Kingdom of God *here*. Which Virtues,  
*our Saviour* therefore emphatically calls  
 Mat. xxiii. *The weightier matters of the Law.* And  
 23. the *Apostle* accordingly, whenever he men-  
 tions *These* things, always supposes all *other*  
 Gal. v. 6. matters, to be, *comparatively speaking*, as  
 nothing. *In Christ Jesus*, (says he) *nei-*  
*ther circumcision availeth any thing, nor*  
 1 Cor. vii. *uncircumcision, but faith which worketh by*  
 19. *love.* For *Circumcision is nothing, and*  
 Gal. vi. 17. *uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping*  
*of the commandments of God.* And as ma-  
 ny as walk according to *This rule*, peace  
 Tit. iii. 8. *be on them and mercy, and upon the Israel*  
*of God.* For *These things* (says he) *are*  
*good* (are essentially good) *and profitable*  
 Rom. xiv. *unto men:* And *He that in These things*  
 18. *serveth Christ, is acceptable unto God,*  
*and approved of* (all reasonable) *men.*

Secondly; THE Second Observation I  
 would draw from the Apostle's doctrine in  
 the Text, is: that tho' the Great and Prin-  
 cipal

cipal End of true Religion, is the pro-S E R M.  
 moting and establishing the Practice of XI.  
*Moral Virtue and Righteousness*; yet the   
*Externals also* of Religion, matters of Or-  
 der and Decency and Particular Appoint-  
 ment, are nevertheless of necessity not to  
 be neglected. The distinctions of *meats*  
*and drinks* alluded to in the Text, tho'  
 they are *not* the *Kingdom of God*, *not* of  
 the *essence of religion*, yet, under the *Jew-*  
*ish* dispensation, they *were* expressly and  
 immediately of *divine appointment*; And  
*so long as* they were appointed, and *for the*  
*Ends to which* they were appointed, and  
*in subordination to* those Ends, they *were*  
 of necessity to be *observed*. The weigh-  
 tier matters of the Law, *ought* (as our  
 Saviour expresses it with the most per-  
 fect accuracy; they *ought*) to be *done*;  
 and the others, *not to be left undone*. And, Mat. xxiii.  
*in proportion*; now, and at all times, un-<sup>23.</sup>  
 der the *Christian* dispensation likewise,  
 matters of *positive appointment*, of decen-  
 cy and external form, tho' *not* of the  
*essence of religion*, yet so far as they are  
*Helps and Means* of religion, ought not  
 in any wise to be *left undone*. In pro-  
 portion

S E R M. portion (I say) This holds true, under  
 XI. the *Gospel* likewise: For

~~~~~ *Thirdly*; THE *Third* and *Last* Observation I would draw from the words of the Text, is; that *That* Form and Institution of religion is *proportionably* the *most perfect*, which has the *fewest* positive external Rites, and lays the *least stress* upon them; and wherein those Rites which *are* appointed, have the most direct and immediate tendency to promote *real* Virtue and Holiness. This is evident in the *nature* of things. For, in *all* cases whatsoever, the *End* is *always* best and most certainly attained, where the *Means* made use of, are *Fewest* in number, and most *direct* in their *nature*, and most *obvious* in their *tendency*, and *least apt* to be *perverted*, and have *no* other *stress* laid on them, than just as they promote the *End* they were designed for. The *End* therefore, is always principally to be had in View; and *Means* are nothing, but with relation to the *End*. *The Kingdom of God, is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.*



THE *Inferences* from what has been SAID, shall be very short, and such as obviously follow from the fore-going Observations. S E R M.  
XI.

1<sup>st</sup>, FROM hence appears the peculiar Excellency and Advantage of the *Christian* religion; that it is not burdened, as the *Jewish* was, with a multitude of outward Rites and Ceremonies; with perpetual Washings, Purifications, Sacrifices, and other typical Observations, which (as the Apostle expresses it) *neither we nor our Fathers were able to bear*; but requires of us, in order to eternal Salvation, only *Faith* in God and in *Jesus Christ*, *Repentance* from dead Works, and *Obedience* to the *Laws* of Christ in the *Gospel*, in expectation of the *Resurrection* to eternal Judgment.

2<sup>dly</sup>, FROM what has been said, appears the Great *Wisdom* and *Usefulness* of those few even external Rites in the *Christian* institution; the *Preaching* of the *Word*, and the *Administration* of the two *Sacraments*; These being such *Means*, as have a *direct*, *natural*, and *immediate* Tendency, to promote the *Ends* of real  
Virtue

S E R M. Virtue and Holiness. For, by the *Preaching* of the *Word*, men are instructed in the *Knowledge* of their Duty, and continually exhorted to perform it. By *Baptism*, they are admitted into a solemn *Obligation* to obey it: And by the Sacrament of the *Lord's Supper*, they continually *renew* and *confirm* That Obligation. Nevertheless, *excellent* as these *Means* are, both in their *natural* aptness to the End designed, and moreover as being *expressly* and *positively* commanded by *Christ himself*; yet that they are still *but* Means, subordinate *to*, and useful *only as* they promote, the practice of real Godliness, Righteousness, and Charity; is evident from hence; that the *Virtues* which these Institutions were intended to promote, are *absolutely, essentially, indispensably*, and without *Any* excepted Cases whatsoever, necessary to Salvation; there being no expedient, by which an unrighteous person, continuing such, can *possibly* enter into the Kingdom of Heaven: The *Gospel itself* to such a person, instead of being a *Savour of life unto life*, becomes on the contrary the *Savour of Death unto Death*:

*Baptism,*

*Baptism*, being merely the *washing away* S E R M.  
*the filth of the flesh*, and not the *answer of* XI.  
*a good conscience towards God*, is of no  
benefit to him; and the receiving the  
*Lord's Supper*, does but increase his con-  
demnation. But now on the other side,  
in matters of *positive institution*, tho' by  
our Lord himself, declared *generally* neces-  
sary to Salvation, yet in *particular* cir-  
cumstances there are manifestly *Some* ex-  
cepted Cases. *Infants* dying suddenly *be-*  
*fore Baptism*, no reasonable person can be-  
lieve shall perish, for what can in no  
sense be esteemed their own Fault. The  
*Penitent* upon the *Cross*, tho' he could  
not be baptized, yet received from our  
Lord's own Mouth a Promise of Salva-  
tion. And in the primitive Ages, when  
Many Converts, before they could be bap-  
tized, were carried immediately to *Mar-*  
*tyrdom*; no one doubted, but their dy-  
ing *literally* with and for Christ, was  
more than equivalent to being *figurative-*  
*ly* buried with him by Baptism into  
Death. Which clearly shows the *true*  
*difference*, between the things which ab-  
solutely *must be done*, and the things  
which *ought not to be left undone*.

S E R M. 3dly, FROM what has been said, it appears, how contrary to the Spirit of Christianity the manner of the Church of Rome is, in multiplying mere Forms and Ceremonies without number, and particularly in making additional *Sacraments* of their own invention, or pretended means of conveying Grace, in order to amuse the people, and withdraw their attention from the Practice of real and true Virtue. Thus *Confirmation*, which is only mens publicly ratifying their baptismal Vow; and *Ordination*, which is the Solemn Appointment of particular persons to a particular Office; are, with *Them*, *Sacraments*. Also, instead of True Repentance and Amendment of Life, they have the *Sacrament of Penance*. And upon a gross misinterpretation of a single passage in St *James's* epistle, concerning the Sick being anointed with oil, and having their Sins forgiven, and their bodily Disease at the same time miraculously cured; is built the superstitious *Sacrament of extreme Unction*. And because St *Paul*, in his comparing Matrimony with the spiritual Union between Christ and his Church, calls

calls That Similitude a great *Mystery*, S E R M. XI.  
 which word *Mystery* the *Latin* translator ignorantly and ridiculously renders a great *Sacrament*; hence *Matrimony* is, with *Them*, another *Sacrament*. And innumerable other things of the like nature there are among them, of which *St Paul* would have said, with greater earnestness than even of the *Jewish Observations* themselves; *The Kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.*







## SERMON XII.


The Parable of the Rich Man and  
*Lazarus* explained.



LUKE xvi. 25.

*But Abraham said: Son, remember that thou in thy life-time receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now He is comforted, and thou art tormented.*



OUR Saviour in the *Beginning* S E R M.  
of this chapter, shows by the XII.  
Parable of the Unjust Steward,   
*what is the true and wise Use*  
of Riches. ver. 9. *I say unto you, Make to*  
*yourselfes Friends of the Mammon of un-*  
V O L . VII. S righteous-

S E R M. *righteousness ; that when ye fail, they may receive you, ( it ought to have been rendered, ye may be received, ) into everlasting Habitations.* By the *mammon of unrighteousness*, is not here meant *Riches unjustly gotten*, but *Riches in general ; the false, the uncertain, the transitory Riches of this present World*: As appears plainly from the use of the same word in other places, and particularly from the following part of This very Parable, ver. 11 ; where *unrighteous* is expressly opposed, not to *righteous* or *just*, but to *True* or *Permanent*: *If ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, that is, in the Use of the uncertain and transitory Riches of this present Life, Who will commit to your Trust the True Riches, the permanent and unchangeable Riches of Eternity ?* The Sense therefore of our Lord's Exhortation, is : Employ in such a manner, in the ways of Justice, Equity, Sobriety and Charity, these *false, uncertain and transitory Riches here ; that hereafter ye may be found worthy to be intrusted with an unchangeable and everlasting Possession.*

HAVING



HAVING thus declared what was the *True and Wise Use* of Riches, our Saviour proceeds in the *latter part* of this Chapter, (by way of Reproof to the *Pharisees* who were covetous and derided him, ver. 14; he proceeds) to show, by the Parable of the *Rich Man* and *Lazarus*, that Those who had great Superiority and exalted themselves highly in the *present World*, were not always of Esteem in the Sight of God, or in the way of being Happy in the *World to come*. There was (says he) a certain Rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linnen, and fared sumptuously every day. This rich man died, and was buried: And in hell, lifting up his Eyes in Torments, and seeing Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his Bosom; he begged of him to send Lazarus, that he might dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool his Tongue; for he was tormented in That flame. The Answer our Lord puts in the Mouth of the Patriarch, is, in the words of my Text: *Son, remember that thou in thy life-time receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: But now He is comforted, and Thou art tormented.*

S E R M.  
XII.  


SERM.

XII.



THE First thing that obviously offers itself in these words, as worthy of particular Observation, is; that our Lord here represents a person tormented in the Flames of Hell; and, when his petition for mercy is rejected, there are *not* expressly charged upon him any Great and Enormous *Vices*; but, *what* his peculiar Crimes were, is left to be *collected only* from the Circumstances of the whole Parable compared together; and he is here barely put in mind, that he had already *in his Life-time* received his *Good things*, as *Lazarus* had received *Evil things*. It was very natural to have expected, that the Patriarch should here have *expressly* charged him with *revelling* and *drunkenness*, with *wasting his Substance in riotous living*, as the *Prodigal* in the fore-going chapter is described to have done. Or he might have been charged *plainly and explicitly*, with *Cruelty* and *Uncharitableness* towards the Poor. He might have been told *distinctly* and with many *aggravating* circumstances, that since, when he lived in ease and plenty and in the abundant enjoyment of all the good things of life, he had shown no regard to the miserable

able

rable State of the *Poor* man ; he had no reason to expect, now that the Scale was turned, and Himself fallen into a State of Misery, that the *Poor* man should leave That place of Happiness which is figured to us by *Abraham's* Bosom, to come and quench the Violence of the Flame that tormented *Him*. He might have been told, that 'twas but just, since he had *shown* no Mercy, none should be *shown* to *Him* ; and that he should receive no Relief from the *poor man* after Death, to whom he had *given* none when he was Alive. All This, I say, it was natural to have been expected, should have been highly and severely aggravated upon him. But our Lord does *not* introduce the Patriarch *expressly* charging him with *Any* of these *Vices*. On the contrary, what *Abraham's* Reply directly charges him with, does not obviously and at first sight appear to be *Criminal* : *Son, remember that Thou in thy life-time receivedst thy good things*. The Character given of him in the introduction of the Parable, is ; that he was *cloathed in Purple and fine linnen, and fared sumptuously every day*. And as

S E R M.  
 XII.

S E R M. his Quality or Station in the World may  
 XII. be supposed to have been, there is no Im-  
 ~~~~~ possibility but he might be conceived to  
 have done this, without the imputation  
 of any Scandalous Excesses. Differences  
 of Station, there must be in the World.  
 'Tis plainly the Will of God, that there  
*should* be such; and that they should be  
 supported with proper Marks of Distinc-  
 tion. Luxury does not consist in the in-  
 nocent enjoyment of any of the good  
 things, which God has created to be re-  
 ceived with Thankfulness; but in the  
 wastful Abuse of them to vicious Purpo-  
 ses, in ways inconsistent with Sobriety,  
 Justice, or Charity. The exceeding pleny  
 in which *Solomon* is described to have  
 lived, 1 *Kings* iv. 22. is not laid to his  
 charge as a *Sin*, but remarked as an In-  
 stance of God's Blessing upon him, and of  
 the fulfilling That Promise made to him  
 upon his desiring Wisdom and an under-  
 standing Heart, ch. iii. 13. *I have also*  
*given thee that which thou has not asked,*  
*both Riches and Honour, so that there shall*  
*not be Any among the Kings like unto thee*  
*all thy days.* And even in the *New Tes-*  
*tament,*

tament, wherein the *Future State* is more clearly revealed; still *Godliness* (with an exception always to the case of *Persecution*,) has the *Promise of This life* also, as well as of *That which is to come*. And They who are *Rich in This World*, 1 Tim. vi. 17. are not threatned as if they should be *miserable in the Next World*, for *This reason only* because God had blessed them in *This*; but they are charged, not to be *high-minded*, nor trust in *uncertain Riches*, but in the *Living God*, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy: That they do good, that they be *Rich in good Works*, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; Laying up in store for themselves a good *Foundation against the time to come*, that they may lay hold on *eternal Life*.

THIS therefore being the case; that the *Rich man* in this Parable is not, as might have been natural to expect, charged in plain and express words with the Practice of any *direct Vice*; and yet it being infinitely certain, that *nothing but Vice* can be the real Cause of any man's coming into *That place of Torment*: What remains, is,

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*First*, THAT we enquire from the whole Scope of our Lord's Discourse, and collect from the several Circumstances of the Parable compared together, *What* the *Vices* were, which Christ here intended to condemn in the person of this Rich man, and to warn his Hearers against. And


*Secondly*, THAT we consider *What* the *Reason* might be, (For there could not but be *Some* particular *Reason*,) *why* our Lord chose to express himself in this manner; not naming *expressly*, and *in plain words*, any *particular Vice*; but *leaving it to be collected* from the whole Series of the Parable.

I. *First*; WE must collect from the whole Scope of our Lord's Discourse, and from all the Circumstances of the Parable compared together, *What* the *Vices* were, which Christ here intended to condemn in the person of this Rich man, and to warn his Hearers against. And

*1st*, THAT, *in general*, our Lord intended it should be understood, that the person he sets forth under this parabolical representation, was not merely a State  
of

of Prosperity, but a really *Vicious* cha-S E R M.  
 racter; appears plainly from the descrip-XII.  
 tion the rich man is introduced as giv-  
 ing of his *five brethren*, ver. 28, 30. The  
 whole Discourse supposes them to be per-  
 sons of the *same* manner of Life with  
 their Rich Brother. And This their man-  
 ner of Life was, what showed them to  
 have no Regard to the Exhortations of  
*Moses and the Prophets*; 'Twas what  
 made it desirable and necessary, in the  
 Rich man's judgment, that one should be  
 sent on purpose to *Testify unto them, lest*  
*they also should come into That place of*  
*Torment*; 'Twas a course of Life, which  
 must needs bring them to destruction, if  
 they did not *repent*; and which, *if one*  
*went unto them from the Dead*, (he thought)  
*they Would repent* of, though they would  
 not at present *bear Moses and the Prophets*.  
 This plainly shows, that our Lord in-  
 tended in this Parable to be understood  
 to represent, not merely a State of Pro-  
 sperity, but *in general* a really *Vicious*  
 character.

2dly, 'Tis probable, *in particular*, that  
 our Saviour intended to give an intima-  
 tion

S E R M. XII.  tion of the Danger of the Sin of *Uncharitableness*, when he represents *Lazarus* lying in a very miserable condition at the Rich man's door, and *desiring to be fed with the Crumbs that fell from his Table*. For though he does not *expressly* put the case, that the *Poor man* found *no relief* in those circumstances; yet since, on the contrary, 'tis neither expressed in the Historical part of the Parable, nor pleaded by the Rich man in his Own behalf, that there *was* any Relief given; 'tis reasonable to suppose that our Lord intended to be understood, as making *Uncharitableness* a part of the *Character* represented under this Parable.


3dly, 'TIS probable, for the same reason, that *Luxurious Rioting and Drunkenness* was likewise *in particular* designed to be reprov'd in this parabolical representation. For though *This Vice* also does not *expressly* enter into the *Character* here set forth; and all that we read upon *This head* is, that the Rich man was *cloathed in Purple and fine Linnen, and fared sumptuously every day*; yet since, in *This respect* also, neither in the Historical  
cal



cal part of the Parable, nor in the Rich SERMON.  
 man's Plea for Mercy, is there any inti- XII.  
 mation of any *Guard against* these Ex-  
 cesses, or of any *Good Use* made of his  
 Riches and Grandour; but, on the con-  
 trary, the *Whole* is an exprefs Character  
 of a person *Condemned*, and of one hav-  
 ing *no Apology* to make for *Himself*; 'tis  
 reasonable to conclude, that *This Vice* al-  
 so was by our Lord intended to be un-  
 derstood as Part of the *Character* here  
 represented.

