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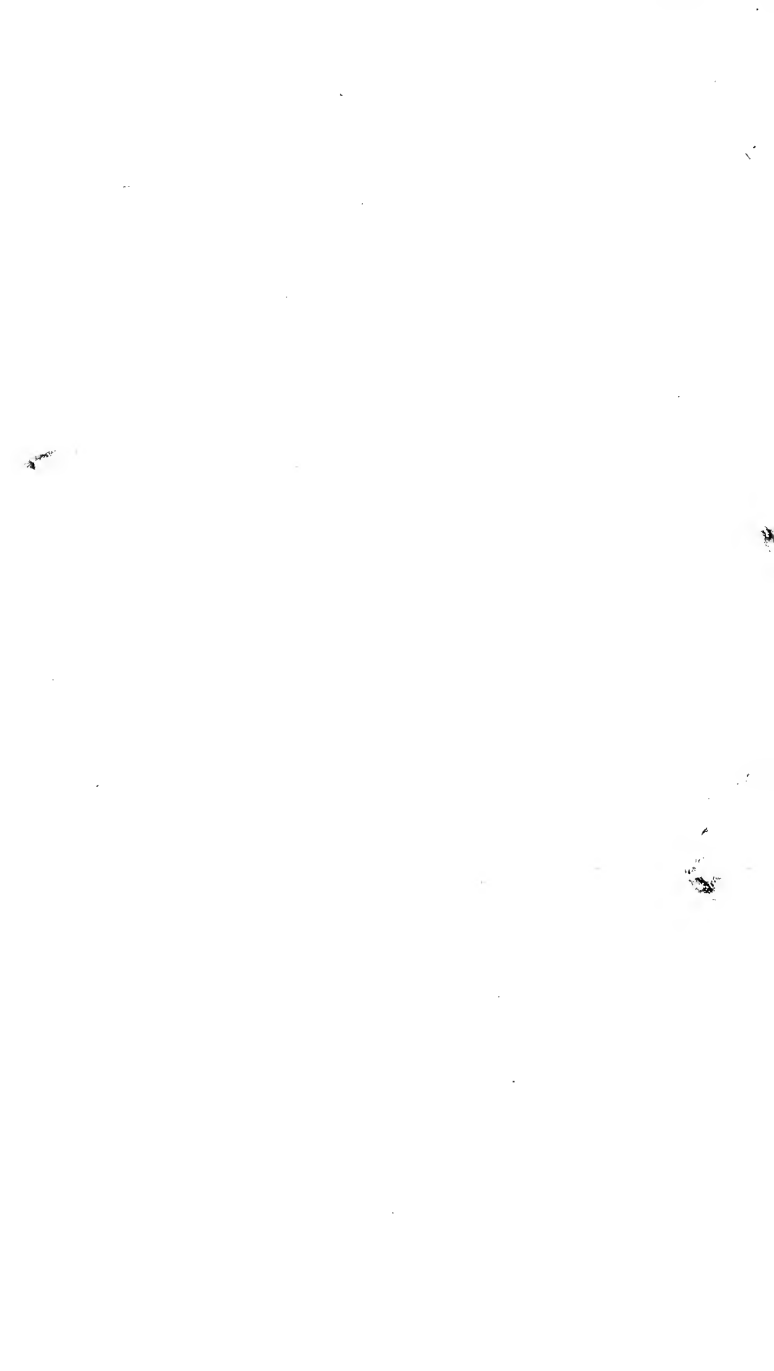
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SERMONS

ON THE

Following SUBJECTS,

VIZ.

How Wicked Men are of the Devil.	Reason the Judge of Religious Actions.
The Difference betwixt living after the Flesh and after the Spirit.	Of the Nature of Temptations.
Of the Sins of Profaneness.	Of the Nature of Lying.
Against profaning the Name of GOD.	Uprightness a Man's greatest Security.
How Wicked Men are deceived to their Destruction.	Religion consists in keeping the Commandments only.
The Design of the Gospel is to separate the Good from the Bad.	Of Suffering upon the Account of Religion.
Scripture-Evidence sufficient to make Men Religious.	Of the Nature of the Sufferings of <i>Christ</i> .
The Scripture a sufficient Rule of Religion.	Of the Humiliation and Sufferings of <i>Christ</i> .
The Knowledge of Sin is by the Law.	The Method of Deliverance through <i>Christ</i> .

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

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to*

C O N T E N T S.

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S E R M O N



S E R M O N I.

How Wicked Men are of the
Devil.

JOH. viii. 44. former part of the Verse.
*Ye are of your Father the Devil, and the
Lusts of your Father ye will do.*



IN the beginning of this chap- S E R M.
ter, we find the *Scribes and* I.
Pharisees (ver. 3.) tempting
our Saviour with insidious
questions, *that they might have*
to accuse him, ver. 6. which not succeeding,
they in the next place object against the
Evidence he brought, of his coming from
God: Ver. 13, *The Pharisees therefore*
VOL. VIII. B *said*

S E R M. *said unto him, Thou bearest record of thy self, thy record is not true. To This, he*
 I. *replies, ver. 16, 18, that he was not alone; that he did not expect, they should believe him upon his own testimony; but that the Father that sent him, bare witness of him; that is, that the agreeableness of his doctrine to the known Will of God, the correspondence of his behaviour to the Prophecies of the Old Testament, and the miraculous Works which God enabled him to do, were undeniable Proofs of his divine Commission. Ver. 26, 29, He that sent me, is true; and I speak to the World those things which I have heard of Him:----- And he that sent me, is with me; the Father hath not left me alone. Hereupon, not knowing what further to object, some of them pretended to believe on him, and joined themselves with others who were sincerely convinced, ver. 30. Designing, as appears plainly from what follows, to find some opportunity, under this pretence of believing on him, to deliver him into the hands of those who sought his Life; ver. 37, Ye seek to kill me, because my word has no place in you.*

In reproof of which wicked and detestable Design, he tells them that though by *natural Descent* they alledged *Abraham* to be their Father; ver. 9; and, by *outward Profession of religion*, said that *God* was their Father, ver. 41; yet in truth and reality, by the wickedness of their Life and Manners, they showed themselves to be *children of the Devil*, ver. 44, *Ye are of your Father the Devil, and the Lusts of your Father ye will do.*

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

IN discoursing upon which words, I shall *first* offer two or three *general* Observations upon the *whole*; and *Then* I shall consider the several Phrases more distinctly in *particular*.


THE *First* general Observation I would make upon the words of the Text, is, that our Saviour plainly *supposes* in his *manner* of speaking, that men become what he here calls *children of the Devil*, by no other way than by their own *obstinate Choice* and *wilful vicious practice*: *The Lusts of your Father* (says he) *ye will do.* There is nothing in any *Appointment* of *God*, or in the *Nature* of *Man*, that determines any one to be what our Saviour here describes under so fe-

S E R M. vere a character. 'Tis a character, not  
 I. of any *natural* Quality or Disposition,  
 but of mere *wilful* Perverseness, of ob-  
 stinate and malicious Corruption. *The*  
*Lusts of your Father, ye will do.* Con-  
 trary to *Nature*, contrary to *Reason*, con-  
 trary to innumerable *Divine Admonitions*,  
 contrary to *All the Obligations* that can  
 be incumbent upon Men; ye *will* do such  
 things, as no *Mistake*, no *Frailty*, no *In-*  
*firmity* can be pleaded in Excuse for; but  
 such things as proceed evidently from di-  
 rect *Malice*, and bear the nearest resem-  
 blance to *That manner* of Sinning, which  
 cast some of the *Angels* out of their first  
 habitation into everlasting chains under  
 Darknes. *Ye are of your Father, the De-*  
*vil; and the Lusts of your Father, ye will*  
*do.*

*Secondly*; I observe, that *as* the Wick-  
 edness which our Saviour *here* reproveth  
 in the *Text*, is *therefore* represented by  
 him as *diabolical*, because it was in the  
 highest degree *wilful*, and against the  
 clearest Light; *so* in *all* other places,  
 where-ever he uses *sharpness* and *severity*  
*of expression*, 'tis always against things in  
 their own nature *immoral*: Such as in the

Text

Text are stiled *Lusts*, that is, *vicious and* S E R M.  
*immoral Practices* loved and delighted in: I.  
*The Lusts of your Father, ye will do.* Er-  
*rours and Mistakes* of all kinds, he ar-  
 gued against with the greatest Meek-  
 ness: *Frailties and Infirmities* of all  
 sorts, he reprov'd with the utmost  
 Gentleness: *Penitents*, who had been  
 guilty of many and great Sins, but ca-  
 pable of reformation and amendment;  
 he received and comforted with all pos-  
 sible Tenderness. The *Syrophænician*  
 woman, who was a *Stranger in Israel*,  
 obtained of him her Request. The *Sa-*  
*maritan* woman, and Others of That ha-  
 ted Sect, received Instruction from him  
 at large; to the Wonder of his own Dis-  
 ciples; and to the bringing upon him  
 from the *Jews*, much Reproach and Scan-  
 dal, who gave him the ignominious name  
 of being a *Samaritan* Himself. *Peter's*  
 denying him upon a Surprize, he repro-  
 ved with the friendly expostulation of a  
 Look. *Sinners* of all kinds, upon whom  
 any good was to be done, he freely and  
 familiarly conversed with, and invited to  
 Repentance; insomuch that his Enemies  
 stiled him, by way of Contempt, a *Friend*

S E R M. of *Publicans and Sinners*. But incorrigible Lovers of *Immorality*, *Devourers of Widows Houses*, and men of *corrupt intention*; whose Hearts, like Sepulchres filled with dead mens bones, were full of *Unrighteousness* and all *Uncleaness*; these he *never* spared, these he always re-  
 I.  proved with the greatest *Freedom* and *Earnestness*.

*Thirdly*; I observe, that of all the *Several Kinds of Immorality and Unrighteousness*, which our Saviour reproves in his Gospel; *That*, against which he, in a still more *particular* and *distinguishing* manner, directs his *highest* Expressions of *Severity*, not without some *warmth* even of *Indignation*; is the Practice of those *Hypocrites*, who in matters of Religion, put Deceits upon the World; living viciously *themselves*, and not caring *what Burdens* they lay upon *other Men*. Luke xi. 46, 52; *Wo unto you*, says he, *ye Lawyers*; (that is, Teachers and Expofitors of the Law of *Moses*;) *for ye lade men with Burdens grievous to be born, and ye yourselves touch not the Burdens with one of your Fingers:----Wo unto you; for ye have taken away the key of knowledge;*  
 ye

ye entred not in yourselves, and them that were entring in, ye hindred. And again, *Matt. xxiii. 33*; *Ye Serpents, saith he, ye generation of Vipers, how can ye escape the Damnation of Hell?* The reason of this singular and extraordinary severity, in our Lord who upon all other occasions was all meekness; the reason (I say) of his peculiar Severity in *This* case, is the Great Weight and Importance of the Thing. Religion, is the Light of the World; And if the Light that is in men, be itself Darknes, how great must the Darknes be! If the Rule and Guide of mens Actions, be itself perverted; and That which should direct their feet into the paths of Virtue and Goodness, be itself transformed into Blind opinions and external Forms, which afford matter on-ly for Strife and Contentions and Uncharitableness amongst men; how great must the corruption of manners, necessarily be! This was the true and just ground, of our Saviour's peculiar Severity towards the Scribes and Pharisees and Expounders of the Law among the *Jews*: And it ought, at *all* times, and in *all* places,

S E R M. to make men very careful, that they represent Religion faithfully and sincerely in its Simplicity, as the Truth is in Christ, and not according to the accidental Traditions of Men at *different Times*, and in *different Places*: And that *Religion*, whose great End is Piety towards God, and universal Righteousness and Charity towards Men, never be made a ground of Hatred and Animosity, of Party and Faction, of Power and worldly Dominion among Christians; which is always a Demonstration, and an Effect, of great Corruption.

T H E S E Observations being premised *in general*; I proceed now to consider the expressions used by our Saviour in the Text, more distinctly and in *particular*: What is meant, by Wicked mens being *of their Father the Devil*; and what, by their *doing his Lusts*.

I. *First*; I N order to understand clearly, what is meant by Wicked men's being *of their Father the Devil*; 'tis to be observed, that in the nature of *Things*, and according to the tenour of *Scripture*, All Rational Beings whatsoever, capable

capable of Good and Evil, of Obedience and Disobedience, must be created originally in a State of Tryal or Probation. Answerable therefore to what we see amongst *Men*, 'tis reasonable to suppose, that, among all *Other* creatures likewise, indued with Freedom of Will; allowing for their respective Circumstances, Powers and Capacities; there will be proportionably a Difference of Behaviour. And accordingly the Scripture expressly assures us, that, among *Angels*, *Some* continued to be *the Servants of God, who do his Pleasure*; and that *Others* of them *Sinned, and kept not their first Estate, but left their own habitation*. And concerning the *Chief* of these, our Saviour in This verse, of which my Text is a part, tells us that *from the beginning he abode not in the Truth*. What the *particular* Sin of these disobedient Angels was, is not distinctly revealed; and therefore 'tis a *weak*, as well as *vain* curiosity, to make conjectures about it. *This only* we may be very sure of, that it was not, as Some have incautiously represented it, a *rebeling* against God by way of *open force*; but

S E R M.  
I.  
~

S E R M. but a presuming foolishly, as wicked *Men* also do, to transgress the Laws of their Nature and their God. For no creature, or number of creatures, can possibly *in the way of Force* rebel against God; in whose hand the whole Universe, is less than nothing; and their Being, he can, whenever he pleases, withdraw from them in a moment. When therefore we read in Scripture, concerning *War in Heaven*; and of the *Dragon* and *His Angels*, *fighting* against *Michael* and *His Angels*; 'tis manifest it must, according to the nature of the prophetick language, be understood *figuratively*, concerning *contentions* and *persecutions* in the *Church*, upon account of matters of *Religion*. For the *Church*, or Whole Number of Sincere Believers, is the *House* or *City of God*; and the Persecutors of Christ's true Disciples, are in Scripture represented as *blaspheming them that dwell in Heaven*. In like manner, when St *Jude* mentions *Michael the Arch-Angel*, ver. 9, *contending with the Devil about the Body of Moses*; 'tis probably an allusion to certain Disputes in the *Jewish Church*, concerning the *Substance* of the

*Law*



*Law* or religion of *Moses*: For the very same phrase is used by *St Paul* concerning the *Gospel*, *Rom. vii. 4*; *Ye are dead to the Law, by the Body of Christ*, that is, by the *Gospel*: And *Col. ii. 17*; These things are a *Shadow of things to come*; but the *Body*, (or *Substance*), is of *Christ*. From the figurativeness therefore of these expressions, as well as from the nature and evident reason of the thing itself, 'tis plain that the *Kingdom of Satan*, set up in opposition to the *Kingdom of God*, is not literally a *Kingdom of Force* or *Power*, but in the spiritual sense a *Kingdom* or *Party*, a *Dominion* or *Prevalency* of *Sin*, in opposition to the *Kingdom* or *Establishment* of *Righteousness*. Departing from *Virtue* and *Goodness*, is revolting from the *Kingdom of God*, and declaring that we *will not have Him to reign over us*. The *Head* of this transgression, the *Original* or *Beginner* of *Disobedience* and *Unrighteousness*, among all the rational creatures of whom *We* have any *Knowledge*; is the *Devil*. And all wicked *Spirits*, perhaps all wicked *Men* also, who, either by his enticement,

or,

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

S E R M. or after his example, transgress the Laws
 I. of their Creator; are in Scripture stiled
His Angels; Matt. xxv. 41, *everlasting Fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels*: and sometimes *his children*; as in the words of the Text, *Ye are of your Father the Devil*. The phrase is very elegant, and, according to the analogy of the *Jewish* language, very usual and very expressive. For the highest way, in That language, of expressing any particular Quality, Similitude, or Relation; is by stiling men the *children* of that *Thing* or *Person*, by which any extraordinary Quality, Similitude, or Relation, is intended to be expressed. Thus, men of *meek* and calm Spirits, are in Scripture called *Sons of peace*; and outrageous *Oppressors*, *Sons of Violence*. Men of true *courage*, are *Sons of Valour*; and, in a still sublimer figure, *Sons of Thunder*. Persons of exemplary *Virtue, faith, and piety*, of whatever nation they be, are *children of Abraham*: And *Judas*, on the contrary, for his singular corruptness, is stiled the *Son of Perdition*. Men under the Sentence of *condemnation*, are called *Sons of Death*;
 and

and persons under any great or lasting *Distress*, Sons and Daughters of affliction. S E R M.
I.

And Thus likewise, by the same figure of Speech, all righteous and good men, imitators of the divine Virtues, are frequently mentioned under This Denomination, as being Children of God; and God is spoken of as being *Their Father*. In the words just before my Text; *Jesus said to the Jews, If God were your Father, ye would love me.* And wicked men, on the contrary, are stiled Sons of *Belial*, and children of the Devil, 1 Joh. iii. 10; the children of the wicked One, Matt. xiii. 38; and in the words of the Text, *Ye are of your Father the Devil.* And from hence; as God, not with regard to his absolute Kingdom and natural Dominion over the Universe, but with regard to his being (in the moral and religious Sense) *The Father*, of whom the whole spiritual family in heaven and earth is named, has the Title given him of *King of Saints*, Rev. xv. 3: So the Devil, not as having any natural Power to set up literally any Kingdom or true Dominion in opposition to the Almighty; but as being
the

S E R M. the *Biginner of Sin and Disobedience*, or
 I. the *Head* of that unrighteousness which
 has so widely *spread* over a degenerate
 World; is, in a moral and figurative
 Sense, stiled in Scripture, *the Prince of
 this World*; and, *the God of this World*;
 the *Prince of the Power of the Air*, the
*Spirit that now worketh in the children of
 disobedience*: And they who resist and
 conquer the Temptations of *Sin*, are con-
 sequently represented as being *delivered
 from the Power of Darkness*, Col. i. 13;
 and as *wrestling*, Eph. vi. 12, *against Prin-
 cipalities, against Powers, against the Ru-
 lers of the darkness of this World, against
 spiritual wickedness in high places.*

HAVING thus at large explained the
 Meaning of this *first* phrase in the Text, that
 Wicked and profane men *are of their
 Father the Devil*: It remains in the

II. *Second* place, that I proceed to con-
 sider what is meant by that *Other* expres-
 sion, of *doing his Lusts*: *The Lusts of your
 Father, ye will do.* Now from what has
 been already said, 'tis evident that This
 phrase very properly signifies, *Every kind
 of Sin and Wickedness* whatsoever. *He
 that*

that committeth Sin, he that lives in the S E R M.
habitual Practice of *Any Sin* whatsoever, I.
is of the Devil; 1 Joh. iii. 8. For as, God
being the Author and Lover of All Good,
the *Doing* of *His Will* implies conse-
quently the Practice of *Every Virtue*: So,
the *Devil* being considered as the *Head* of
Apostacy, and the *Beginner* and *Example*
of *Transgression*; the *Doing his Lusts*, or
following *his Example*, or fulfilling *His*
Desires, signifies consequently mens de-
lighting in *Any Instance* of *Vice*. Ac-
cordingly, in Scripture-phrafe, the *Power*
of *Satan* is the *Habit* of *Any Sin* or De-
bauchery whatsoever. His *Dominion* or
Kingdom, or, in the language of our
Lord's parable, the *strong man's house*, is
the *Prevailing* of *Unrighteousness*, or its
taking *Possession* of mens *Hearts* and Af-
fections. A *general* corruption of *Man-*
ners in any *place* or *country*, is, what the
prophetick language describes by stiling
such a place, the place *where Satan*
dwelleth, and *where his Seat* (or *Throne*)
is; Rev, ii. 13. And the *Whole World* be-
ing overspread with great *Wickedness*, or
lying *in Wickedness*, as we translate That
passage

S E R M. I: passage in St *John*, 1 *Joh.* v. 19; is, in the original, *The whole World lieth in the Wicked One*: That is, in the *moral* and *figurative* Sense, is subject to the Dominion of *Sin*, and filled with all manner of *unrighteousness*: After the same manner of speaking, as good Christians are said to be *in God*, and *in Christ*, and *in him that is True*; when they answer the intent of their Profession, by their *Knowledge* of the *Truth* and by their *Practice* of *Virtue* and *all Goodness*. For the same reason, when our Lord by the *Light* of his *Gospel* and by the *Excellency* of his *Precepts*, dispelled the *Darkness* of *Ignorance*, and put an End to the *Impious* and *Superstitious* Practices, which before prevailed among Mankind; the Scripture calls this *manifestation* of the *Son of God*, his *destroying* the Works of the Devil; 1 *Joh.* iii. 8. And the swift progress of the Truth at the beginning, by the speedy propagation of the Gospel; is, in our Saviour's own expression, *Satan as Lightning falling from Heaven*. By the *Lusts* of the Devil therefore, 'tis plain, is to be understood All *Sin*, All *Unrighteousness*, All *Debauchery*,

Debauchery, every Breach of God's com- SERM.
mandments whatsoever. I.

NEVERTHELESS, in a strict and more restrained Sense, *some Sins* there are, which both in Scripture and in the reason of the thing, are represented as more peculiarly *diabolical*. Of *This* kind, one instance is *False Accusation*, or *Persecution*: For the *Devil* is stiled in Scripture, *The Accuser of the Brethren*, and 'tis the proper signification of the *Name itself*.

ANOTHER instance is *Pride*; that is, a Spirit of *Insolence* and *Dominion*, especially if it be in matters of Religion, opposite to *Christ's Spirit of Truth and Meekness*. Concerning This, *St Paul* speaks, *1 Tim. iii. 6*; *A [Bishop, or] Preacher of the Gospel, must not* (says he) *be lifted up with Pride, lest he fall into the condemnation of the Devil*.