4<sup>thly</sup>, FROM the particularly remark-  
 able expression in my Text, *Remember that*  
*thou in thy life-time receivedst thy Good*  
*things*, compared with the other parts of  
 the Parable; 'tis plain that our Lord's  
*Principal View* in this whole Discourse,  
 was to warn men of the danger of That  
*Worldly-mindedness*, of That *Heedlessnes*  
 concerning matters of *Religion*, of That  
 total *Intentness* upon *present Pleasure and*  
*Profit*, which is not so much itself a *par-*  
*ticular Vice*, but rather the *Foundation of*  
*All Vices*. 'Tis That, which makes men  
*regardless of Futurity*, and not to have  
*God in All their Thoughts*. 'Tis That *De-*  
*ceitfulness*

S E R M. *ceitfulness of Riches, and the Care of Other*  
 XII. *things, of Ambition and Voluptuousness;*  
 which, our Lord tells us in Another Parable, *chokes the Word,* (stifles all Notions of Religion,) *and it becometh unfruitful.* 'Tis That Temper, which exposes a man to *Every Temptation of Any kind;* and makes him continually ready to sacrifice the Interest of Truth and Virtue, whenever it happens to come in competition with the *Good Things* of this present Life, the *Good things* on which alone his Heart is entirely set. This *Character* is in a very lively manner set forth by the Psalmist, *Pf. xlix, 6; There be some that put their Trust in their Goods, and boast themselves in the multitude of their Riches: ----- They think that their Houses shall continue for ever, and that their dwelling-places shall endure from one generation to another: ----- He shall carry nothing away with him when he dieth, neither shall his Pomp follow him: ---- Man being in Honour has no Understanding, but is compared unto the Beasts that perish.* An eloquent description of the *like persons*, we meet with in the Book of *Job*; *ch. xxi. 9; Their Houses are safe from Fear, neither is the Rod of God upon them:*

them: ----They take the Timbrel and Harp, S E R M.  
 and rejoice at the Sound of the Organ: XII.  
 They spend their days in Wealth, and in a   
 moment go down to the Grave: Therefore  
 they say unto God, depart from us, for we  
 desire not the Knowledge of thy ways:  
 What is the Almighty, that we should serve  
 him? and what Profit should we have, if  
 we pray unto him? The same Temper is  
 again set forth by our Saviour in Another  
 Parable, Luke xii. 16; The ground of a  
 certain rich man brought forth plenteously.  
 And he thought within himself, saying,  
 What shall I do, because I have no Room  
 where to bestow my Fruits? And he said,  
 This will I do: I will pull down my Barns,  
 and build greater; and there will I be-  
 stow all my Fruits and my Goods. And I  
 will say to my Soul; Soul, thou hast much  
 Goods laid up for many years; take thine  
 ease, eat, drink, and be merry. 'Tis the  
 perfect character of a person whose Treas-  
 ure was upon Earth, and his Heart and  
 Affections placed entirely There also: Who  
 look'd not at all upon Riches, Honour,  
 Power, and other worldly Advantages,  
 as Talents committed to his Charge, to  
 be

S E R M. be employed as Means and Opportunities of Good, of promoting and encouraging Truth, Virtue, Justice, and Charity in the World; (which is what our Saviour calls *being Rich towards God*;) But he esteemed them merely as Instruments of Luxury, Pride, and Vanity: In the midst of which Folly, *God said unto him, Thou Fool, this night shall thy Soul be required of thee; then whose shall all these things be, which thou hast provided?*

5thly, THAT our Lord's *View and Design* in the description he gives of the State of the *Rich man* and *Lazarus* after their Deaths, is what I have now represented; may be still further confirmed from the *connexion and coherence* of his *Whole Discourse*, and from the *Occasion* of his speaking the Parable. The Pharisees and Chief men among the *Jews*, in our Saviour's time, were extremely proud and vain-glorious, covetous and ambitious; *desiring to walk in long robes; loving the highest Seats in the Synagogues, and the chief Rooms at Feasts; making long Prayers for a Shew before Men, and at the same time devouring*

ring Widows Houses. Concerning these S E R M. persons, our Lord declares no less than XII. three several times in the *sixth chapter of* ver. 2, 5, *St Matthew*, that in the *Praise of Men*, 16. which their Hypocrisy and Worldly Grandour procured them, *they had their Reward*; but at the hands of God, for their Real Wickedness, *the same persons*, says Luke xx. he, *shall receive greater Damnation.* To 47. *These mens* corruptions, almost all our Lord's Discourses, through the Whole Gospel, have a *perpetual View*. With regard to *These particularly* in *this chapter* whereof *my Text* is a part, our Saviour warns his Disciples, ver. 13; *No man can serve two Masters: For either he will hate the one, and love the Other; or else he will hold to the One, and despise the Other: Ye cannot serve God and Mammon.* These Admonitions, the Evangelist observes, ver. 14, that *the Pharisees, who were Covetous, heard, and derided him.* Whereupon Jesus replied to them, ver. 15; *Ye are they which justify yourselves before Men, but God knoweth your Hearts: For That which is highly esteemed amongst Men, is abomination in the Sight of God.* And then,

S E R M. then, as an illustration and confirmation  
 XII. of That assertion, he *concludes* his Discourse with the *Parable of the Rich man and Lazarus*, ver. 19: Wherein is represented in the strongest and most affectionate manner, how Riches and Power and Grandour, and all those Advantages for which men are generally so highly valued in the *present World*; are no Marks at all of *God's Final Favour*: For that, in the *next World* God will judge entirely by Other measures, and will have No regard to any thing but to the *Virtues* taught in the *Law and the Prophets*; So that Many of Those who are *First* here, shall There be *Last*, and the *Last* shall be *First*.

II. *Secondly*, HAVING thus at large explained the *Nature and Design* of the *Parable*; it remains in the *Second* place, that we consider *What* the *Reason* might be, why our Lord chose in This Parable not to name *expressly* and *in plain words* any *particular Vice*, for which he represents the Rich man condemned; but to *leave it* rather *to be collected*, from the Whole Series of the Parable. And

*1st*, SINCE

1st, SINCE 'tis plain from the Intro-<sup>S E R M.</sup>duction, ver. 14, 15, that our Lord in-<sup>XII.</sup>tended here to reprove the *Covetous* and *Proud Pharisees*; 'tis reasonable to suppose, that he thought proper to express himself after *This manner*, as being more *likely to take effect*, and that the Pharisees might the more *readily* apply the Parable to *Themselves*. Had our Lord aggravated the *Particular Vices* of the rich man, whom he here represents as condemned; the Pharisees probably would thereupon in their own Minds have *thank-ed God, that they were not as Other men are*, guilty of *This* or the *Other* particular Vice, *or even as This rich Man*. But, in the manner our Saviour *Now* worded his description; their Own Hearts, how great soever their Pride was, could not but tell them they were such persons as he describes; and that All their *Grandour*, and their being *highly esteemed among Men*, was of no advantage before *God* the Judge of Hearts. And this could not but naturally lead them, (such of them as had Any sense of Religion at all,) to consider and collect from the whole Series of the

S E R M. Discourse, *what* were the *Vices* for which  
 XII. the *Rich man* was condemned.


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2dly, ANOTHER and (I suppose) the Principal Reason, why our Lord chose to express himself in this *general* and *less explicit* manner, without mentioning in *plain and direct words* Any *One Vice in particular*; was, that he might *raise the Attention* of his Disciples, to be aware of the *Great Danger* and numerous *Temptations*, to which an uninterrupted State of *Worldly Prosperity* does continually expose men. He *expressly* represents the *Rich man*, as condemned to the Place of *Torment*; But *What* his *Vices* were, he leaves to be *collected* from the *Circumstances* of the *whole Parable*; intimating, that no man could be ignorant, *what* are the *Temptations* incident to such a State. *Riches, Honour, Power, Reputation*, and other the like *Worldly Advantages*, 'tis evident, are not themselves *criminal*; nay, on the contrary, they are real *Blessings* of Providence; *Talents*, by the right Use of which, men may obtain a great *Reward*; *laying up in store for themselves a good Foundation against the Time to come*,  
 that



that they may attain eternal Life. But S E R M.  
*Who*, that knows the nature of Mankind, XII.  
 and observes what has generally happened  
 in the experience of All Ages and Nations;  
*Who* can assure himself, if he was to be  
 invested with *arbitrary Power and Domi-*  
*nion*, that he could execute That Trust  
 without any of that *Tyrannical Spirit*,  
 which the Governours of this World  
 have generally been so fond of? *Who* can  
 rely upon himself before-hand, that if he  
 was to be advanced to the highest Pitch  
 of *Honour and Grandour*, he should  
 wholly stand clear of all that *Pride and*  
*Insolence*, which has so frequently accom-  
 panied Other men's *Ambition*? *Who* can  
 be sure, if he should on a sudden find  
 himself surrounded with *immense Riches*,  
 with *Ease and Plenty and Flattery* on all  
 sides, that he could resist all those Tem-  
 ptations to *Voluptuousness and Luxury*, by  
 which Thousands and ten thousands have  
 been ruined before him? For *This reason*  
 our Lord, in almost all his Discourses,  
 seems as it were to *affect* always, upon  
*This head*, to use the *strongest* and to *Us-*  
 surprizing expressions. *Wo unto you that*  
 VOL. VII. T 2 are

S E R M. *are Rich, for ye have received your Conso-*  
 XII. *lation : And, 'Tis easier for a Camel to go*  
 through the Eye of a Needle, than for a  
 Rich man to enter into the Kingdom of  
 God. The Sense, as I have shown, is ;  
 not that the Possession or Enjoyment of  
 the Blessings of Providence in This life,  
 is itself criminal ; but that the *Tempta-*  
*tions to abuse* those Blessings, are *Many*  
 and *Great*, and require an excellent Tem-  
 per of Mind to overcome them. The  
*Intention* of Christ, in so frequently re-  
 peating his Admonitions of *This* sort, was  
*twofold*. That it might be matter of  
*Comfort* to the *Poor*, to consider, that  
*virtuous Poverty* is no mark at all of  
 the Divine displeasure ; but *particular-*  
*ly*, when occasioned by Persecution for  
 righteousness sake, it entitles men on the  
 contrary to an extraordinary Reward.  
 And on the other side, that he might  
 give *perpetual Caution* to the *Rich*, that  
 they *so* use the things of this *present*  
*World*, as that the ultimate Design of all  
 their Actions may have a constant View  
 to *That which is to come*. By *This* means  
 only, can they be effectually secured,  
 from

from falling into the same *Fault* with S E R M. the Rich man in this Parable, and into XII. the same *condemnation*. Consider always,  that *This World* is not our final State: In all things *whatsoever thou takest in hand, remember the End, and thou shalt never do amiss*; Ecclus. vii. 36.







# SERMON XIII.

Of the equitable Distribution of  
Things at the last Day.



I P E T. iv. 17, 18.

*For the time is come, that Judgment must begin at the House of God: And if it first begin at Us, what shall the End be of them that obey not the Gospel of God? And if the Righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the Ungodly and the Sinner appear?*



S men who govern themselves continually by Regards to Reason and Truth, by Principles of Virtue and Religion, by the Rules of Justice and Integrity; must necessarily at *all* times, in

S E R M.  
XIII.



SERM. the course of a vicious and debauched  
 XIII. world, subject themselves to some Incon-  
 ~~~~~ veniences, which Others easily avoid; and  
 deny themselves some Gratifications and  
 Advantages, wherein Others place their  
 chief Happiness of Life: So at *some par-*  
*ticular* Times, and in some *particular*  
 Circumstances and Situations of Things;  
 in times particularly of great Oppression  
 and Tyranny, in Times and Places of  
 great Superstition and Bigottry, in times  
 of prevailing Errors in matters of Reli-  
 gion, Errors violent in their Nature and  
 universal in their Extent; in *These* cases  
 (I say) more *particularly*, men of the  
 greatest Virtue and Integrity may very  
 possibly, merely upon account of their  
 adhering to Truth and of their Fearing  
 God, be exposed to the severest Sufferings,  
 and to the greatest Calamities, that *can*  
 be incident to Humane Life. This was,  
 in a very extraordinary degree, the Case  
 of the *Apostles* and *primitive* Christians,  
 in the early Ages of the Church: And  
 'tis *Now* the Case of all such Christians,  
 who, in Countries over-run with the Ty-  
 ranny and Superstions of Popery, have the  
 Courage

Courage to profess the great Truths of SERM.  
the Gospel. XIII.



'T WAS, at the time of St *Peter's* writing this epistle, (as it has been indeed at all *other* times before and after, both under the *Jewish* and under the *Christian* Dispensation, and under the State of *Nature* too,) a question of considerable difficulty; whence it comes to pass, that God, who is as *certainly pleased* with mens adhering at all times to *Truth and Virtue*, as we are *certain* of his *Existence* at all; has yet so frequently thought fit to permit the *best* and most *valuable* men, (if *Truth* and *Virtue* be of *Any Value*;) to be liable in many cases to undergo the greatest of Sufferings; and to become, of all men upon Earth, possibly the most miserable. To This the Apostle replies, in This and the foregoing Chapters; that they who *suffer* at any time, not as Malefactors, but *according to the Will of God*, ver. 19; have abundant reason to *commit the keeping of their Souls to him in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator*; There being in the Order and Method, and in the nature of the general and perhaps necessary Laws

of

S E R M. of God's Government of the Universe,  
 XIII. *many wise Reasons, (some of which we know, and others 'tis no wonder we should at present be ignorant of,) why things are for a time permitted to be in such a disorderly state. That, One reason in particular is, that the Tryal of mens Faith, (ch. i. 7,) being much more precious than of Gold that perishes though it be tried with Fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ. That Suffering at any time for well-doing, is not a thing to be ashamed of, (ch. iv. 16;) but on the contrary to be looked upon as a glorifying of God, and doing Honour to Truth and Virtue. That Afflictions of different kinds, have in all Ages been accomplished (ch. v. 9,) in our Brethren that are in the world. That even Christ himself went before us in This respect, (ch. ii. 21,) leaving us an Example, that we should follow his Steps. And that therefore good men ought never to think it strange concerning the fiery Tryal which is to try them; as though some strange thing happened unto them, ch. iv. 12. For the time is come, saith he,*  
*that*



that Judgment must begin at the house of God: And if it first begin at Us, what shall the End be of them that obey not the Gospel of God? And if the Righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the Ungodly and the Sinner appear?

I. First; The Time is come, that Judgment must begin. These words suppose, (which is the *First Particular* observable in my Text; and which, in the nature of *all Government*, is a thing necessary in itself;) that, in the Order and Method of God's Government of the Universe, there must be certain *Periods of Time*, certain proper *Seasons*, (to be determined by the Wisdom of Him who ruleth over All;) for *Judgments of Correction*, upon those who are capable of Amendment or Improvement; and *Judgments of Condemnation*, upon those who are finally worthy of Destruction. Without *This* Disposition of things *in general*, there would be no such thing in the World, as Government *at all*. God would indeed be an All-skilful *Artificer*, or Author of the Universe, as his *Workmanship*; and an All-powerful *Lord*, and Disposer of all things,


S E R M. things, as his *Property*: But he would  
 XIII. have *No Kingdom or Dominion over Sub-*  
 ~~~~~ *jects*; He would be *No Legislator, Moral*  
*Governour, or Judge, having Rule over*  
*rational and free Agents.* And were not  
 the Order and Method of things *ſo* di-  
 ſpoſed *in particular*, as that there were  
 certain *Times* appointed, and proper *Sea-*  
*ſons* for Judgment, after the accompliſh-  
 ment of the reſpective *Periods* of certain  
 great and long-connected Events; but  
*Juſtice* were *immediately* executed, every  
 moment: There could be no proper *Try-*  
*als* of many particular *Virtues*; there  
 could be no *Space* for *Repentance, Cor-*  
*rection, and Amendment*; there could be  
 Rom. xi. no manifeſtation of the *Depth of the*  
 33. *Riches both of the Wiſdom and Knowledge*  
*of God*, and of the other Attributes of  
 the divine Nature, in the great *Revolu-*  
*tions* of Providence, and in the various  
*Diſpenſations* of his Goodneſs and Mercy  
 in different Ages and Nations. In the  
 Reaſon and Nature of things therefore,  
 and in the Method of God's All-wiſe Go-  
 vernment; there muſt be, at the *Con-*  
*ſummation and Period* of any System of  
 Rational

Rational Creatures, (such as *Mankind* are,) S E R M.  
 a *General Judgment*, for the final *Separation* and *Punishment* of the incorrigible: XIII.  
 And, at *intermediate* times, *particular*  
*Judgments*; for the *Tryal* and *Improve-*  
*ment* of *Virtue*, and for the *Correction* and  
*Amendment* of such as are capable of being  
 reformed; that, as the Scripture expresses  
 it, they may be *purified*, and *made white*,  
 and *tried*; Dan. xii. 10.

II. *Secondly*; *Judgment* must begin at the  
 House of God: This is the *Second Parti-*  
*cular*, observable in the Text; The *Per-*  
*sons*, upon whom *Judgment* must *first* be-  
 gin. The *Kingdom* of God, or his *Do-*  
*minion absolutely*, is over *All*; over those  
 who *know* him, and those who *know*  
 him not, over those who *obey* his  
 Laws, and those who regard them *not*.  
 But the *House* or *Family of God*, or (as  
 'tis sometimes called in Scripture) the  
*Houshold of Faith*, are Those only, who  
*know God*, and *acknowledge* him as their  
*Father*; professing to *obey* his *Will*, and  
 to govern themselves by his *Laws*. These  
 are always represented as being his *Chil-*  
*dren* and his *Servants*; while the *Ungodly*  
 and


S E R M. and *Profane*, are spoken of as *Enemies*.

XIII. Now the same Perfections of the Divine Nature, and the same essential Rules of Government, which require that God should finally *destroy* his incorrigible *Enemies*; require likewise, that he should *correct* the Imperfections of his *Servants*, and, by proper Tryals, *improve* and *confirm* the Virtue of such as are capable of *Amendment*. God, is (in the language of the Gospel-Parables) the Supreme *Householder*; the *Father of All*; the *Father, of whom the whole Family in Heaven and Earth is named*; Eph. iii. 15. In This Household or Family of God, *Christ* governs as a *Son, over his own House*; Heb. iii. 6. *Moses*, was *faithful in it, as a Servant*, ver. 5; And so were the rest of the Prophets and Apostles. All *virtuous and good* men, in All Ages and in All Nations, and under All Dispensations of Religion; under the Light of Nature, under the Law of *Moses*, and under the Gospel of *Christ*; are of this *Household of Faith, Children of God*, obeying his Commandments, trusting in his Providence, and waiting for the accomplishment of his

his Promises in due season. God, who S E R M.  
best knows the Method of his own Go- XIII.  
vernment, and the Reasons of that Me-   
thod; who best knows the ways of bring-  
ing about his own Purposes, and what is  
in itself best absolutely and finally in the  
whole; has in his infinite Wisdom thought  
fit to appoint, that, in this present State,  
his Children and Servants, those who in  
my Text are stiled *The House of God*,  
should, generally speaking, have their  
Faith and Patience tried with Difficulties  
and Discouragements of various kinds.  
Concerning *Christ* himself, the Apostle  
tells us, 'twas what the Method and all-  
wise Reasons of God's universal Govern-  
ment required; 'twas what *became Him,*  
*for whom are all things, and by whom*  
*are all things*; that, in bringing many  
Sons unto Glory, he should *make the Cap-*  
*tain of their Salvation perfect through*  
*Sufferings*; Heb. ii. 10. And 'tis a very  
extraordinary Expression, which he adds  
upon This head, ch. v. 8; that Christ our  
great High Priest, *though he were a Son,*  
*yet learned he Obedience by the things which*  
*he suffered*. Now, (to use our Lord's own  
Argument,) if these things are spoken  
concerning

S E R M. concerning the *Master of the House*, how  
 XIII. *much more concerning them of his Household?*


For the *Disciple is not above his Master*, nor the *Servant above his Lord*; It is enough for the *Disciple that he be as his Master*, and the *Servant as his Lord*; Matt. x. 25. The *Patriarchs* of old, though they were in a peculiar manner the *Servants of God*, and *Heirs of the Promises*; and *Abraham* particularly, by a very singular and distinguishing Appellation, stiled *the Friend of God*, Jam. ii. 23; yet with so many Difficulties were they perpetually tried, that *they confessed they were only Strangers and Pilgrims on the Earth*, Heb. xi. 13. *Moses*, though by divine appointment the *Leader of God's people*; yet his undertaking of That Office, is in Scripture stiled his *choosing to suffer Affliction with the people of God*, and his *esteeming of the Reproach of Christ to be greater Riches than the Treasures in Egypt*; ver. 25, 26. After This, in the Ages before the Coming of Christ, the *Condition* of those persons, concerning whom the Apostle declares, that of *Them the World was not worthy*, Heb. xi. 31; The *Condition* (I say) and the *State of Life* of these persons was, that

that they had Tryal of cruel Mockings S E R M.  
 and Scourgings, yea moreover of Bonds and XIII.  
 Imprisonment; And that they wandered   
 about,---being destitute, afflicted, tormented,  
 ver. 36, 37. Our Lord himself, and his  
 Apostles, met with the like Treatment  
 themselves; And both He and They, con-  
 stantly testified to their Followers in the  
 generations to come, that *All who would* 2 Tim. iii.  
*live godly in Christ Jesus, should* (in some 12.  
 manner or other) *suffer Persecution*: In  
 Some Ages, and in Some Countries, from  
 the Malice of unbelieving Jews and Hea-  
 thens: At other Times, and in other Pla-  
 ces, from the Bigottry of idolatrous and  
 tyrannical Christians: And that, at all  
 Times and in all Places, even where Chri-  
 stianity should be most universally pro-  
 fessed, and when it might seem most to  
 prosper; still men of Truth and Virtue  
 should continue perpetually exposed to  
 Inconveniencies and Disadvantages of di-  
 verse kinds, from the strong Prejudices  
 and manifold Iniquities of a vicious and  
 debauched World. The Reason, one Rea-  
 son at least, why, in the course of Pro-  
 vidence, these thing *must* be; is for the

SERM. *Trial of mens Faith*, as St Peter expresses  
 XIII. it, 1 *Pet.* i. 7; for the *Trial* of their *Fidelity*, of their *Stedfastness* to the Principles of Truth and Virtue. That *they which are approved*, that is, who are *Proof* against the Temptations of an unrighteous World; *may be made manifest*; 1 *Cor.* xi. 19. Hence the Apostle to the *Hebrews* exhorts, ch. xii. 5, *My Son, despise not thou the chastning of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth; and scourgeth every Son whom he receiveth. Not for his own Pleasure, ver. 10; but for Our profit, that we might be partakers of his Holiness: For though no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of Righteousness, unto Them which are exercised thereby: ver. 11.*

Now from hence, by the way, appears clearly the Folly and Vanity of the Popish notion of *Purgatory*: Where men are supposed to be tormented in such a manner, and at such a *Time*, (after this State of *Probation* is intirely over,) that the Asserters of it do not *Themselves* pretend




tend that there is *There Any Tryal* of S E R M.  
*mens Faith or Virtue*, or *Any Room* ei- XIII.  
 ther for *Amendment* or *Improvement* : 

Which the Scripture expressly declares to be the End of all God's *Temporal Judgments*, and of all the *Afflictions* and *Chastisements* which he sends upon his children whom he *receives* and *loves*; Heb. xii. 6.

III. A *Third* Particular, worthy of distinct Observation, in the words of the Text; is That Severe Doctrine, which may seem to be included in the Supposition here put: *If the Righteous scarcely be saved*. That *Virtue* and *Righteousness* should be in Any Danger of being finally miserable; or that, by Any Appointment of *God*, the Salvation of *Virtuous* and *Good Men* should become improbable or uncertain; is undoubtedly inconsistent with the Nature, and with the Perfections of *God*. But the persons to whom is here given the Denomination of *Righteous*, are persons considered as indued with *such* Righteousness, as does by no means give them a *Claim of Right* to Happiness. They are *Righteous*,

S E R M. NOT in the Eye of the *Law of Righteousness*, but in the *favourable* construction of the *Gospel of Mercy*: Righteous, not by having *never transgressed* the Commands of God, but by having obtained *Forgiveness of their Sins* upon *Repentance*: Righteous, not in the Accounts of strict *Justice*, but in the *gracious estimations* of *Goodness and Compassion*. They are *such* persons as St Paul had in view, when he speaks of God as *justifying the ungodly*, Rom. iv. 5: *Saying, Blessed are they whose Iniquities are forgiven, and whose Sins are covered*: ver. 7. Now concerning *Such* persons, 'tis no great Wonder the Scripture should speak in such manner, as to represent its being a thing *difficult in itself*, and an *extraordinary Instance* of *Goodness* in God, to bring them to be partakers of *Everlasting Happiness*. The Nature of God's *Justice*, and of the rest of his divine *Perfections*; the necessary *Rules and Measures*, of his eternal *Government* over the Universe; and the *Qualifications*, essentially necessary to the State of *Heaven*; may very reasonably make even the *Best of men* apprehensive,  
 that

that they can *very hardly* be thought S E R M.  
*worthy* of That State. The *Extraordi-* XIII.  
*nariness* of the *Method* of God's manifest-   
 ing his Mercy, by the Incarnation of  
 Christ; The singular *Condescension* of our  
*Saviour himself*, in being willing thus to  
 take our Nature upon him; The great-  
 ness of the *Sufferings* he himself under-  
 went, in this State of Humiliation; And  
 the manifold Afflictions wherewith God  
 hath thought fit that great Numbers of  
 the best of his Servants, in almost every  
 Age of the World, should (as the Scrip-  
 ture expresses it) be *purified and made* Dan. xii.  
*white and tried*; and with which the 10.  
*Gate* has been *straitened*, and the *Way to* Mat. vii.  
*Life* has (as the word in the Original 14.  
 signifies) been *narrowed* and *beset with*  
*Difficulties*: All these, are Considerations  
 naturally and necessarily leading us to  
 This Apprehension, that the Salvation of  
 Men, the exalting *such* a kind of Crea-  
 tures as sinful Men are, to *such* a State  
 of Happiness as the Gospel proposes; is  
 not a matter, which, in the natural Pro-  
 gress of Things, might have been ex-  
 pected to be accomplished *in course*; but

S E R M. is certainly a very *great*, and, in the Method of God's eternal Government over the Universe, an *extraordinary* Effect of the Divine *Goodness and Mercy*. This is the *least* that can be meant, by That Expression of the Apostle in my Text; *If the Righteous scarcely be saved*. And the Design of it, is; not to terrify and discourage men, in the practice of Virtue; but, on the contrary, to convince them of the indispensable Necessity of a real and effectual Amendment of Manners; and to show them the reasonableness of Patience and Contentment under such Afflictions and Difficulties, wherewith God, who knows better what is useful for them than they can possibly judge for themselves, thinks fit at any time to make Tryal of their Faith and Constancy.

IV. *Fourthly and Lastly*; The *Last* thing observable in the words of my Text, is the *Inference* the Apostle here draws from the Observation he had laid down. *If Judgment must begin at the House of God, and even the Righteous scarcely be saved; then What shall the End be of them that obey not the Gospel? and Where shall the Ungodly*

Ungodly and the Sinner appear? This is S E R M.  
indeed just matter of Terrour to Wicked XIII.  
and Profane men: And therefore, know-  
ing the Terrour of the Lord, we per-  
swade men: 2 Cor. v. 11. The Ax is now  
laid to the Root of the Trees, according to  
John the Baptist's description of the Gos-  
pel-Dispensation: And every Tree which  
bringeth not forth good Fruit, shall cer-  
tainly be hewn down and cast into the Fire:  
Wherefore, Bring forth (says he) Fruits,  
worthy of Repentance; Luk. iii. 8, 9. The  
Prophet Ezekiel, describing in figurative  
language the final Destruction of the  
Wicked, represents the Lord giving Com-  
mand to the destroying Angel, ch. ix. 6;  
Slay utterly old and young, (except such  
as are There directed to be spared;) And  
begin, saith he, at my Sanctuary. 'Tis  
probably the very Expression alluded to by  
the Apostle in my Text: Judgment must  
begin at the House of God. In like man-  
ner in Jeremiah, God in prophetic lan-  
guage Thus threatens the wicked Nations  
of the Earth, ch. xxv. 29; Lo, I begin to  
bring evil on the City which is called  
by my Name; and should Ye be utterly  
U 4                    unpunished?

S E R M. *unpunished?* The Sense is the same, as  
 XIII. of those words of *Solomon*, (which in the  
 Greek Translation are the *very words* of  
 St Peter in my Text,) *Prov. xi. 31, Be-*  
*hold, the Righteous shall be recompensed in*  
*the Earth,* (that is, shall be punished for  
 their Offences;) *much more the Wicked*  
*and the Sinner.* What our Saviour said upon  
 another occasion, *Luk. xxiii. 31,* may very  
 properly be applied Here; *If they do these*  
*things in a green tree, what shall be done*  
*in the dry?* If God's *Judgments of Cor-*  
*rection* seem to us severe *Here,* what shall  
 be his *Judgments of Destruction* Hereaf-  
 ter? If our present *Afflictions* which are  
*but for a moment,* seem grievous and un-  
 supportable; then *who among us shall*  
*dwell with everlasting Burnings?* *Isai.*  
*xxxiii. 14.*

VICIOUS and profane men are very  
 apt to flatter themselves with Hopes of  
 final Impunity, *always from groundless,*  
*often from inconsistent and contradictory*  
 Arguments. *God,* they are sure, is infi-  
 nitely and essentially *Good:* Therefore  
 they cannot persuade themselves, he will  
 ever make them *miserable.* Or, on the  
 con-

contrary; Many men, they actually see and know, are under *very miserable* Circumstances: Therefore they cannot believe, that the World is' under the Government of a *Good God*. Both these *Conclusions*, are absurdly drawn from *Conjecture* against *Fact*; Whereas, on the contrary, all *True Reasoning* proceeds, from *Facts at present* certainly known, to what may *consequently* be expected hereafter. The *Being and Perfections* of God, are *absolutely demonstrable*; both in the *Nature of Things*, and from the *Frame of the Universe*. The *miserable Circumstances* of many persons here upon Earth, is also a *certain Truth*; not depending on the Faith of remote History, but seen every day in present Fact. What therefore vicious and unrighteous men see with their own eyes, that the Divine Perfections *can* permit to happen in this *present* time and place, and in a *mixed* World of *good* men and *bad*; How can they expect it should not be permitted *hereafter* in a much *greater degree* and in a more *lasting manner*, when the *Wicked* shall be separated into a World *by themselves*?

I SHALL

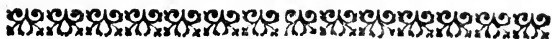
S E R M. I SHALL conclude with the Addition  
XIII. of this One necessary Caution, upon account of many melancholy pious persons; That, in like manner as the *Righteous* spoken of in the Text, are not Persons in a State of *Innocency*, but *Penitent Sinners* not without *difficulty* saved; so *the ungodly and the Sinners* here threatned with such severity, are not *Sincere* persons overtaken with *Faults*; but such, of whom St Paul says ( 1 Tim. i. 9, ) that *the Law was made for the ungodly and for Sinners, for the unboly and profane, for Murderers and Whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for men stealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine.*





# SERMON XIV.

Of GOD's disposing all Things  
to their proper Ends.



PROV. xvi. 4.

*The Lord has made all things for himself;  
yea, even the wicked for the day of evil.*



THE Book of *Proverbs* is a SERM.  
Collection of wise and useful XIV.  
Sayings and Observations, not  
put together in the way of a  
continued Discourse, but singly without  
any order or method: not in the way of  
a continued Discourse; but as Sentences  
of themselves pithy and momentous; and  
containing each of them singly, Matter  
of

S E R M. of wise Instruction, and fit to be enlarged  
 XIV. upon in our Meditations. The meaning  
 therefore of any particular Doctrine laid  
 down in this Book, is not ordinarily to be  
 discovered (as in other Books of Holy  
 Writ,) by comparing it with the Context  
 going before or after; but is to be sought  
 for only in the Words themselves, by  
 considering their true and proper significa-  
 tion, examining them by other places of  
 Scripture, and comparing them with the  
 general Reason of things and the Analo-  
 gy of Faith. The Words now read unto  
 you, are a remarkable instance of this kind;  
 having no Light afforded them from any  
 thing in the Context; containing in them-  
 selves a very weighty and important Doc-  
 trine; yet not without considerable Dif-  
 ficulty and Ambiguity in the Expression.  
 For if we take the Words in the Sense  
 our Translators understood them, to signi-  
 fy that God created all things, merely for  
 his own Glory and Pleasure; it is very  
 hard to apply the latter part of the  
 Words, as if God made the *Wicked* also  
 for his own Pleasure, and on purpose to  
 manifest his Power in their Destruction:  
 And

And if we render the words *more properly* and *more agreeably* to the original, not, *the Lord has made all things for himself*, but, *the Lord has made all things suited or fitted each to other*; yet still it will deserve to be considered, how God can be said to have *made* or *fitted* the wicked to Destruction; *The Lord has made all things suitable to each other, yea even the wicked to the day of evil.* I shall first consider the Words in the Sense our Translators apprehend them; and *secondly* in that *other* Sense, which seems, according to the original, to be their stricter and more proper signification; and wherein the *latter* part of the Text answers more directly to the *former*.

I. *First*, in the Sense according to which our Translation renders them, the *former* part of the Words contains a plain Doctrine, that *God created all things merely for his own good pleasure, without any external Motive*; The *latter* part contains a Question of great Difficulty, how God can be said to have made even the *wicked* for himself, for the manifesting of his *Glory in the Day* of Punishment; *The Lord*


S E R M. *Lord has made all things for himself, yea*  
 XIV. *even the wicked for the day of evil.*



I. IN the *First* Sense of the Words, the former part of them contains a plain and evident Doctrine, that *God created all things merely for his own good pleasure, without any external Motive.* And indeed *external Motive* 'tis impossible he could have *Any*, when in the Universe there was *nothing* existing without himself; Other Motive, besides his own good pleasure, he possibly could have *none*, who was already Infinite in all Perfections, and absolutely Self-sufficient to his own Happiness. The *good Pleasure* of God therefore, is the only reason why things were brought into Being at all; and *for himself only has the Lord made all things.* The Ignorance of debauched Imagination, and the Vanity of corrupt Philosophy departing from True Reason, made wicked and foolish men of old, seek out for *other* causes of the Existence of Things. Some fancied the World eternal by Necessity of Nature; and were so absurd as to imagine, that it was a satisfactory account of the cause of the Existence of such

Such an infinite Variety of things, to as-<sup>S E R M.</sup>  
firm that they existed without any cause,<sup>XIV.</sup>  
at all. Others ascribed the Formation of  
this beautiful Fabrick of the World, to  
blind Chance; and were so foolish as to  
contend, that That which could not ac-  
count for the Beauty and Contrivance of  
any single part, might yet be a sufficient  
cause of the Production of the Whole.  
But the Light of *natural Reason* itself,  
when carefully attended to, abundantly  
confuted these Follies; and to inquisitive  
Persons, *the invisible things of God from  
the Creation of the World were clearly seen,  
being understood by the things that are  
made.* Yet because all Men had not lei-  
sure and abilities to study the Works of  
*Nature*, God was pleased to declare him-  
self by a clear *Revelation* to persons of *all*  
capacities, to be the Creator of Heaven  
and Earth, and of all things that are  
therein. By *this* Character he made him-  
self known to the Patriarchs and to the  
*Jews*, and distinguishes himself from Idols  
which are no Gods. Upon *this* account  
he is every where in the Old Testament  
described as receiving Glory, because that  
by

S E R M. by the word of the Lord were the heavens  
 XIV. made, and all the Host of them by the  
 breath of his Mouth: and in the New  
 Testament St John in his Vision describes  
 all Creatures praising God upon this ac-  
 count, 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.*  
 Rev. iv. 11. *For his Pleasure; that is, By  
 his alone Will and All-powerful Com-  
 mand: Not that he himself stood in  
 want of any thing; but only his Goodness  
 moved him to bring creatures into Being,  
 on which he might display that Goodness,  
 and to whom he might communicate his  
 Happiness. This is sometimes expressed  
 otherwise, by God's doing things for his  
 own Glory; Is. xliii. 7; *I have created  
 him for my Glory, I have formed him, yea  
 I have made him. The Glory of God, is  
 not any thing properly relating to him-  
 self, any Advantage or Benefit to Him;*  
 but 'tis the communicating of his Good-  
 ness, by Creating the World; the promo-  
 ting his Likeness among rational Crea-  
 tures, by the Practice of Righteousness;  
 and*

and the making them partakers according S E R M.  
 to their capacities, of some degrees of that XIV.  
 Happiness, which in Himself is infinite   
 and incomprehensible as his Nature, and  
 boundless as his unlimited Duration. This  
 is the meaning of God's *making all things*  
*for himself*, who yet stands in want of  
 Nothing: This is *his* establishing a  
 Kingdom in the World, whose Kingdom  
 yet by Nature ruleth over all; This is  
*his* doing all things for his own Glory,  
 whose Glory yet is capable of no Ac-  
 cession. *For of him, and thro' him, and* Rom. xi.  
*to him are all things, to whom be glory and* 36.  
*dominion for ever.*

2dly, THE latter part of the Words,  
 according to the present interpreta-  
 tion, contains a Question of great Dif-  
 ficulty; how God can be said to have  
*made even the wicked for himself*, for the  
 manifesting of his Glory *in the day of*  
*Punishment*; *The Lord has made all things*  
*for himself, yea even the wicked for the*  
*day of evil.* And here there have been  
 some men so very unreasonable, so little  
 regardful of the natural and unchange-  
 able Perfections of God, and so little at-

S E R M. tentative to the true scope and design of the  
 XIV. Scriptures, as to contend that God has *on*  
 purpose made many Creatures necessarily  
 inclined to Wickedness, that he might  
 manifest his Power and Authority in their  
 Destruction. As if the infinitely merci-  
 ful and good God, whose tender Mercies  
 are over all his Works, could take  
 delight in the Misery of his Creatures;  
 or as if the Absolute Sovereignty and  
 Power of God, could be any ways ad-  
 vanced by the Destruction of finite Crea-  
 tures, which, in respect of his incompre-  
 hensible Greatness, are less than nothing  
 and Vanity. No: Our very *Natural No-*  
*tions* of God, ascertain us that this is ut-  
 terly inconsistent with the Nature of Him  
 who is perfect Goodness: And the *Reve-*  
*lation* he has made to us of himself in  
 Scripture, is in nothing more full, than  
 in this declaration, that the *Destruction*  
 of Sinners is *from themselves*, and that  
 God has *no Pleasure in the Death of him*  
*that dieth*; but only, as a Wise and Good  
 Governour, he finds it necessary to cut  
 off those that will not be reformed. *God*  
 made not *Death*, neither has he pleasure in  
 the


Wisd. i. 12



the destruction of the Living; But ungodly men with their Works and Words called it unto them: For God created man to be immortal, and made him to be an image of his own eternity; But thro' envy of the Devil came Death into the World, and they only who hold of his side do find it; [Wisd. i. 12.] or, as 'tis excellently expressed by the Author of the Book of Eccclus; ch. xv. ver. 11. Say not thou, 'tis through the Lord that I fell away; for thou oughtest not to do the things that he hateth; Say not thou, he hath 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 hath set before man life and Death; and whether him liketh, shall be given him; He hath commanded no man to do wickedly, neither hath he given any man licence to sin. His Power stands in no need of wicked men to accomplish his designs, tho' he sometimes makes use of them as the most proper instruments; and his Justice makes it impossible he should be the Author of Sin, in order to show forth his Severity in the Punish-

S E R M.  
XIV.  
ii. 23.