ANOTHER Particular of This sort, is *Witchcraft*: That is, (in the *Scripture-sense* of that word,) *Astrology*, *Fortune-telling*, and all other *Pretences* of that kind: Which, if they had any *reality* in them, would be *literally* diabolical; and

S E R M. having *no reality* in them, yet they are truly diabolical, as being *Cheats, Delusions, and Impositions* upon Mankind. Two other examples, of Sins in their own nature more particularly devilish, our Saviour expressly names in the words immediately following my Text; *viz. Murder and Lying*: *Ye are (says he) of your Father the Devil, and the Lusts of your Father ye will do: He was a Murderer from the Beginning, and abode not in the Truth, because there is no Truth in him: When he speaketh a Lie, he speaketh of his own; for he is a Lyar, and the Father of it.* The former of these two instances; *Murder*, (*i. e.* Hatred, Malice, Wars, Destructions, Desolations;) is evidently in the highest degree imitating the works of *Him*, who by way of eminence is intitled *The Destroyer*. The latter of these; *Lying, or not abiding in the Truth*; has generally, in Scripture-language, reference to matters of *Religion*. For, as the *right Knowledge and Worship* of God, is frequently, by way of eminence, called *The Truth*; and *God himself* is stiled emphatically, *He that is True*; and our *Lord*

Jesus Christ, according to the same Analogy, *The Faithful and True Witness*: So *Idols*, in the prophetick style, are very usually called *Lies* and *Lying Vanities*; and under the title of *Lyars*, are primarily comprehended all *Idolaters*: That is, all who pay religious Worship where it is not due; applying themselves to False and imaginary Objects, whether they be fictitious *Gods* or fictitious *Mediators*. *Idolatry* therefore, in the last place, (and to conclude this Head,) is the *Chief* of all the *Works of the Devil*, and the most immediate and direct opposition to God. This, in all Ages and Nations of the World, has been the great Spring and Root of innumerable sorts of Wickedness, and of the vilest Immoralities; as *St Paul* at large sets forth, *Rom. i.* This, at the first planting of the Gospel, was the great Enemy of Christianity among the *Gentiles*. And though, under the Name of *Heathenism* indeed, it be Now intirely abolished in these parts of the World; yet there are, even among those who call themselves *Christians*, some that worship Images of Wood and Stone, and

S E R M.

II.



SERMON. Other Fancies and Imaginations of their own, instead of obeying *the everlasting Gospel* in paying their Worship to *Him that made Heaven and Earth and all things that are therein*; and are continually addressing themselves to Angels, and to real or fictitious Saints, instead of directing their Prayers to God in the Name and through the Intercession of Him, who is our Alone Mediatour and Advocate with the Father, even our Lord *Jesus Christ*: All which Practices, are only so many different species of Idolatry: And upon account of These things it is, that, in the prophetick Writings of the *New Testament*, some part of that which takes upon itself the Name of the *Christian World*, is in very severe terms called *Babylon*, and *spiritual Sodom*, the *Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth*. And indeed, in the great and solemn Acts of Religion, every thing is, more or less, faulty in This kind, except worshipping *Him* alone, who created the World by his Power, who redeemed Mankind by his *Son*, and sanctifies all good persons by his *Holy Spirit*.

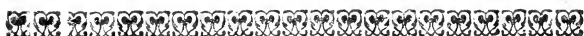
THE

THE Application wherewith I shall S E R M. conclude, shall be This *One* Inference; I. that, from all that has been said, it clearly appears, that the *Works of the Devil*, so often mentioned in Scripture, are the *wilful and deliberate Sins of Men*: Not things worked *in* or *upon* men, by the proper efficiency or operation of any superiour power; but things worked *by* men, by their *own Will and Choice*, agreeable to, in *imitation* of, and in compliance with the *Temptations* of, the Great Apostate from God and Goodness: *Works of the Devil*, not in the *natural*, but in the *moral* sense; Actions, in their own nature *wicked, impious, diabolical*. From whence it most evidently follows, that none of the things spoken in Scripture concerning the temptations of the Devil, are any *diminution*, but on the contrary they are *Aggravations* of the Guilt of Great Sins. Profane men, are Therefore declared to *be of their Father the Devil*, because his *Lusts they will do*; they *will deliberately, obstinately, and impenitently* do them.



S E R M O N II.

The Difference betwixt living after the Flesh and after the Spirit.



R O M. viii. 13.

For if ye live after the Flesh, ye shall die: But if ye through the Spirit do mortify the Deeds of the Body, ye shall live.



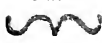
S the whole *Natural* World, S E R M. II. is divided into *Two* great Portions, of *Light* and *Darkness*; And as the Whole of what the *Sensitive* World perceives, may well be ranked under the *Two* general Heads

C 4 of

S E R M. of *Pleasure and Pain, of Happiness and Misery* : So the whole *Rational or Moral* World, may very properly be distinguished, under those *Two* opposite and most important characters, of *Good and Evil*. The *One* of these, is the Kingdom of *God*, the Kingdom of *Righteousness*, the Kingdom of *Light* : The *Other* is, the Kingdom of *Satan*, the Power of *Darkness*, the Dominion of *Sin*, or the Prevaling of *Wickedness* among Men. The *One* of these, is the *Way* that leadeth unto *Life* ; the *Way* of *Life and Happiness eternal* : The *Other*, is the *Way* that leadeth to *Destruction* ; the way of *Death and Misery everlasting*. The *proper business*, of *Reason*, and of *Religion* ; the whole *intent and office*, the whole *end and design*, both of the *Light of Nature*, and of the *Gospel of Christ* ; is to teach men to *judge and distinguish* rightly, concerning this great and essential *Difference* of *Things* ; to show them the *Importance* of acting wisely in this matter ; and to warn them of the *Consequences* of which soever part they take.

ANSWERABLE to this great *Division* of S E R M.
things in the World *without* us, there is II.
naturally *within* every man a correspon-
dent *diversity* of inclinations, towards the
two *contrary* Objects, towards Good and
Evil. By the irresistible evidence of *Rea-*
son, and by the Native Amiability of
Truth and Right; by the additional Weight
of the *Authority of God*, and the power-
ful *Motives of Religion*; a man is of ne-
cessity obliged to *approve* what is *Good*,
and strongly invited to *act* in conformity
to That Obligation. But because *Happi-*
ness also is of necessity desirable; and the
Way to those things, on which mens pre-
sent Happiness depends, lies often through
the forbidden passages of *unrighteous* Prac-
tices; hence there cannot but be also in
Man, in all such cases, an *Inclination* to
Evil; a Desire to obtain the Pleasure or
the Profit, a Desire to gratify the Appe-
tite or the Passion, though it cannot be
gratified in Those particular Circumstan-
ces but by the doing what is *Evil*. This
diversity of inclinations, by which a man
is drawn by different Motives at one and
the same time towards opposite Objects;
is

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S E R M. is what the Scripture thus describes, *Gal.*
 II. v. 17 ; *The Flesh lusteth against the Spirit,*
 *and the Spirit against the Flesh ; And these*
are contrary the one to the other, so that ye
cannot do the things that ye would. Again,
Rom. vii. 22 ; I delight in the law of God,
after the inward man ; but I see another
law in my Members, warring against the
law of my Mind, and bringing me into
captivity to the law of Sin. By the solli-
citations therefore of different Motives,
men are continually drawn towards con-
trary Objects: And in determining rightly
which Object to prefer, consists the true
Wisdom and Happiness of Man. For no
person can serve Two opposite Masters.
He must of necessity either love the One,
and hate the Other ; or else he must adhere
to that Other, and neglect the first. Rom.
viii. 5, 7, 8 ; They that are after the
Flesh, do mind the things of the Flesh ; but
they that are after the Spirit, the things
of the Spirit. Because the carnal mind, is
enmity against God ; for it is not subject to
the Law of God, neither indeed can be. So
then, they that are in the Flesh, cannot
please God. On the contrary ; Whosoever

is born of God, (1 Joh, iii. 9,) doth not and cannot commit Sin; that is, consistently with his character 'tis impossible he should live a vicious life, because he is born of God: For they that are Christ's, have crucified the Flesh, with the Affections and Lusts: Gal. v. 24.

S E R M.
II.


THE Consequence of mens Choice on *Either* part, in this great *Division* of things; their choosing to be led by the Law of *Appetite* and *Passion*, or by the Law of *Reason* and *Religion*; the *Consequence* (I say) of their choice on *Either* part, is set forth to us in the words of my Text. *If ye live after the Flesh, ye shall die: But if ye through the Spirit do mortify the Deeds of the Body, ye shall live.*


IN the following Discourse, I shall 1st endeavour to show more particularly and distinctly the Meaning of the words, *Flesh* and *Spirit*; and upon what grounds they have come to be used in Scripture in so great a Latitude and Extent of Signification. 2^{dly}, I shall consider *what* the Apostle here declares will be the *Consequence* of mens living according to one or the other of these two contrary Principles of Action:

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S E R M. ACTION : In the *one* case, saith he, *ye shall live*; in the *other*, *ye shall die*. And 3dly, I shall draw some useful *Inferences* from the Whole.

II.

I. IN the *First* place, Man being by Nature compounded of *Body* and *Mind*, the one of these is naturally the Seat of *Appetite*, the other of *Reason*. And Each of these Faculties, are essentially Good and Useful in their kind : *Appetites and Passions*, to *excite* and *move* men to act; and *Reason*, to *direct* and *regulate* those Actions; to *direct* Appetites and Passions to their proper *Objects*, and to *restrain* them within their just and due *Bounds*. The *Brute* creatures, having no *Moral* capacities, no Faculties capable of being influenced by the Arguments of *Reason* and *Religion*; are and can be directed *merely* by *Bodily Appetite*, in every thing they do. *Men*, who have no regard to the considerations of *Reason and Religion*, do the *Same* thing; And, (with *This* difference only, that they act with a *Consciousness* of *Guilt and Folly*, which Beasts do not,) *They* also are *Brute Animals*. *These*, as St *Jude* expresses it, (ver. 10,) are
 very

very apt to *ſpeak evil of the things which* S E R M.
they know not; but what they know natu- II.
rally as Brute Beasts, in thoſe things they 
corrupt themſelves. Or, according to St Pe-
ter's deſcription of them. 2 Pet. ii. 12, 19;
Theſe, as natural Brute Beasts, made to
be taken and deſtroyed, ſpeak evil of the
things that they underſtand not; but are
the Servants of corruption, and ſhall ut-
terly periſh in their own corruption. The
fiſt therefore, the original and moſt ob-
vious Meaning of this phraſe in the Text,
of living after the Fleſh; is the literal
ſenſe: Mens living in a courſe of Debauchery,
in the Praſtice of thoſe Sins of Uncleanneſs,
which the Apoſtle ſays ought not ſo much
as once to be named among Chriſtians. And
then, on the contrary, the mortifying through
the Spirit the Deeds of the Body, will ſignify
the reſtraining and regulating the Appetites
of Senſe by the Rules of Virtue and ſober
Reason, which is the governing Power in
the Spirit of a man's own Mind, as he is a
rational Creature; and by the Precepts of
True Religion, which are the Dictates of
the

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S E R M. the *Divine Spirit*, revealing to us the
 II. Laws and Will of *God*.



FROM this first, original, and literal signification of the words, *Flesh* and *Spirit*; the same Terms have, by a very easy and natural figure of Speech, been extended to signify *All Vice* and *All Virtue* in general; as having their Root and Foundation, one in the prevailing of different *Passions and Desires* over the Dictates of *Reason*, and the other in the Dominion of *Reason and Religion* over all the irregularities of *Desires and Passions*. Every *Vice*, and every instance of *Wickedness*, of whatever kind it be; has its Foundation in some unreasonable *Appetite* or *ungoverned Passion*, warring against the *Law of the Mind*. And therefore, living in the Practice of *Any Wickedness* whatsoever, in opposition to the *Reason* of a man's own *Mind*, and to the *Precepts of Religion* delivered by the *Spirit of God*; is, in the language of my Text, *living after the Flesh*, or, as 'tis expressed ver. 1st of this chapter, *walking after the Flesh*. And on the contrary in Good men, with regard

regard to the Practice of *All Virtue* in general; *the Body* (saith the Apostle) is dead, because of Sin; but *the Spirit* is Life, because of Righteousness; ver. 10. The *Works of the Flesh* therefore, in Scripture-language, are, not only *Adultery, Fornication, and Uncleanness*; but also, as St Paul adds in the continuation of his Catalogue, *Gal. v. 20; Idolatry, Witchcraft, Hatred, Variance, Emulations, Wrath, Strife, Seditions, Heresies*, (that is, *worldly Factions* set up under pretence of Religion; For That is the Scripture-sense of the word, *Heresy*; to which term, the Church of Rome has in later Ages affixed a *ridiculous* signification, of which the Apostles could have no knowledge:) All these things, I say, are by St Paul expressly stiled, *Works of the Flesh*: Also *Envyings, Murders, Drunkenness, Revellings, and such like*; ver. 21: Nay further, even *Contention* likewise, and all *superstitious Inventions of men* in matters of Religion; as the same Apostle says concerning *Worshippers of Angels*, that they are *vainly puffed up by their Fleshly Mind*; Col. ii. 18. In like manner the

Fruit

S E R M.

II.



S E R M. *Fruit of the Spirit*, is, not only *Sobriety*
 II. *Temperance, and Chastity*; but also, as the
 ~~~~~  
 Apostle adds in the same place, ver. 22;  
*Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness,*  
*goodness, faith, meekness.* *Against such,*  
*says he, there is no law.* *And they that*  
*are Christ's*, that is, all good Christians,  
*have crucified the Flesh, with the affections*  
*and lusts*; That is, will effectually take  
 care to avoid the Practice of every Vice,  
 which is contrary to these Virtues or  
 Fruits of the Spirit.

FURTHER: Because a great part of  
 the *Jewish Religion* consisted in *external*  
 Observances relating to the *Body*, in *meats*  
*and drinks and divers Washings, and Car-*  
*nal Ordinances imposed on them until the*  
*time of reformation*, as the Apostle ex-  
 presses it, *Heb. ix. 10*; and again, *ch. vii.*  
*16*; *after the Law of a Carnal Command-*  
*ment*: Whereas the *Gospel of Christ* always  
 lays the whole Stress of Religion upon  
 the Practice of those *Moral Virtues*, whose  
 Seat is in the *Heart and Soul*: Hence the  
 Doctrine of those *False Apostles*, who in  
 a contentious manner endeavoured to ob-  
 lige all *Christians* to observe the *Cere-*  
*monies*

monies of the Law of Moses as a most necessary part of Christian religion, is likewise by St Paul stiled *The Flesh*; in opposition to the true and uncorrupted doctrine of Christ, which he stiles *The Spirit*. Thus Gal. iii. 3; *Are ye so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the Flesh?* That is; Can you be so weak as to think, that after you have embraced the Truth of Christ's spiritual Religion, you can become still more perfect, by observing the mere external Ceremonies of the Jewish Law? And again, ch. v. 18; *If ye be led by the Spirit, ye are not under the Law*: That is, If ye have a right Understanding and a suitable Practice of Christ's Holy Religion, in the course of a truly virtuous and good life; ye will be under no obligation from your profession of the Gospel, to observe the rituals of the Jewish Law. Nay, on the contrary, *if ye be circumcised, faith he, ver. 2; Christ shall profit you nothing*. That is: If, after ye have been instructed in the Truth of the Gospel of Christ, ye contentiously insist upon the observation of Jewish Ceremonies as necessary,

S E R M.  
II.  


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S E R M. and depend on them as *efficacious* to Sal-  
 II. vation, ye do vacate one of the main  
 Ends and Designs of the Gospel; and your  
 Religion will certainly degenerate into a  
 mere external *Formality*, which is but a  
*Work of the Flesh*.

HAVING thus at large explained the  
 Meaning of the words *Flesh* and *Spirit*,  
 and upon what Grounds they have come  
 to be used in Scripture in so great a lati-  
 tude and Extent of Signification; I pro-  
 ceed now in the

II. *Second* place, to consider, *what* the  
 Apostle here declares will be the *Conse-  
 quence* of mens living according to one or  
 the other of these two contrary Principles  
 of Action: In the *one* case, says he, ye  
*shall live*; in the *other*, ye *shall die*. If  
 ye live after the *Flesh*; that is, if ye live  
 in a habit of gross *Debauchery*, or in the  
 practice of *Any other* known *Vice* whatso-  
 ever, (for *All Vices* are founded upon pre-  
 vailing *Appetites* and *Passions*;) or if your  
*Religion* consists merely in *outward Forms*  
*and Ceremonies*, or in matters of *Animosity*  
*and Contention*, (for These likewise are  
*Works of the Flesh*;) then, says he, ye  
*shall*



*shall die. But if you through the Spirit,* S E R M.  
that is, by the Laws of *Reason* implanted II.  
in a man's own *Spirit*, and by the Precepts  
of *Religion* dictated by God's *Spirit*, do  
*mortify the deeds of the Body*; then ye *shall*  
*live*. For, *to be carnally minded*, (ver. 6,)  
*is Death*; but *to be spiritually minded*, *is*  
*life and peace*. 'Tis so, originally, in the  
*natural consequences of things*; and 'tis  
much more so by the *constitution and ap-*  
*pointment of God*. For *the Wages of Sin,*  
*is Death*; but *the Gift of God is eternal*  
*life, through Jesus Christ our Lord*.

MAN was originally, in his *Nature*,  
created *Mortal*; but by the Grace of God,  
represented under the Emblem of a Tree of  
Life, he had a possibility of escaping *actual*  
*Death*. Upon the entrance of *Sin* into  
the World, Man became *absolutely and ne-*  
*cessarily* subject to that Death, which by  
his Obedience had before been in his Pow-  
er to have avoided. By the interposition  
of Christ, God has again renewed the  
Promise of Immortality; But 'tis still  
upon the condition of Man's renewing his  
Obedience. If men continue in Sin, the  
Sentence of Death *remains* upon them;

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S E R M. And the Consequence of That, is the final Effect of the Divine Vengeance in the *Future State*. In the *Natural Tendency* of things, *Some Vices*, even in the *present time*, lead directly and *literally* to *Death*; either by *Capital Punishments*, or by *natural Diseases*. *She hath cast down many wounded*, saith *Solomon* concerning a vicious Woman, *Prov. vii. 26*; yea, *many strong men have been slain by her*: *Her house is the way to Hell, going down to the Chambers of Death*. And *All Vices*, by taking away the *rational Uses* and the *rational Comforts* of Life, wherein *the life of Man consisteth*, the life of Man as distinguished from that of the *Beasts that perish*; do bring every man, so far as they get the *Dominion* over him, into the State of That person, of whom *St Paul* affirms, *1 Tim. v. 6*; that *she is dead while she liveth*. By the *same Natural Consequence* of things, in the *Future State* likewise, a vicious and corrupt mind *cannot possibly live unto God*. And what *St Paul* says of *Flesh and Blood* in the *natural and literal Sense* of the words, as signifying a *mortal person*; is much more true in the

*figura-*

*figurative and moral sense of them, as signifying a vicious and debauched person: Flesh and Blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God, neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. But if it were possible, in the Nature of Things; yet, by the righteous Judgment of God, 'tis unalterably decreed, that no vicious person shall enter into That Life. Gal. vi. 7; Be not deceived, God is not mocked; For whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to the Flesh, shall of the Flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. Again, 1 Cor. iii. 17; If any man defile the Temple of God, him shall God destroy: For the Temple of God is Holy, which Temple Ye are. But on the contrary, says he, if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead, dwell in you; that is, if ye obey the Dictates of the Spirit of God, in the course of a virtuous and religious life; then he that raised up Christ from the dead, shall also quicken your mortal Bodies, by his Spirit that dwelleth in you; Rom. viii. 11.*

S E R M.  
II.  


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S E R M. III. IT remains in the *Third* and *Last*  
 II. place, that I conclude with a practical  
 ~~~~~ Inference or two, from what has been  
 said. And

1st ; FROM the account which has been given of the Extent of the signification of these Phrases, *living after the Flesh* and *after the Spirit* ; it appears that *All* persons, of *all* ranks and conditions, in *All* stations and circumstances of life whatsoever, are concerned in the Exhortation or Warning given in my Text. As *various* as are the *Appetites* and *Passions* of Mankind, which *all* have their Foundation in the *bodily* part warring against the *Law* or *Reason of the Mind* ; so many *different* ways are there, of *living after the Flesh*. Persons in the *lowest* stations of life, have usually, from bad education and ill company, their *proper* Temptation to *Beastly Excesses and Debaucheries* ; or, if they are under *extreme* Want and Oppression, then their chief Temptation is to *Impatience* and *Murmuring* against God, or perhaps to *unrighteous* Methods of *relieving* their own Necessities. In the *highest* and most *exalted* Stations of life, the

2

Temp-

Temptations men are most *naturally* exposed to, are those of *Pride* and *Ambition*; of *Tyrannicalness*, or a Love of *Power and Dominion*; of *oppressive, haughty, and injurious Treatment* of Inferiours; of *Luxuriousness* in life, joined with either a *total Thoughtlessness* or a *profane Despising and Contempt* of matters of *Religion*. In the *middle* rank and condition of life, the Sins that most *easily* and *generally* beset men, are those of *Fraud* and *Deceit*, of *unfairness* and *over-reaching*, in all kinds of *Dealings* and *Contracts*: Also an aptness to run ignorantly and violently into *Parties* and *Factions* either *Civil* or *Religious*, with a Spirit of *Contentiousness*, *Hatred*, and *Animosity*. All things which are of one and the same kind, proceeding from one and the same Root under different Circumstances; all of them, what the Apostle calls *Works of the Flesh*. The Denunciations of the Wrath of God in Scripture, against those who *walk after the Flesh*; are indeed *primarily* and *chiefly* directed against such, as live in the Practice of those gross Debaucheries, which are in the more *literal* sense, the *works of*

The Difference betwixt living after

S E R M. *the Flesh.* Thus, 2 Pet. ii. 9; *The Lord knoweth how ----- to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished; But chiefly them that walk after the Flesh, in the Lust of Uncleanness.* And St Paul exhorts, speaking concerning the same kind of Sins; *Eph. 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; or upon Unbelievers, even in the Heathen World.* But though These Sins are ranked *first* in the catalogue of those which certainly exclude from the Kingdom of God; yet all *other* Vices also do follow in the same catalogue; and are really (as has been shown in the foregoing Discourse) *Works likewise of the Flesh.* So that it was of no avail to the *proud and hypocritical Pharisee*, to say; *God, I thank thee, that I am not, as other Men are, ---- adulterers, and so on; Luke xviii. 11.* For, as St James expresses it, ch. ii. 11; *If thou commit no Adultery, yet if thou kill, if thou livest in the practice of any other known vice, thou art become a Transgressor of the Law.*

2dly, FROM what has been said concerning these Two great and general Principles of Action, the *Flesh* and the *Spirit*; 'tis easy for every man to make a right judgment concerning his *own* present spiritual estate, under *which* of these *two* denominations he finds himself. Of *Other* mens Actions, whether they proceed from a *good* or an *evil* Principle; except in the case of notorious Vices, he may very easily judge amiss. But concerning *himself*, if a man seriously considers, he cannot but know, whether he is governed in general by Considerations of *Reason* and *Religion*, or by mere *Appetites*, *Passions* and *Interests*: Whether he walks after the *Flesh*, and shall die; or after the *Spirit*, and shall live.