S E R M. ment of it. Concerning the destruction  
 XIV. even of the *Heathen Nations*, the *Jewish*  
 ~~~~~ Writer of the Book of *Wisdom* declares  
 ch. xii. 12. honourably concerning God: *Who shall*  
*accuse thee for the Nations that perish,*  
*whom thou hast made? For, seeing thou*  
*art righteous thyself, thou orderest all things*  
*righteously; thinking it not agreeable with*  
 Thy Power, *to condemn him that has*  
*not deserved to be punished.* Nothing there-  
 fore is more impossible, nothing more  
 blasphemous against God; than to ima-  
 gine that *he* created any Beings, with *de-*  
*sign* that they might be wicked and mi-  
 serable. Nevertheless, because 'tis certain  
 that nothing comes to pass without his  
 Permission, nothing subsists but by his  
 Power and Concurrence, nothing is done  
 but by the Use or Abuse of those Faculties  
 which *he* has created; therefore in Scripture  
 phrase, by a figurative expression, and in  
 acknowledgment of the Supreme Super-  
 intendency of Providence over all Events,  
*God* is represented as *doing* every thing  
 that is *done* in the World. When a man  
 is slain by accident, and without *any* ill  
 intention in him that did it; *God* is said  
 to

to have *delivered* him into the hand of S E R M. his Neighbour; *Exod.* xxi. 13. When Sa- XIV. tan tempted *David* to number the people,  as the Scripture expressly assures us, 1 *Chron.* xxi. 1; yet, because it could not be done without God's permission, therefore the same Scripture elsewhere expresses it, as if *God* had moved *David* to number 2 Sam. *Israel* and *Judah*; and sometimes speaks xxiv. 1. of God's *sending upon men an evil Spirit*, Judges ix. and God's *sending them strong delusion*, ve- 23. ry figuratively and improperly speaking: 11. xxix; for, speaking strictly and literally, as *God* 10, 13. cannot be tempted with evil, so neither Ezek. xiv. tempteth he any man; *Jam.* i. 13. When 9. any Calamity befalls a Nation or People; 2 Thes. ii. because it cannot be without the direction 11. of Providence, *God* is represented as 1 Kings *Creating* a new thing; *Is.* xlv. 7, *I form* xxii. 22. *the Light*, and create *Darkness*; *I make* Job xii. 16. *peace*, and create *evil*; *I the Lord* do all Rev. xvii. *these things*; and *Amos* iii. 6; *Shall there* 17. *be evil in a City*, and the *Lord* has not done it? Some have been so inconsiderate, [not to say profane,] as to understand these passages, to signify God's *decreeing* all the *Wickedness* that is practised in the *World*;

S E R M. Whereas on the contrary, even of *natural* evils, of Afflictions and Calamities, it is true only in a *figurative* Sense that they are of *God's* creating; for properly and in reality, they are drawn down only by men upon *themselves*, by their own Wickedness and Incurribleness. When *good* men, by the knowledge and Assistances of the Gospel, sincerely obey the Will of God, and abound in works of piety and righteousness; because 'tis *by grace* they are *saved*; because 'tis by the undeserved mercy and favour of God, that That Knowledge and That Assistance is granted to them; therefore they are stiled, his *Workmanship*, created in *Christ Jesus* unto good works, which God hath before ordained that they should walk in them; Eph. ii. 10. On the other hand, because wicked and incorrigible men are at length forsaken by the Spirit of God, and left in the hands of their own counsel; the effect of which desertion, is their becoming insensible and hardened in Habits of Sin; therefore *God* is said in some places, not to have given them an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, Deut. xxix. 4;

nay,

nay, actually to make *the ears* of such people *heavy*, and to *shut their eyes*, that *seeing they might not see*, and *bearing they might not understand*; which in other places is expressed by way of complaint, because *they seeing see not*, and *bearing they bear not*, neither do they understand; Matt. xiii. 14. In like manner, because wicked and disobedient persons when they obstinately reject and oppose the Gospel; do exactly answer the Character by which the Prophets of old described such persons in their predictions; therefore they are said in Scripture to have been *before of old ordained to this condemnation*, Jude iv. to be *vessels of wrath fitted to destruction*, Rom. ix. 22; *whereunto also they were appointed*, 1 Pet. ii. 8. *fitted to destruction*; not by any Decree or appointment of God; for on the contrary God is declared in the very same verse, to have *endured them with much long-suffering*, waiting for their amendment: but *fitted* by their own obstinacy for *that destruction*, which the Prophets foretold was *ordained* to come upon such persons. When God by many repeated trials made *Pharaoh's*

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 XIV.  
 If. vi. 9.  
 Mat. iv 10.

S E R M. *raob's* obstinacy conspicuous to the World,  
 XIV. and his Punishment exemplarily remarkable; this is expressed in Scripture by *God's* hardning *Pharaoh's* heart, and *raising him up* (or making him eminent) *for the same purpose, that he might shew his Power in him, and that his Name might be declared throughout all the Earth*; Rom. ix. 17. And concerning wicked *Christian Princes* in *Corrupt times*, *God hath put it in their hearts*, saith the Angel, *Rev. xvii. 17. to fulfill his Will, and to agree and give their Kingdom unto the Beast, i. e. to the Romish tyranny, until the words of God shall be fulfilled.* Lastly, because God in every Work of Creation and Providence, and particularly in his distribution of Punishments to the Wicked, manifests his Power and Wisdom and Justice to the World; therefore in the Text God is represented as having *made all things for himself, yea even the wicked for the Day of evil.* In which, and many other the like places, the Scripture using a figurative manner of expression, in ascribing those things to God, of which he is not properly and strictly the Author, but  
 which

which he only makes use of in the Wisdom of Providence, as Instruments to bring about his just and wise designs; it is therefore a great abuse and misinterpretation of Scripture, to infer from any such passages as these, as if God was literally the Author or Cause of any man's Sin, or as if he made any man wicked, with *design* to manifest his Severity in making him miserable. On the contrary, the Scripture in numberless plain places, which cannot be mistaken, declares with sufficient clearness the literal meaning, which lies under these figurative expressions; and it is obvious enough to any one that compares the different passages before cited, that this expression in the Text, that God has *made even the wicked for the day of evil*, can mean nothing more, than what in other words is thus expressed by *Job*, Job xxi. 30; *The wicked is reserved to the day of destruction; they shall be brought forth to the day of wrath.* And more largely by the Son of *Sirach*, ch. xi. 16; xxxix, 25; xl. 9; *Error and Darkneſs had their beginning together with Sinners, and evil ſhall wax old with*

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*with them that glory therein: For the good, are good things created from the Beginning, so evil things for Sinners: Death and Bloodshed, Strife and Sword, calamities, famine, tribulation and the Scourge, These things are created for the Wicked, and for their sakes came the Flood. Which day of Wrath, so far as it signifies the execution of temporal judgments only, is thus excellently described in the book of Wisdom, ch. v. ver. 20; His severe wrath shall be sharpen for a Sword, and the World shall fight with him against the unwise: Hailstones full of wrath, shall be cast as out of a stone-bow; and the water of the Sea shall rage against them, and the floods shall cruelly drown them; Yea, a mighty Wind shall stand up against them, and like a storm shall blow them away; thus iniquity shall lay wast the whole Earth, and ill-dealing shall overthrow the thrones of the Mighty.*

II. Secondly; IT remains in the *second* place, that we consider the Words of the Text in their other and more proper rendering, wherein the *latter* part of the words answer more strictly to the *former*;

The



*The Lord has made all things suited to each other, yea even the wicked to the day of evil.* And in *this* Sense, the general doctrine they contain, is evident; that God has made every thing fitted for its proper end and purpose, and wisely contrived to answer its intention. The only question *here*, is, how God can be said to have *fitted* the wicked to Destruction. But *this* difficulty also will disappear, if we consider, that, according to the nature of the *Hebrew* language, *fitting the wicked to the day of evil*, signifies nothing more, than causing wickedness and punishment to be proportionable; that is, not that God *causes* wickedness to be at all, but that he causes punishment to be proportionable to the wickedness that he finds in Men. And this is not only an Instance, but of all others the greatest and most eminent instance, of the Wisdom and exact Adjustment of the Works of God. *Good is set against Evil, and Life against Death; so is the godly against the sinner, and the sinner against the godly: So look upon all the Works of the most High, and there are two and two one against another,*

S E R M. *other* : Ecclus. xxxiii. 14. Or, as it is in  
 XIV. the Text ; *The Lord has made all things*  
 ~~~~~ *suitable to each other, yea even the wicked*  
*to the day of evil.* As God has made  
 every thing throughout the World in ex-  
 act proportion, so particularly in this has  
 he taken especial Care, that sooner or la-  
 ter, by direct consequence or by positive  
 infliction, by the natural effect of the  
 things themselves or by the immediate  
 interposition of his own Authority, either  
 in the present state or at least in the Life  
 to come, Wickedness and Misery shall  
 bear a just proportion to each other. This  
 Adjustment of mens condition to their de-  
 serts, is the true Greatness and Glory of  
 a Kingdom ; and as illustrious a Mani-  
 festation of the *Justice and Majesty* of  
 God in his Government of the *Moral*  
 World, as the Beauty and Harmony of  
 the Parts of the *Material* World, and the  
 wonderful Fitness of every thing therein  
 to its proper End, is an undeniable Ma-  
 nifestation of his Power, and Wisdom in  
 the Works of *Nature*. In the Frame of  
*Nature*, God has *ordered* and disposed *all*  
*things*, as the Wise man expresses it, *in*  
*measure,*

measure, number, and Weight. He by his S E R M.  
 Wisdom made the Heavens, and stretched XIV.  
 out the Earth above the Waters; He made

great Lights, the Sun to rule the day, and the Moon and the Stars to govern the Night: Pf. cxxxvi. 5. He hath replenished the Earth with suitable inhabitants; each in their proper places; the Land, with Beasts and Insects, the Air with Birds, the Water with Fish; To each of these he has furnished their proper Food, and given them their meat in due season; He has adorned the Earth with Plants and Flowers, mixing usefulness with Variety, and cloathing each with inimitable Beauty; so that even Solomon himself in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these: He has tempered the Cold, with the use of Fire; and the Heat with perpetual gentle Winds; He has appointed the Day, for Work and Labour; and the Darkness of the Night, for Rest and Refreshment: And over all his Works, he has placed Man, as the Lord and Owner of all; capable of knowing, and of obeying his Creator; capable of applying the whole Creation, to his own Use and Benefit; capable of con-  
 temp-

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templating in every part of the Universe, the Wisdom and Glory of its Maker; so that thro' *him*, all the Works of the Lord, animate and inanimate, by furnishing variety of materials for *Man's* Contemplation, may properly enough be said, themselves to *praise the Lord*, to *bless him and magnify him for ever*. These things cannot be better expressed, than in the Words of the Holy Psalmist, *Pf. civ. 1. O Lord, thou art very great, thou art clothed with Majesty and Honour;-----who stretchedst out the Heavens like a curtain;-----who laidest the foundations of the Earth,-----and coveredst it with the deep as with a garment;-----He sendeth the springs into the vallies, which run among the hills; They give drink to every Beast of the Field, and the wild Asses quenck their thirst; By them shall the Fowls of the Air have their habitation, which sing among the branches: He watereth the hills from his chambers, the Earth is satisfied with the fruit of thy Works: He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of Man; He appointeth the Moon for certain*

*tain*


tain seasons, and the Sun knoweth his going down; and so on through the whole Psalm. Thus in the Fabrick of the natural World, God has made all things suitable to each other, every thing exactly fitted, and proportioned with the greatest and most exquisite Wisdom, to the End for which it was intended. In the Government of the Moral World, in his ordering of rational Creatures, the Justice and Equity of God is no less exact, than his Wisdom is conspicuous in the Fabrick of the Material one. He has fitted and adjusted every thing with the utmost exactness and congruity, even the Wicked to the day of Evil; the Punishment of Sin, to the degree of its Demerit. And this, both in the natural constitution of things, and by the positive interposition of his Power and Authority. First, in the natural consequence and constitution of things, and in the ordinary course of Providence, he has, with great proportion, annexed the Day of Evil to the Practice of Wickedness. As Light is sown for the Righteous, and joyful gladness for them that are upright in Heart; so he

that



S E R M. *that soweth Iniquity, shall reap Vanity,*

XIV. Prov. xxii. 8; or, as 'tis expressed, Job

 iv. 8, *I have seen them that plow Iniquity, and sow Wickedness, reap the same. As the Work of Righteousness, is Peace; and the Effect of Righteousness, Quietness and Assurance for ever; so the Wicked shall eat of the Fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices; Prov. i. 31.*

The Scripture every where represents Misery, as the proper and natural consequence of Sin: *Is. iii. 10; Say ye to the Righteous, it shall be well with him; for they shall eat the fruit of their doings: Wo unto the Wicked, it shall be ill with him, for the reward of his hands shall be given him: And Jer. ii. 19, Thine own Wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee; know therefore and see that 'tis an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God.* And the Wise man, among things that have the most necessary connexion, reckons a rod for the Fool's back, Prov. xxvi. 3; and ch. xix. ver. 29, *Judgment*, says he, *is prepared for Scorners, and Stripes for the back of Fools.* And not of Wickedness

*in general* only, but of most *particular* S E R M.  
Vices also, it is observed in Scripture, that XIV.  
they bring along with them, and are naturally suited to, their proper *day of Evil*.  
Of *Intemperance*, that it destroys the health of the Body; of *ill-gotten Riches*, that they either *make themselves Wings and fly away*, or are *kept by the owners thereof to their Hurt*: of *Envy*, that it *slayeth the silly one*, and consumeth him as the *rottenness of the Bones*; of *Pride*, that it *goeth before destruction, and a haughty Spirit before a Fall*; of *Judas's* betraying his Master to Death, that the guilt of it brought *him* to an untimely and unnatural Death, *that he might go to his own Place*; of the idolatrous Heathens who *changed the Truth of God into a Lie*, that by the practice of unnatural and dishonourable Vices among themselves, they *received in themselves that recompence of their Error which was meet*: Rom. i. 27.

BUT *secondly*, besides this natural Tendency of Things themselves, God does moreover take care, by the positive interposition of his Power and Authority in the World, that every evil Work shall

SER M. have its proper recompence in the day  
 XIV. of evil. Most strictly and exactly shall  
 this be done at the great and final day  
 of Accounts, when God shall bring every  
 Work into judgment, with every secret  
 thing, whether it be good or whether it  
 be evil. But very frequently even in this  
 present World, is the Sinner recompenced  
 according to his doings; and not unu-  
 sually in the very same manner, and by  
 the same things that were the instruments  
 of his Sin. *He hath graven and digged  
 up a pit, and is fallen himself into the  
 destruction that he made for other; For  
 his travail shall come upon his own head,  
 and his Wickedness shall fall on his own  
 pate; Ps. vii. 16.* The Scripture affords  
 us many Examples of this kind: Of *Ado-  
 nibezek*, who suffered the same cruel  
 Treatment, which he himself had for-  
 merly exercised upon others; so that he  
 was forced to confess, *Judg. i. 7; As I  
 have done, so God has requited me.* Of  
*Agag*; to whom *Samuel* declared, *1 Sam.*  
*xv. 33; As thy Sword has made Women  
 childless, so shall thy Mother be childless  
 among Women.* Of *Joab*; to whom the  
 Lord



Lord returned his blood upon his own Head, who fell upon two men more righteous and better than he, and slew them with the Sword; 1 Kings, ii. 32. Of Haman, who fell by the same ignominious Death, which he had prepared for a man more excellent than himself; *Esth.* vii. 10. Of David himself, for his great Sin in the matter of *Uriah*; when upon account of the Murder he had committed, it was declared to him from God, that *the Sword* should not depart from his house for ever; and upon account of his *Adultery*, that his own Family should be permitted to be dishonoured *publicly*, in reproof of the crime that he had committed in *secret*. Lastly, of the whole Nation of the *Egyptian* Idolaters: concerning whom the Author of the Book of *Wisdom* thus expresses himself, ch. xii. ver. 23; and xi. 16; and xv. 18, compared with xvi. 1; *Whereas men have lived dissolutely and unrighteously, thou hast tormented them with their own abominations: They worshipped Beasts that are most hateful;--- therefore by the like were they punished worthily, and by the multitude of*

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S E R M. *Beasts tormented: For the foolish devices of*  
 XIV. *their wickedness, wherewith being deceived*  
 they worshipped serpents void of Reason,  
 and the vilest of beasts; thou didst send a  
 multitude of unreasonable Beasts upon them  
 for vengeance; That they might know that  
 wherewithal a man sinneth, by the same  
 also shall he be punished.

THE Use of what has been said, is, 1<sup>st</sup>,  
 that we justify God, and give glory to  
 him in all his proceedings; whose Plea-  
 sure it is not, that any man should be  
 wicked; but he punishes them *here*, that  
 they *may* repent; and *hereafter*, if they  
 repent *not*. There is nothing in the whole  
 tenour of Scripture more sollicitously pro-  
 vided against, than that men should not  
 think God to be Author or Decreeer of  
 Sin. In numberless places he declares to  
 Sinners, that their Destruction is wholly  
 of themselves, that they bring it upon  
 themselves by their own Obstinacy only,  
 and that he hath no pleasure at all in  
 the Death of Him that dieth: And a very  
 severe reproof is given to such as speak  
 otherwise of God; *Jude 15; Behold, the*  
*Lord cometh with ten thousand of his Saints,*

*to their proper Ends.*

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*to execute judgment upon All, and to convince all that are ungodly among them, of all their ungodly deeds, which they have ungodly committed, and of all their Hard Speeches which ungodly Sinners have spoken against Him.*

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~ ~ ~

2dly, **T H A T** if we would escape the *day of evil*, we must avoid the *wickedness* to which it is annexed. There is nothing more unreasonable, than for men to live viciously, and yet hope to escape the necessary consequences of their Vices. Happiness in the Nature of *God*, is in conjunction with perfect Righteousness and Holiness: Happiness in the Nature of *Things*, can arise only from the Participation of those divine Perfections: Happiness therefore in *Men*, cannot be in connexion with Impiety and Vice. And if it naturally *were* possible; yet it would not be *fit* for God to permit the just proportions of things to be so disordered: For it *becomes* the Almighty Governor of the Universe, and his Justice and Wisdom are highly concerned therein, to *make every one thing answerable to another, even the wicked and the day of evil.*

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S E R -





# SERMON XV.

Of a Future Judgment.



ACTS xvii. 31.

*Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in Righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained.*



HERE is no where in the S E R M.  
 whole *New Testament* a more XV.  
 sublime and affectionate Summary of the Christian Doctrine, than in this Discourse of *St Paul* to the men of *Athens*. *Athens* was at that time the Seat of Learning in

S E R M. *Greece*, the Great Resort of Philosophers  
 XV. of all Sects, and of the ablest and most  
 accomplished men in every part of Literature. Whatever the Light of Nature and Reason, assisted with all the Helps of acquired Learning, could possibly discover, concerning the *Nature of God* and of *true Religion*; might naturally have been expected to be met with *here*. *Here*, if in *Any* part of the World, it was reasonable to imagine, might have been found *Numbers* of men, free from the contagion of those gross Superstitions and absurd Idolatries, which had overspread the ignorant and unlearned World. But on the contrary, in *Fact*, it appears from This History of *St Paul*, and from the agreeing account which all *Other* Ancient Writers give us of this matter; that This School of Reason and Philosophy, this eminent Seat of Learning, was itself as deeply overwhelmed and buried in Superstition and Idolatry, as any *Other* part of the less Learned World. The *obvious Inference* from which observation, is, the *Usefulness* and *Necessity* of *Revelation*. For how true soever it be, (as most true and certain

certain it is,) that the Principles of true Religion are perfectly agreeable to Nature and Reason, and may even demonstrably be deduced from thence by irresistible Arguments; yet so it was, that Few or None of these most Learned Philosophers, either Themselves *saw and traced this Light* of Reason and Truth, or *dared to discover and recommend* it to Others. From whence it evidently appears, that those *Right Notions* concerning God and the *Natural Obligations of Religion*, which are Now so plain and obvious in *Reason*, that they are urged by Many as an Argument against the *Needfulness* of any *Revelation at all*; are themselves generally borrowed from the *Light of Revelation*, even by Those who use them as an argument *against* it. But This, *by the way*.

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THE Disposition of the City of *Athens*, at the time *St Paul* travelled That way, being such as I have described; *his Spirit was stirred in him*, ver. 16, it filled him with great and just indignation, to see so eminent a City *wholly given to Idolatry*. And because the Persons he was at This place to converse with, were principally Philo-

S E R M. Philosophers, and men of Reason and Argument; *here* therefore was a noble Field for him to display the whole Force and Power of his Eloquence. And what our Saviour said concerning the *Samaritan City* coming out to hear him, *Lift up your eyes, and look on the Fields, for they are white already to Harvest*, Joh. iv. 35; might now, in all Appearance, *much more* have been said concerning the Apostle's Auditory at *Athens*. To draw to him their Attention, and cause his Discourse to enter more effectually into their Minds; he makes an accidental Remark upon Somewhat he had observed in the place, to be the seeming occasion of what he had to propose to them. *As I passed by, says he, and beheld your Devotions, I found an Altar with This Inscription, To the Unknown God; ver. 23.* This naturally suggested to him to mention, both the *Knowledge* they already in Some Measure had of the *True God*, and at the same time the extreme *Ignorance* their Manner of Worship showed they were in, of his *True Nature and Attributes*. That God, *therefore*, says he, *whom ye ignorantly worship,*



worship, Him declare I unto you. And S E R M.  
Thus, beginning at what they already XV.  
professed to know, he deduces his Argument through what they could not but acknowledge, to a conclusion necessarily inferring what they would gladly have denied. First he alledges to them, that *the God who made the World and all things therein, the Lord of Heaven and Earth,* ver. 24, must (according to True Reason) be acknowledged to be One Omnipresent Being, who is not *far from every One of us, for in Him we live and move and have our Being.* That, consequently, all things being the Works of his Hands, the Light of Nature itself teaches us to discover him, and the Works of the Creation naturally lead men to him: *He hath made of One Blood all Nations of Men, (ver. 26,) for to dwell on all the face of the Earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their Habitation: That they might seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him and find him.* From This natural Notion of God, which the *Athenian Philosophers* could not deny, the Apostle  
imme-

S E R M. immediately proceeds to urge them with  
 XV. this most obvious deduction, in reproof  
 of their idolatrous Worship; that This  
 Omnipresent God, who made and governs  
 the Universe, *dwelleth not in Temples made  
 with Hands, Neither is worshipped with  
 mens Hands, as though he needed any thing;  
 seeing he giveth to All, Life and Breath  
 and all things, ver. 25: And that He,*  
 whose *Offspring* We ourselves are; whose  
 Workmanship not only the *material  
 World*, but even *rational and immortal  
 Spirits* are; cannot Himself be *like unto  
 Gold, or Silver, or Stone, graven by Art  
 or Man's Device; ver. 29.* This being it-  
 self exceeding clear, and what the Philo-  
 sophers were very sensible of; yet the  
*great Ignorance* in which the generality of  
 the World was involved, he tells them,  
 would *extenuate* in some degree, in the  
 Eyes of a merciful God, the Folly of  
 the deluded Nations: *The Times of this  
 ignorance, God winked at; ver. 30.* But  
 then at the same time, from this *general  
 Ignorance*, which prevailed notwithstanding  
 the clearness of the thing itself in  
 point of true Reason, he argues very  
 strongly

strongly for the needfulness and credibi- S E R M.  
lity of a *Revelation*: ver. 30, *But Now* XV.  
*he commandeth all men every where to re-*  
*pent; Because he hath appointed a day,*  
*wherein he will judge the World in Right-*  
*eousness.* And from thence he lets him-  
self into the Proof of the *Christian Reve-*  
*lation in particular*: *God will judge the*  
*World by That man whom he hath or-*  
*daind; whereof he hath given assurance*  
*unto all men, in that he has raised him*  
*from the Dead.*

IN discoursing upon which Subject, I shall lay before you some brief Observations, upon the *following Particulars* contained in the Words. 1<sup>st</sup>, *The Proof* we have, that there shall be a *Judgment*: *God will judge the World.* 2<sup>dly</sup>, *The Time*, when *This Judgment* shall be: *He hath appointed a Day, in the which he will judge the World.* 3<sup>dly</sup>, *The Person*, by whom the World shall be judged: He will judge it by *That man, whom he hath ordaind.* 4<sup>thly</sup>, *The Persons, who shall be called into Judgment*: It is the *Whole World.* And *Lastly*, the *Manner or Method*, in which this Great Affair will be transacted:

S E R M. transacted : He will judge in *Righteous-*  
 XV. *ness.*



I. *First*; The *Proof* we have, that there shall be a *Judgment*, is very strong and clear, both in the *Reason* of *Things*, and in the *Revelation* of *God*. *Revelation* here, does but *confirm* what *Reason* teaches; and *Reason* makes *credible* the *Revelation*. The *Difference* between *Good* and *Evil*, between *Virtue* and *Vice*, is (in the *Nature* of *Things*) *essential*, *necessary*, *immutable*, and *eternal*. And what our *Saviour* says in the *Gospel*, with relation to the *unchangeable Determinations* of *God*; is in *This case* equally true in the very *Nature* of the *Things* themselves; *Heaven* and *Earth* shall *pass away*, but *not a tittle of the Law* shall ever *fail*. This natural and *essential* *Difference* between *Good* and *Evil*, every *rational Mind* is as necessarily *sensible* of, as every *Eye* distinguishes between *Light* and *Darkness*: And upon *This* is founded That natural *Conscience*, whose *gentle* *Admonitions*, and yet *Admonitions* that *will be* heard, are to every man the *perpetual Still Voice* of *God*. Even the *Gentiles*,

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Gentiles, saith St Paul, by Nature, having not the Law, are a Law unto themselves; which show the work of the Law written in their Hearts, their Conscience also bearing Witness, and their Thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another: S E R M. XV.

Rom. ii. 14. Men have therefore, even by the *Light of Nature*, a Rule to walk by; They see, and distinguish, what is Good or Evil; They chuse freely, and determine their own Actions; They reflect upon what they have done, with an unavoidable *Sense* of having done well or ill: They are, consequently, capable of *Accounting* for what they do; being worthy either of *Blame* or *Commendation*, either of *Punishment* or *Reward*. Wherefore if there be a God who governs the World, who gave men these rational and moral Faculties, and who has himself any Real Concern about Good and Evil; (without which, he would not indeed be *Governour of the World*, that is, he would not be *God*, but mere *Fate* or *Nature*: If there be a *God*, I say, who governs the World,) it cannot but be *One* proper *Act* of his *Government*, to bring to Judgment such  
Creatures

S E R M. Creatures as are capable of being judged,  
 XV. and to reward or punish them according  
 to their Behaviour. Which since it is  
 not done *here*, (as indeed the proper Season of Judgment, is not till the Time of Tryal be accomplished;) it follows necessarily that it must be done *hereafter*. This is the manifest Voice of *Nature* and *Reason*: And to *confirm* this Great Truth by the immediate *Authority of God*, to make it still more *evident* even to the meanest Capacities, and to *inculcate* it with greater *Strength* and *Weight* upon Mankind, is the principal End and Design of *Revelation*. In This, All our Saviour's Discourses, and those of his Apostles, terminate; in assuring us, that *God will bring every Work into Judgment, with every Secret thing, whether it be good or evil*. That to them who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for *Glory, and Honour, and Immortality*, he will give *eternal Life*: But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the Truth, but obey *Unrighteousness, Indignation, and Wrath*: Tribulation and Anguish upon every soul of man that doth

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*Evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile.* SERM.  
XV.

II. THE *Second* Particular observable in the Text, is the *Time* when this Judgment shall be: *He hath appointed a Day, in the which he will judge the World.* The word, *Day*, in this place, and in all other Texts of Scripture, where the *Day of Judgment* is spoken of; is not at all needful to be understood of that particular *Portion* or *Quantity* of Time, which we call a *Day*; But it signifies only, in general, a *determinate Time* or *Season*, how *short* or how *long* soever the *Continuance* or *Duration* of it may be. And God's having *Appointed* this Time, does not signify his declaring *when* it is to be, but only the certainty of his having decreed that it *shall* be. On the contrary, the *particular Time* when the World shall be judged, is One of Those Secrets, which, for the wisest Reasons, (that men might *watch* and *be ready always*,) the *Father* has reserved in his own *Power*. *Of that Day and Hour*, says our Lord, *knoweth no man, no not the Angels which are in Heaven, neither the Son, but*

S E R M. *my Father only*; Mar. xiii. 32; Matt. xxiv.  
 XV. 36. *This only* does the Scripture assure  
 us, that *as a Snare shall it come on all*  
*them, that dwell on the face of the whole*  
*Earth.* That as, in the days before the  
*Flood*; and as, before the overthrow of  
*Sodom and Gomorrha*, men were *eating*  
*and drinking*, and thought not of the  
 Destruction till it came upon them; *so*  
*also shall the coming of the Son of man*  
*be.*

T H E R E were Some in the Apostles  
 times, who, by misapplication of certain  
 Prophecies relating to the Destruction of  
 the *Jewish State*, thought the World was  
 to end in That Age. But from our Sa-  
 viour's own Prophecy, that *Jerusalem*  
*should be trodden down of the Gentiles, till*  
*the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled*; (which  
 is plainly a long season;) And from the  
 Apostle's exhortation, *Let no man deceive*  
*you by any means, by word or letter as*  
*that the day of Christ is at hand*; for  
*That day shall not come, except there come*  
*a falling away first, and That man of Sin*  
*be revealed*; From these Passages, I say,  
 'tis evident, that not the End of the  
 World,



World, but the Destruction only of *Ju- S E R M. dea* was to be expected in That Age. XV. 


Nevertheless, *whatever* be the Time, how *near* or how *far off* soever, when the World is to end; it makes no difference at all to any *particular person*; seeing *His* particular Concern in the Judgment of the Great Day, depends intirely on the State wherein *He himself* shall leave the World; which Time, he is sure, cannot be *very far* distant from him.

III. THE *Third* thing proper to be taken notice of in the Text, is, *the Person* By *whom* the World shall be judged: God will judge it *By That man, whom he hath ordained*. The *Light of Nature* teaches us, that *God will judge the World*; and *Revelation* has declared to us, that He will judge it *By Christ*. The *Difference* of the *Person* Judging, makes not indeed any *Difference* in the *Rule* by which we shall be judged. But 'tis a *Signification* of *God's merciful Intentions* towards Mankind, that he has *Appointed* the *Same* person to be our *Judge*, who *condescended* to take our Nature upon him,

S E R M. him, to be made subject to all our Weak-  
 XV. nesses and Infirmities, and to be tempted  
 in all things like as We are, Sin only ex-  
 cepted; Who therefore *can have compas-*  
*sion on the ignorant, and on them that are*  
*out of the way, for that he himself also*  
*was compassed with Infirmity.* And at  
 the same time on the other hand, 'tis an  
*Aggravation* of the Ingratitude and of  
 the Terrour of presumptuous and impe-  
 nitent Sinners, to consider that the same  
 merciful Saviour, who gave himself for  
 them to have redeemed them from Death,  
 and sent them so many gracious Invita-  
 tions to Repentance, shall, after all his  
 Offers of Mercy have been despised, *come*  
*Himself with ten thousand of his Saints,*  
*to execute Judgment upon All:* That he  
*shall come in the glory of his Father, and*  
*all his Holy Angels with him;* and *shall sit*  
*on the Throne of his glory, and before him*  
*shall be gathered all Nations:* That he  
*shall descend from Heaven with a shout,*  
*with the voice of the Archangel, and with*  
*the trump of God;* Before whose face the  
*Earth and the Heaven shall flee away,*  
*and there shall be found no place for*  
*them:*

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them: That he shall be revealed from S E R M.  
Heaven with his mighty Angels, in flaming XV.  
Fire taking vengeance on them that know   
not God, and that obey not the Gospel.

IV. THE Fourth Particular observable in the Text, is, the *Persons who shall be called into Judgment*: He will judge *the World*; that is, All Mankind from the Highest to the Lowest. For he which is Lord over All, shall fear no man's person, neither shall he stand in awe of any man's Greatness; for he hath made the small and great, and careth for all alike; Wisd. vi. 7. By Greatness therefore shall no man prevail, nor by Smallness shall any one be concealed. Say not Thou, (as 'tis excellently expressed in the Book of Ecclesiasticus; Say not Thou,) I will hide myself from the Lord; Shall Any remember Me from above? I shall not be remembered among so many people; For what is my Soul among such an infinite number of creatures? (Say not this, says he: For) Behold, the Heaven, and the Heaven of Heavens, and the Deep, and the Earth, and all that therein is, shall be moved when He shall visit: The Mountains also,

SERM. and Foundations of the Earth, shall be  
 XV. shaken with Trembling, when the Lord look-  
 eth upon them: No heart can think upon  
 these things worthily, and Who is able to  
 conceive his Ways? ch. xvi. 17. In This  
 judgment therefore (I say) no one what-  
 soever, shall upon Any account be ex-  
 empted, or concealed. Force or Power  
 shall avail nothing, and Meanness or Lit-  
 tleness will afford no Plea. Riches shall  
 find no place for Bribery, and Poverty and  
 worldly Considerations move no Compassion.  
 Fraud and Skill will be able to make no  
 Evasions, nor Multitudes and Numbers les-  
 sen the Terrors of That Solemnity. But  
 the Righteous alone shall be exalted in  
 That day, and shall appear with joy un-  
 speakable and full of Glory. Then the  
 Wicked repenting, and groaning for an-  
 guish of Spirit, shall say within them-  
 selves, (Wisd. v. 3.) We Fools accounted his  
 Life Madness, and his End to be without  
 Honour; How is he numbred among the  
 Children of God, and his Lot is among the  
 Saints!----What hath Pride profited us?  
 or what good hath Riches with our Vaunt-  
 ing brought us? All those things are pas-  
 sed

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*sed away like a Shadow, and as a Post that hasteth by. And Rev. vi. 14, The Heaven departed as a Scroll when it is rolled together, and every Mountain and Island were moved out of their places. And the Kings of the Earth, and the Great men, and the Rich men, and the chief Captains, and the Mighty men, and every Bondman, and every Freeman, hid themselves in the dens, and in the Rocks of the Mountains: And said to the Mountains and Rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the Throne, and from the Wrath the Lamb.*


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V. THE *Fifth* and *Last* thing needful to be remarked in the Text, is the *Manner* or *Method*, in which This Great Affair will be transacted: He will judge in *Righteousness*. That is: Every man shall be rewarded, or punished, according to his *Deserts*; according to what he has done in the *Flesh*, whether it be good or evil. For the Judge of the whole Earth will do what is right, and *with Equity shall he judge the Nations*. And our Saviour himself Thus describes it, *Rev. xxii. 12; Behold, I come quickly, and*

S E R M. *my Reward is with me, to give every man*  
 XV. *according as his Work shall be. Not there-*  
 fore according to *empty Notions* and *contentious Opinions*, which foolish men earnestly dispute about: *Not* according to mens *Faith* or *Knowledge*, if they be void of the Fruits of *Righteousness*: *Not* according to mens *Zeal* in particular *Parties* and *Factions*, or in the bare outward *Profession* even of the true *Religion* itself: *Not* according to the *uncharitable judgment*, which rash men are apt to pass one upon another: *Not* according to any *unconditionate Decree*, or *Fore-appointment* of *God*: But according as men have lived in the ways of *Piety*, or *Profaneness*; in *Sobriety*, or *Debauchery*; in the Practice of *Righteousness*, *Goodness*, and *universal Charity*; or of *Injustice*, *Iniquity* and *Unrighteousness*; according to *This*, shall the final Sentence pass.

FATAL therefore is the Mistake of all those, who expect to be judged by *Any Other Measure*. Who, without true *Virtue*, expect to be saved, by means of any thing they can possibly do for *themselves*, or that *any other persons* can do for them.

Who

Who hope to obtain Salvation, either by S E R M. any *unconditionate Favour and Decree of* XV. God; when the Apostle expressly declares  on the contrary, that God is *no Respector of Persons*, and that he hath *chosen men to Salvation through Belief of the Truth, and Sanctification of the Spirit.* Or who rely on their *zealous external Profession of the True Religion*; when even to those who *taught in his Streets, and in his Name had cast out Devils, and done many wonderful Works*, yet our Saviour replies, *I know you not whence ye are, Depart from me, all ye Workers of Iniquity.* Or who hope to be saved, by virtue of *Any superstitious Commutations*; As the *Pharisees*, who under Pretence of contributing to the Service of the *Temple*, excused men from relieving the Necessities even of their *Parents themselves*; Matt. xv. 5. Nor is the Errour of *Those men* at all less fatal, who depend that they shall be saved by their *Faith*; if thereby they mean any thing else than *That Obedience of Faith*, as the Apostle stiles it, which is the *Practice of Righteousness.* Or that they shall be saved by the *Merits of Christ*; if there-  
by

SERM. by they mean any thing else, than the  
 XV. *Terms of That Covenant for the Acceptation of Repentance, which is the Purchase of the Merits and Death of Christ. Or that they shall be saved by Grace; if by That Term they mean any thing else than the Gospel itself, even That Grace of God which bringeth Salvation, by Teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly Lusts, we 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.*

THE *Application* of what has been said, is;

1<sup>st</sup>; IF These things be so, and there is certainly a Judgment to come; Then let us *All* frequently and seriously consider with ourselves, as St *Peter* admonishes, 2 *Pet.* iii. 11; *Seeing that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought we to be, in all holy conversation and godliness: Looking for and hastening unto the Coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent Heat.*

2<sup>dly</sup>;



2dly; SEEING the Time when this S E R M.  
 Judgment shall be, (or, which to Us is XV.  
 the same thing, the Time when we our-  
 selves shall depart out of This World,) is  
 altogether uncertain; Let us therefore  
 continually set before our eyes that Ad-  
 vice of our Saviour, *Luke xxi. 34; Take  
 heed to yourselves lest--- That day come up-  
 on you unawares; For as a snare shall it  
 come on all them, that dwell on the face of  
 the whole Earth. Watch ye therefore, and  
 pray always, that ye may be accounted wor-  
 thy to escape all these things that shall  
 come to pass, and to stand before the Son  
 of Man.* And if any Damage at any  
 time befall us, for the sake of a good  
 conscience; let us say with That brave  
 person, in *2 Maccab. vii. 11. These I had  
 from Heaven, and for his Laws I despise  
 them, and from Him I hope to receive them  
 again.* And when we see Great Wick-  
 edness perhaps prosper for a time, let us  
 remember the Admonition of *Solomon,*  
*Prov. xxiii. 17; Let not thine Heart envy  
 Sinners, but be thou in the Fear of the  
 Lord all the day long; For surely there is  
 an End, and thine expectation shall not be  
 cut off.* 3dly;

SERM. 3dly and Lastly; IF the Manner and  
 XV. Method of this final judgment, shall be  
 in righteousness, according to every man's  
 work that he has done, whether it be good  
 or evil: Then let us continually be aware,  
 that all Other expectations whatsoever,  
 are mere Deceits. And let us always re-  
 member those remarkable words, with  
 which our Saviour concludes his Sermon  
 on the Mount: *Whosoever heareth these  
 sayings of mine, and doth them, I will li-  
 ken him unto a wise man, which built his  
 house upon a rock: And the rain descended  
 and the floods came, and the winds blew, and  
 beat upon that house; and it fell not, for it  
 was founded upon a rock: And every one  
 that heareth these sayings of mine, and  
 doth them not, shall be likened unto a fool-  
 ish man, which built his house upon the  
 sand: and the rain descended, and the  
 floods came, and the winds blew, and beat  
 upon that house: and it fell, and great  
 was the fall of it.*



# SERMON XVI.

That every Man shall finally receive according to his Works.



GAL. vi. 7.

*Be not deceived, God is not mocked: For whatsoever a man soweth, That shall he also reap.*



IN these Words we may observe, 1<sup>st</sup>, the General and Fundamental Doctrine of True Religion; that every man shall finally receive of God, according to what he has done: *Whatsoever a man soweth, That shall he also reap.* 2<sup>dly</sup>, A Declaration, that every Opinion

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XVI.


S E R M. Opinion or Practice, that subverts This  
 XVI. Great and Fundamental Doctrine ; is, in  
 reality and in true consequence, a *Mock-  
 ing of God ; God is not mocked ; For what-  
 soever a man soweth, That shall he also  
 reap.* 3dly ; An Admonition or Warn-  
 ing, that, how pernicious soever, and how  
 manifestly soever pernicious, every such O-  
 pinion or Practice is ; yet many deceit-  
 ful Considerations there are, which (with-  
 out due Care) will in event draw men  
 into so great a Destruction : *Be not de-  
 ceived, God is not mocked.*

I. *First* ; H E R E is laid down the Gene-  
 ral and Fundamental Doctrine of True  
 Religion ; that every man shall finally re-  
 ceive of God, according to what he has  
 done : *Whatsoever a man soweth, That  
 shall he also reap.* This Maxim, is the  
 Reason and End of All *Laws*, the Main-  
 tenance and Support of all *Government*,  
 the Foundation and Ground-work of all  
*Religion*. In *Other* matters therefore,  
 which are of *less* importance ; in opini-  
 ons of *particular* and more *minute* con-  
 sideration ; which depend on a variety of  
 Circumstances, and on the Truth of Ma-  
 ny

ny collateral Notions which must care-fully be compared together: In *These* there will always be room for difference of Apprehensions, and Many *Errours* possibly may be of small Consequence. But *This* Doctrine, of Rewards and Punishments finally proportionable to mens Behaviour; is the *Root* of Virtue, and the *vital Principle* of Religion. 'Tis a Truth of the *same Certainty* and of the *same Importance*, with the Acknowledgment of the very *Being* of God, and of the natural and essential Difference between Good and Evil. For which reason the Apostle in the Text, by a very lively and expressive figure, represents it under the similitude of things which have in *Nature* the most immediate and necessary Connexion: *Whatsoever a man soweth, That shall he also reap.* And what our Saviour alledged upon *another* occasion, to express the reasonableness of judging concerning mens *Hearts* from their *Actions*; may no less properly be applied here, as a Rule for every man to judge from his *present Actions* concerning his own *Future State*; *Men do not gather Grapes of Thorns, or Figs of Thistles.* As

S E R M.  
XVI.  
~

S E R M. the *Fruit* is always of the *same kind*, with  
 XVI. the *Stock* that bears it; and the *Grain*  
 reaped, is necessarily of the same sort with  
 the *Seed* that was sown: So mens final  
 State of *Happiness* or *Misery*, shall be the  
 proper and correspondent Effect of their  
*present Actions*. *He that soweth to his*  
*flesh*, (as the Apostle expresses it in the  
 words following my Text,) *shall of the*  
*flesh reap corruption*: *But he that soweth*  
*to the Spirit*, *shall of the Spirit reap Life*  
*everlasting*. In the *present* time, we fre-  
 quently see This *in some degree* verified,  
 in what we usually call the *Natural*  
*Course and Consequences of Things*. In the  
*Future State*, after what manner the Ef-  
 fects and Operations of *Nature* will pro-  
 ceed, we are Now altogether ignorant:  
 And therefore we represent to ourselves,  
 very justly and with the greatest Reason,  
 every Circumstance of *That State*, as the  
 immediate Effect of *God's final Judgment*,  
 and the direct execution of the irrever-  
 sible Sentence. Yet, were we able to  
 discern, or had God thought fit to dis-  
 cover to us, the *Particulars* of This  
 Whole Proceeding; the *Difference* per-  
 haps of God's several Ways and Methods

of Acting, would not appear so Great to S E R M  
us, as we are apt to imagine. The Cer- XVI.  
*tainty* at least of the *Connexion*, and the   
*proper correspondency* of the *Events*, would  
be altogether as *conspicuous*, and appear as  
far removed from Any degree of *arbitrary*  
*Uncertainty*, in all those things which  
we ascribe to the *immediate Judgment of God*;  
as in any of those which we Now look upon,  
as arising from the *Natural Consequences and*  
*Connexion of Things*. For, What are the *Natural*  
*Consequences and Connexion of Things*, but  
the *Result of That Order and Disposition*  
of Things, which God originally established  
in the Creation? And the very *same Power*,  
which established and preserves this Order  
of Nature, has appointed likewise the  
*Connexion of Consequences* in the Progress  
of the Moral State of the World. However  
*different* therefore the *Manner and Method*  
of God's operations may be, in these two  
*different Governments* of such *very different*  
kinds of Subjects; yet the *operation* may,  
in *Each*, be *equally regular in its kind*; And  
the proper *Effect* or *Event*, corresponding