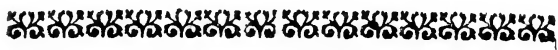
S E R M O N .
II.






S E R M O N III.

Of the Sins of Profaneness.



H E B. xii. 16, 17.


Lest there be any Fornicator, or profane Person as Esau, who for one Morsel of Meat sold his Birthright: For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the Blessing, he was rejected; for he found no place of Repentance, tho' he sought it carefully with Tears.



H E S E words naturally suggest S E R M. III. unto us the following useful Subjects, for our Meditation.

1st, That 'tis a true and just Character of All Sinners, that for one Morsel

S E R M. Morfel of Meat they sell their Birth-right: For the comparison here made by the Apostle, between *Fornicators* and Other *profane* Persons, and the Behaviour of *Esau*; is not a representation of their likeness in *the particulars* of their *Sin*, but in the *general* notion of their *Folly*.

III.  2dly, That those kinds of Sins, which are more properly and strictly comprehended under the Name of *Debauchery*; are of equal Malignity, and do equally provoke the Divine Displeasure, as Sins of *Profaneness*; For thus they are joined together in the Text, *Any Fornicator, or Profane person as Esau*. 3dly, That *Repentance*, sooner or later, effectual or ineffectual, must of Necessity, always be the *Consequence* of *Sin*: *Esau* sought a place of *Repentance*. 4thly and lastly, That they who incorrigibly go on in a course of Wickedness, ought to be perpetually admonished of their Danger, least That *Repentance* which they Now so carelessly put off, come upon them Hereafter when it will be too late to be accepted: *Ye know that afterward, when he would have inherited the Blessing, he was rejected; for he*

Of the Sins of Profaneness.

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be found no place of Repentance, though S E R M.
be sought it carefully with Tears. III.

I. THE *First* Observation naturally arising from the Text, is ; that it is a true and just Character of *All Sinners*, that for one Morfel of Meat they sell their *Birth-right*. God has by wise men, in all Ages, been very properly and significantly stiled, *The Father of the Universe* : And the Usage of Scripture recommends, and confirms the propriety of, That expression. There is, *One God and Father of All*, Eph. iv. 6 ; *Of whom, the whole Family in Heaven and Earth is named* ; ch. iii. 15. The whole *World*, is the *House and Family of God* : And in this great Family of the Universe, Good *Angels* and Good *Men* are, by way of eminence, stiled the *Sons of God*, and his *First-born* ; Heb. xii. 22 ; *Ye are come --- unto the City of the Living God, ---- to an innumerable Company of Angels, to the general Assembly and Church of the First-born that are written in Heaven, and to God the Judge of All*. The Kingdom of Heaven, is the general Assembly and Church of the *First-born* ; and the inheritance

SERM. III. ritance of That Kingdom, is the *Birth-right* of the *Sons of God*. They are *Heirs of God, and Joint-Heirs with Christ*; Rom. viii. 17. There is a *Treasure, a Portion, laid up for righteous and good men in the Kingdom of their Father*; which is the *Birth-right, or the Inheritance, of the Saints in Light*, Col. i. 12; And they who by a *Life of Virtue and true Holiness, are meet to be partakers of this inheritance among them who are sanctified*, are already, even during their continuance here upon Earth, *no more Strangers and Foreigners, but Fellow-citizens with the Saints, and of the Household of God*; Eph. ii. 19. This *Birth-right, this Claim of Inheritance, this Right to the Tree of Life*, (as St *John* elegantly styles it, Rev. xxii. 14, *Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have Right to the Tree of Life, and may enter in through the gates into the City*;) This *Birth-right, I say, is sold, is voluntarily parted with, by all Wicked men; and 'tis for one Morsel of Meat they sell it.* For a *present inconsiderable Trifle, they part with a most valuable Estate in reversion* :

Of the Sins of Profaneness.

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version: For the *momentary* Pleasures of Sin in this transitory and uncertain World, they exchange their heavenly and *eternal* Portion in the City of the Living God. Our Saviour in the Gospel, by a most lively similitude, compares the Kingdom of Heaven to a *Pearl of great Price* hid in a Field, which when a man had found, immediately he went and sold all that he had, and purchased That Field. The *Reverse* of This, is the Case of all impenitent Sinners: The *inestimable Pearl* which is in their hands, they carelessly sell for *For that which profiteth not*. By many moving Descriptions, is the Greatness of this *Folly* set forth to us in Scripture; in order to prevail with us, to *become wise unto Salvation*. By the *similitude* of the *Prodigal Son*, Luke xv; who left his Father's house, where he might have *been ever with him*, and *all that he had was His*; and *spent his portion of Goods*, and brought himself to Poverty in a foreign Country, till he would *fain have filled his Belly with the Husks that the Swine did eat*, and *no man gave unto him*. By the *Example* of our first Parent *Adam*; who
when,

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when, in the garden of God, he had free leave to eat to the full, of all the Trees in that goodly Paradise, except One only forbidden Fruit, reserved as an instance of Homage to his Maker; for the gratification of One forbidden Desire, he ventured to exclude himself from the Tree of Life, and from his whole Possession in the Paradise of God. But lastly; By *no instance* is the true case of Sinners more lively and affectionately set forth to us in Scripture, than by That of *Esau* in the Text, who carelessly and presumptuously, unthankfully and profanely, *for One Morfel of Meat sold his Birth-right*. In the Book of *Genesis* we read, ch. xxv. 32, that *Esau*, coming out of the Field *faint and weary* from hunting, makes *This Apology* for himself upon selling his Birth-right for a Morfel of Meat; *Behold*, says he, *I am at the Point to die, and what profit shall this Birth-right do me?* Had this been really and literally the *Truth* of his case; it had been a circumstance of just Pity, and of great Excuse. But from the *whole* of the History it plainly appears, that this was, not a *serious*, but a *loose and profane*

profane expression. He comes home faint and weary out of the Field from his Sports; and, in bargaining for his Birth-right, to which were annexed some special Promises of God and the Blessings of his Father *Isaac*, he complains in a *scoffing* and *contemptuous*, not in a *serious* manner, that he was *ready to be starved*. This appears plainly from the *last* verse of That chapter; where we find that after he had sold his Birth-right, he went away careless and unconcerned at what he had done: *He did eat and drink*, says the Text; *and rose up, and went his way; Thus Esau despised his Birth-right*. The word, *despised*, in the *Original* of this Text in *Genesis*, is a word implying *Profane Contempt*: And from thence the Apostle to the *Hebrews*, in the words of my Text, speaks comparatively of *Profane Persons as Esau, who for one Morsel of Meat sold his Birth-right*. Now *This* being the Case; *Who* is there among us, that will not presently be apt to reply with the *Jews* in the Gospel, *Had We lived in the days of our Fathers*, these things should not have happened unto us?

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Had *We* been in the case of *Esau*, or of our Forefather *Adam*, we would not for one Morsel of Meat have sold our Birth-right, or, for the Taste of One pleasant forbidden Fruit, have forfeited our whole Possession in the Paradise of God? It is very natural, for unthinking Sinners, thus to reply ; and, with the *Pharisees* in several of our Saviour's Parables, very zealously and with great readiness, under the *Person of Another* to condemn *Themselves*. They wonder, and think it hardly possible, that men should err so greatly, as their Fore-fathers are in Scripture recorded to have done. But what if the very same thing is still done among us every day? What if the true intent, and the just and proper application of the Scripture-histories before us, be no other than This ; *Thou thyself art the Man* : Thou, that wonderest and art astonished at the History of *Esau*, and canst not conceive how any man should be so stupidly careless ; thou art thyself the *Esau* whom the Scripture here meaneth, who art *Now* for *one Morsel* of Meat *selling thy Birth-right* ? Thou, who canst scarcely think

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it credible, that thy Fore-father *Adam* S E R M.
could possibly be so weak, as, for the III.
sake of One forbidden Fruit, to forfeit his
Right for ever to the Tree of Life; what
if Thou *thyself* art the *Adam* whom the
Scripture points at, who art *Now* for the
momentary pleasures of Sin, excluding
thyself from the eternal Paradise of God?
For it is certain, all these things *happened*
unto Them of old, for *Examples*; and
they are written for Our Admonition, up-
on whom the Ends of the World are come;
1 Cor. x. 11. The Father hath freely be-
stowed such Love upon us, that we should
be called the *Sons of God*: And the *Birth-*
right of the Sons of God, is an *inheri-*
tance that fadeth not away in their Fa-
ther's house, even in the eternal Kingdom
of Heaven. Into this City of God, there
shall in no wise enter any thing that de-
fileth; nothing that is impure or corrupt,
nothing that is unrighteous, nothing that
loves a Lie or promotes any Deceit, no-
thing that is uncharitable, insolent, or
tyrannical. What then is it else, but, in
the truest and saddest sense, *selling our*
Birth-right for One Morsel of Meat; to

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1 Pet. i.

24.

Jam. iv.


14.

part with our *eternal* Portion in the Kingdom of our Father, for the *present* momentary injoyments of Sin? for the unmanly Pleasures of Debauchery? for the unprofitable Gains, of Fraud and Injustice? for the unreasonable and base Satisfaction, of tyrannizing, domineering, and uncharitably imposing upon our Brethren, for a very short Season? For, what is our Life, at most, but as a *Flower of the Grass* that speedily *fadeth*; or as a *thin vapour*, that *passeth away*, and *cometh not again*? or, as it is elegantly expressed by the Author of the Book of *Wisdom*, speaking in the Person of wicked men who had died in their Sins, ch. v. 9; *All those things are passed away like a Shadow, and as a Post that hasteth by; And as a Ship that passeth over the Waves of the Water, which when it is gone by, the trace thereof cannot be found; ----- Or as when a Bird has flown through the Air, there is no Token of her way to be found; ---- Even so We in like manner, as soon as we were born, began to draw to our End, and had no sign of Virtue to show, but were consumed in our own Wickedness.*

This

This is the *First Observable* from the S E R M. Text; that it is a true and just Character III. of *All Sinners*, that for *One Morfel of Meat they sell their Birth-right*: For the comparison here made by the Apostle between the Behaviour of *Esau*, and That of *Other profane persons*; is not a representation of their Likeness in the *particulars* of their *Sin*, but in the *general Notion* of their *Folly*.

II. THE *Second Observation* naturally arising from the words of the Text, is; that those *kinds* of Sins, which are more properly and strictly comprehended under the Name of *Debauchery*; are of equal *Malignity*, and do equally provoke the Divine Displeasure, as Sins of *Profaneness*: For thus they are joined together in the Text, *Lest there be Any Fornicator, or Profane person as Esau*. God, is a Being of infinite Purity and Holiness; and there shall in no case enter into his Kingdom, any thing that defileth, any thing impure and unholy, any thing that worketh Abomination. The Sins of This kind, need not to be particularly mentioned, and indeed ought not to be at all so

S E R M. much as named among Christians. Our
 III. Profession indispensably requires of us,  that we present ourselves, our Souls and Bodies, a *living Sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is our reasonable Service*; Rom. xii. 1. And the same Apostle, who tells us, that *Pure Religion and undefiled, before God even the Father, is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their Affliction*, Jam. i. 27; adds in the very same verse, that it is also an equally essential part of the same Religion, that a man *keep himself unspotted from the World*; that he preserve himself free, from the defilement and corruptions, of a vicious and debauched Age. Some men, who seem to *hate* the Vices of Oppression and Violence, of Arbitrariness and Tyranny; flatter themselves that God will not be severe with them in judgment, for the *less ill-natured Sins* (as they are apt to represent them to Themselves) of Pleasure and Debauchery. But God who is *of purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity*, will punish *Iniquity of all kinds*: And He who hath said unto us, under pain of his final Displeasure, *Do not kill*; hath

hath likewise said unto us, under the same Penalty, *Do not commit Adultery.* Of *All* Sins, the most *literal* and *formal* Apostacy from God, is *Idolatry*: But in *effect*, Stubbornness and wilful incorrigibleness in the Practice of *Any* Sin, is of the same Malignity as *Iniquity and Idolatry*, 1 *Sam.* xv. 23; *Rebellion* against God, in *Any* great Instance, is as the Sin of *Witchcraft*; and *Stubbornness* in *Any* known Crime, is as the *Iniquity of Idolatry*. Whatever alienates a man's Heart from God and Goodness, and fixes it upon a wrong and forbidden Object; makes him to become what the Scripture, in a *spiritual* sense, calls an *Idolater*. *Covetousness*, saith St Paul, is *Idolatry*; Col. iii. 5. And being subject to the Dominion of *Any* unlawful *Pleasure*, as well as to the Love of unjust *Gain*; is, in the same sense, *worshipping an Idol*. Indeed, there is *nothing* that *more* alienates the Mind from God; that *more* darkens the Understanding, and depraves the Will; that tends more to make a man's Temper base and vile, to deprive him of all Sense of Virtue here, and unfit him for the

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State of Heaven hereafter ; than a Habit of Sensuality, and the Practice of such Vices, as do after a peculiar manner (in St Peter's language) *war against the Soul* : 1 Pet. ii. 11 ; *Dearlly beloved, I beseech you as Strangers and Pilgrims, abstain from fleskly Lusts, which war against the Soul.* They *war against the Soul* ; by making it void of Understanding, void of all true Sense of Spiritual matters, void of all Hope towards God ; Prov. vii. 27 ; *Her house is the way to Hell, going down to the Chambers of Death.* The Observation is true, in general : But concerning Christians, it is more particularly affirmed, that God has called us to Holiness ; and that he sanctifies us by his Holy Spirit dwelling in us. Which Holy Spirit, the Author of the Book of Wisdom well observes, ch. i. 4, *will not dwell in the Body that is subject unto Sin.* And St Paul strongly urges the same Argument, 1 Cor. iii. 16 ; *Know ye not that ye are the Temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you ? If any man defile the Temple of God,* (in the Original it is very elegantly, *if any man destroy the Temple,*

of God,) him shall God destroy; For the Temple of God is Holy, which Temple ye are. For This Reason; of all the Punishments which God has at different times inflicted upon Sinners, there are none recorded in Scripture as having been more *exemplary*, than those inflicted upon account of Sins of *Debauchery*. I Cor. x. 8; *Neither let Us commit Fornication, as some of Them committed, and fell in One day three and twenty thousand.* And Jude 7, *Sodom and Gomorrah, and the Cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to Fornication,----- are set forth for an example, suffering the Vengeance of eternal Fire.* And in all the Catalogues of Sins mentioned in the *New Testament*, against which the *severest* of Threatnings are denounced, these Instances of *Debauchery* are always set down in the very first rank. I Cor. vi. 9; *Know ye not that the Unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God? Be not deceived; neither Fornicators, nor Idolaters, and so on, shall inherit the Kingdom of God.* Again, Gal. v. 19; *The works of the Flesh are manifest, which are these, Adultery,*

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S E R M. *Adultery, Fornication, and the like; of*  
 III. *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. And Eph. v. 5; For This ye  
 know, that no Whoremonger nor unclean  
 person,-----bath 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:  
 In the Original it is, upon the children  
 of Unbelief; That is; These very Vices  
 are the Great and Principal Cause, of God's  
 wrath falling upon the Heathen-world:  
 How much more vain then and unreason-  
 able is it to imagine, that they can pos-  
 sibly admit of Any Excuse among Chri-  
 stians! Lastly, in Rev. xxi. 5, 8; God,  
 even the Father, himself in person, is re-  
 presented as declaring in the most so-  
 lemn and awful manner; He that sat  
 upon the Throne, said,-----The Fearful,  
 and Unbelieving, and the Abominable, and  
 Murderers, and Whoremongers, and Sor-  
 cerers, and Idolaters, and All Liars, shall  
 have their part in the Lake that burneth  
 with



with Fire and Brimstone; which is the Second Death. In which, and in some Other of the fore-going Passages, it is remarkable that Sins of Profaneness and of Sensuality, are joined together in like manner as in the words of the Text; *Lest there be Any Fornicator, or Profane Person as Esau.*

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III. THE Third Observation I would draw from the Text, is; that *Repentance*, sooner or later, effectual or ineffectual, must of Necessity always be the Consequence of Sin. *Esau* sought, a *place of Repentance*; and he sought it *carefully with Tears*. All the Pleasures of Sin, are Vanity and Disappointment: They are contrary to Nature, contrary to Reason, contrary to the Wise Constitution and Appointment of God. Sooner or later, the True Nature of Things *will* discover itself, and all Paints and False Colours will be wiped off. Whenever This is the case; Repentance necessarily succeeds, consequently and of Course. *Sometimes early*, by the Grace of God; working upon men through serious Consideration, and Attention to Truth and Reason: And then

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then their Repentance becomes effectual, bringing forth the Fruits of Amendment and Reformation of Life. But if not so; yet *finally* at least, and by the *necessary nature of Things* Then, when they would *inherit the Blessing* and *are rejected*, the very worst of men must needs be brought to *Repentance*; to a Repentance, *not* which is a *Virtue*, or of any *Effect* (for it is *Necessary* then, and altogether *unavoidable*;) but they are brought to *such* a Repentance, as is a *Passion* only, and a proper Part of their *Punishment itself*. The State of such Persons, is most elegantly described by the Author of the Book of *Wisdom*; ch. i. 20; *When they cast up the Accounts of their Sins, they shall come with fear*, (that is, shall appear in despair before God in judgment,) *and their own iniquities shall convince them to their Face:---- And they repenting and groaning for Anguish of Spirit, shall say within themselves;---- We have erred from the way of Truth, and the Light of Righteousness hath not shined unto us:---- For the Hope of the Ungodly is like dust that is blown away with the Wind; like a thin froth*

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*froth that is driven away with the Storm; like as the smoke which is dispersed here and there with a Tempest, and passeth away as the remembrance of a Guest that tarrieth but a Day. And This brings me to the*


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IV. *Fourth and Last Particular, observable from the Text; viz. that they who incorrigibly go on in a Course of Wickedness, ought to be perpetually admonished of their Danger; least That Repentance which they Now so carelessly put off, come upon them Hereafter when it will be too late to be accepted: Ye know that afterward, when he would have inherited the Blessing, he was rejected; for he found no place of Repentance, though he sought it carefully with Tears. What is here affirmed of Esau, that he found no place of Repentance, though he sought it carefully with Tears; does not signify, (as some have imagined,) that he could not repent: For indeed he could not but repent, in the case he was Now in: But the Meaning plainly is, that his Repentance being only the Sorrow of Repentance, and not a true Amendment of Mind; a Repen-*  
*tance*

S E R M. *tance* coming upon him, at the time when  
 III. the *Blessing* was to be *distributed*, and not  
 when his *Duty* was to be performed ; for  
 That Reason it found no means of being  
*Accepted*. As, in other places of Scrip-  
 ture, God's giving *men Repentance*, or  
 granting *them Repentance unto life*, does  
 not signify God's causing *them to repent*,  
 but his accepting *their Repentance*, or al-  
 lowing it to become available for their *Par-*  
*don*; so here, a man's *finding* or *not find-*  
*ing* any place of *Repentance*, does not  
 mean his being *able* or *not able* to *repent*;  
 (for indeed no man can *help* repenting,  
 when it is too late;) but it means evi-  
 dently his *finding*, or *not finding*, *Accept-*  
*ance*. *Ejau*, when he would have inhe-  
 rited the *Blessing*, *was rejected* ; he was  
 rejected, *notwithstanding* his *Repentance*  
 and his *Tears*. And This Example is  
 urged by the Apostle, as a Warning or Ad-  
 monition to *All wicked Men*, that they a-  
 mend their Lives while there is yet *time*  
 and *space* to *perform* their *Duty* ; least af-  
 terwards, when they shall *desire* to inherit  
 the *Blessing*, (at the day of judgment cer-  
 tainly, upon their Death-bed very probably,)  
 their

their Repentance and their Tears prove in- S E R M.  
 effectual. Our Saviour, in his Parable of III.  
 the five foolish Virgins, *Matt. xxv* ; and   
 again in his Discourse, *Luk. xiii. 25*, gives  
 us the very same Warning: *When once, says*  
*he, the Master of the house is risen up, and*  
*hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand*  
*without, and to knock at the door, saying,*  
*Lord, Lord, open unto us; he shall answer*  
*and say unto you, I know you not whence*  
*you are. The Jews in the Wilderness,*  
*who refused to enter into the promised*  
*land, 'till God had sworn they should not;*  
*and then they became desirous to enter in,*  
*and were not permitted; are a lively em-*  
*bleme of the same Truth; as it is cited and*  
*at large applied, in this very Epistle, to*  
*That purpose. And the exclamation of*  
*Wisdom in the first chapter of the Pro-*  
*verbs, is most apposite to the same Sub-*  
*ject: ver. 24; Because I have called, and*  
*ye refused; I have stretched out my hand,*  
*and no man regarded;----- I also will*  
*laugh at your calamity, and mock when*  
*your Fear cometh;---- Then shall they call*  
*upon me, but I will not answer; they shall*  
*seek me early, but they shall not find me.*

The

SERMON. The meaning of all which passages is;  
 III. not that it is ever too late in This life, for  
 men to repent and really *Amend* and be  
 forgiven; but that All who delay, are in  
 continual and very great Danger, lest  
 Sickness, and Death, and Judgment, and  
 the Time of distributing the Blessing,  
 overtake them; and Then, when they  
 shall earnestly *desire to inherit the Blessing,*  
*they shall be rejected, and shall find no*  
*place of Repentance, though they seek it*  
*carefully with Tears.*





# S E R M O N I V.

Against profaning the Name of  
G O D.



LEVIT. xix. 12.

*Ye shall not swear by my Name falsely,  
neither shalt thou profane the Name of  
thy God: I am the Lord.*




TRULY religious person, as S E R M.  
he glorifies God in all his IV.  
*Actions*, and obeys him in the  
course of a virtuous Life; so  
even upon his *Words* also he  
sets a constant guard; and keeps the door  
of his Lips, that he offend not with his  
V O L. VIII. F Tongue.

S E R M. Tongue. *Out of the Abundance of the*  
 IV. *Heart the Mouth speaketh*; and from a  
 ~~~~~  
 man's behaviour in the Freedoms of common unguarded conversation, may his true Sense of Religion and his Regard to the Honour of God better be judged of, than from any thing that can be discerned in his more restrained carriage at the solemn Offices of religious Worship; where Regard to Appearances of Decency and Custom, often causes Hypocrites to make a greater Show of earnest Devotion, than those who live all the day long in the Fear of God, and under a constant Sense of the Obligations of Religion. By the habitual Temper and Disposition of a man's mind in the general course of his Life, is the true judgment of every one's character to be made; and this habitual Temper *most* appears, in mens freest and unreserved Conversation. *A good man, saith our Saviour, out of the good Treasure of the Heart, bringeth forth good things; and an evil man, out of the evil treasure, bringeth forth evil things; Matt. xii. 35.* Which words, plainly lead to the true ex-

which follow, ver. 36; *I say unto you, SERM. IV.*
that every idle word, (that is, according to the nature of the Jews language, every wicked or every profane word,) that men shall speak; they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment; For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned. The Reason is, because (as he had before observed) out of the abundance of the Heart the Mouth speaketh, and a man's conversation is the Effect of the Temper of his Mind. For this Cause the Apostle exhorts, Col. iv. 6; Let your Speech be always with Grace. With Grace; that is, such as is decent for Christians, who are partakers of the Grace of God. And whatever ye do in word iii. 17. or deed, do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus; that is, in such manner as is answerable to your Holy Profession, in such manner as becomes the Disciples of Christ. There is in the Mouths of wise and religious men, even when they are not speaking of religious matters; but in the common affairs and business of the World, nay even in the most cheerful freedoms of innocent Diversions, there is habitually a

SER. M. *found speech which cannot be condemned;*

IV.  Tit. ii. 8. To be indeed always in this matter exactly upon the guard, is *very difficult*; nay perhaps *impossible*, except to such, who by good Habit have made it *natural* to themselves to do what is right, so that it is a sort of Violence and a Force to them to transgress in this Kind. He that *offendeth not in word*, saith St James, *the same is a perfect man*; ch. iii. 2. But alas! there are too many among Christians, as there were of old among the *Jews*, so much more *notoriously* and in so much *higher* Instances Transgressors in this kind, as to make needful the Prohibition given in the Text; *Ye shall not swear by my Name falsely, neither shalt thou profane the Name of thy God: I am the Lord.*

IN discoursing upon which words, I shall *first* explain the *Terms*, what is meant by the *Name of God*, and what by *profaning* or *swearing by it falsely*. *Secondly*, I shall consider the *nature* of the *several Vices*, included in this prohibition. And *Thirdly*, I shall take Notice of the *Argument* here brought to *inforce* the prohibition, *I am the Lord.* I. *First*;

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I. *First*; As to the Signification of the Terms, *Thou shalt not profane the Name of thy God*; it is to be observed that this Phrase, *the Name of God*, signifies in Scripture, according to the nature of the *Hebrew* language, *God himself*. A principal part of whose Worship it is, to bear always in our minds and express always in our behaviour a just Awe and Veneration for him as the Supreme Governour of all things, and a proportionable honour for whatever has relation to his Service. The first Petition, with which our Lord directs us to begin our daily Prayer, is, that the Name of God may be *Hallowed* or *Sanctified*; that is, that the *Knowledge* and *Worship* of the True God may prevail continually more and more in the World. Which Petition whoever puts up with Sincerity and Understanding, and not in mere Form; must of necessity, and in all consistent Consequence, judge, that the God whom alone we worship in the *publick* Solemnity, Him also we are no less obliged to have a continual Regard to in all the *private* and *common* actions of Life. A *Regard*, not formal and

S E R M. affected, not superstitious and troublesome, not scrupulous and precise; but an habitual, an easy, an unperceived Regard; such as men bear towards a Governour whom they esteem and love, and whose Honour they are continually promoting, even in *common* actions, where neither Others nor perhaps themselves at that Instant perceive any *actual* Attention of mind to That particular End. Habitual Reverence towards God, is the great Foundation of Religion; and in whomsoever it is found, 'twill always have an influence upon the whole Life and Conversation, as well as upon the more solemn Acts of Devotion. The *Ancient Jews*, whenever mention was made of *God*, used always to add, *whose Name be blessed*; and Expressions of the like kind, are frequently found in the *Apostles* Writings. The *Modern Jews* have run this matter into a great and very superstitious Extreme, of *never naming the Name of God at all*. In opposition to which, (as all Extremes are apt to produce each other,) Christians of latter Ages have, to the highest degree of Carelessness, allowed

ed themselves to talk and dispute about S E R M.
 God with all the Slightness and Irreverence, and with such absolute Unconcernedness, as if he were a Being to whom they had no relation, and on whom they had no dependance. In which matter, the more decent Behaviour even of the *Mabometans* whom we despise, may justly be a Reproach to us; and teach us to take heed, that in trivial and common Conversation, we be not found too often *profaning the Name of God*, and insensibly diminishing that great Guard of Religion, the due Sense men ought to have of God upon their Minds. IV.

YE shall not swear by my Name falsely. The word which we here render, *falsely*; is of the same import, with That which in the third Commandment, *Exod. xx*; is expressed by the phrase, *in vain*. From whence we are to observe in general, that the words *Falsehood* and *Vanity*, are in Scripture-language used promiscuously, as meaning One and the same Thing. Thus *Idols*, because they are really nothing in the World, nothing in the religious Sense, nothing of what they are

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pretended to be; are frequently stiled *Vanities*, and *lying Vanities*; *Falsehoods*, *Gods which by nature are no Gods*; *Gods which in reality have no Being*; or (which is the same thing) have none of *That Power, Dominion and Authority*, which would constitute them *Gods*. In like manner, *swearing by the Name of God* falsely, as 'tis expressed in the Text; or, *taking the Name of God* in vain, as it is expressed in the *xxth of Exodus*; or, *profaning the Name of God*, as 'tis again expressed in the latter part of the Text; are all of them *Phrases*, denoting one and the same *Kind of Sin*; and, in every prohibition, must be understood to extend to several *Vices of the same Nature and Sort*, differing in their respective *Circumstances and Degrees*. *What the particular Vices are*, included in the present prohibition in the Text; was the

II. *Second general head* I proposed to treat of. And

1st; THE highest and most presumptuous degree of *profaning the Name of God*, is *Perjury*; when a man solemnly calls God to witness to the *Truth of That*,
which

which he either *knows* to be *False*, or does S E R M.
not know to be *True*. This is a Crime of IV.
so high a nature, that no man *can possibly* be guilty of it, who has any Sense at all of Religion remaining upon his Mind. For he who knowingly and deliberately calls God to witness to a *Falseness*, in order to deceive or wrong his Neighbour ; does openly disclaim the Mercies of God, and challenges the Almighty to show him no Favour. But though none but a professed Atheist, can thus avowedly and directly invoke the Displeasure of the most High, and solemnly bid defiance to the Power of the Divine Wrath ; yet there is *too* frequently, even in those who are *not* altogether destitute of Religion, a carelessness and want of attention, or an aptness to deceive themselves with vain and groundless distinctions, which tend much to diminish the *Solemnity* of appealing to the righteous judgment of God, and the Sacredness of invoking that great and tremendous Name. Serious and considerate Persons cannot but wish, either that Oaths were less frequently administered ; or that
it

S E R M. it might always be done with greater Solemnity, so as to put men upon considering in earnest what they are about.

IV.




2dly, THE next degree of *profaning the Name of God*, is that *indecent* as well as wicked Custom of *rash Swearing in common Conversation*. Of which Sin, the first Aggravation is, that they who are guilty of it, are in perpetual danger of the Crime of *Perjury*. For he who uses himself to swear frequently and habitually, will never attend carefully, that what he swears to, be *True*. Nay, 'tis too just an Observation, that they who are accustomed to this Vice at all, are *then* apt to be *most* guilty of it, when they are *most provoked*, and *most suspicious* that what they affirm, is not credible. This Argument is well urged by the Son of *Sirach*; *Ecclus. xxiii. 9*; *Accustom not thy mouth to swearing, neither use thyself to the naming of the Holy One. For as a Servant that is continually beaten, shall not be without a blue mark; so he that sweareth, and nameth God continually, shall not be faultless. A man that useth much Swearing, shall be filled with iniquity;*

quity; and the Plague shall never depart S E R M.
from his house. If he shall offend, (that IV.
is, fall into Perjury,) his Sin shall be upon him; and if he acknowledge not his Sin, he maketh a double Offence; and if he swear in vain, (that is, falsely,) he shall not be innocent, but his House shall be full of Calamities. But if the danger of Perjury could certainly be avoided, (as it never can be by habitual Swearers;) yet to call upon God perpetually, as a witness to mean and trivial matters; is manifest want of *Reverence*, and want of a just Sense of God and Religion. And *This* Fault is the more inexcusable, because there cannot here be pretended, as in most other Vices, any *natural Temptation*. Drunkenness and Debauchery, Intemperance and Sensuality of all kinds, have their proper Allurements; which, though *no just Excuse* indeed, yet afford Sinners a deceitful Plea for themselves, to alledge that they were overpowered by the Force and Prevalency of Temptation; as *St Paul* at large argues in the *viith* chapter to the *Romans*. But to the Sin we are now speaking of, there is *no Temptation* in Nature; unless it may
be

S E R M. be called a Temptation, when a man is
 IV. *ashamed* to be thought by abandoned Per-
 sons one that fears God, or is led to think
 it a part of *Courage* to despise Religion.
 Whereas indeed it is not *Courage*, to dare
 to affront the Almighty; but on the con-
 trary a real instance of *Cowardice*, not to
 dare to perform our Duty towards him.
 It is as if a Soldier should imagine, that
Courage consisted, not in opposing the
Enemy, but in daring to disobey the Or-
 ders of his proper *Commander*: The Au-
 thor of the Book of *Ecclesiasticus* excel-
 lently argues upon This head, ch. iv. 20;
*Be not ashamed when it concerneth thy
 Soul. There is a Shame that bringeth Sin,
 and there is a Shame which is Glory and
 Grace. Accept no person against thy Soul,
 and let not the Reverence of any man
 cause thee to fall.*

NEITHER is *That* any just Excuse,
 wherewith many deceive themselves, when
 they swear by any *other* thing, and not
 by their Maker. For this very Precau-
 tion shows, that they could as easily, if
 they were careful, avoid the Sin *wholly*,
 as attend to a *particular* Circumstance in
 the

the *manner* of committing it. Which Cir- S E R M.
cumstance, nevertheless, does not at all IV.
hinder it from amounting in reality to 
the very same thing. For as, in common
speech, that usual Prayer, *Heaven bless or
reward a man*, is evidently of the very
same import, as if therein had been more
expressly mentioned, *God who dwelleth in
Heaven*; so *swearing* by any creature,
does in Truth amount to the same thing,
as swearing by the Name of *God* whose
Creature it is, and who alone indeed can
finally be supposed to be appealed to, for
the *Truth* of the thing affirmed, and for
the *Sincerity* of the Intention. *Whoso*,
saith our Saviour, *shall swear by the Al-
tar, sweareth by it, and by all things
thereon. And whoso shall swear by the
Temple, sweareth by it, and by Him that
dwelleth therein. And he that shall swear
by Heaven, sweareth by the Throne of God,
and by Him that sitteth thereon*; Matt.
xxiii. 20. The Inference he draws from
this Reasoning, is; *Therefore, Swear not
at all; neither by Heaven, for it is God's
Throne; nor by the Earth, for it is his
Footstool; neither by Jerusalem, for it is
the*

S E R M. *the City of the great King: Neither by thy Head, because thou canst not make one Hair white or black. But let your Communication be yea, yea; nay, nay; for whatsoever is more than these, cometh of Evil; Matt. v. 34. And St James, ch. v. 12; Above all things, my brethren, swear not; neither by Heaven, nor by the Earth, nor by any other Oath; but let your yea be Yea, and your nay Nay, lest ye fall into condemnation. Simplicity and Plainness of Speech, greatly becomes the Sincerity of Christians: Whose Profession teaches them to be so far removed from all fraud and deceit, in imitation of their Master in whose mouth was found no Guile; that, did they in Any Measure live worthy of their holy Profession, there never would be any ground of Suspicion, never any Occasion, never any Temptation in matters of common conversation and ordinary concern, to make use of any such Affeверations, as our Saviour declares to*

Mat. v. 34. *come from Evil.*

SOME have carried this matter so far, (as indeed there are in almost all cases *Extremes* on Both hands,) that they have imagined

imagined an Oath to be *Always* and without S E R M. exception, even upon the most solemn and IV. most important Occasions, absolutely unlawful. But that This is evidently a Mistake, appears from the Example of *God himself*, who upon solemn occasions, *because he could swear by no greater*, is in Scripture represented as *swearing by Himself*. And our Saviour, when the High-priest *adjured him by the Living God*, made no Scruple of replying upon that Adjuration. And the Angel in the *Revelation*, when prophesying of the great Changes that should happen in the World ; *lifted up his hand to Heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever and ever* : (He swore, *that there should be time no longer* ; That is, not, that *time itself* should be no more ; as some have ridiculouſly understood it ; but that the time of fulfilling the prophecy should no longer be delayed ; *Rev. x. 6.*) And *St Paul*, in assuring the Truth of his doctrine, appeals after the following manner, *God is my Witness, whom I serve in the Gospel of his Son*, *Rom. i. 9* ; And *Heb. vi. 16* ; *An Oath for confirmation, is an End of all Strife.* 'Tis evident therefore,

S E R M. fore, that an Oath upon great and solemn
 IV. occasions, administred and taken in the
 Fear of God, seriously and with a right
 Sense of Religion, is by no means *un-*
lawful, but on the contrary an Act of
 real *Honour* to God. *Profanation* of the
 Name of God, is, when 'tis used rashly
 and carelessly, upon light and trivial oc-
 casions, without any just Sense of the Ma-
 jesty of God, who is invoked with so
 little Reverence.

FURTHER; As rash *Swearing*, so all
Cursing also, is a part of that profanation
 of the Name of God, which is forbidden
 in the Text. For when men in common
 Conversation, use Curses and Impreca-
 tions against their Brethren; as passionate
 and profane men are frequently apt to
 do; it is either *with* an Intention and De-
 sire that Mischief may befall them; which
 is both malicious towards *Men*, and also
 irreligiously thinking light of the Curse
 of *God*: Or else it is *without* any such
 Desire or Intention; and then it is profanely
 supposing God to have no regard to their
 Behaviour; According to the description
 the Psalmist gives of such persons, *Pf. lxxiii.*

II; *Tush,*

11; *Tush, say they, how should God perceive it? is there knowledge in the most High?*

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IV.


3dly; ANOTHER Vice, included in what the Text calls *profaning the Name of God*, is *Scoffing, Blaspheming, or speaking reproachfully of Religion*. This is what the Psalmist reckons in the *highest degree of Sins*, where he distinguishes Offenders into *three several Ranks*; *Pf. i. 1, The man that walketh in the counsel of the ungodly, the man that standeth in the way of Sinners, and the man that sitteth in the Seat of the Scornful*: Of the *Scornful*, that is, of those who not only *neglect*, but also *scoff* at Religion; and make a *mock* at That, which of all things in the World is of the greatest importance. *Elibu's* description of such a person is very just and elegant, though his application of it to *Job* was most unrighteous; *Job xxxiv. 37*; *He addeth Rebellion unto his Sin, he clappeth his hands amongst us, und multiplieth his words against God*. Were there either None, or but very little and uncertain Evidence for the Truth of Religion; yet, even in *That* case, a

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reasonable and fair man would be so far from making a *mock* at what is so useful and indeed absolutely *necessary* to the well-being of rational and intelligent Creatures; that on the contrary he could not but wish earnestly, that the Proof of it were much clearer and more convincing than he finds it: This, I say, would be the Behaviour of a *reasonable* person, even when he was not *satisfied* of the Truth of Religion. But for men who *do* make Profession of Religion, yet at the same time wantonly and profanely to scoff at the most serious and important parts of the very Religion they profess, the Expectation of a future Judgment, and the Rewards and Punishments of another Life; This is of all others the absurdest, and the most stupid Instance of Wickedness; Such as no persons can be guilty of, but those whom St *Paul* elegantly describes to *have their consciences seared with a hot Iron*, 1 Tim. iv. 1: Of whom, St *Jude* likewise prophesies, ver. 18; that *there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts*: And St *Peter*, 2 Pet. iii. 3;

Scoffers walking after their own Lusts, and saying, Where is the Promise of his coming? The Persons spoken of in all these places, are not only professed Unbelievers, but also vicious and debauched Christians, led, merely by the practice of Vice, into all Profaneness and Contempt of Religion. Neither are *Those* men wholly free from the same Guilt, who, though *themselves* not actual Mockers and Scoffers at Religion, yet by their absurd and unreasonable Doctrines, Doctrines contrary to the Necessary Perfections of God, and to the eternal Reasons of Things; or by their vicious Lives and debauched Practices, give occasion to *Others* to *Blaspheme the Name of God*.

4thly; THE Name of God is *profaned*, by careless and inconsiderate *Vows*: When the *Matter* of them is *unjust*; as in the case of the *Corban* among the *Jews*, who hypocritically dedicated *That* to the Service of God, and for the Use of the Temple, which they *ought* to have employed in relieving the Necessities of their destitute Parents, *Mar. vii. 11*: Or when the matter of a Vow, is *impossible* or *unrea-*

S E R M. *sonable*: or the thing vowed be *unprofitable*, and of no Tendency to promote true Religion; or the *manner* of making the Vow, be *rash and irreligious*. Many Directions and Cautions of This kind, are to be found in Books of Devotion. But the best and only good Rule in This matter is, that among Christians there is no Use, no Benefit, no Encouragement given to any such thing, as making any Vows at all. For why should men needlessly bring snares upon their own Souls, or intangle themselves in Difficulties where there is no Command? The Vows mentioned in the *Old Testament*, are All either parts of the *Jewish Ceremonial Law*, which is now wholly abolished: Or else they signify only general *Resolutions* of serving and obeying God, which can never too often nor too seriously be renewed, as when *Jacob* vowed, that the *Lord should be his God*; that is, that he would always continue steadfast in the true Religion. In the *New Testament*, there is, (I think) no one Instance of Any Vow made by a Christian: The Vow of *Aquila*, mentioned *Acts xviii. 18*; and That of the
four

four persons with whom St *Paul* purified himself, *Acts* xxi, 23; being Both of them Vows, which had been made before the mens conversion to Christianity.

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Lastly: BY too frequent familiar and irreverent Mention of *God* in ordinary conversation, without an habitual Sense and Just Awe of him upon our Minds; men are very apt to run into *some* degree, of the Fault forbidden in the Text. The *Jews*, were (in the opposite Extreme) *Superstitious* in this Matter. The very *Mahometans*, retain rather too much *Formality* in the same kind. But a good Christian, and a sober and wise man, who has a true Sense of Religion; will easily judge, and (without any set Rules) naturally practise, what is (without affectation) fit and decent, in all cases of this Nature.

THUS have I briefly described the several *Vices*, to which the Prohibition in the Text extends: *Ye shall not swear by my Name falsely, neither shalt thou profane the Name of thy God.* The

III. *Third* and *Last* Thing observable in the Text, is the *Argument* therein

S E R M. brought to enforce the fore-mentioned
 IV. prohibition: *I am the Lord.* The Lord; that is, He whose *Sovereignty* and *Supreme Dominion* or *Authority* over us, gives him a *Right to demand*; and whose continual *Mercy* and *Goodness* towards us, gives him reason to *expect*, that we should, in an equal Sense both of *Duty* and *Gratitude*, pay all possible *Obedience* to him. The *Lord*; who made and governs all things; whose *Power* is irresistible, and his *Kingdom* infinite and eternal; who *will not be mocked*, nor *hold them guiltless that take his Name in vain.* Will *not* hold them *guiltless*; that is, will *certainly* and *severely* punish them. For so the Scripture often very elegantly uses a *diminutive* manner of speaking, in the description of Punishment. He that does and teaches such things, saith our Saviour, *shall be least in the Kingdom of God*; that is, he shall least of all men ever enter therein at all. And they that do such things, saith St Paul, *shall not inherit the Kingdom of God*; that is, shall be most severely punished in the place of Torment. So likewise, the Lord will *not* hold the false Swearer

Swearer *guiltless*; that is, his Anger shall burn most *exemplarily* against such Persons. This therefore is the plain meaning of the Phrase, *I am the Lord*: It is an *Argument* or *Motive* of Obedience, drawn from the consideration of the *Person* to whom it is due. It is the *Lord*; whose *Goodness* and *Mercy* towards us, obliges in point of *Gratitude*; and whose *Power* and *Justice* will exact of us in point of *Duty*, Obedience to his Commands. The Characters are, *both* of them, lively and emphatically expressed, in the Name by which the Lord was proclaimed before *Moses*, Exod. xxxiv. 6; *The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in Goodness and Truth; keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty.*

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S E R M O N V.

How Wicked Men are deceived to
their Destruction.



2 T H E S S. ii. 11, 12.

And for this cause God shall send them strong Delusion, that they should believe a Lie: That they all might be damned, who believed not the Truth, but had pleasure in Unrighteousness.



THESE words contain a strong S E R M. and lively Description, of the V. Nature and Grounds of Wick- edness; of the Destruction in which it will, at last, necessarily terminate; of the Delusions, by which

S E R M. which men are drawn into That Wick-
 V. edness which must terminate in their De-
 struction; and of the *Justice* of the Di-
 vine Providence, in permitting them to
 be so deluded. In discoursing therefore
 upon This Subject, I shall consider, 1st,
 The *Character* by which *Wicked men* are
 here described: They *believe not the*
Truth, and they *have Pleasure in Unright-*
eousness. 2dly, The *Destruction*, into
 which the Wickedness thus described,
 must in the End necessarily lead men:
 Expressed in these severe words, *That*
they all might be damned. 3dly, The
Means, by which men are enticed and
 deceived into this final Destruction: It
 is by *believing a Lie*. 4thly, The *Strength*
 of the *Delusion*, by which men are thus
 caused to believe a Lie: *God shall send*
them strong Delusion. 5thly and lastly;
 The *Justice* of Providence, in permitting
 them to be thus deluded: Expressed in
 the words, *For This Cause*: Not arbitra-
 rily, not without just and good reason;
 but *for This Cause*, for the *Cause* men-
 tioned in the words immediately forego-
 ing, ver. 10; *because they received not*
the

are deceived to their Destruction.

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the Love of the Truth, that they might be saved.

S E R M.

V.

I. *First*; HERE is the proper and essential *Character*, by which *Wicked men* are distinguished and described ; They *believe not the Truth*, and they *have Pleasure in Unrighteousness*. *Truth*, is the Foundation of *Right* ; and the *Knowledge of Truth and Right*, is the Foundation of *Virtuous Practice*. The *First Principle* therefore and *Ground-work* of all Religion, is the *Love of Truth* ; the Desire of knowing what is in itself *Fit and Right* to be done ; the Desire of knowing the *Will* of the Supreme Author and Preserver of our Being ; the Desire of knowing what the true *Reason and Equity* of every Case, wherein we are to act, requires. This Temper, cannot but be acceptable to *God* ; and it is the Great Spring and Principle of every good Action among *Men*. Without *This*, there cannot be any such thing as *Religion*, or any real *Goodness* ; there cannot (as *St Paul* expresses himself) be *any Virtue*, or *any Praise* ; Phil. iv. 8. A man may *accidentally* do Good Actions, Actions materially
Good

S E R M. Good and Useful ; he may do them when
 V.
 it will serve his present Interest, or hap-
 pen to fall in with any Temporal Views.
 But such a one has not any real Virtue
 or Religion, nor can be depended upon
 with Any certainty ; because his Goodness
 stands upon no steady Principles, and is
 built upon no Foundation. Every the
 least *Obstacle* or *Worldly Discouragement*,
 will put an entire *Stop* in him to any
 Good Intention : Every the least *Blast* of
Passion, will *divert* and *drive* him from
 That Course, which Reason was steering :
 Every the least *Allurement* of *Pleasure* or
Profit, will *draw* him aside from the paths
 of Virtue and Integrity. And *This* is
 what *ought* to have been meant by That
 Distinction, which has sometimes been
 made, (if there be *Any* room for making
 such Distinction at all,) between *Reli-*
gious Actions and *Actions merely Moral*.
 When any thing is done out of regard
 to *Truth* and *Right*, to the *Reason* and
Equity of the Case ; the Action, is really
 a *Religious Action* ; because *Truth*, and
Reason, and *Right*, are essentially agree-
 able to the *Nature* of *G O D*, and by ne-
 cessary

cessary consequence conformable to his S E R M.
Will. But whatever is at any time done V.
without regard to these; however the 
Action may in its own nature possibly and
accidentally be *Moral and Good*, Moral
and Good *merely* with regard to the *Ac-*
tion itself; yet in the *Person* doing it,
there is in truth nothing of *Morality* or
Goodness; because *His* Views are nothing
but the gratifying his own present Hu-
mour, or securing to himself some Tem-
poral Pleasure or Profit. Now This *Dis-*
regard to Truth and Right; This *Uncon-*
cernedness in men, to know the *Reason of*
Things and the *Will of God*; This giving
up of themselves consequently to the Con-
duct of mere *Will* and *Pleasure*, *Passion*
and *Appetite*; is what the Text calls *not*
Believing the Truth. By which is meant,
not that every *good man is infallible*, so as
always to embrace every Truth; or that
every *Mistake* in not embracing the Truth,
will justly denominate any one a *Bad man*.
For as the *doing* an Action *good* in its own
nature, may yet possibly not be a *religious*
nor *moral Act* in him that does it, if it
be done not out of a *Principle* of Virtue:
So,

S E R M. So, on the other side, the *receiving an*
 V. *Errour*, or the *not receiving the Truth*, if
 it proceeds not from a *Principle* opposite
 to Truth, from *Unreasonableness*, from
Viciousness, and from *hating to attend*;
 but merely from accidental Want of pro-
 per information; is not what the Scrip-
 ture calls, *disbelieving the Truth*. But the
 Meaning of *not believing the Truth*, in
 the Scripture-sense of the phrase, is, *re-*
jecting it contemptuously, without having
 any sollicitude to *inquire after* it. For,
 the same persons who in the *Text* are
 threatned that they shall be *condemned* for
not Believing the Truth; are, in the words
 immediately fore-going, declared to *pe-*
rish, because they received not the Love of
the Truth, that they might be saved. And
Unbelief, In *This* sense, as opposed to the
Love of Truth, very naturally leads men
 to take *pleasure in Unrighteousness*. For
 he that is *little sollicitous* to study the
 Truth, and Reason, and Equity of Things,
 or to inquire after and understand the
 Will of God; will consequently of course,
 according as the particular Bent of his
 Passions lead him, either give himself up
 to

to *Voluptuousness* and *dissolute* Practices, or set himself to acquire *Riches* by *unjust* and *corrupt* Methods, or make *Power* and *Dominion* his principal Aim, for the Purposes of *Vain-glory*, *Tyranny*, and *Oppression*. Which are the Great Instances, wherein men who *believe not the Truth*, are apt to have *Pleasure in Unrighteousness*.

II. *Secondly*; HERE is the *Destruction*, into which the *Wickedness* thus described, must in the End necessarily lead men; expressed in these Severe words; *That they all might be damned*. The Meaning of which, is not, *To the End that they may be condemned*; but, *So that they will be condemned*. The words are not intended to express what God has ultimately in *View* or *Design*, but what *in Event* must necessarily come to pass. The *Design* and *End* of All the *Divine Threatnings*, is not that men should finally perish; but that, by bringing them to the *Obedience* of God's *Commands*, their *Destruction* might be *prevented*. God has sworn by himself; *As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the Death of Him that dieth, but rather*

SERM. *ther that he should turn from his ways*
 V. *and live. God wills not that Any should*
 ~~~~~ *perish, but that All should come to Repen-*  
*tance. He would have All men to be sa-*  
*ved, and to come to the Knowledge of the*  
*Truth. But because, under a righteous*  
*and holy Governour, who can never pos-*  
*sibly be reconciled to Wickedness, 'tis nei-*  
*ther reasonable nor possible that men*  
*should be saved, who have never had any*  
*Regard to Truth and Right, nor habitu-*  
*ated themselves to the Practice of Any*  
*Virtue; or that Sinners should escape the*  
*just Punishment of Sin, without forsaking*  
*the Sins to which the Punishment is an-*  
*nexed; therefore God has been pleased to*  
*prove men with proper Tryals, and suffer*  
*various Temptations to surround them; to*  
*the end that the Righteous might distin-*  
*guish themselves from the Wicked, the*  
*Corrigible from the Incurable; and so*  
*the Sentence of Condemnation might finally*  
*come upon Those, and upon Those only,*  
*who love not the Truth, and who have*  
*Pleasure in Unrighteousness. The like*  
*manner of speaking, is frequently used in*  
*Scripture upon Other occasions. Thus,*