S E R M. to the antecedent Cause, whether in the  
 XVI. *Natural* or *Moral* World, may be alike  
 Certain and *invariable* in *Both*. When, in the Course of *Nature*, we see Grain, sown in the Earth, produce regularly and uniformly, after certain stated Periods of Time, Fruit of the same kind with That which was sown; we are very apt to let the Wonder slip out of our Minds, and lose the whole Force of its impressi<sup>o</sup>n, merely by affixing to it a *word* of *No* signification, and calling it by the Name of *Natural*: Whereas, in Truth, inanimate *Nature* is nothing but an *empty Sound*; Unintelligent *Agents* and *Powers*, (as we improperly call them,) are nothing but *mere Instruments*; and the Whole Effect is *really* the *Operation* of *Him*, who is the *Author and God of Nature*. By the *Disposition* and *Appointment* of the *Same* Author and Ruler of the Universe, the *Moral* Consequences and Connexions of Things do, in *Their proper manner*, and at *Their proper Seasons*, take place likewise in the World. And could our Faculties extend themselves, to take in at One View those *larger Periods* of the Divine  
 Dif-



Dispensations, on which depends the Harmony and Beauty of the *Moral* World; in like manner as our experience enables us to contemplate the *Yearly* Products of *Nature*: We should *Then* probably be no more struck with Wonder, at the seeming *Forbearing* of Providence to interpose *at present* in the ordering of the *Moral* State of the World; than we are *Now* surprized, in the *regular course* of *Nature*, to see Grain lie as it were dead in the Earth in Winter, and seemingly dissolving into corruption; and yet, without Fail, at the Return of its proper Season, bringing forth the certain particular Fruit, of which it was the Seed. The Apostles Similitude therefore in the Text, not only *in general* is a *Certain and Infallible Truth*, but very probably may be also a Truth which has *in itself* a more *immediate and necessary connexion*, than men are usually sensible of. It is not only true, that God has *actually* set before men such and such Promises and Threatnings; but probably it will be found true also, at the final issue and event of Things, that he has appointed by as *close*

S E R M.  
XVI.  
~

S E R M. *and regular a Connexion, in Morals as in*  
 XVI. *Naturals, that whatsoever a man soweth,*  
 ~~~~~ *That shall be also reap.*

IN the *Natural and Material World*, the *More Observations* men make, and the *greater Accuracy* they arrive at, and the *Longer Periods of Time* they are able to take in; the *more clearly and distinctly* do they discern, that in *That innumerable Variety* of the Works of God, all things conspire uniformly, with the most exquisite exactness, to produce (and *That* sometimes out of the *Greatest* seeming Confusions) the *properest and most regular Effects*. The *Moral World*, is of infinitely greater Importance: 'Tis *That*, for the *sake of which* the *material World* was created; and *without which*, this beautiful and stupendous *Fabrick* of the *inanimate Universe* is *Nothing*. It cannot be doubted then by *Any* reasonable person, but that the *Same Wisdom*, which, in the *unintelligent Works of Nature*, has shown forth itself in the contrivance of such inexpressible *Aptnesses and Proportions* of Things; will *much more* in the *Government of Rational Beings*, (which are in  
 a far

a far nobler and more proper Sense the Subjects of God's Power and Kingdom, )  
 show forth itself finally, in making every Event, through a wonderful variety of different Dispensations, terminate at length in most evident and illustrious Manifestations of perfect Justice, Goodness and Truth.

S E R M.

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HOWEVER therefore *Melancholy pious* persons, patiently persisting in the Practice of their Duty, may, when they observe how Providence in *the present Time* suffers all things seemingly to go alike to all, be hereby sometimes tempted almost to despond; yet in reality their Reward is laid up for them with God *much more certainly*, than Grain which in the Winter seems to lie dead in the Earth wherein it was sown, may yet be depended upon to bring forth Fruit in its Season. The *Psalmist* expresses This very emphatically, *Pf. xxvi. 6; They that sow in Tears, shall reap in joy: He that now goeth on his way weeping, and beareth forth good seed, shall doubtless come again with joy, and bring his Sheaves with him.* The Figure is the same with that in the Text: And the li-

S E R M. *teral meaning of it is well expressed by*  
 XVI. *the Author of the Book of Wisdom, ch. iii.*  
 4; and v. 15; *The righteous, though they*  
 be punished in the Sight of Men, yet is  
 their Hope full of Immortality; For their  
 Reward is with the Lord, and the Care  
 of them is with the most High. And by  
 the Apostle himself, Rom. ii. 7; *To Them*  
 who, by patient continuance in well-doing,  
 seek for glory and Honour and Immorta-  
 lity; to Them God will give eternal  
 Life. And therefore he exhorts, Heb.  
 x. 35; *Cast not away therefore your Con-*  
*fidence, which hath great Recompence of*  
*Reward. For ye have need of Patience,*  
*that, after ye have done the Will of God,*  
*ye might receive the Promise. For yet a*  
*little while, and he that shall come, will*  
*come, and will not tarry. And St James*  
*in like manner, ch. v. 7; Be patient there-*  
*fore, Brethren, unto the Coming of the*  
*Lord. Behold, the Husbandman waiteth*  
*for the precious Fruit of the Earth, and*  
*hath long Patience for it, untill he re-*  
*ceive the early and latter Rain. Be ye*  
*also Patient; stablish your Hearts; For*  
*the Coming of the Lord draweth nigh.*

ON the contrary; However *Presumptuous and Careless* persons may deceive themselves with numberless vain Imaginations, expecting to *reap where they have not sown, and to gather where they have not strawed*; yet, as certainly as the *Nature of Things* is unvaried, and the *Perfections of God* unchangeable; the final issue of things in the *future State* will be *universally*, what *Job* observes it to be *sometimes even in the present State*; ch. iv. 8; *I have seen, they that plow iniquity and sow wickedness, reap the same: By the Blast of God they perish, and by the Breath of his Nostrils they are consumed.*

THIS therefore is the *First Particular* observable in the Text: The Apostle here lays it down as the *General and Fundamental Doctrine of True Religion*, that every man shall finally receive of God, according to what he has done; *Whatever a man soweth, That shall he also reap.*

II. *Secondly*; HERE is a Declaration, that every Opinion or Practice, that subverts This Great and Fundamental Doctrine; is, in reality and in true Consequence,

S E R M. *quence, a Mocking of God: God is not*  
 XVI. *mocked; For whatsoever a man soweth,*  
*That shall he also reap.* The word, *mock*, [which in the *New Testament* is in the *Original* expressed by two or three *synonomous Terms*;] in its *literal* and most proper *Sense*; signifies, *Deceiving* any person, *deluding* him, or *disappointing* his *Expectation*. Thus *Matt. ii. 16*; when *Herod* had ordered the *Wise men* to bring him word where *Jesus* was; and, by their returning privately into their own country another way, found himself disappointed of his expectation; the Text expresses it, that he *saw he was Mocked of the Wise men*. At other times, it signifies *affronting* or *abusing* any person by *open violence*. Thus *Matt. xx. 18*; *The Son of man shall be betrayed unto the Chief Priests and Scribes; and they shall----- deliver him to the Gentiles, to Mock and to scourge and to crucify him*. And sometimes it signifies *pretending Obedience and Respect*, by way of *Derision*, in a *scornful, insulting, and despiteful* manner. Thus *Matt. xxvii. 29*; *When they had platted a crown of Thorns, they put it upon his Head, and a reed*


a reed in his right hand for a Scepter; and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail King of the Jews. SERM.  
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IN the *literal* and *proper* Sense of the phrase, 'tis *impossible* in the nature of Things, that God should in any of these ways be *mocked*. But *figuratively*, *consequentially*, and in *true reality* of Guilt and Folly, All Wicked men, who set themselves to oppose God's Kingdom of Righteousness; who, without Repentance, Amendment, and Obedience to God's Commands, expect to escape, and teach Others that They may escape, his Righteous Judgment; are, in the Apostles estimation, *Mockers* of God. And the Grounds or Reasons, upon which they are *justly* so esteemed, are very evident. For

*1st*, SUCH persons, as far as in Them lies, *confound* the necessary Reasons and Proportions of Things, and endeavour to *take away* the eternal and unchangeable Differences of Good and Evil; which are the Original Order and Rule of God's Creation, and the very *Foundation* of his Government over the Universe. For,  
*what*

S E R M. *what* is Government, but the preserving  
 XVI. of the Order and Reason of *Things*, and  
 ~~~~~ suiting them to the Capacities and Qua-  
 lifications of *Persons*? To endeavour  
 therefore, either in *Doctrine* or in *Prac-*  
*tice*, to *set aside* or to *elude* this great and  
 essential *Distinction* of *Things*; without  
 which the *Government* and even the *very*  
*Being* of God is of no consequence: What  
 is *This*, but, in the Highest degree, *mock-*  
*ing* of God, and taking away the *very*  
*Notion* of a Supreme Lord and Gover-  
 nour of the Universe? What is it else,  
 but mens taking upon themselves to be  
 wiser than God; and presuming that the  
 Consequences of things *ought not* to be  
 what they *are*, or that they *will not be*  
 what he has declared they *shall be*? With  
 regard to the *Fabrick* and *Constitution* of  
 the *Material* World, there have in All  
 Ages been Some Vain Philosophers, who  
 through Ignorance, and Want of under-  
 standing the true Reasons and Uses of  
 things, have been so foolish as to think  
 they could find *Some Particulars Faulty*  
 in the operations of *Nature*, and that  
 they might *more conveniently* have been  
 disposed



disposed in some *Other* method. The S E R M.  
*Changes* these men would make in the XVI.  
Frame of the World, are *always* such, as   
would by Some *Other* Consequences,  
which *Their* short-sighted Presumptuous-  
ness is not at all aware of, introduce  
Confusion and Disorder into the *Whole*.  
In the *moral* Order of things, the case  
is exactly the same. Could wicked and  
debauched men, make *Evil* to be *Good*,  
and *Good* *Evil*; Could they (in the Pro-  
phet's expression) make *Darkness* to be  
*Light*, and *Light* *Darkness*; *Bitter* to be  
*Sweet*, and *Sweet* *Bitter*: Could they re-  
verse the eternal Laws of Nature, and the  
Establishment of the righteous Judgments  
of God: Could they make *Grapes* to be  
*gathered of Thorns*, and *Figs of Thistles*;  
and that They who *sow Unrighteousness*  
here, should *reap Happiness* hereafter:  
What would the *Consequence of This* be,  
but that, for *Their* sakes, the *Nature of*  
*Things* and the *Constitution of the King-*  
*dom of God* should be destroyed? *Vain*  
therefore is the *Flattery* wherewith un-  
righteous men *deceive Themselves*, and  
*extreme the Presumption* wherewith they  
*mock*

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*mock God; when they who cannot make one Hair white or black, or add one Cubit to their Stature, imagine that their state of Happiness or Misery shall not finally be determined according to that eternal Reason of Things, concerning which it may with the most certain Truth be affirmed, that Heaven and Earth shall pass away, but not one Tittle of that Law shall fail.*

2dly, THE endeavouring, by *Any Deceit* whatsoever, to elude and set aside this Great and Fundamental Rule; that every man shall finally receive of God, according to what he has done, whether it be good or whether it be evil; that *whatsoever a man soweth, That shall he also reap*: I say, the endeavouring, by *Any Deceit*, to elude and set aside this great and fundamental Doctrine of true Religion; is really, and in true estimation of things, a *Mocking of God*; Not only because 'tis (as I have shown) a *Confounding of the essential and unchangeable Differences of Good and Evil*, the necessary Reasons, Proportions, and Consequences of *Things*; which are the original Order and Rule of God's Creation,

tion, and the very *Foundation* of his GO-S E R M.vernment over the Universe; But alio XVI. *further*, because 'tis an Entertaining of *very dishonourable* and *very injurious* Apprehensions, concerning the *Perfections and Attributes* of God Himself. I speak not now of *Atheistical* persons, of such as directly *deny* either the *Being* or the *Providence* of God; But of such as either carelessly or presumptuously *deceive* Themselves or Others, by imagining that God has not so great a Concern about Moral Good and Evil, but that they may by some means or other escape his final Wrath, without a life of Virtue and True Holiness. This, I say, is really and in effect taking away his Moral Perfections, and entertaining very dishonourable and very injurious Apprehensions concerning the Nature and Attributes of God. 'Tis divesting him of those Perfections, by which he is (as our Saviour emphatically styles him) *The Great King*, the Supreme Governour of the *rational* and *moral* as well as of the natural World. And as the greatest Affront that can be offered to the Majesty of any Wise and Just *Prince* here

S E R M. here upon *Earth*, is to suppose that his  
 XVI. Authority will not be principally employ-  
 ed in promoting the Great Ends and De-  
 signs of his Government, and the Sup-  
 port and Security of his own Laws; so  
 the Attempts of wicked men to elude  
 the Great Ends of the *Divine* Govern-  
 ment, by substituting any thing else what-  
 soever in the place of Virtue and true  
 Righteousness, in the place of Tempe-  
 rance, Equity, Charity, and Truth; is,  
 in the Apostle's esteem, a *mocking* of God:  
 'Tis *such* a Mockery of him, as really  
 tends more to hurt and efface in mens  
 minds the true Notion of God, and to  
 hinder the efficacy of Virtue and Good-  
 ness in the World, than questioning even  
 the very *Being* of a Supreme Governour  
 at all. *Pf. x. 12, xciv. 7; The Ungodly*  
*has said in his Heart, God has forgotten;*  
*he hideth away his Face, and he will never*  
*see it. They say, Tush, the Lord shall not*  
*see; neither shall the God of Jacob regard*  
*it.*

3dly, As such persons are, in true esti-  
 mation of things, *Mockers* of God, upon  
 account of their *Confounding* those *essen-*  
*tial*

*receive according to his Works.*

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*tial Differences of Good and Evil, which* S P R M.  
are the *Foundation* of God's Government XVI.  
over Rational Creatures; and upon ac-  
count of their entertaining *dishonourable*  
and *very injurious* Apprehensions concern-  
ing the *Perfections and Attributes* of God  
*Himself*: So they are *still further* guilty  
of the same charge, in perverting the  
plain *Revelation* of Christ, and overthrow-  
ing the *whole Design* of his Religion. The  
Great Doctrine *our Lord* came to preach,  
is This: *Matt. xvi. 27*; *The Son of man*  
*shall come in the glory of his Father, with*  
*his Angels*; and then he shall reward every  
man according to his Works. Again: *Rev.*  
*xxii. 12*; *Behold I come quickly, and my Re-*  
*ward is with me, to give every man according*  
*as his Work shall be.* And the *Sum* of what  
his *Apostles* taught, amounts always to the  
same. *We must all appear before the judg-*  
*ment-seat of Christ, that every one may re-*  
*ceive the things done in his Body, according*  
*to That he has done, whether it be good or*  
*bad*: *2 Cor. v. 10.* Whosoever attempts  
to elude these plain Declarations, by ima-  
gining *any other Rule whatsoever*, where-  
by men shall be judged; (and saying, as  
the

S E R M. the Serpent did to the woman, *Gen. iii. 4;*  
 XVI. *Ye shall not surely die;* ) does in reality  
 make a *Mockery of Religion*; or, as the  
 Apostle expresses it in the Text, *Mocks  
 God and Deceives himself: Be not deceived,  
 God is not mocked; For whatsoever a man  
 soweth, That shall he also reap.*

III. THE *Third and Last Particular* I  
 observed in the words, is the *Admonition*  
 or *Caution* the Apostle here gives, that,  
 how pernicious soever, and how manifestly  
 soever pernicious, every opinion or Practice  
 is, which misleads men from this One  
 Great and Fundamental Rule; yet *Many*  
 deceitful Considerations there are, which  
 (without due Care) will in event draw  
 men into so great a Destruction: *Be not  
 deceived, God is not mocked.* But the ex-  
 plication of This, must be referred to a  
 following Opportunity.



# SERMON XVII.

That every Man shall finally receive according to his Works.



GAL. vi. 7.

*Be not deceived, God is not mocked: For whatsoever a man soweth, That shall he also reap.*



IN a foregoing Discourse upon these words, I observed that herein is contained, 1<sup>st</sup>, the General and Fundamental Doctrine of true Religion; that every man shall finally receive of God, according to what he has done; *Whatsoever a man soweth, That shall he also reap.* 2<sup>dly</sup>, A

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Declaration, that every Opinion or Practice, that subverts this Great and Fundamental Doctrine; is, in reality and in true consequence, a *Mocking of God*: *God is not mocked*; for *Whatsoever a man soweth, That shall he also reap.* 3dly, An Admonition or Warning, that, how pernicious soever, and how manifestly soever pernicious, every such Opinion or Practice is; yet Many Deceitful Considerations there are, which (without due Care) will in event draw men into so great a Destruction: *Be not deceived, God is not mocked.* The *Two former* of these Particulars, I have already discoursed upon: And shall, at This Time, proceed to the *Third and Last* of them; namely, the *Many Deceitful* Considerations there are, which (without due Care) will be apt to draw men into the Destruction the Apostle here admonishes us to avoid: *Be not deceived.*

THE *Doctrine* itself; that every man shall finally receive of God, according to what he has done, whether it be good, or whether it be evil; that, *whatsoever a man soweth, That shall he also reap*; is undeniably



undeniably proved by all the Principles of S E R M. Reason, and expressly confirmed by all the XVII. Notices of Revelation. Yet so manifold and various are the *Delusions* of Sin, and such a Mist of Darkness do the Passions and Appetites of men continually cast before their Eyes; that the Apostle thought it necessary to add, with great Affection and Earnestness, the Caution in the Text; and to repeat it frequently elsewhere, upon the like occasion; *Be not deceived.* Thus, 1 Cor. iii. 18, 17; *Let no man deceive himself: If any man defile the Temple of God, which Temple Ye are; that is, if any Christian lives a vicious and debauched Life; him shall God destroy.* And ch. vi. 9; *Know ye not, that the Unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God? Be not deceived: Neither Fornicators, nor Idolaters, nor Adulterers, nor Effeminate, nor Abusers of themselves with Mankind, nor Thieves, nor Covetous, nor Drunkards, nor Revilers, nor Extortioners, shall inherit the Kingdom of God.* In like manner, Eph. v. 5; *Ye know that no Whoremonger, nor unclean person, has any inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ and of God: Let*

S E R M. *no man deceive you with vain words; for,*  
 XVII. *because of These things cometh the Wrath*  
 of God upon the children of Disobedience; or, as we read in the margin, upon the children of Unbelief. i. e. Even upon the Heathen World, 'tis for their *unrighteous* and *debauched* Practices, contrary to the Light of Nature and to the eternal Laws of Truth and Reason, that the Wrath of God is poured down upon them. Again, *Heb. iii. 12, Take heed, brethren,-----lest any of you be hardened through the Deceitfulness of Sin.* And *St John* in his first Epistle ch. iii. 7; *Little children,* says he, *let no man deceive you; He that Doth Righteousness, is righteous.* These repeated Cautions and Admonitions of the Apostle, were intended to warn us, that there are *Many Deceitful* Considerations, which (without due Care) will be apt to hide from mens eyes the bright and clear Light even of this *evident Proposition* and *great Foundation of Religion*, that every man shall finally receive of God, according to what he has done, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.

*receive according to his Works.*

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WHAT the principal of these *Delusions* are in *particular*, is what I have now proposed to consider.