*Matt. xxiii. 34; Behold, I send unto you* S E R M. V.  
*Prophets, and Wise men, and Scribes; And some of them ye shall kill and crucify, and some of them shall ye scourge in your Synagogues, and persecute them from City to City: THAT upon you may come all the righteous Blood shed upon the Earth; from the Blood of righteous Abel, unto the Blood of Zacharias. The Meaning is: Not that the End and Intention of God's sending forth Preachers of Righteousness into the World, was that They might be persecuted, and Then Wicked Men punished for persecuting and slaying them: But that All, who were capable of Correction and Amendment, being converted by the Preaching of these righteous persons; the Wrath of God might finally fall upon Those only, who by rejecting so many repeated Admonitions to Repentance, had shown themselves to be absolutely and altogether incorrigible. Again, Mar. iv. 12; All these things, says our Lord, are done in Parables; THAT seeing, they may see, and not perceive; and hearing, they may hear, and not understand; least*

S E R M. *at any time they should be converted, and  
V. their Sins should be forgiven them.* The

Sense is; Not that the *Design* of Christ, was to hinder men from understanding, and being converted, and saved; but that he chose to deliver his Doctrine in such a manner, as that it might be received by *Those only*, who were sincerely desirous to know and to obey the Will of God, whilst the wilful and incorrigible remained *Blind* and *Deaf* to all his Exhortations. And thus therefore likewise in the words of the Text; This phrase *THAT they all might be damned, who believed not the Truth, but had pleasure in Unrighteousness*; does not mean, that the ultimate *Design* and *View* of Providence in trying men with various Temptations, is that the *Wicked* may be *Damned*; but that, those who seek after *Truth* and *love Righteousness*, being distinguished and proved by These Temptations, the sentence of Condemnation may fall *only* upon the *Lovers* of *Falsehood* and *Iniquity*.

III. *Thirdly*; T H E Text represents to us the *Means* in particular, by which wicked  
men



men are inticed and deceived to their Destruction: 'Tis by *believing a Lie*. To choose *Misery* for its *own* sake, without any Cover or Deceit; is beyond the utmost Possibilities of Human Folly. To choose *Wickedness*, directly for *Wickedness* sake; without the Delusion either of some present Gratification, or of some future foolish Hope; is beyond the malice of the very worst of Men, perhaps even of Devils also. When *Angels* were tempted to *leave their first Habitation*, and *abode not in the Truth*; it could not be, but by first *believing* some *Lie*. And whenever any *Man*, gives himself up to any vicious or unrighteous Practice; if he could be perswaded seriously to consider with himself, he would find that it is by choosing with his Will and Appetite to entertain certain Notions, which his Understanding and Conscience does at the same time admonish him are not agreeable to Reason. This is what the Text calls, *believing a Lie*. Thus, though the Works of Nature do every moment prove the Being of God, yet *This* (as St *Peter* expresses it)

S E R M. very many are willingly ignorant of, 2 Pet.  
 V. iii. 5; contenting themselves with the  
 empty insignificant Names, of *Nature*,  
*Chance*, or *Fate*. Others, believing the  
*Being* of God, as the Great Author of  
*Nature*; yet are willing to think Him re-  
*gardless* of That Difference of *Moral*  
*Good and Evil*, which among Mortal  
 Men 'tis hardly possible even for the most  
*Careless Governours* not to have Some  
 Regard to. Others, convinced of God's  
*real* concern for Virtue, and Hatred of  
 Vice; and that there *will be* a final day  
 of Accounts; and being moreover admo-  
 nished by the continual Voice of Reason  
 and Conscience, and by repeated Decla-  
 rations in Scripture, that God will cer-  
 tainly judge men *according to their Works*;  
 that *whatsoever a Man soweth, That shall*  
*be also reap*; that the Gospel stands firm  
 upon *This Foundation, Let every one that*  
*nameth the Name of Christ, depart from*  
*iniquity*; and that *Any other Foundation*  
 a man can possibly build upon, will fail  
 him as the loose *Sand*: Yet nevertheless  
 suffer themselves to be imposed upon with

so

so strange a Delusion, as to reconcile the continuance of some sinful Practice or other, with the Hope of Salvation; in reliance, either upon the *Goodness of God*, or upon the *Merits of Christ*, or upon the *Intercession of Saints*, or upon the *Absolutions of the Priest*, or upon the *Sacraments of the Church*, or upon Notions of unconditionate *Predestination*, or upon a *Death-bed Repentance*, or upon the *Strength or Rightness of their Faith*, in believing things they understand nothing of, and in *adhering zealously* to certain *Parties* of men. Which last, is perhaps of all Others the *greatest* and most *extensive* Delusion. Numbers of men satisfy themselves, with giving themselves up to the Guidance of an *Infallible Church*. An *infallible Church*, they are told, there must needs be; because the *True Church* cannot possibly *err*; That is, They that are in the *Right*, cannot, while they *are so*, be in the *Wrong*. Which is exactly the same Argument, by which the Maintainers of *Fate* do, from the very *Supposition* of *Liberty itself*, endeavour to prove that there


S E R M. cannot possibly be any such thing as *Li-*  
 V. *Liberty* at all. A man having at any time  
 Liberty to choose whether he will *act* or  
*not act*, must of necessity either choose to  
*act*, or choose *not to act*; because two  
 Contradictories, cannot possibly exist to-  
 gether. And which soever part he freely  
 chooses, yet, as soon as it is chosen, he can-  
 not possibly but have chosen it; because  
 'tis impossible that any thing should *be*  
 and *not be* at the same time. By the ve-  
 ry same ridiculous Argument, the *True*  
*Church* must indeed of necessity be *infall-*  
*ible*, because *the Truth* cannot possibly  
 be *False* or *erroneous*. But *who* are *pos-*  
*essed* of this *Truth*, All men that are de-  
 sirous not to *believe a Lie*, must *consider*  
*with Probity and Care*. That God has  
 appointed for all men an *Infallible Judge*  
*of Religious Controversies*, is believed by  
*Many*; for no other reason, but because  
 they fancy it would be better he *should*  
*have done it*, though it is notorious he has  
*not done it*; and they who have pretend-  
 ed to it with the highest *Presumption*,  
 have of All mortal men fallen into the  
 most



most absurd Errors. For the determining of *Civil Controversies* among the nations of the Earth, there is (if possible;) still *greater Need* of an *Infallible Judge*: And yet, in This case, no man was ever so void of Sense, as to contend that there *Therefore* certainly is such a Judge, because he could wish there *were* such a one, though he plainly sees that there is *none*. The Truth is: God, in *Both* cases, has thought fit to leave *rational Creatures* to the Use of their *Reason*; that such as love and seek after *Truth* and *Right*, might distinguish themselves from Those, who, for the gratification of *present Passions and Interests*, are always ready to *believe a Lie*.

IV. *Fourthly*; THE Text affectionately represents to us how very *strong* the *Delusion* often is, by which wicked men are led to believe a Lie. *God shall send them Strong Delusion*. The Meaning is; not that God, by his Superiour Power and Knowledge, *imposes upon* and *deceives* his Creatures. For *who* could possibly withstand *that Deceit*? or *who* could justly

S E R M. be blamed for being *so deceived?* or why  
 V. could not *Good men* be as possibly and as  
 easily imposed upon by *such a Deception,*  
 as the most abandoned *Sinners?* But the  
 Meaning is; that the Deceit is of such  
 a nature, as the Divine Providence *thinks*  
*fit to permit to come very strongly,* upon  
 those who attend not to That Light of  
 Reason and Religion, by which God di-  
 rects and calls men into the Paths of  
 Truth and Virtue. According to the na-  
 ture of the *Jewish* language, whatever is  
 remarkable and extraordinary in its kind,  
 they express by the addition of the *name*  
*of God* to it. Thus Mountains exceed-  
 ing *large and high,* are *Mountains of God.*  
 And, by a like Analogy; whatever Event,  
 in the course of Providence, comes to  
 pass *remarkably* either in *Manner* or *De-*  
*gree,* is in the *Hebrew* language peculiarly  
 expressed as being done *of God.* *God*  
*sends men strong Delusion,* when by their  
 own Folly or Wickedness they are *great-*  
*ly deluded.* *God tempted David,* that is,  
*David was strongly tempted,* to number  
 the people. *God hardened Pharoah's*  
*Heart;*

Heart; that is, the *Heart of Pharaoh* was S E R M.  
*extremely obstinate and wilful.* To the V.  
*Jews* in the Wilderness, (according to )  
the Complaint of *Moses*, Deut. xxix. 4;) *the Lord did not give an Heart to perceive,*  
*and eyes to see, and Ears to Hear;* that  
is, they were *marvellously stupid and per-*  
*verse,* not to be convinced and led to O-  
bedience by all the mighty Works that  
God had done for them; As 'tis expressly  
explained, ver. 3. And the like Com-  
plaint in After-Ages concerning the same  
people upon the like occasion, is made  
frequently by the Prophets, and by our  
Lord himself, and by his Apostles; that  
*God gave them the Spirit of Slumber,* Rom.  
xi. 8; *Is.* xxix. 10: and that *God blinded*  
*their eyes, and hardened their heart, that*  
*they should not see nor understand,* Joh. xii.  
40; That is, the *Strength and Obstinacy*  
of their *Prejudices* was extremely *Great*  
and surprizing. And, in These and all  
other the like Instances; the Delusion,  
the Temptation, or Ground of the Preju-  
dice, is what the Wisdom of Providence  
knows to be a proper and fitting Tryal or  
Proba-

S E R M. Probation, of those who *are* or *are not*  
 V. sincerely desirous to obey him. Our Lord,  
 in his Prophetick description of the most  
*corrupt* Ages of *his Church*, expresses this  
 matter in *very strong* Words, *Matt. xxiv.*  
 24; They, (that is, the *Church of Christ*  
 falsely so calling themselves,) *shall show*  
*great Signs and Wonders, insomuch that*  
*(if it were possible) they shall deceive the*  
*very Elect.* Concerning which words it is  
 particularly to be observed, that as they  
 very emphatically set forth the *Strength*  
 of the *Delusion*, by which wicked men  
 are seduced; so they no less clearly ex-  
 press at the same time, (which was the

V. *Fifth and Last* thing I proposed to  
 show,) the *Justice* of Providence, in per-  
 mitting them to be thus deluded. The  
*Signs and Wonders*, the *Delusions* and  
*Temptations* spoken of by our Lord, are  
 indeed *very Great*; but they are so, only  
 to *vicious and corrupt* minds; to men who  
 have *no real Sense of True Virtue*, but  
 judge of religion merely by *Worldly*  
*Shows and Parties.* On virtuous and good  
 Minds, on sincere Lovers of Truth and  
 Right,




Right, these Delusions have *No Power*. S E R M,  
*If any man will do the Will of God, he* V.  
*shall know of the Doctrine, whether it be*  
*of God. The Eleēt, (that is, as our Lord*  
*elsewhere describes them, they who re-*  
*ceive the word of God in an honest and*  
*good Heart,) cannot possibly be deceived in*  
*this matter. They who place their Re-*  
*ligion where our Saviour has founded it,*  
*in the Love of God and of All Mankind;*  
*on These, wicked and pernicious Errours*  
*can have No Hold. The Power and Signs*  
*and Lying Wonders referred to in my Text,* ver. 9, 10;  
*are, the Deceivableness, only of Unrighteous-* 11, 12.  
*ness: And the Delusion sent upon men, that*  
*they should believe a Lie, is declared to*  
*be Strong, and to be judicially permitted*  
*as such, expressly for this Cause only;*  
*because they received not the love of the*  
*Truth, but had Pleasure in Unrighteous-*  
*ness: Giving heed to seducing Spirits, be-*  
*cause they had their Consciences seared as*  
*it were with a hot Iron: 1 Tim. iv. 1.*  
*Thus Balaam was deceived; because he*  
*desired to go against the Will of God, as*  
*far as he durst; and hoped to prevail up-*

S E R M. on God by sacrificing *from one Hill to another*; and at last, *for the Wages of Unrighteousness*, advised the *Moabites* to tempt the *Israelites* to *fornication*, that God might be as it were obliged to give them up. *Abab* was *deceived*, and with a very strong delusion too, even by a *lying Spirit* put into the Mouth of his *Prophets*; because he did not enquire, with a *Desire* of knowing the *Truth*; but enquired of *Those* only who had been accustomed to flatter him, and hated *Those* who had told him the *Truth*. *Saul* was *deceived*; because he would not be persuaded to understand, that to *Obey* the Will of God, *is better than Sacrifice, and to hearken than the Fat of Rams*. The *Prophets* of *Israel* were *deceived*; and *I, saith the Lord, have deceived those Prophets, Ezek. xiv. 9*; because they had *set up Idols in their Hearts*, ver. 7. The Words are plainly, not a declaration of God's *Power* in imposing upon weak men, but the *Threatning* of a *just Punishment* in suffering them to impose upon themselves. The Case is the very same, in all *Other Instances*;

*deceived to their Destruction.*

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*Instances:* And the plain Application of S E R M.  
the whole, is ; that there is no other Se- V.  
curity against Fatal Errours, but the fin-   
cere Love of Truth and Virtue.



SERMON





# S E R M O N VI.

The Design of the Gospel is to separate the Good from the Bad.



MATT. iii. 12.

*Whose Fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his Floor, and gather his Wheat into the Garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable Fire.*



THE great Design of God in S E R M. all Institutions of Religion VI. from the Beginning of the World, has been to *separate* to himself, out of the corrupt and degenerate Bulk of Mankind, a *peculiar*

S E R M. *peculiar people, zealous of good Works.*

IV. This was his Purpose in calling the Patriarchs to go out from their Native Place, *not knowing whither they went*; and to sojourn in the land of Promise, as in a strange country, separate from the idolatrous Cities and Nations of the World. This was his Design in giving the Jews a Law, by which they were distinguished from all People upon Earth, and set up as a Standard to the Nations, and for a Testimony and Example of the Worship of the One True God of the Universe. This was the End and Intent of his sending his Son into the World, with fuller and clearer Declarations of the Divine Will, and with stronger Arguments and Motives of Religion, drawn from the considerations of a Future and Eternal State.

UNDER *Each* of these Dispensations: the *professed* Worshipers of the True God, his *visible* Church or People, has always too plainly consisted of a *mixt* number of Hypocrites and sincere persons. So that it is very evident, that in every  
Age,

*separate the Good from the Bad.*

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Age, and in every Place, the children of S E R M.  
*the Promise* in the *literal Sense* according VI.  
to *the Flesh*, the *Visible Church* or *Pro-*  
*fessed Worshippers of the True God*, are  
but the *Type* or *Representative* of the  
*Real invisible Church* of God. And all  
the great Promises, which God has ever  
made to his *Church*, to his *People*, to the  
*Families* or *Nations*, of his *True Worship-*  
*pers*, must of necessity be all along so un-  
derstood, as that *Wicked* and *Unworthy*  
persons, of whatever *Family* or *Nation* or  
*profession of Religion* they be, shall be ex-  
cluded from the Benefit of those Promi-  
ses, shall be *cut off from God's People*;  
And *Virtuous men* of All Nations, *from*  
*the East* and *from the West* and *from the*  
*North* and *from the South*, shall be ac-  
cepted in their Stead. That is to say: In  
like manner as the Promise was made  
*originally*, not to *All* the children of *A-*  
*braham*, but to *Isaac* only; and not to  
*Both* the Sons of *Isaac*, but to *Jacob* on-  
ly: And among the Posterity of *Jacob*,  
*All were not Israel*, which were of *Israel*;  
but, in *Elijah's* days, *seven thousand* only  
VOL. VIII. I were

S E R M. were the True *Israel*; and, in the time  
 VI. of *Isaiab*, though the number of the chil-  
 dren of *Israel* was as the Sand of the  
 Sea, yet a remnant only was to be saved;  
 And in *Hosea* God says, *I will call Them*  
*my people, which were not my people; and*  
*Her beloved, which was not beloved*: So,  
 under the Gospel likewise, not *All* that are  
 Called, are Chosen; And not every one that  
 saith unto Christ, *Lord, Lord*, is a real  
 Disciple of Christ; but he that doth the  
 Will of his Father which is in Heaven.

T O W A R D S separating the true Servants  
 of God from a vicious and corrupt World,  
 by turning men from *Darkness to Light*,  
 and from the Power of Satan unto God:  
 Towards gathering together in one, the  
 children of God that were scattered abroad,  
 Joh. xi. 52: Towards purifying unto God  
 a peculiar people, a chosen generation, a  
 royal Priesthood, a Holy Nation, a glorious  
 Church, not having Spot or Wrinkle or  
 any such thing, as the Scripture emphati-  
 cally speaks: Towards This, I say, the  
 Gospel of Christ has even in the present  
 life, by the Excellency of its Doctrine,  
 by



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by the Purity of its Precepts, and by the Promise of an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, availed *much more* than any Former Institution of Religion. But the *complete* Establishment of the Kingdom and City of God, will be in the *Future* State; when the *Wicked* shall be *separated* from among the *Just*, totally and for ever. The *Power* of accomplishing which great Event, being committed to *Christ*; it is by *This* peculiar character, this *Power* of *Judgment* committed unto him, that he is distinguished infinitely from all *Other* Preachers of Righteousness. *I indeed*, says *John the Baptist* in the words preceeding my Text; *I indeed baptize you with Water, unto Repentance: But He that cometh after me, is mightier than I; whose Shoes I am not worthy to bear: He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with Fire. Whose Fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his Floor, and gather his Wheat into the Garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable Fire.*

S E R M.  
VI.





OTHER Preachers of Righteousness, under different Dispensations in All Ages, did indeed *instruct* men in their Duty, *invited* and *exhorted* them to Repentance, showed them the *necessity* of Amendment and Reformation of Manners, laid before them *in general* the Promises and the Threatnings of God: Which is what *John* here expresses under this character of his *Own* Preaching, *I indeed baptize you with Water unto Repentance. But Christ* taught with an *Authority* singular and peculiar to himself, as one who had Power to *assist* his Followers with what Gifts and Graces he pleased, as one who was to be *himself* the *Judge* of their Use or Abuse of his Assistances. *He* came to *baptize* men *with the Holy Ghost, and with Fire.* *He* declared to men, in the Last and most Complete manner, the Whole Will of God. *He* had Power to endue his Apostles with *miraculous Gifts*, and to send down upon them the *Holy Ghost* under the similitude of *Fire*; representing its Influence over the Minds of Men to be as much more *efficacious* than  
*John's*

John's Baptism, as *Fire* is in its nature S E R M.  
more powerful and penetrating than *Wa-* VI.  
*ter*. He was able to *search the Heart*   
and *Reins*; being *himself* *The Word of*  
*God quick and powerful, and sharper than*  
*any two-edged Sword, piercing even to the*  
*dividing asunder of Soul and Spirit, and*  
*discerning the Thoughts and Intents of the*  
*Heart*. And This, not only with regard  
to the Persons he preached to, and with  
whom he was actually present; But  
through *All Ages*, and in *All Places*, This  
his Power continues over his *Whole*  
*Church*, even 'till his final Coming to  
Judgment. At which time, and by which  
Last Act of his Power, it will fully ap-  
pear, that *his Fan is in his hand, and he*  
*will thoroughly purge his Floor, and gather*  
*his Wheat into the Garner; but he will*  
*burn up the Chaff with unquenchable*  
*Fire*.

IN the Words, there are *Two* Particu-  
lars, very remarkable. *1st*, A *Supposition*,  
that *Good and Evil* are really different in  
*Kind*, absolutely and intrinsically, essen-  
tially and in the Nature of Things: For

SERM. *Wheat and Chaff* are not mere external arbitrary Denominations, but Things in their whole Nature and Kind really and essentially different. 2dly, A Declaration, that the Great Design of God, as in every dispensation of Religion in general, so in the *Gospel* more particularly, is to separate the *Evil* from the *Good* by proper Trials; And that This Design will be effectually accomplished by *Christ*; in the present life partly, and to certain degrees; in the future life perfectly, totally, and finally. His Fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his Floor, and gather his *Wheat* into the *Garner*; but he will burn up the *Chaff* with unquenchable Fire.

I. First; It is Supposed in the Text, that *Good* and *Evil* are really different in Kind, absolutely and intrinsically, essentially and in the Nature of Things. This appears in the Similitude under which *Good and Bad Men* are here represented, of *Wheat and Chaff*; which are not mere external arbitrary Denominations, but Things in their whole Nature and Kind really and essentially

tially different. The *Whole Foundation* of S E R M. Religion, and of God's governing the VI. World at all, as a Moral Governour; relies entirely upon This Principle, that Moral Good and Evil, Virtue and Vice, are, in the nature of Things, essential and immutable; and not arbitrary, or changeable Characters. That by the Free Choice of the *Will* only, and by Practice consequent upon such Choice, and not by any mere external *Operation upon* men, or arbitrary *Denomination of* them, can real Virtue or Viciousness be acquired. That every Man *is*, as to his *Moral* character, what his own Behaviour and Practice makes him, really and intrinsically, and by as certain and determinate a distinction; as *Wheat* and *Chaff* are, by their real and proper natures, different from each other. That *God* in all his Commandments, made known either by the Light of Reason or by revealed declarations of his Will, really and sincerely *intends* and *desires*, as a Beneficent and Good Governour, to bring men by the habitual Practice of Virtue to such a Temper and

S E R M. VI. Constitution of Mind, as is the only possible Qualification by which they can become capable of eternal Happiness in the enjoyment of his unchangeable Favour. For *God cannot deny Himself*; 2 Tim. ii. 13. He cannot alter his own Nature; or any more possibly approve *unrighteous* Practices or Persons, than a man can knowingly choose to preserve the *Chaff* and throw away his *Wheat*. This then being *Supposed* as a First Principle; the Text contains


II. *Secondly*; A distinct *Declaration*, that the Great Design of God, as in *every* dispensation of Religion *in general*, so in the *Gospel* more particularly, is to *separate* the *Evil* from the *Good* by proper Trials; And that This Design will be *effectually* accomplished by *Christ*; in the *present* life *partly*, and to *certain degrees*; in the *future* life *perfectly, totally, and finally*. His *Fan* is in his hand, and he will *thoroughly purge his Floor, and gather his Wheat into the Garner; but he will burn up the Chaff with unquenchable Fire*.

*Separate the Good from the Bad.*

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THE *Jews* of old, having received repeated Promises of a *Saviour* to appear in the latter days; and having their Hearts more set upon Prosperity and Power, than upon the promoting of Virtue and True Religion; were extremely apt to flatter themselves with expectations of wonderfully *Happy Times*, when their promised *Messiah* should appear. But God by his latter *Prophets*, even *before* the Coming of *Christ*, gave them very plain intimations, that the *Salvation* *He* promised them, was of a very different kind from what vain men were apt to imagine: It was to be a *Salvation* of *such* a kind, as would be of no pleasure or advantage at all to Any wicked and corrupt Mind. *Mal. iii. 1*; Behold, says he, *the Lord whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his Temple; even the Messenger of the Covenant, whom ye delight in; behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of Hosts. But who may abide the day of his Coming? and who shall stand when He appeareth? for he is like a Refiner's Fire, and like Fuller's Sope. And he shall sit as a Refiner and Purifier*

S E R M.  
VI.  


SERM. *Purifier of Silver ; and he shall purify*  
 VI. *the Sons of Levi, and purge them as gold*  
 *and silver, that they may offer unto the*  
*Lord an Offering in Righteousness.--- And*  
*I will come near to you to Judgment ; and*  
*I will be a swift Witness against the Sor-*  
*cerers, (that is, against all Teachers of*  
*artificial Methods to make men Religious*  
*without True Virtue,) and against the*  
*Adulterers, and against false Swearers,*  
*and against those that oppress the Hireling*  
*in his Wages, the Widow and the Father-*  
*less, and that turn aside the Stranger from*  
*his Right, and fear not Me, saith the Lord*  
*of Hosts. These words are a very signi-*  
*ficant Prediction of that which in the*  
*New Testament was afterwards more fully*  
*and distinctly set forth ; that the Salvation*  
*by Christ, was not to be a Salvation of*  
*Any sinful Nation, or sinful Persons ; but*  
*of Those only, who, by the Influences of*  
*the Gospel, should be prevailed upon to*  
*separate themselves from a vicious and*  
*corrupt World, by an effectual and ex-*  
*emplary Reformation of Manners. Christ*  
*came into the World, not to answer*  
 Expectations



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Expectations of *Ambition* and *Covetousness*, not to advance his Disciples to *Temporal Power* and *Grandour*; but

S E R M.

VI.

to *finish transgression*, and to make an end of *Sins*, and to bring in everlasting *Righteousness*: And whatever tends not to

Dan. ix.

24.

promote *These* Ends, is of *no* account in *His* Religion. The Design of *His* Coming, was, that he might gather together in one, the children of God that were scattered abroad; Joh. xi. 52. That he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good Works; Tit. ii. 14. That he might sanctify and cleanse---and present to himself a glorious Church, not having Spot or Wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be Holy and without Blemish; Eph. v. 27. This was the Design of Christ's coming into the World. And the Method in which he accomplishes this Great End, (far different from the Expectations of those who looked for a *Temporal* Kingdom of *Ease* and *Power*,) is This. In the first place, he has by himself purged our Sins, Heb. i. 3; has put away Sin by  
the

SERMON. *the Sacrifice of himself; ch. ix. 26. That*  
 VI. *is: He has made an acceptable Atonement, and obtained Forgiveness for all such as shall sincerely repent, and shall for the future bring forth Fruits meet for Repentance. Which that they may effectually be enabled to do, he has in the next place made a most clear and full discovery of the Will of God; Teaching us, in a more exact and perfect manner than ever, that denying Ungodliness and worldly Lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present World: Giving us moreover Assurance of the Assistance of his Holy Spirit: Laying before us in the clearest Light, the glorious Hopes of Life and Immortality; and revealing from Heaven, in the most express and affectionate manner, the Wrath of God against all Ungodliness and Unrighteousness of men. The strongest and most pathetick Admonitions are now given to Sinners, that This is the Last Dispensation of Mercy God will afford to Mankind; and that whosoever rejects the gracious Terms of This Gospel, there will remain to him*

no more Sacrifice for Sin. That into the City of God there shall in no case enter any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a Lie; Rev. xxi. 27. That, if he that despised Moses's Law, died without Mercy, of how much sorer Punishment shall He be thought worthy, who shall tread under foot the Son of God, and do despite unto the Spirit of Grace? Heb. x. 29. That the Ax is now laid to the root of the Trees; and every Tree, that bringeth not forth good Fruit, is decreed to be hewen down and cast into the Fire; Matt. iii. 10. Which expression is of the same import with That in the Text: *His Fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his Floor, and gather his Wheat into the Garner; but he will burn up the Chaff with unquenchable Fire.* For the time is come, that Judgment must begin at the House of God, 1 Pet. iv. 17; 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 Sinner appear?

These

SERMON. These words are spoken by St Peter, upon occasion of the Many *Afflictions and Persecutions*, wherewith God sometimes thinks fit to *try* the fidelity of his Servants; lest any one should *think it strange concerning the fiery Trial, which is to try them*; ver. 12. For *Temptations* of All kinds, and *Persecutions* in particular, that is, all Temporal Inconveniencies annexed at any time to the pursuit of Truth and Virtue; are, in the language of my Text, *the Fan* wherewith in the *present life* God purges his *Floor*; separating the Hypocrites from the righteous, as *Gold* is separated from the Dross by *Fire*, or as *Wheat* from the *Chaff* which *hath been winnowed with the Fan*. This is the foundation of those expressions in the *Old Testament*: *Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; And some of them of Understanding shall fall, to try them, and to purge, and to make them white*; Dan. xii. 10; xi. 35. *When he hath tried me, I shall come forth as Gold*; Job xxiii. 10. *I will refine them as Silver is refined, and will try them*

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them as Gold is tried; Zach. xiii. 9. For S E R M.  
God proved them, and found them worthy VI.  
for himself: As Gold in the furnace has been  
tried them, and received them as a burnt-offering; Wisd. iii. 5. And from hence in the New Testament; That the Trial of your Faith, saith St Peter, being much more precious than of Gold that perisheth, though it be tried with Fire, might be found unto Praise and Honour and Glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ; 1 Pet. i. 7. And Jam. i. 12; Blessed is the man that endureth Temptation; for when he is tried, he shall receive the Crown of Life. By Temptations therefore of All Kinds, is the Sincerity of mens Virtue distinguished in the present life. But because none but God, who seeth the Heart, can with certainty judge of this Sincerity; therefore the perfect and total Separation of the Good and the Bad, cannot be made before the day of Judgment. According to That declaration of the Householder in our Lord's Parable: At present, says he, let them alone; lest, while ye gather up the Tares,  
ye

S E R M. VI. *ye root up also the Wheat with them. Let Both grow together until the Harvest ; And in the time of Harvest I will say to the Reapers, Gather ye together first the Tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them ; but gather the Wheat into my Barn ;* Matt. xiii. 29. The application of which similitude, we have at ver. 40 ; *In the end of the world, saith our Lord, the Son of man shall send forth his Angels, and they shall gather out of his Kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity ; and shall cast them into a furnace of Fire ; there shall be wailing, and gnashing of Teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the Sun, in the Kingdom of their Father.*

III. *Thirdly* ; F R O M what has been said in this whole Discourse, concerning the essential and unalterable difference of *Good* and *Evil*, expressed here under the similitude of *Wheat* and *Chaff* ; and concerning its being the Great End and Design of the Gospel, to *separate* the *Good* from the *Bad*, in the *present* state as far as may be, and in the *future* state entirely :

From

From hence (I say) arises *One* obvious S E R M.  
and general Inference, of great VI. Extent  
and of the highest Importance; That  
whatever Doctrin in Religion has any  
Tendency to persuade men, or make them  
imagine, that they can be in any degree  
the *Better* for their Profession of the Gos-  
pel of Christ, any otherwise than as their  
Knowledge of the Gospel of Christ makes  
them to be *Better* and more virtuous men;  
that is, in the language of my Text, what-  
ever tends to persuade men that *Chaff*  
may pass for *Wheat*, while it continues to  
be only *Chaff*; is a direct *Mockery* of *God*,  
and *Deceit* upon *Themselves*. Of This  
kind are *all* Notions, upon which a *vi-*  
*cious* man may build Expectations of be-  
ing *Saved* by any secret *Decree* and *Fore-*  
*appointment* of *God*, or by the *Merits* of  
*Christ*, or by the *Intercession* of *Saints*, or  
by the *Sacraments* of the *Church*, or by  
the *Absolution* of the *Priest*, or by the  
*Orthodoxy* and *Strength* of his own *Faith*,  
or by the *Firmness* of his *Adherence* to  
any particular *Seēt*, or by his *Reliance*  
upon the *Mercy* and *Goodness* of *God*, or

SER M. by the *ineffectual* Sorrow of a *Death-bed*  
VI. *Repentance*, or by *Any other Means* that  
may be invented or imagined to supply the  
Want of the *One thing necessary*, which is  
a *Virtuous Life* in Obedience to God's  
Commands. *Little children*, says the A-  
postle, *let no man deceive you : He that*  
*Doth Righteousness, is Righteous.*







# SERMON VII.

Scripture - Evidence sufficient to  
make Men Religious.



LUK. xvi. 31.

*And he said unto him, If they bear not  
Moses and the Prophets, neither will  
they be perswaded though one rose from  
the Dead.*



WHETHER the Infidelity of S E R M.  
men, be the secret cause of VII.  
their wicked lives; or whe-  
ther on the contrary, their Re-  
solution not to amend their Lives, be the  
cause of their persisting in their Infidelity,  
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and that they desire not to be convinced of the truth and of the necessity of Religion ; is not easy to determine : He that impartially considers the Evidence of true and uncorrupt Religion, and how satisfactory it is to all reasonable and unprejudiced minds ; will be apt to think, that men *could not* possibly resist its powerful and convictive proofs, were it not that being by custom captivated and enslaved to Sin, they are resolved before-hand not to hearken to any thing, that will oblige them to forsake their accustomed Vices : On the other hand, he who considers what manner of persons a true sense of Piety would make men ; what an influence Religion must of necessity have upon their Minds and Lives, if it were sincerely and steddily believed ; will be apt to conclude, there could not possibly be so much Wickedness and Debauchery in the world, as he every day beholds ; but that men do not in earnest believe, as they pretend and profess to do, the great doctrines of Religion. For though Faith has not the evidence of Sense ; as indeed it is impos-

I

sible

sible it should; yet, if it be well ground-  
 ed, it could not but have in many re-  
 spects the same effect upon mens Lives,  
 as the evidence even of Sense itself would  
 have. It is not possible that rational crea-  
 tures should act so carelessly as they do,  
 if they *believed* and considered that the  
 Scene of this World shall not be shut up  
 in everlasting oblivion; but, that there  
 will certainly come a day, wherein they  
 must give account for their Works, and  
 be accordingly happy or miserable for  
 ever. *Faith* therefore, is that which the  
 Rich man in the parable, thought to be  
 the only *possible* cause of his brethren's  
 Irreligion; He thought they had not up-  
 on their minds a full conviction of the  
 Truth of a Future State; and therefore  
 he says to *Abraham*, ver. 27; *I pray thee*  
*therefore Father, that thou wouldst send*  
*Lazarus to my father's house; for I have*  
*five brethren; that he may testify unto*  
*them, lest they also come into this place of*  
*torment.* And thus far his argument was  
 unquestionably right; that the true reason  
 why his brethren continued in such a



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sinful course, as would at last prove destructive to them without repentance and amendment; was their not sufficiently considering the Certainty of a future state; nor having imprinted upon their minds a just and due sense of those Rewards and Punishments, which were therein to be dispensed. We must suppose them to be such persons, as the Rich man himself is in the former part of the Parable described to have been; *cloathed in purple and fine linnen, and faring sumptuously every day; i. e.* such persons as living in the abundant enjoyment of the good things of this present World, had set their hearts and affections wholly upon these things, without Any regards to the interest of Truth or Virtue, of Religion or Good manners. And this was indeed a manner of living, which must unavoidably be the cause of their final Ruin; and bring *Them* also into that place of torment, into which the same course of life had before brought their rich brother; unless they could by some means or other be warned of their approaching danger, and  
put



put in mind that for all these things, God would certainly bring them into judgment. Thus far therefore the Rich man's plea was undoubtedly just; that the true reason, why his brethren were in danger of following him into that place of torment, was their not being sufficiently convinced of the Certainty, and not duly considering the Greatness of that Danger: But then that the sending *Lazarus* to testify unto them; *i. e.* that the sending one on purpose from the Dead, to assure them of the Certainty of a future state, would be sufficient to convince and reform those men, who could not be worked upon by these discoveries and declarations which God had already made both by reason and revelation concerning this matter; herein was his mistake. For so we find *Abraham* answering his importunate request, in the words of the Text; *If they bear not Moses and the Prophets; neither will they be perswaded though one rose from the dead; i. e.* if they be so immersed in the sinful pleasures of this present World, as not to be concerned

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about the certainty of a future state, and of the Punishments which shall therein be inflicted on all impenitent Sinners; nor be convinced of it by the revelations which God has already made: If they be so hardened in their Folly, that they can continue deaf to the continual Preachings, the repeated Threatnings and Promises, the earnest Exhortations, and the constant Warnings of their Danger, which God vouchsafes unto them by his servants the Prophets; and those confirmed and strengthened by the Reason of things, by the dictates of conscience, by the judgment of all Wise men, and by the perpetual Providences of God; it is plain they would for the same reason reject all other means whatsoever, that God should make use of for their conviction and reformation; even though he should send one on purpose from the Dead, to preach to them. The design therefore of our Saviour in this parable, is plainly This; *to show us* that the true reason of that Infidelity, which causes men to continue in a course of Sin, is not either want of real evidence

evidence to prove the great Truths of S E R M. Religion, or want of sufficient Arguments VII. to enforce the practice of it; but merely such an affectionate Love of the World, and of its sinful *Pleasures*; as darkens their Understanding, biaſſes their Will, clouds their Reason, and blinds their Eyes, that they cannot discern even the cleareſt Light. *Their fooliſh heart is darkened*, as *Ss Paul* elegantly expreſſes it, *Rom. i. 21*; and *the God of this world has blinded their minds, leſt the light of the glorious Goſpel of Chriſt, who is the image of God, ſhould ſhine unto them*; *2 Cor. iv. 4.* From the words of the Text therefore, I ſhall endeavour theſe three things; *1<sup>ſt</sup>*, To ſhow that God has given us ſufficient evidence to prove the *Truth* of Religion, and ſufficient *Arguments* to enforce the *practice* of it. *2<sup>dly</sup>*, That ſuch men as will not be perſwaded to be religious, by *that* evidence and *theſe* motives which God has afforded us, would not be perſwaded by any *other* Evidence or Arguments of Religion, which their own unreaſonable fancy could ſuggeſt to them to  
deſire;

S E R M. desire; And 3dly, That therefore in order to the making men truly religious, it is not necessary that *God* should on *his* part work more miracles to give them greater convictions; but only that *They* on *their* part should lay aside their unjust prejudices, and forsake their unreasonable lusts, which hinder them from considering the true force of the Arguments of Religion.