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AND here, That which first and most obviously offers itself, in our View of Mankind; is the Deceit men put upon themselves by a general *Carelesness* and *Inattention*. They pursue the Ends of Ambition and Covetousness; they labour continually to gratify their Passions, and Appetites; and consider not at all, that the most High regardeth, and that for all these things God will bring them into Judgment. They see that all things continue as they were from the beginning of the Creation, and go on from generation to generation in one settled course; wherein it fares very much alike, with the righteous and the wicked; *with Him that sacrifices*, and *with Him that sacrifices not*. And This draws them on carelessly in the ways of Sin; as if That which *has* been, is That which *shall* be; and things would never be otherwise than they Now are. The *Folly* of *This Delusion*, lies in *This*; that they consider not, that *One day is with God as a thousand years, and a thou-*

S E R M. *sand years as one day.* They consider not  
 XVII. that there is a *Time for all things*; that  
 ~~~~~ God has appointed for every thing its  
 proper Season; that *he has made all things*  
*suitable, each to his correspondent, yea*  
*even the wicked for the day of Evil.* The  
*Deceit* therefore *These men* put upon  
 themselves, is exactly the same, as if any  
 one should imagine, that because during  
 the *Winter* All Seeds lie equally buried  
 and as it were dead in the Earth, there-  
 fore in the *Spring* there would be no  
 difference of their Produce, nor of their  
 Fruit in *Harvest.* And This is indeed, a  
 sort of *Infidelity*: 'Tis what the Apostle  
 calls, an *evil heart of Unbelief*: 'Tis a  
 mixture of *Unbelief* and *Carelesness*, *va-*  
*rious* in its *Degrees*, and of *spreading in-*  
*fluence* in its *Extent.* 'Tis This, to which  
 is principally owing That State of the  
 World, which our Saviour describes,  
*Matt. xxiv. 38; As in the days that were*  
*before the Flood, they were eating and*  
*drinking, marrying and giving in marri-*  
*age, until the day that Noah entred into*  
*the Ark; and knew not until the Flood*  
*came, and took them all away: so shall*  
*also the coming of the Son of man be.*

B U T

BUT besides this general Carelessness, S E R M. XVII. mixt with *different degrees of Unbelief*; innumerable are the *Deceits* wherewith those who *seem not* to themselves to make *Any doubt* of the Being and Government of God, do yet continually make shift to *delude* themselves.

SOME, judge of God by *Themselves*; not according to the *Reason of Things*, but by their *own Disposition and Temper*. And because *they Themselves* are not apt to be displeas'd, unless at things *directly injurious* to *Themselves*; therefore they flatter themselves that God, who can no way be *injured* by the Sins of men, will not be severe in punishing them; and particularly, that his Anger will not be so highly provok'd by Sins of *Debauchery* or *Injustice*, as by *Irreligion* or *Profaneness*. In which matter they *deceive* themselves for want of considering, that God is not a *Party*, but the *Judge and Governour* of the Universe; who punishes *Wickedness*, not that *He himself* suffers any thing by it, but as being *repugnant* to the *Nature and Reason of things*, to the eternal *Laws* of His righteous Govern-

S E R M. *ment, to the Welfare and Happiness of*  
 XVII. *the whole Creation.*



O T H E R S there are, who *deceive* themselves by imagining, that God is pleased or displeas'd with *little* things, instead of judging of men according to the whole Course and Tenor of a *virtuous* or *vicious* life. And hence, though they are defective in any *Great Point* of Moral Virtue, or indulge themselves in the *Habit* of any plain Vice, of Intemperance or Debauchery, of Fraud, Dishonesty, or Unrighteousness; yet they hope to appease God with some external Forms, with some empty and ineffectual Resolutions, with some extraordinary Solemnities of Worship at certain Times and Seasons, with a zeal for some particular Notions or Opinions; with things which ought not indeed to be *left undone*, but which can by no means make any Amends for the Neglect of the *weightier* matters of the Law, *Justice, Mercy, and Faithfulness*. And This *Deceit* arises, from having false and unworthy Notions of *God*; from supposing him to have a *greater Concern* about *temporary, changeable, and merely positive* Institu-

Institutions, than about those *Great and Eternal Laws*, in which essentially consists his everlasting *Kingdom of Righteousness*, and the *Happiness* of the *Whole Creation*. SERM.  
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ANOTHER sort of men there are, who seem to content themselves with a loose and general expectation, that *They shall fare upon the whole* as well as *Others*: and that the *Multitude* of those who live in the same sensual way with themselves, cannot be *all of them* in a state liable to God's severe displeasure. They hope therefore, that the *Debaucheries* they are guilty of, will be put to the account of *Natural Infirmities*, and excused as the *Weaknesses* of *Humane Nature in general*. And Here they deceive themselves by not considering, that the very *End and Design* of *Christ's Religion*, was, *that he might deliver us from this present evil world*, and purchase to himself a *Peculiar people zealous of good works*: That we might not be conformed to *This world*, but transformed by the renewing of our *Mind*: That we might prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect *Will of God*. They consider

S E R M. consider not, that, for *This very Reason*,  
 XVII. we are commanded, *not to follow a Multi-*  
 ~~~~~  
*tude to do Evil*; not to follow the *customa-*  
*ry*, and perhaps *fashionable Vices*, of a  
 degenerate and Corrupt World; but on  
 the contrary to *strive to enter in at the*  
*strait Gate*, and to live *worthy of God*  
*who has called us unto his Kingdom and*  
*Glory*. They consider not, when they  
 comfort themselves in the *Multitude* of  
 Transgressors, that there are many *Thou-*  
*sands in Israel*, whom *They* know not of,  
*which never bowed the Knee to Baal*. And  
 if there were *not*; yet God, who Made  
 and can Destroy all with a Word, and  
 who is able *even out of these Stones to*  
*raise up Children unto Abraham*; he, I say,  
*hath no Need of the sinful man*; and has  
 declared, that *though hand join in hand*,  
 yet *the wicked shall not be unpunished*:  
 Prov. xi. 21.

ANOTHER Delusion, by which wick-  
 ed men sometimes impose upon them-  
 selves, is their observing the *Great Faults*,  
 of which Some very Eminent and Extra-  
 ordinary Persons are in Scripture recorded  
 to have been guilty. But they consider  
 not



not at the same time, the *Virtues and Excellencies* of the same persons in the general course of their Lives; the severe *Punishment* God was pleased to inflict upon them, for their particular Offences; and, above all, the *Greatness and Exemplariness* of their *Repentance and Amendment*. The *Penitential Psalms* of David, are lasting Evidences upon Record, of the *Deepness* of his *Repentance and Humiliation*: And the severe *Temporal Punishments* God was pleased to inflict upon him notwithstanding, are sufficient Warnings to prevent the Example of his Faults from being an Incouragement to Sin. *Moses* transgressed against God, in *One rash Action* in the *Wilderness*: And God said unto him, *Deut. xxxii. 49; Get thee up into This Mountain,--- and die in the Mount,--- as Aaron thy Brother died---*; *Because ye trespassed against me among the children of Israel--- in the wilderness of Zin, and sanctified me not in the midst of the children of Israel*. In like manner *King Hezekiah*; of whom the Scripture says, that *he did that which was Right in the Sight of the Lord; --- so that after him* 2 Kings, xviii, 3-5.  

was

S E R M. *was none like him among all the Kings of*  
 XVII. *Judab, nor any that were before him; yet,*  
 because in *One* remarkable Instance *his*  
*heart was lifted up with Pride, therefore*  
*there was Wrath upon him, and upon Ju-*  
*dab and Jerusalem, 2 Chr. xxxii. 25.*  
 These things (as the Apostle *St Paul* ob-  
 serves) happened unto *Them of old* for  
*Examples, and they are written for Our*  
*Admonition, upon whom the Ends of the*  
*World are come. To the intent that We,*  
 (far from being encouraged by *Their* Of-  
 fences, to venture upon the like Trans-  
 gressions;) might on the contrary learn  
 from *Their* Punishment, that God will  
 not be *mocked*; and might take warning  
 in Time to *judge ourselves*, so as not to be  
 finally *judged of the Lord*.

T H E R E are still *Others*, who *speak*  
*peace to themselves* in a *vicious* course of  
 life, upon the mere *general* Notion of the  
*Mercy and Patience and Goodness* of God;  
 without at all considering, whether they  
 themselves be *proper and capable* *Objects*  
 of his *Mercy and Compassion*. And *These*  
 deceive themselves, by fixing their *Atten-*  
*tion wholly upon One single Attribute* of  
 the

the Divine Nature; and consider not God S E R M.  
as indued with *all* those Perfections together, which compleat the character of XVII.  
an all-wise and righteous Governour of the Universe. They consider not, that as *Power*, though *infinite*, is still confined to what is the *Object* of *Power*, and extends not at all to the working of contradictions; so *Mercy* likewise, however *infinite*, is still limited to the things which are in their Nature the *Objects* of *Mercy*. Wherefore, though God *is* indeed Long-suffering and of Great Patience, and allows men Space and Time of Repentance; yet Sin is not at all the less hateful and provoking to him; but his Forbearance when abused, will have an End; and his Wrath will, with greater Severity, be executed upon the Impenitent: And the final Punishment of Sin is not at all the less certain, for being remote and at a distance; seeing one day is with God as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day; and *the Lord knoweth* (as *St Peter* expresses it, *2 Pet. ii. 9,*) he knoweth *how to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished.* Great therefore is the Deceit, and Fatal  
the

SERMON. the Errour, by which all Those delude  
 [XVII. themselves, who continue in Sin, because  
 God's Mercy ( they think ) and his Good-  
 ness and Compassion abounds. The Dan-  
 ger of *This* Folly, is most affectionately  
 expres'd, *Deut. xxix. 18 ; If there be a-*  
*mong you a root that beareth gall and*  
*wormwood, and it come to pass when a*  
*man beareth the words of this Curse, that*  
*he bleſs himſelf in his Heart, ſaying, I*  
*ſhall have Peace though I walk in the*  
*Imagination of mine heart, to add drun-*  
*kennes to thirſt, (that is, to add One Sin*  
*to another, to continue in the Practice*  
*of Any known wickedneſs or Debauche-*  
*ry whatſoever) The Lord will not ſpare*  
*him, but the Anger of the Lord ſhall ſmoke*  
*againſt That Man, and All the Curſes that*  
*are written in this Book ſhall lie upon him.*

BUT the frequentest, and, of all others,  
 the most extensive *Deceits*, are the two  
 following. *First*, a careless misunder-  
 standing of certain Texts of Scripture,  
 wherein Salvation may seem to be promi-  
 sed upon *Other* Terms, than the Prac-  
 tice of Virtue and true Righteousness. And  
*Secondly*, An imaginary Design of *Future*  
*Repentance*.

ist; 'TIS a very common Delusion, S E R M. XVII. for false and corrupt Minds to deceive themselves with a careless misinterpretation of certain Texts of Scripture, wherein Salvation may seem to be promised upon *Other* terms, than the Practice of Virtue and true Righteousness. Thus when the Scripture declares, that *the just shall live by Faith*, and that *a man is justified by Faith without the deeds of the Law*; they imagine that a confident Belief of perhaps they know not what, will bring them to Salvation; Whereas the *Texts* speak of That Obedience of Faith, which is the *Practice of Virtue* required by the *Doctrine*, and supported by the *Belief* of the *Promises* of the *Gospel*. When St Paul tells us, that Christ is *made unto us Righteousness and Sanctification*; they fancy that the Righteousness of *Christ himself*, shall be imputed to *Them*; Whereas the Meaning of the Apostle is, that the Motives and Assistances of the *Gospel of Christ*, are effectually sufficient to reform Mankind, and induce them to become truly Virtuous and Holy. When the same Apostle assures us, that *by Grace we* Rom. i. 17. iii. 28. 1 Cor. i. 30. Eph. ii 2.  
*are*

S E R M. *are saved*; they are willing to suppose,  
 XVII. that This signifies the *Absolute and*  
 ~~~~~ *Groundless Favour or Partiality of God*;  
 Whereas the *Grace* There meant, is That  
*Grace of God which bringeth Salvation*  
 unto *All men*, by *Teaching us, that deny-*  
*ing Ungodliness and worldly Lusts, we*  
*should live soberly, righteously, and godly*  
*in this present World.* And 'tis Therefore  
 stiled *Grace*, because the Benefit of it is  
*graciously and mercifully* extended to such  
 as have *formerly been wicked*, if they  
 . *Now effectually reform and amend.*

AGAIN: When the Scripture says,  
 2 Th. ii. that *God has from the Beginning chosen*  
 13. *us to Salvation*, and that *of his Own Will*  
 Jam. i. 18. *he begat us with the Word of Truth*, and  
 the like; men of This disposition are ve-  
 ry apt to imagine, that the *Will of God*  
 here spoken of, is Some *particular arbi-*  
*trary, unalterable, and unconditionate De-*  
*cree*; Whereas the Apostle plainly means  
 the *Doctrine and Conditions of the Gospel*  
*in general*, which by the gracious Will and  
 Good Pleasure of God, are Now declared  
 to be the Terms of Salvation. The *Jews*  
*of old* thus flattered themselves, (and with  
 much


much more Appearance of Reason,) that, S E R M. by the absolute Favour and Determination XVII. of God, they were unalterably his Chosen or Elect people. But our Saviour declared to them on the contrary, *Matt. viii. 11; Many shall come from the East and West, and shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the Kingdom of Heaven; but the children of the Kingdom shall be cast out into outer Darknes.* And St Paul in like manner, *Rom. ii. 6; God will render to every man according to his Deeds,----to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile.* If therefore God spared not the Rom xi. 21. Natural Branches, his originally elect people the Jews, but cast them off for their Unbelief; much more ought the ingrafted Branches, as the Apostle by way of Analogy stiles the Christian Believers, to take heed lest he also spare not Them. For if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found Sinners, *Gal. ii. 17;* it will nothing profit us to have been from the Beginning chosen unto Sal- 2 Th. ii. vation, through Sanctification of the Spirit 13. and Belief of the Truth; when, in the End, we turn this Grace of God into

S E R M. *Wantonness*; and our *Belief of the Truth*  
 XVII. produces not in *Practise* That *Sanctifi-*  
 cation of the Spirit, which is the Habit of  
 real Virtue and Righteousness.

2 Th. ii. UNDER the *same* head of Deceit, there-  
 13. fore, may be placed the Errour of Those,  
 who, because the Scripture often lays so  
 great a Stress upon the *Belief of the*  
*Truth*, are thence apt to value themselves  
 more upon the *Rightness* of their *Opini-*  
*ons*, than upon the Goodness of their  
*Morals*: Whereas the *only View*, in which  
 the Scripture ever regards *Belief of the*  
*Truth*, is considering it as the *Foundation*  
 of *Virtuous Practise*. Without *which*  
*Effect*, not *Right Opinions* only, but also  
 all *Other Qualifications* whatsoever, are,  
 in the *Religious estimation* of things, re-  
 puted as *Nothing*. *Though I speak with*  
*the tongues of Men and of Angels,---and*  
*though I have the Gift of Prophecy, and*  
*understand all Mysteries and all Know-*  
*ledge, and though I have all Faith, so that*  
*I could remove Mountains, and have not*  
*Charity, (i. e. an universal Desire of do-*  
*ing what is Right and Good to All men;)*  
*I am Nothing*: I Cor. xiii. 1.

UNDER




UNDER the same Head of Deceit S E R M.  
likewise, may be ranked *all Superstitious* XVII.  
*Commutations* whatsoever; every thing,   
by which vain men take upon them to  
supply the want of True Virtue and  
Goodness; all *Sorceries* or Charms, as  
St *John* styles them, *Rev. xviii. 23*, by  
*which the Nations are Deceived*; Such as  
are *Processions, Pilgrimages, Penances, Ab-*  
*solutions, Extreme Unctions*, and the like:  
In a word, every thing that *one man* can  
do *to* or *for* Another, every thing that  
*Any man* can do for *himself*, any other-  
wise than by *keeping the Commandments of*  
*God* in the Habit of a sober, virtuous,  
and good Life. For, what Delusions so-  
ever, and in whatsoever various Forms,  
men impose upon themselves; still the  
Apostle's assertion will for ever remain  
True: *He only that Doth Righteousness,*  
*is Righteous*; and *Whatsoever a man sow-*  
*eth, That shall he also reap.*

2dly, THE Other of those Two Great  
Deceits, which I said were of all Others  
the most frequent and extensive, is an  
*imaginary Design of Future Repentance.*

The Great Doctrine of the Gospel is,

S E R M. that whosoever sincerely and effectually  
 XVII. repents, shall obtain remission of his past  
 Sins by virtue of the Redemption and Intercession of Christ. To a World ignorant of the *Will*, and doubtful of the Extent of the *Mercy* of God, This Doctrine was the *Glad Tidings* of Peace and Salvation: An *encouragement*, to Amendment and Reformation; a *New Ground, and Support* of Virtue; A *Grace* or Favour of God, *which brought Salvation*, by *Teaching men, that denying Ungodliness and worldly Lusts, they should for the future live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present World*, and Thereupon be accepted of God. For *Christians*, to whom the Will of God and the Necessity of Holiness has been clearly revealed, to take from hence an occasion of flattering themselves, that they can indulge themselves in debauched and unrighteous Living, and repent when they think fit; is (in the Apostle's phrase) *turning the Grace of God into Wantonness*, making *Christ the Minister of Sin*, or (in the words of the Text) *deceiving themselves by attempting to mock God*. For  
 the

the *Repentance* spoken of in the Gospel, S E R M. XVII. is not the *Passion*, but the *Virtue of Repentance*; 'Tis a *Real Change of Mind*,  evidencing itself in such a *Real Amendment of Life and Manners*, as is in Scripture very properly and significantly stiled *The New Man*. Most justly therefore do we condemn those of the *Church of Rome*, when they place imaginary *Penances* and a repeated Circle of *Confessions to the Priest*, in the room of this *Real Change of Life and Manners*. And (which is of much *greater moment* for *Us* to consider,) no less justly shall *We* also fall into the *same* condemnation, if we place a repeated Circle of *Confession to God himself*, or any thing else whatsoever it be, in the room of *Real Virtue and Amendment of Life*. For, let us not *deceive ourselves*; *God is not mocked: Whatsoever a man soweth, That shall he also reap.*





# SERMON XVIII.

Of Future Rewards and Punishments.



MATT. xxv. 46.

*And These shall go away into everlasting Punishment, but the Righteous into life eternal.*



THESE words, are the conclusion of that moving and most affectionate description, which our Saviour himself gives us of his final coming to judgment. Ver. 31. *When the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the*

SERMON XVIII.

SERMON. *holy Angels with him ; then shall he sit up-*  
 XVIII. *on the throne of his glory : And before him*  
 shall be gathered all nations ; and he shall  
 separate them one from another, as a Shep-  
 herd divideth the Sheep from the goats :  
 And he shall set the Sheep on his right  
 hand, but the goats on the left. Ver. 34 ;  
 Then shall the King say unto them on his  
 right hand ; Come, ye blessed of my Father,  
 inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from  
 the Foundation of the World. Ver. 41,  
 Then shall he say also unto them on the  
 left hand ; Depart from me, ye cursed, in-  
 to everlasting fire, prepared for the devil  
 and his Angels. The immediate execu-  
 tion of Both which Sentences, is accord-  
 ingly set forth in the concluding words  
 of the Text : *And These shall go away into*  
*everlasting Punishment, but the Righteous*  
*into life eternal.*


THE Arguments proper to persuade men to the Practice of Virtue, drawn from the *abstract* consideration of the Nature and Reason of Things ; from the *intrinsic Beauty* and *Excellency* of *Virtue*, and the *Deformity* of *Vice* ; from the *Usefulness* and *proper Tendency* of *Virtue* to promote

promote the *general Welfare* of men even S E R M.  
 in this *present State*, and the *mischievous* XVIII.  
 Consequences of *Wickedness* and *Debauchery* to the *World* : Arguments, I say, of  
*this kind*, in their proper place and sea-  
 son, to generous and considerate minds,  
 and in suitable Circumstances of things ;  
*have* in them a *real Weight* of Truth, and  
 carry along with them, when impartially  
 attended to, an undeniable Force of ra-  
 tional Conviction. But in a *corrupt*, and  
*confused World* ; where the Wickedness of  
*Some*, hinders the Virtue of *Others*, from  
 producing its just and natural Effects ;  
 where the *Understandings* of *Many*, are  
*perplex'd* and *puzzled* ; and the *Wills* of  
*More*, are *biassed* by ill Habits ; and where  
 the *Best* are frequently *bated* and *perse-*  
*cuted*, even for the sake of their very *Vir-*  
*tue* itself : In *Such* a confused State, the  
 most *universally* proper, and *only* effectual  
 Motive, to *deter* men from *Vice*, and  
*perswade* them to their *Duty* ; is the lay-  
 ing before them, in a clear and strong  
 Light, the *Rewards* and *Punishments* of a  
 future State. *These shall go away into*  
 ever-

S E R M. *everlasting Punishment, but the Righteous*  
 XVIII. *into Life eternal.*

THE word, *These*, refers to the *Uncharitable* persons described, ver. 42; *I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye cloathed me not; sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not.* And the *Righteous* on the contrary, who were to enter into life, are described under the correspondent character of persons exemplarily *charitable*: Ver. 35, *I was an hungred, and ye gave me Meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a Stranger, and ye took me in; Naked, and ye cloathed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me.* The Meaning of which Descriptions, is; not, that at the great day of Accounts, the Virtue of Charity *Alone* will be inquired after; but that *Charity* is so eminent and principal a Virtue, one of those *Great Commandments* on which the Law and the Prophets and the whole Gospel lay so particular a Stress, that,



that, by a very easy and common *Fi-* S E R M.  
*gure* of putting a Part for the Whole, it XVIII  
 naturally and very expressively represents   
 the *Whole of Religion*. In *Other* places,  
 of Scripture, sometimes *Faith*, sometimes  
*Holiness*, sometimes the *Love*, sometimes  
 the *Fear* of God, according to the par-  
 ticular occasion upon which it is intro-  
 duced, signifies, without Any ambiguity,  
 the same as *Virtue in general*. And *here*  
 in like manner, because, in representing  
 the Solemnity of the Last Judgment, the  
 descriptions of a *charitable* or *unchari-*  
*table* Behaviour are in their nature very  
*affectionate* Images, and apt most *strong-*  
*ly* to *move* the Hearers; for This reason  
 (I presume) our Saviour chose to set  
 forth under those *particular* Images, the  
 Two *General* characters of the *Righte-*  
*ous* and the *Wicked* at the Great Day.  
 The *full* Sense therefore of this Decla-  
 ration of our Saviour, (*These shall go*  
*away into everlasting Punishment, but the*  
*Righteous into Life eternal,*) is, that at  
 the great and final Judgment, every man  
 shall be recompensed, in a proportion-  
 able State either of Happiness or Misery,  
 accord-


SERM. according to the *Nature* and the *Degree*  
 XVIII. of his *Works*. The Impious and the Pro-  
 fane, the Blasphemer and the Idolater,  
 the unrighteous and unjust, the tyrant  
 and the Oppressour, the unholy and the  
 unclean, the hard-hearted and unchari-  
 table, and the Workers of *Every* iniqui-  
 ty, inconsistent with the *Love of God*  
 and *Charity towards Men*; these he shall  
 condemn to everlasting destruction, from  
 the presence of the Lord and from the  
 glory of his Majesty. On the *other* hand,  
 all virtuous and good men, all just and  
 righteous and religious persons, who,  
 from the Beginning of their Lives, or  
 from the time of their breaking off their  
 Sins by Repentance; either under the  
 Light of *Nature*, after the Example of  
*Enoch, Noah, Job*, and the *Patriarchs*  
 of old; or under the *Law*, with *Moses*  
 and the *Prophets*; or under the Know-  
 ledge of the *Gospel*, with the *Apostles and*  
*Followers of our Lord*; have sincerely en-  
 deavoured to found all their Actions upon  
 a Principle of Love and Piety towards  
*God*, and of Righteousness, Truth, and  
*Charity towards Men*; these he shall re-  
 ward

ward with everlasting Glory, in the eter-  
 nal Kingdom of his Father. The For-  
 mer *shall go away into everlasting Punish-*  
*ment; but these Righteous into Life e-*  
*ternal.*

S E R M.  
 XVIII.

THE Beginning of these Rewards and Punishments, as they are founded partly in the *natural consequences* of things, is *cotemporary* with the *Practice itself* of Virtue or Vice. For in this *present life*, besides the *Benefits of Virtue to Mankind in general*, and the *destructive Consequences of Vice to the World*; the Happiness of every *particular man's own mind* has necessarily a very great dependence upon that *Conscience* of Good and Evil, which unavoidably attends virtuous or vicious Actions. In the *intermediate separate State* between Death and Judgment, when the Vanities of this deceitful World shall be at an end, and the Delusions and False Colours here put upon things shall all entirely disappear; the natural Effects and Impressions made by virtuous or vicious Habits upon the minds of men, will be still more lively and sensible. Besides; In That State, the Righteous  
 cannot

S E R M. cannot but be very happy, through the  
 XVIII. certain *expectation* of that Crown of  
 ~~~~~ Righteousness, which they know the Lord  
 the Righteous Judge shall give them at  
 That day ; And the Wicked; on the con-  
 trary, cannot but be made very mise-  
 rable, by a *certain fearful looking for of*  
*judgment and fiery indignation*, though  
 the irreversible Sentence shall not be ac-  
 tually executed upon them before the  
 Great Day. These therefore are; in their  
 several kinds and degrees, attestations gi-  
 ven to the Divine Justice by the *Nature*  
*and Truth of Things*, and by mens own  
*Consciences, anticipating* the Righteous  
 Judgment of God. But the *final* and  
*unalterable* distribution of Rewards and  
 Punishments, in exactness of Weight and  
 Measure, according to the unerring deci-  
 sions of Omniscient Justice ; will not be  
 made, 'till our Lord's passing That judi-  
 cial Sentence in the Great Day of Ac-  
 counts, in consequence of which *The*  
*Wicked shall go away into everlasting Pu-*  
*nishment, but the Righteous into Life e-*  
*ternal.*