I. *First*; G O D has given us sufficient evidence to prove the *Truth* of Religion, and sufficient *Arguments* to enforce the Practice of it. And here it is to be observed, that the design of Religion being to bring men to Happiness, by making them holy and virtuous; *i. e.* to make Happiness not the fate of mens Nature, but the reward of their Duty; it is plain the Arguments of Religion ought in the nature of the thing, to be such as might abundantly encourage all wise men, to adhere steadfastly to their duty as to their life, and yet at the same time leave room for men utterly incorrigible, to avoid being forced into the possession of that Happiness, which



which they are not willing to purchase S E R M.  
upon the terms of being religious. The VII.  
reward of everlasting life promised to  
obedience, and the punishment of eternal  
mifery threatned to difobedience, are mo-  
tives in themfelves irrefiftibly ftrong: and,  
if they were prefent and immediate, could  
not be withftood, nor leave any room for  
liberty and choice. Wherefore, though  
the infinitely gracious and merciful God  
has indeed propofed to us thefe great and  
moft powerful Arguments; that men by  
choofing their duty might choofe their  
life, and become happy in confequence of  
their being truly religious; yet hath he fo  
propofed them, invifible at prefent and at  
a diftance; that good men might have  
fome exercife of their virtue, by choofing  
their duty in order *to*, and as a natural  
Preparation *for*, their eternal happinefs;  
and that men obftinately impenitent might  
not (as indeed they *cannot*) partake of the  
happinefs, without choofing the duty to  
which that happinefs is both by the ap-  
pointment of *God* and by the Nature  
of *things themfelves* infeparably annexed.

Now

S E R M. Now this being premised; I say, God  
 VII. *has* given us all that *evidence* to prove the  
 truth of Christian Religion, and all those  
*Arguments* to enforce the *practice* of it,  
 which it was agreeable either to the *wisdom*  
 of *God* to give, or the *reason* of *men* to  
 expect. He has given all the *intrinsic*  
 Evidence from the Excellency of the Na-  
 ture of the Thing itself, that is possible  
 to be conceived; and all the *external*  
 Proof from unquestionable Testimony,  
 that was ever given to any matter of Fact  
 in the World.

1<sup>st</sup>; As to the *intrinsic* Evidence from  
 the Excellency of the Nature of the  
 thing itself; The duties which Christian  
 Religion requires, are such as are plainly  
 most agreeable to our natural Notions of  
*God*, and most conducive to the happiness  
 and well-being of *men*; And this is a  
 proof which might alone be sufficient,  
 to convince a wise man, that his religion  
 was from *God*; For that religion which  
 enjoyns no other Duties, but what are  
 perfectly agreeable to the eternal and un-  
 changeable laws of *God* and *Nature*, and  
 that

that manifestly tend to promote *virtue* S E R M.  
*and goodness* only, which is the true hap- VII.  
piness of men; such a Religion has al-  
ready the character of God upon it, and  
cannot possibly but either directly come  
from him, or at least be acceptable and  
agreeable to him. A religion which stands  
on such a foundation, does sufficiently re-  
commend itself, even by its own *intrin-*  
*sick* excellency, to the belief and practice  
of all wise and considerate men.


Now that the Christian Religion, in  
its native simplicity; the gospel or doc-  
trine of Christ, separate from the mis-  
takes and corruptions and uncertain Com-  
ments of men, is such an Institution; is  
evident from the whole frame and temper  
of the Gospel. *Whatsoever things are*  
*true, whatsoever things are honest, what-*  
*soever things are just, whatsoever things*  
*are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, what-*  
*soever things are of good report; if there*  
*be any virtue, and if there be any praise;*  
these are the things in which the true Spi-  
rit of Christianity consists. And as to the  
principal *Motives* or *Arguments* of the  
Gospel,

S E R M. Gospel, namely, the certainty of a future  
 VII. state, and the rewards and punishments  
 therein to be dispensed; these things are  
 so exactly suitable to the Justice and Wisdom of God, according to the best notions we can frame of his Attributes; and so agreeable to the natural apprehensions and expectations of *Men*, that there is nothing in nature, of things removed from sense, more credible and probable in itself to unprejudiced and impartial reason. That the Soul of man is immortal, and shall survive after the dissolution of this corruptible body; is a truth which has always been thought even naturally demonstrable, from principles of the best Philosophy. That man is a creature capable of doing good or evil, and consequently of giving account of his actions, and being judged, rewarded, or punished for them; is also very evident to reason: That therefore, since the mixt dispensations of providence in *this* world make no such difference, therefore that *future* life must be a state of retribution, wherein every man shall receive of God according

to what he has done in the flesh, whether it be good or evil; all This, has been collected by the wiser and more considerate part of men even among the Heathens themselves. So credible and probable are these things to the unprejudiced judgment of mankind, even of themselves in their own nature, without any external evidence to confirm that probability. But then

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2dly; BESIDES the intrinsick Evidence for the Truth of Religion, from the Excellency of the Nature of the thing itself; it is moreover proved to be taught and confirmed of God, by the most credible and satisfactory testimony that was ever given to any matter of fact in the world. The *Miracles* which our Saviour worked, were to his first Disciples, who were Eye-witnesses of them, a complete demonstration of the Truth of his doctrine; And the History of his Life, Death, and Resurrection, delivered down to us upon the testimony of those Disciples, are to us also a sufficient and most undeniable evidence of the same Truth. *Their having conversed from the beginning, with*

S E R M. *our Saviour himself; their having heard*  
 VII. *with their ears, and seen with their eyes;*  
 *their having looked upon, and having hand-*  
*led with their hands, of the word of life,*  
 (as St *John* expresses it, I *Job.* i. 1.) made  
 it impossible that they should be deceived  
*themselves*: And their whole Life and  
 Conversation, their Sufferings and Deaths,  
 were demonstrative proofs against the  
 Adversaries of Christianity, that they had  
 no design of imposing upon *others*. They  
 saw all the prophecies of the *Old Testa-*  
*ment* precisely fulfilled in the Life and  
 Doctrine, in the Sufferings and Death, of  
 our Blessed Saviour; They saw him con-  
 firm what he taught with such mighty  
 works, as his bitterest and most malicious  
 enemies could not but confess to be a-  
 bove the power of Nature, even while  
 they were blaspheming that holy Spirit  
 which worked them; They saw the  
 whole course of his Life to be such, as  
 to all unprejudiced beholders brightly  
 showed forth his divine Commission;  
 They saw him so constantly despise all  
 worldly greatness, that once when the  
 people

people would have attempted to make him a King, he even worked a miracle to avoid That, which was the only thing that was possible to be the Aim and design of an Impostor; In fine, they saw him alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, conversing with him for forty days together, and at last beholding him ascend visibly into Heaven. These were such Demonstrations of his being a Teacher sent from Heaven, and consequently that his Doctrine was no other than an express Revelation of the Will of God, that nothing but the extremest malice and obstinacy could withstand them.

AND NOW the same reason that these Disciples of our Saviour had to receive *his* doctrine, the rest of the world had to receive *theirs*: *They* confirmed what they taught by Signs and Miracles; *they* lived according to the doctrine they preached, though manifestly contrary to all the interests and pleasures of this present world; and which no Deceivers could do, they died freely and deliberately, with all ima-

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ginable chearfulness and joy of mind, for the testimony of their Doctrine and the confirmation of their Religion: *Their* Doctrine (I say) and *their* Religion, as it lies in the plain Simplicity of Scripture, easy and intelligible even to the meanest capacity; separate from the difficulties which vain and contentious men have since mingled with it. It is true, the Miracles of Christ, and particularly his Resurrection, which was the greatest of all, is not such an ocular demonstration to After-generations, as it was to those men, who then *lived* and *saw him*, and *conversed* with with: But then on the other side, in some respects, we have the advantage even of *Them*; We have the Examination of many Ages, the Answers to the Objections of all sorts of Adversaries, the Judgment of the wisest and most considerate Men that have gone before us, and the Evidence of several of our Lord's prophecies since that time fulfilled: So that upon the whole, it is evident whoever is not convinced by the Arguments we Now have, of the Truth of Religion;



would not be *convinced*, by any *other* proof S E R M.  
or demonstration whatsoever. And This VII.  
is the

II. *Second* general proposition I designed to speak to; namely, That such men as will not be persuaded to be sincerely religious, by that Evidence and those Arguments which God has afforded us; would not be persuaded by any *other* evidence or motive of Religion, which their own unreasonable fancy could suggest to them to desire. *If they bear not Moses and the prophets, neither would they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.* And the reason hereof is plainly this: The true cause why any such wicked man neglects and disbelieves the great Truths of Religion, is not that these things want sufficient Evidence to convince his judgment, (for then he would not believe and act upon *other* grounds that have *less* proof, as every man plainly does in his worldly business;) but it is because his passions and affections are interested, and that his heart is set upon the sinful Enjoyments of this present World; It is for *This* reason that he is willing to

S E R M. shake off the thoughts of such Truths, as  
 VII. are contrary to these false interests and  
 unreasonable affections. Did men follow  
 the unprejudiced Reason of their own  
 minds, a small *possibility* of obtaining eter-  
 nal Happiness, or the least appearing *ha-*  
*zard* of falling into endless or lasting Mi-  
 sery, would immediately determine them  
 to make it the great business of their lives,  
 to obtain the one and to avoid the other.  
 Wherefore when we see men act directly  
 contrary to this natural principle, and al-  
 most wholly neglect these most impor-  
 tant of all things, not only when there is  
 a great appearance of their *possibility*, but  
 when there is moreover all reasonable  
 positive evidence of their being *certainly*  
*true*; is it not manifest that such persons  
 are guided, not by reason and the force  
 of evidence, but by blind passion and un-  
 reasonable affection? And where this af-  
 fection and love for the sinful pleasures  
 of the World is so strong, as to cause men  
 to despise the Authority both of Reason  
 and Scripture in conjunction; to elude  
 the clearest and most undeniable evidence  
 of

of matter of fact; to become deaf to all the promises and threatnings, the persuasions and terrours of the Gospel; to disregard all the kind warnings that God gives them by his Spirit and by his Ministers, by his Mercies and his Judgments, and by all the dispensations of his Providence; there is little doubt but the same persons would resist any *other* means, that should be made use of for their Conversion and Reformation. We are many of us willing perhaps to imagine, that if we had lived in our Saviour's time, if we had heard his preaching and seen his miracles, if we had had the advantage of beholding those mighty works which he performed for the proof of his divine Commission, as the *Jews* then had; we should not like them have rejected the counsel of God against ourselves, but with all chearfulness have believed his Doctrine and embraced his Religion; We may be apt to fancy, we should have immediately become Disciples of Christ, and that the Truths which he taught would have had a powerful influence upon the whole course

S E R M.  
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S E R M. of our lives. But all this, is a very great  
VII. Fallacy; and if the Arguments of Religion *Now* have no influence upon us, we should *Then* likewise as certainly have found out evasions to elude them. The *Jews* are a lasting instance, how far prejudice and affection are able to prevail over the strongest convictions. When our Saviour began to preach that he was sent from God to instruct them in their duty, they required a *Sign* of him and they *would* believe him; but when he had worked so many miracles, that even the World itself could not contain the books if they should all be written, they still persisted in their Infidelity: When they saw him hanging upon the cross, and thought themselves secure of him, they said, *Let him now come down from the cross and we will believe him*; But when he arose out of the grave wherein he had lain three days, which was a much greater and more convincing miracle; they grew more hardened and obstinate in their Unbelief. And reasonably may we believe, if we live wickedly *Now*; that the same

same would have been *our* case, if we had lived in those days. S E R M.  
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SHOULD God *Now* send a messenger from the Dead to assure men of the certainty of a future state, and the danger of their present Wickedness; As soon as their present terrible Apprehensions were ceased, it is extremely probable they would find some way or other to ascribe it all to the delusion of Fancy and Imagination; and that their old vicious Habits and beloved Sins would again by degrees prevail over them. Wherefore

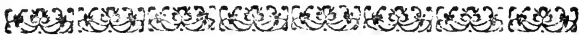
III. *Thirdly* and to conclude; In order to the making Men truly religious, it is not necessary that God should on *his* part work more miracles to give them greater Convictions; but only that They on their *own* part should become reasonable persons; lay aside their unjust prejudices, and forsake their unreasonable lusts, which hinder them from considering the true force of the Arguments of Religion. They have no concern for the interests of Truth and Virtue; The love of this present World has

S E R M. blinded their eyes; and 'tis for That rea-  
 VII. son only, that they *receive not the things*  
 of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness  
 unto them; 1 Cor. ii. 14. The Sum of all  
 therefore is; Let us take care to free our-  
 selves from those unreasonable prejudices,  
 wherewith carelessness and want of con-  
 sideration, and unrighteous practice are  
 used to blind us; and then we shall soon  
 be convinced, of the Truth and of the  
 Necessity of Religion; Let us but be sin-  
 cerely willing to obey the Will of God,  
 and then we shall know of the *Doctrine*  
*whether it be of God*: In a word, Let us  
 but suffer our selves to be governed by  
 our passions less, and by our reason more;  
 Let us consider the Arguments of Reason  
 and Scripture without prejudice or par-  
 tiality, and resolve to direct our lives by  
 those rules which shall appear most truly  
 wise and reasonable; and then we shall  
 certainly become as religious by hearing  
*Moses* and the prophets, by hearing Christ  
 and his Apostles, as if we had been  
 preached to by one immediately from the  
 Dead.



# SERMON VIII.

The Scripture a sufficient Rule of  
Religion.



2 T I M. iii. 16.

*All Scripture is given by inspiration of  
God; and is profitable for Doctrine,  
for Reproof, for Correction, for Instruc-  
tion in Righteousness.*



THE Apostle in the *Beginning of* SERM.  
*this Chapter* gives notice to Ti- VIII.  
*mothy, of certain False Teach-*  
*ers, who should arise after the*  
Apostles days, and by their erroneous doc-  
trines should corrupt the Simplicity of the  
Gospel

S E R M. Gospel of Christ. The *Token* by which  
 VIII. these False Teachers might certainly be  
 known, *our Saviour himself* had before  
 laid down: *By their Fruits* (says he)  
*ye shall know them.* And accordingly *St Paul*  
*here* describes them, from the Ten-  
 dency of their Behaviour and Practice,  
*ver. 4; Lovers of Pleasures, more than*  
*Lovers of God; Having a Form of God-*  
*liness, but denying the Power thereof;*  
 That is, laying the Strefs of religion al-  
 ways upon *Other* things, than *true Virtue.*  
 His *Own* Behaviour on the *contrary*, he  
 appeals to *Timothy's personal* Knowledge of  
 it, how unblameable it was, and agreeable  
 to the true Christian Spirit: *But thou hast*  
*fully known* (says he) *My Doctrine, man-*  
*ner of life, purpose, faith, long-suffering,*  
*charity, patience;* *ver. 10.* As to persons  
 of *vicious and corrupt* Dispositions, These  
 (says he) *evil men and seducers, shall wax*  
*worse and worse, deceiving and being de-*  
*ceived;* *ver. 13:* But how a serious and  
 well-disposed mind, such as *Timothy's*  
 was, should be sure to escape all danger  
 of being misled; he proceeds to show,  
 ver.



ver. 14; *But continue Thou (says he) in* S E R M.  
*the things which thou hast learned, and hast* VIII.

*been assured of; knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto Salvation, through Faith which is in Christ Jesus.* The certain way for him to avoid all error and deceit, was to hearken to No additions of humane invention, but to continue stedfast in the Simplicity of That Doctrine which he had received from *St Paul* himself, and which, by comparing it with the Scriptures of the *Old Testament*, he had been assured was true. 'Tis very remarkable that the Apostle, though he appeals to *Timothy's own personal* Knowledge of the Authority and Fidelity of his Teacher; *Thou knowest (says he) of whom thou hast learned;* (He had been instructed immediately by *St Paul himself* :) yet for All that, the Apostle (I say) here *expressly* puts the *foundation* of *Timothy's Assurance of the Truth*, upon his having examined the Scriptures of the *Old Testament*, and seen the Apostles Doctrine

S E R M. trine to be founded thereon; *That from*  
 VIII. *a Child thou hast known the Holy Scrip-*  
 tures, which are able to make thee Wise  
 unto Salvation. He commends *Timothy*,  
 for having searched what the Spirit of  
 Christ, which was in the *Prophets*, had  
 testified beforehand; and professes the  
 Truth of his Own doctrine, to depend  
 upon its agreeableness to what *Timothy*  
 should find delivered in those antient in-  
 spired Writings. And then he adds in the  
 words of the Text: *All Scripture*, that  
 is, All those Books which in the forego-  
 ing Verse he calls *The Holy Scriptures*,  
 the Writings of the Prophets under the  
 Old Testament; *are given by inspiration*  
*of God; and are profitable for Doctrine,*  
*for Reproof, for Correction, for Instruction*  
*in Righteousness; That the man of God may*  
*be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all*  
*good Works.* They are profitable for *Doc-*  
*trine*, as containing all necessary Truth;  
 for *Reproof*, as guarding Men against all  
 pernicious *Errours*; for *Correction*, as af-  
 fording the strongest Arguments to per-  
 swade Sinners to *Amend*; and for *Instruc-*  
*tion*

tion in Righteousness, as directing men in all virtuous practice. That the Man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good Works: That is, that every good Christian, and particularly every Preacher of the Gospel, may therein find abundant Instruction both how to direct his Own Practice in the Way of Righteousness, and how to persuade Others also to do the like. The Sense is the same, as in that expression of our Saviour, *Matt. xiii. 52; Therefore every Scribe which is instructed into the Kingdom of Heaven, is like unto a man that is an Householder, which bringeth forth out of his Treasure things New and Old.*

IN the Original, there is an Ambiguity in the Reading of the Former part of the Text. The Sense therein expressed, is either this; *All Scripture, given by inspiration of God, is profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Instruction in Righteousness.* Or else, according to our present Reading, *All Scripture is given by Inspiration of God, and is profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction,*

S E R M.  
VIII.