THE *Sense* and *Meaning* of the words S E R M.  
 is plain and obvious, so that they have XVIII.  
 little need of particular *Explication*:   
 But the *Weight* and *Importance* of them  
 is such, that they can never be too *frequently*  
 and seriously *meditated* upon.  
 Yet so it is, that even the *Plainness* and  
*Clearness itself* of this most important of  
 All *Doctrines*, is probably often the oc-  
 casion of mens neglecting to attend to it.  
 For as the *strongest Objects*, which make  
 perpetually an equal and continued Im-  
 pression upon our Senses, are apt, by reason  
 of their constant Presence, to affect us little  
 more, than if they made No impression  
 upon the Sense at all: And as the daily  
 Instances of *Mortality*, which ought con-  
 tinually to remind us what we must  
 speedily expect, do by an habitual Care-  
 lessness, reconcile men in such manner to  
 the Sight of it in Others, as if them-  
 selves were not at all concerned in the  
 Example: So, with regard to the *Rewards*  
*and Punishments of a Future State*, the  
*Doctrine in general* is lookt upon as so  
 settled and established among Christians,  
 that men care not to be reminded or to  
 remind

S E R M. remind themselves of That, which they  
 XVIII. think they already very well know, and  
 in which there is no room for new In-  
 struction. Hence their Knowledge, with-  
 out Meditation, becomes very like unto  
 Ignorance; because it has No Effect, and  
 makes no Impression: 'Tis like the Spe-  
 culative Knowledge, of a Truth not at-  
 tended to; like the habitual Understand-  
 ing of a Demonstration, never recollected.  
 In order to remedy *This* evil, the Scrip-  
 ture sets forth to us both the *Judgment*  
 in general, and the future *Rewards* and  
*Punishments* in particular; under great  
 variety of the *strongest Images*, and of  
 the most *lively, moving, and affectionate*  
*Descriptions*. In general: God, saith St  
*Paul, will render to every man according*  
*to his deeds; To them, who by patient*  
*continuance in well-doing, seek for glory,*  
*and honour, and immortality; eternal life:*  
*But to them that are contentious, and do*  
*not obey the Truth, but obey Unrighteous-*  
*ness; indignation and wrath: Tribulation*  
*and anguish upon every soul of man that*  
*doth evil; of the Jew first, and also of*  
*the Gentile, Rom. ii. 6: And the manner*


of

of the Solemnity, he thus describes, 1 Th. S E P T M.  
 iv. 16; *The Lord himself shall descend* XVIII.  
*from Heaven with a shout, with the voice*  
*of the Archangel, and with the Trump of*  
*God; And the dead in Christ shall rise*  
*first. Our Saviour, in his own account*  
*of this matter, expresses himself thus;*  
*Job. v. 28, All that are in the graves,*  
*shall hear his Voice, and shall come forth;*  
*they that have done good, unto the Resur-*  
*rection of Life; and they that have done*  
*evil, unto the Resurrection of Damnation:*  
 And the manner of the Solemnity, he thus  
 describes; in the Beginning of That ac-  
 count, whereof my Text is the conclu-  
 sion; *When the Son of man (says he)*  
*shall come in his glory, and all the Holy*  
*Angels with him, then shall he sit upon*  
*the Throne of his glory; And before him*  
*shall be gathered all Nations; and he shall*  
*separate them one from another, as a*  
*Shepherd divideth the Sheep from the*  
*Goats. The Prophet Daniel, in the sub-*  
 lime prophetick style, foretells the final  
 Judgment thus; ch. xii. 2, *Many of them*  
*that sleep in the dust of the Earth, shall*  
*awake; some to everlasting Life, and some*

S E R M. *to Shame and everlasting Contempt: And*  
 XVIII. *the manner of the Solemnity, He thus de-*  
 scribes; *I beheld till the Thrones were cast*  
*down, and the Ancient of days did sit;*  
*whose Garment was white as the Snow,*  
*and the Hair of his Head like the pure*  
*Wool; His Throne was like the fiery*  
*Flame, and his Wheels as burning Fire:*  
*A fiery Stream issued and came forth from*  
*before him; Thousand Thousands ministred*  
*unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand*  
*stood before him; the Judgment was set,*  
*and the Books were opened; ch. vii. 9.*

THIS in general. In particular: As  
 to the *Happiness* of the *Righteous* at *That*  
*day; Though we Now know only in*  
*part, and prophesie in part; and see but*  
*through a glass, darkly; and it doth not*  
*yet appear, what we shall be; because eye*  
*hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have*  
*entred into the Heart of man the things*  
*which God has prepared for them that*  
*love him; Yet the various Images and*  
*Similitudes, by which the Scripture sets*  
*forth to us this State of Blessedness, are*  
*such as represent it under the highest*  
*Characters, of fulness of joy, and pleasures*  
*for*



for evermore; of an eternal Weight of S E R M.  
 glory; of a Kingdom that cannot be mo- XVIII.  
 ved; of a City, whose Builder and Maker   
 is God; of an Inheritance incorruptible,  
 undefiled, and that fadeth not away; where  
 neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and  
 where thieves do not break through and  
 steal; where they that have been wise,  
 shall shine as the brightness of the firma-  
 ment; and they that have turned Many  
 to righteousness, as the Stars for ever and  
 ever; where the Righteous shall shine  
 forth as the Sun, in the Kingdom of their  
 Father; where the Spirits of just men  
 made perfect, That general Assembly and  
 Church of the First-born which are writ-  
 ten in Heaven, shall converse for ever  
 with the innumerable Company of Angels,  
 and with Jesus the Mediator of the New  
 Covenant, and with God himself the  
 Judge of all; and they shall see his Face,  
 and his Name shall be in their foreheads;  
 and they shall be before the throne of God,  
 and shall serve him day and night in his  
 temple; They shall hunger no more, nei-  
 ther thirst any more, neither shall the Sun  
 light on them, nor any Heat; for God

SERM. shall wipe away all Tears from their  
 XVIII. Eyes, and there shall be no more Death,  
 neither Sorrow nor crying, neither shall  
 there be any more Pain; for the former  
 things are passed away.

ON the other hand, though we know not distinctly the exact particulars of the Punishment of the Wicked in the future State; yet This we may be well assured of, that it is not a mere empty Threatning, that the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven, with his mighty Angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not (that is, who acknowledge not) God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his Power. Nor is it without just reason, that the Scripture, in order to deter men from Sin, sets forth this Punishment to us under the severe representation, of an everlasting Fire prepared for the Devil and his Angels; where the Worm dieth not, and the Fire is not quenched; where shall be Weeping and gnashing of Teeth; where they shall drink of the  
 Wrath

*Wrath of God, poured out without mixture, into the cup of his indignation; and shall be tormented with fire and brimstone; and the Smoke of their Torment ascendeth up for ever and ever; and they have no Rest, day nor night.* Inſomuch that our Saviour, as it were overlooking temporal Death, as being comparatively Nothing; ſays concerning *Such* perſons that they *ſhall not Taſte of Death, till they ſee the Son of man coming in his Kingdom.*

S E R M  
XVIII.


SOME Unbelievers, willingly miſtaking the Senſe of theſe Threatnings, as they *love* to miſtake every thing elſe in Scripture; have endeavoured to draw an argument from hence againſt the *Truth of the Goſpel*, as if it repreſented God under a character more *ſevere*, than is conſiſtent with the eſſential Attributes of his Nature. And indeed Some *Chriſtian* Writers, in their heedleſs Systems, and unwarranted Accounts of God's Proceedings, it muſt be confeſſed, have given but too juſt occaſion for ſuch an Objection; when, after having ſet forth, in *Scripture-expreſſions*, the ſevereſt De-

S E R M. nunciations of the divine Vengeance a-  
 XVIII. gainst the Great Enemies of God and  
 Goodness, against the unrighteous and  
 the profane, against the profligate and  
 the debauched, against the obstinately  
 wicked and incorrigible; immediately,  
*without* any warrant at all from *Scripture*, nay, in direct *contradiction to it*; they suppose the *same* tremendous Punishment to be inflicted, upon *infants* who never actually sinned, or upon men *reprobated* by the mere arbitrary Will of God, or upon All who follow not such or such *Particular Sects or Doctrines of Men*, or *promiscuously and without distinction* upon all sorts and degrees of *Sinners* who shall not attain unto the Happiness of Heaven. But the *Scripture* does not so speak. We *There* find, that *the Judge of the Whole Earth will do what is Right*: That the final wrath of God shall be inflicted upon all impenitent Offenders, not promiscuously, but in weight and measure, precisely according to every one's Deserts: That it shall be *more tolerable in the day of Judgment for Some*, than for Others who shall receive

ceive a greater condemnation: That Some S E R M. shall be beaten with Few Stripes, and O- XVIII. thers with Many: That the Punishment of All, shall be inflicted in the presence of the Holy Angels, and in the presence of the Lamb; who shall accordingly be Witnesses of the Justice and of the Equity of its proportions: That God therefore will be thoroughly justified in his Sayings, and clear when he is judged: That every mouth shall be stopped before him; that is, shall have nothing to object against the reasonableness of his Proceedings: And that, when he cometh with ten thousand of his Saints, to execute judgment upon All; he shall convince Sinners, not only of all their ungodly deeds, but of their hard Speeches also which they have spoken against him. And this is a full Answer to the Objection raised by Some Unbelievers, from the Severity of the Divine Threatnings as expressed in the New Testament.

ANOTHER Sort of them there are, who will pretend that *Virtue* ought to be chosen for its own sake; and that

S E R M. when 'tis practis'd through Hope of  
 XVIII. *Reward* or Fear of *Punishment*, it ceases  
 to have the Nature of Virtue. But in  
*This* also, they greatly err. For tho' Virtue is indeed very excellent and amiable in itself, and what a reasonable Agent cannot but always acknowledge to be his Duty to choose; yet if God has not annexed to it any sufficient encouragement, to support men effectually in that Choice; it would follow that the *Nature of things*, and the *final Dispositions of Providence*, were an inconsistency; It being indeed neither *possible* nor *truly reasonable*, that men by adhering to virtue should at any time lose their Lives, if thereby they were to deprive themselves eternally of all possibility of receiving any Benefit from That Adherence. 'Tis very fit therefore, that what is in its *own nature* good and excellent, should at the same time be supported and encouraged, by *Him* who is *essentially Good* and *Powerful over All*. Besides, that the *Rewards*, which *He* proposes, have in their *Nature* a just and  
 proper

proper congruity, and are of the same S E R M.  
*Kind with virtue itself.* For which rea- XVIII.  
 son, the Ancient Worthies in Scripture   
 are never *blamed*, but *commended* for *seek-*  
*ing a better country, that is, an heaven-*  
*ly*: And even *Moses* had *respect* unto the  
*recompence of Reward*: Nay, and our  
*Lord* himself, for the joy that was set  
 before him, endured the *Cross*, despising  
 the *Shame*, and is sat down at the right  
 hand of the *Throne of God*.

*Lastly*, *Others* there are, who have  
 presumptuously taken upon them to ar-  
 gue, that, according to *Their* notions of  
 the Divine Goodness, *All* Creatures should  
 be made capable of *Happiness only*, and  
*None* of them liable to fall into *Misery*.  
 But *then* it would follow, that God had  
 no *Right* to create *Any* rational or *free*  
 Agents at all. For where-ever there is  
*Freedom*, (except only in *God himself*,  
 who is by nature *essentially* and *immu-*  
*tably* Good; where-ever else, I say, there  
 is *Freedom*,) in *whatever* proportion and  
 Degree it be, there *must* be accordingly  
 a Power of choosing *Evil* as well as  
*Good*;

SERM. Good; And where there is no possibility  
 XVIII. of *Disobedience*, there can be properly no  
 ~~~~~ *Obedience* neither; nor *Any Virtue*, where  
 there is no room for *Vice*. Sufficient it  
 is, that God, the Supreme Judge and Go-  
 vernour of All, will deal with every one  
*proportionally* according to their respec-  
 tive Circumstances; and will finally pu-  
 nish even incorrigible Wickedness itself,  
 not arbitrarily, but according to its just  
 Deserts; and in such manner as shall  
 appear to become *Him*, who is *All-Wise*  
 and *Good* as well as *All-Powerful*, to act  
 in his Government of the Universe. *Wisd.*  
*xii. 12; Who shall accuse thee for the*  
*nations that perish, whom thou hast*  
*made? or who shall come to stand against*  
*thee to be revenged for the unrighteous*  
*men? -----Forasmuch as thou art righteous*  
*thyself, thou orderest all things righteously;*  
*thinking it not agreeable with thy Power,*  
*to condemn him that hath not deserved to*  
*be punished.*

THE *Application* of the *Whole* of  
 what has been said, is briefly as follows.  
 In general: If it be agreeable to *Reason*,  
 that




that there *should* be future Rewards and Punishments; and from *Scripture*, certain that there *shall* be such: Then ought we, with *St Peter*, to infer; *What manner of persons ought we to be, in all Holy conversation and godliness!* Then more particularly, with regard to wicked men; *knowing the Terreur of the Lord*, we ought continually to *perswade* them, that they *treasure not up unto themselves wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous Judgment of God.* Always reminding them of our Saviour's Admonition; *I will forewarn you Whom you shall fear; fear Him, who after he has killed, is able to destroy both Soul and Body in Hell; yea, I say unto you, fear Him: And, if thine Eye offend thee, (that is, if any thing very dear and valuable to thee, cause thee to sin;) pluck it out, and cast it from thee; It is better for thee to enter into the Kingdom of God with One eye, than, having two eyes, to be cast into hell-fire; where the worm dieth not, and the Fire is not quenched.*

SERM.  
XVIII.



Wisd. iii.  
1; v. 15.

LIKEWISE, with regard to Good men; we may from the same ground perpetually exhort them, *to look, not at the things that are temporal, but at the things that are eternal*: Considering, that *the afflictions of this present time, which are but for a moment, are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed hereafter*. For, *the Souls of the Righteous* (as the Author of the Book of *Wisdom* affectionately expresses it) *are in the hand of God, and there shall no torment touch them*: In the sight of the *unwise they seemed to die, and their departure is taken for misery*: But ----- in the time of their *Visitation they shall shine, and run to and fro like sparks among the Stubble*: They shall judge the nations, and have dominion over the people, and their Lord shall reign for ever. Then the *Wicked, groaning for anguish of Spirit, shall say*; *We fools accounted his life madness, and his end to be without honour*: How is he numbred among the children of God, and his lot is among the *Saints*! We have erred from the way of truth,

truth, and---- wearied ourselves in the S E R M.  
way of wickedness and destruction:----- XVIII.  
But the righteous live for evermore;   
their Reward also is with the Lord, and  
the care of them is with the most High.

*The End of* V O L. VII.



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