S E R M. *rection, for Instruction in Righteousness.* But  
 VIII. which soever of these ways the words be  
 ~~~~~ read, it makes no real alteration in the  
 Doctrine they contain. For if we read
 the words thus, *All Scripture, given by
 inspiration of God, is profitable for Doc-
 trine, for Reproof, for Correction, for In-
 struction in Righteousness*; the Proposition
 Then, is a *direct* declaration and assertion,
 of the usefulness and sufficiency of the in-
 spired Writings. But if we follow the
Other Reading of the words, *All Scripture
 is given by inspiration of God, and is pro-
 fitable for Doctrinē, for Reproof, for Cor-
 rection, for Instruction in Righteousness*;
 the doctrine is still *consequentially* the very
 same: *All Scripture*, that is, as they are
 stiled in the foregoing Verse, *The Holy
 Scriptures*, all the Writings of the Pro-
 phets in the Old Testament, *are given by
 Inspiration of God*, that is, they are not
 the mere Conceptions and reasonings of
 the Prophet's own mind, but were written
 under the direction and influence of the
 Spirit of God; and *therefore* they are *pro-
 fitable, and sufficient*, to all the Purposes
 of


of true Religion and Virtue. The very S E R M.
 same argument is used by *St Peter*, 2 Pet. i. VIII.
 19; *We have also* (says he) *a more sure*
word of Prophecy, whereunto ye do well
that ye take heed, as unto a Light that
shineth in a dark place; ----- Knowing this
first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is
of any private interpretation, (the words
in the Original are, no prophecy of the
Scripture is of the persons own private ut-
terance, It is not the mere Thought and
Conception of the Writer's own Mind:) For
 the Prophecy came not in old time by the
 Will of Man; but Holy Men of God,
 spake as they were moved by the Holy
 Ghost. The Phrase, *No Prophecy of the*
Scripture is of any private interpretation,
 has most ridiculously by the Church of
 Rome been alledged to prove, that *private*
men ought not to take upon them to *un-*
derstand the Scripture: Whereas from the
 exprefs words of the Apostle immediately
 following, it most manifestly appears,
 that the word *private* is not here spoken of
 the Readers, but of the *Writers* of the
 Prophecies: The Prophets wrote, not the
 Suggestions

S E R M. Suggestions of their *own private Thoughts*,
 VIII. but *as they were moved by the Holy Ghost*.



And this is exactly what *St Paul* affirms in the Text; *All Scripture, is given by inspiration of God*; It is not the mere private conceptions of mens own minds, but was written under the direction and influence of the Holy Spirit.

IT has been matter of great Dispute among Learned Men in all Ages, *wherein* consisted the precise Notion of the *inspiration* of Scripture; and how far the inspired Authors of the sacred Writings, did or did not express their *Own Thoughts*, and in their *Own* words. [I think] the want of Clearness that has generally appeared in what has been written upon this Subject, has chiefly arisen from not carefully distinguishing between the *Propbetick* Writings, and those *other* parts of Scripture which are merely *Historical* or *Moral*. In the *Propbetick* Writings, where the whole Subject matter was entirely *new* to the Prophet himself, and very often perhaps *not understood* by him; it is very plain that *inspiration* necessarily means, that

that the whole was dictated to the inspired S E R M.
 Writer, either in a Vision, or by an An- VIII.
 gel, or otherwise, according as it pleased 
 God to reveal himself at divers times and
 in diverse manners. But in the *Historical*
 and *Moral* books of Scripture, wherein
 the Writers had themselves perfect *Know-*
ledge of the *Faëts* recorded, and perfect
Understanding of the *Doëtrines* taught; it
 was abundantly sufficient, that they had
 such Assistance of the Holy Spirit guiding
 them into All Truth, as inabled them to
 express their own Thoughts in their own
 Words, with an effectual Security that
 they should not err in the manner of deli-
 vering the Doëtrine they were command-
 ed to teach. Of This distinction we have
 a remarkable Instance given us by St
Paul himself; 1 Cor. vii. In *One* case, I
command, (saith he,) *yet not I, but the*
Lord, ver. 10: In *Another* case, *To the*
rest (saith he) *speak I, not the Lord*;
 ver. 12; For *I have no Commandment of*
the Lord; yet *I give my judgment, as one*
that has obtained mercy of the Lord to be
faithful; ver. 25: Such a one *is happier,*
 VOL. VIII. M after

S E R M. *after my judgment; and I think also that*
 VIII. *I have the Spirit of God; ver. 40.*

IN *One or the Other* of these two Senses of the word *inspiration*, the general assertion in the Text is by the *Apostle* intended to be applied *severally* to all the Books of the *Old Testament*; And by *analogy* of reason, it is by *Us* upon the very same account applicable likewise to the Writings of the *New Testament*. *All Scripture is given by inspiration of God; and is profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Instruction in Righteousness.*

THE words of the Text being thus explained, the Doctrine contained in them is in brief the assertion of the *Sufficiency of Scripture*, as a *Rule* both of *Faith and Practice* in matters of *Religion*. In discoursing upon which Subject, I shall 1st endeavour to set forth distinctly the true Notion of the Doctrine itself, of the Scriptures being a sufficient Rule of Faith and Manners. 2^{dly}, I shall consider the Grounds, upon which the Church of *Rome*, and Others who in any measure follow

follow their Example, disallow this Doctrine both in their Practice and Arguments. And 3dly, I shall draw some useful Observations from the whole.

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VIII.



I. *First* ; I shall endeavour to set forth distinctly the true Notion of the Doctrine itself, of the *Scriptures* being a *sufficient Rule* of Faith and Manners. There are *two*, and *two only*, ways by which the Will of God is or can be made known to Men ; And These are, *Reason* and *Revelation*. They are each of them perfect in their kind, and each of them sufficient to the purposes they were intended. *Reason* is the *only* and *sufficient* Rule, of things that are to be judged of by *Reason* ; and *Scripture* is the *only* and *sufficient* Rule, of things that are to be judged of by *Revelation*. If This were not so ; both *Reason* and *Scripture* would be altogether *useless*, nay *hurtful*, to the greater part of mankind. For if in matters of mere *Reason*, every man was not to be directed by his *Reason*, but by some *Other Guide* ; it would follow that his *Reason* could be of no other use to him, than to perplex

S E R M. and confound the directions of that *Other*
 VIII. *Guide*. And if in matters of *Revelation*,
 every man was not to be directed by the words of the *Revelation itself*, but by some *Other Instructor*; it would evidently and necessarily follow, that the Use of the Scriptures could be of no Benefit to him, but, on the contrary, only an Impediment to him in his obeying That *Other Instructor*. It is true, the *Degrees* of Reason, are very different in different men; and very often, what a man's *own reason* does not enable him to apprehend, may easily be made appear to him by the assistance of *Another*, who has Superiour Understanding: And when it is *so* made clear to him, it is *then* as much his *own*, as if he had discovered it *himself*; and is as *truly* an Act of his *own Reason*: But if he was bound by the mere Authority of Another's Superiour Understanding, to *judge* That to be *reasonable*, which after the utmost explication That Other person could give him, he could not yet *perceive* to be *reasonable*; he would manifestly be bound to an *absurdity, and impossibility*.

In like manner, mens *abilities* of judging concerning matters of *Revelation*, are indeed very different ; and many Doctrines of Scripture, which persons of mean capacities would not *without Any instruction* understand, may easily be made very evident to them by Those of Greater Abilities. And when once they are *so* made evident to them, they are *then* as truly evident to the persons *own* understandings, as if they had *of themselves* understood them without Any Instruction. But if any Person was bound, by the mere Authority of another man's greater Capacity or Understanding, to *perceive* any thing to be *injoyned in Scripture* as a *Condition of Salvation*, which, after all the Proofs which That Other person was able to alledge, he could not at last *perceive* to be There *so injoyned* ; it would follow necessarily and manifestly, that he was obliged to *two contradictory things at once*. When therefore Protestants affirm with St Paul, that the Scripture is a sufficient Rule both of Faith and Practice, in matters of Religion ; the Meaning is not, that the World

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VIII.


S E R M. stands in no need of *Living Instructors*;
 VIII. but that the Scriptures do so clearly and
 distinctly express all the things which are
 therein declared to be the general Terms
 and Conditions of Salvation, that persons
 even of the *meanest* capacities, when they
 are *shown and taught* them, can clearly
 and distinctly *see and perceive* that they are
indeed declared by Christ and his Apostles
 to be the Conditions of Salvation. Be-
 yond which, if it were needful or lawful
 for Christians to be perswaded, that there
 are still *Other things* appointed of Christ
 as Terms of Salvation, which not only
 they *themselves* are not able to discover,
 but even *after* they are *taught* them they
 can yet by no means see and perceive to
 be commanded in Scripture; If Christians
 (I say) were to be perswaded of Any
such things, the only *possible* Use of such
Perswasion, would be either to confirm
 them in *confident ignorance*, or to promote
 the practice of some *Wickedness*, or to in-
 troduce something by way of *equivalent*
 or *Commutation* in the stead of True
Virtue and Holiness of Life.

H A V I N G

HAVING therefore thus explained SERM.
 briefly the true Notion of the *Doctrin* it-
self, of the Scriptures being a sufficient
 Rule both of Faith and Practice in matters
 of Religion ; I proceed now in the

VIII.

II. *Second* place , To consider the
 Grounds, upon which the Church of
Rome, and Others who in any measure
 follow Their Example, disallow this Doc-
 trine both in their Practice and Argu-
 ments. Their

First Ground, is; that the *Scriptures*
themselves are conveyed down to us, only
 by *Tradition*; and consequently it cannot
 be, but that the *same* *Tradition*, on which
 the *Scriptures themselves* depend, must be
 in *Other* matters as good a Rule of Faith,
 as the Scriptures which are delivered down
 to us by That *Tradition*. This is their
 Argument in its full Strength. And were
 there *indeed* any *unwritten* Precepts of
 Christ delivered down to us by the same
 Tradition as the *written* ones are ; they
 would all, without doubt, be of the same
 Authority. But this is manifestly both
False in *Fact*, and *impossible* in the nature

S E R M. *of the Thing.* For *unwritten* Doctrines, VIII. conveyed by *verbal* Tradition, every one knows, are unavoidably *mistaken, changed, diversified, lost*, in every *step* of conveyance, not only from one *generation*, but even from one *person*, to another. But a *Book written*, (in *This*, as in *Other* cases,) may be delivered down *from generation to generation*: And the *History* of every Age from *That* time to *This*, and the *Citations* of Scripture made in all *Times* upon every occasion, both by *Friends* and *Enemies*, by those who *owned* and by those who *disowned* the Authority of Christ; are *Attestations* to the *Fact*, that these Books *do* contain the *Doctrine* of Christ.

The

Second Ground, upon which the Church of *Rome* denies the *Scripture* to be a sufficient *Rule of Faith*, is the *Difficulty* of *understanding* its *True Meaning*; which therefore they think the generality of Christians are not capable to judge of, and consequently that they must needs depend upon the *Judgment* of Others. Which if it were really so, it would clearly follow that

that there could not possibly be any such thing as *Christianity* at all; but that *Religion* would be merely the several *Laws* or *Customs*, of the Countries wherein they respectively prevailed. The *Truth* therefore, on the contrary, is evidently *This*. The things that are *declared in Scripture* to be the *Terms and Conditions of Salvation*; (I say, *not the Whole Scripture*, Types and Prophecies, and occasional determinations of controversial Points; but the Principles, as *St Paul* styles them, of the *Doctrine of Christ*; the *Milk of the Word*, the things necessarily to be believed and practised by every one who is baptized and professes himself a Christian, the things declared in *Scripture* to be the *Terms and Conditions of Salvation*;) namely, *Repentance* from all wicked works, and *Faith* towards *God* and our *Lord Jesus Christ*; the *Belief of a Resurrection from the Dead*, and of a *judgment to come*; and a *Life of Virtue*, or *suitable Obedience* to our *Lord's express Commands* in the *Gospel*; *These* things are so clearly required, and so distinctly set forth in *Holy Scripture*, that

it

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SER M. it is impossible for any *serious* person not to understand them; at least no man, even of the *meanest* capacity, when these are *shown* and *taught* him out of the Scriptures, can possibly fail to see that they are *really there*; and that he *is not* imposed upon, when he is told they *are* so. But whatsoever is in its own nature abstruse and difficult, (such as are some *Prophetick* Passages in St *Paul's* Epistles relating to the End of the world; in which *matters*, not in which *Epistles*, St *Peter* saith there are *some things hard to be understood*;) whatsoever, I say, is of so abstruse a nature, that a person of mean capacity can neither of *himself*, nor by means of any *instruction* given him, be able clearly to understand it; such a thing cannot possibly be necessary to be *understood*, by *That particular Person*. And whatsoever a sincere person of mean capacity, can neither *himself* find to be required in Scripture, nor, by seriously and carefully attending to the *best Instruction*, can convince and satisfy himself that it is there commanded; it cannot possibly be the Duty that person,

son, to pretend to believe that *it is* commanded There. All things of *This* kind, are what St *Paul* calls *unlearned Questions*, 2 Tim. ii. 23 ; that is, Doctrines which were never *learnt* by a Christian at his instruction in Christianity , when he was taught the things necessary to make him a true Disciple of Christ, when he was taught the things required in the Gospel as the Terms and Conditions of Salvation. From all which it most evidently appears, that when St *Peter* says, *no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation* ; his meaning is not, (as the *Romanists* pretend) that *private* persons are not to understand the Scripture, as well as *publick* ones ; but that (as I before observed,) the Books of Scripture contain, not the *private Sentiments* of the Writers *own* Minds, but the *Doctrines taught them by the Spirit of God*. That which remains, is, in the

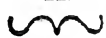
III. *Third* and *Last* place, to draw some useful Inferences and Observations from the whole. And

1st, FROM

S E R M.
VIII.
~

S E R M.

VIII.



1st, F R O M what has been said, it is manifest, that in all succeeding Ages from the days of the Apostles; *following the guidance and direction of the Spirit*, is not (as Some have weakly thought,) *following enthusiastick Imaginations*, but *following the directions given in those Scriptures, which were written by Inspiration of the Spirit of God.*

2^{dly}, F R O M hence it follows, that *All persons*, according to their several capacities, are obliged to study the Scriptures; and principally those parts of them, wherein are declared the Terms and Conditions of Salvation. Our *Saviour* exhorts the *Jews*, *John v. 39*, to *search the Scriptures*, as the means of discovering the Truth of his Doctrine. St *Luke*, in his History of the *Acts of the Apostles*, commends the *Bereans* for *searching the Scriptures daily*, to see whether the things taught them were so or not. St *Paul*, in the words before my Text, commends *Timothy* for *having from a child known the Holy Scriptures, which were able to make him wise unto Salvation.* In his own preaching to the *Jews*,
his

his manner was, Acts xvii. 2; to reason S E R M.
with them out of the Scriptures. And to VIII.
such as had been already converted, he
declares, Rom. xv. 4, that *whatsoever*
things were written aforetime; were writ-
ten for Our Learning, that we through pa-
tience and comfort of the Scriptures might
have hope.

3dly, F R O M what has been said, it fol-
lows, that as *All* Christians are to make
the *plain Scriptures* their *Rule*; so They
who have *particular* opportunities, and
abilities of doing it, may even in the more
difficult parts thereof find wherewith to
enlarge their Knowledge, and confirm their
Faith. *We speak Wisdom*, saith St Paul,
among them that are perfect; 1 Cor. ii. 6.
Our Saviour, debating with the *Sadducees*
about a captious Question, convinced them
that they *erred*, in *not knowing the Scrip-*
tures nor the power of God. The *Prophets*
of old, *searched what, and what manner of*
time the Spirit of Christ which was in them
did signify, when it testified beforehand the
sufferings of Christ, and the glory that
should follow. In all these Scriptures, our
Lord

S E R M. Lord after his Resurrection *expounded to*
 VIII. *his Disciples, the things concerning himself;*
 opening unto them the Scriptures, and, (by
 that exposition) opening their understanding
 that they might understand the Scriptures.
 And then the Mystery, which had been hid
 from ages and from generations, was, by the
 explication of the Scriptures of the Pro-
 phets ready to be made known to all nations :
 And the Disciples, remembering our Lord's
 former Sayings, *John ii. 22; believed (i. e.*
were confirmed in their Belief of) the
Scriptures, and the words which Jesus had
said. And thus *We* also, by comparing the
 things delivered in Scripture with the na-
 ture of things and the present State of the
 World; may (if we be not wanting to
 ourselves,) find great and sufficient reason
 to be confirmed in our Faith, and amend-
 ed in our Practice.



SERMON IX.

The Knowledge of Sin is by the
Law.




R o M. vii. 7, latter part.

*I had not known Lust, except the Law had
said, Thou shalt not covet.*



THE word, *Lust*, in this place, S E R M. IX.
evidently signifies *in general*,
the *coveting* or *desiring* any
thing *not lawful* to be desired,
or the coveting any *lawful*
thing *in such a manner* as is not lawful to
obtain it. And therefore the words ought
more properly to have been rendred, *I
had*

S E R M. *had not known the covetous Desire of any*
 IX. *thing to be a Sin, except the Law had said,*
 *Thou shalt not covet.* In discoursing upon which words, I shall endeavour to show, *First*; *Who* the person is, the Apostle here speaks of; *I had not known Lust.* *Secondly*; In what sense it is to be understood, that the *Knowledge* of any Sin is *by the Law*; *I had not known it, except the Law had said.* And *Thirdly*; What is the *Meaning and Extent* of the *particular Law itself*, here referred to by the Apostle; *Thou shalt not Covet.*

I. IN the *First* place, *Who* the person is, the Apostle here speaks of, and describes through this whole chapter; has been a Subject of much controversy among Commentators. And it is a matter, of *great importance* to be rightly understood; because notions very pernicious and destructive to the practice of true Virtue, have arisen from misapprehensions about this very thing. *Some* have understood this chapter *literally*, as if *St Paul* here spoke concerning *himself*, and described his *Own* state and circumstances *before his*
conver-

conversion. But this is manifestly impossible; because the character of the person described in this chapter, is entirely different from the account St Paul gives of himself, even while he was yet in the state of *Infidelity*. The person introduced as representing his Own Case in *This* chapter, describes himself after the following manner: That *Sin wrought in him all manner of concupiscence*; ver. 8: That *Sin deceived him and slew him*; ver. 11: That *he was carnal, sold under Sin*; so that *what he did, he allowed not; and what he would, That he did not*; ver. 14: That *the good which he would, he did not; but the evil which he would not, That he did*; ver. 19: And, ver. 25; that *with the mind he served the Law of God, but with the flesh the Law of Sin*. Now the character St Paul every-where gives of himself, even before his conversion to Christianity, is very contrary to That here described. Phil. iii. 3; *We have no confidence in the flesh*, that is, in our state of life antecedent to the forgiveness granted in the Gospel: *Though, for his own part, I (says he)*

S E R M. might also have confidence in the flesh. If
 IX. any other man thinketh that he hath where-
 of he might trust in the flesh, I more. Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the Law, a Pharisee; Concerning Zeal, persecuting the Church; touching the Righteousness which is in the Law, blameless. Again, Gal. i. 13; Ye have heard of my conversation in time past, in the Jews religion, how I----- profited in the Jews religion, above many my Equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the Traditions of my Fathers. The same account he gives of himself, in his publick Speech to the multitude of the Jews, Acts xxii. 3; I am verily a man ----- taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the Fathers, and was zealous towards God, as ye all are this day: ----- As also the High Priest doth bear me witness, and all the estate of the Elders. And again, in his Plea before the Council, Acts xxiii. 1; Men and Brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God, until this day.
 And

And in his Apology for himself before S E R M.
King *Agrippa*, ch. xxvi. 4; *My manner of* IX.
life from my youth, which was at the first
among mine own nation at Jerufalem, know
all the Jews; which knew me from the Be-
ginning, (if they would testify,) that af-
ter the most straitest Sect of our religion,
I lived a Pharisee. And in his Second
Epistle to *Timothy*, ch. ii. 3; *I thank God,*
whom I serve from my Forefathers with
a pure conscience. In One respect, he had
indeed been faulty; and with regard to
That Particular, he elsewhere stiles him-
self, by way of aggravation, *a Blasphemer,*
and a Persecutor, and Injurious, and the
Chief of Sinners, because *he persecuted the*
Church of God. But this, though it was
indeed a very great Fault, as proceeding
from rash and inconsiderate Heat, and
therefore wholly inexcusable, yet it was
not done by him with a Sense and Con-
sciousness of Sin upon his Mind at the
time of committing it; but on the con-
trary with a full (though false) perswa-
sion, that he was in That very Action
zealously doing God good Service: And
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S E R M. therefore (as he himself tells us) he obtained mercy, because he did it ignorantly in Unbelief. Now *This* is evidently a very different thing, from a man's sinning against the clear Light of his own Conscience; approving the Law of God, and acknowledging the *Commandment to be Holy, and Just, and Good*; and yet at the same time acting contrary to it, and reproaching and condemning himself in the very Acts of Wickedness: Which is the case of the person described in *This* chapter. And therefore it cannot possibly be, that St Paul should be here speaking concerning *Himself*; no, not even in his State of Unbelief, before his conversion to Christianity.

OTHERS, in their explication of this chapter, have supposed that the Apostle here describes more generally a *regenerate* person; such a one as is full indeed of Infirmities and great Failings, but still sincere and truly regenerate; because he is represented, as being convinced and sensible that *the Law is spiritual*; ver. 14: *consenting unto the Law, that it is good*

good; ver. 16: complaining that since *to will is present with him, but how to perform that which is good he finds not*, therefore it is no more *He that does the evil, but Sin that dwelleth in him*; ver. 20: and, lastly, declaring that he delights in the Law of God, after the inner man; and with the mind, serves the Law of God; ver. 22, 25. But, notwithstanding all these characters, it is still very evident, that the person here described, is not at all a regenerate person. For *whosoever is born of God, doth not commit Sin*; 1 Joh. iii. 9; that is, does not habitually, or in great and plain Instances, contrary to the clear light and conviction of his Conscience, continue to do evil; much less is he, what the person here spoken of by the Apostle is represented to be, ver. 14. *sold under Sin*: Which, in Scripture-language, is an expression of the greatest and most highly and aggravated Guilt: 1 Kings xxi. 25; *There was none like unto Abab, who did sell himself to work Wickedness in the Sight of the Lord*. The *Infirmities, Frailties, or Failings*, of vir-

S E R M. tuous and good men ; are entirely of
 IX. *Another Kind.* They are either Ignorances, Surprizes, Inadvertencies, Omissions, or Faults committed not deliberately, or immediately forsaken and amended. These, through the Grace and Mercy of the Gospel, are continually forgiven men, according to the Tenour of our Saviour's Prayer ; and therefore are not inconsistent with a regenerate state. But to sin deliberately and habitually, in great and plain Instances, against the clear Light and Convictions of Conscience, in the manner described throughout this whole chapter ; *This Spot*, (as *Moses* elegantly expresses it, *Deut. xxxii. 5,*) *is not the Spot of God's children, but of a perverse and crooked generation, who have corrupted themselves.* The *knowing* and *approving* what is right, and *consenting to the Law that it is good* ; is not what will by any means denominate a man, a regenerate person, if his *Practice* be not answerable to his Knowledge. *Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord,* (says our Saviour,) *shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven ; but he that doth*
the

the Will of my Father which is in Heaven. SERM. IX.


Belief alone, is nothing: For even *the Devils*, saith the Apostle, *believe and tremble.* *Profession of Religion*, if men are not really made *better* by it, is nothing: For if the *Salt has lost his Savour*, *wherewith shall it be seasoned?* It is neither fit for the *Land*, nor yet for the *Dunghil*, but to be cast out and trodden under foot of men. *Knowledge and Approbation of what is good*, without putting it in *practice*, is nothing: For, *to him that knoweth to do good, and doth it not, to Him it is Sin*; Jam. iv. 17: Nay, the *greater* is the Sin, proportionably to his *Knowledge*; For *That Servant which knew his Lord's Will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his Will, shall be beaten with Many Stripes*; Luke xii. 47. It is very evident therefore, that the person described by *St Paul* through this whole chapter, as it cannot possibly mean *St Paul himself*, so neither in general is it by any means a *regenerate person*,

SERM.

IX.



SENSIBLE of the Weight of These considerations, *Others* have therefore supposed, that the Apostle is here describing an unregenerate *Christian*; one who believes, and makes Profession of, the doctrine of the Gospel; but is perpetually overcome by the returning Temptations, and continual Deceitfulness of Sin. And indeed, that the person here spoken of, is one still *in the gall of Bitterness and in the bond of Iniquity*, or in an *unregenerate* state; is very certain. But that the Apostle speaks of a *Christian* as continuing in such a state, is plainly a very great mistake and misinterpretation of his words. For that he *did not* and *could not* so mean, is apparent from the *Two* following Reasons. The *one* is, that in this very Discourse, both in the Beginning and at the Conclusion of it, he *expressly declares* the State and Condition of the person described through this whole chapter, to be *That State, from which* men are delivered *by the efficacy of the Gospel of Christ*. Ver. 4, in the *introduction* of his discourse; *My brethren* (says he) *ye also are become*


become dead to the Law, by the Body of S E R M.
Christ, ----- who is raised from the dead, IX.
that we should bring forth fruit unto God: 
For when we were in the flesh, (i. e. before the conversion to the spiritual religion of Christ,) the Motions of Sin which were by the Law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death: But Now, we are delivered from the Law,----- that we should serve in Newness of Spirit. And in like manner at the Conclusion of this whole discourse, ver. 24; *Who shall deliver me (says he) from the Body of this death! I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord; That is, I thank God, we are delivered from it by the Gospel of Christ: For (as he immediately adds, ver. 1. of the following chapter,) they which are in Christ Jesus, walk not after the Flesh, but after the Spirit: For the Law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, hath made me free from the Law of Sin and Death; i. e. has enabled men effectually to overcome the temptations of Unrighteousness. For what the Law could not do, in that it was*
weak

S E R M. *weak through the Flesh*; has been effected
 IX. by the more powerful Motives and As-
 sistance of the Gospel: *That the Righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in Us, who walk not after the Flesh, but after the Spirit.* And in the same manner he elsewhere argues, 1 Cor. xv. 56; *The Sting of death is Sin, and the Strength of Sin is the Law; but thanks be to God which giveth us the Victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ*; that is, who gives us the Victory over Sin and Death, through the powerful and efficacious Helps of the Gospel of Christ. The *Other* reason, from whence (I said) it is apparent that the Apostle in his description of an unregenerate person, living under the power of sinful Habits, does not mean a *Christian*; is because the Scripture, in the whole course and tenour of it, never supposes a *Christian* to be a *vicious* person. Rom. viii. 9; *If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, (if he brings not forth the Fruits of the Spirit in a virtuous and good life,) he is none of His: For if Christ be in you, the Body is dead, because*
 of

of Sin; but the Spirit is Life, because of S E R M.
Righteousness. And they that are Christ's IX.
Gal. v. 24; as many as are sincere Disci-
ples of Christ, have crucified the Flesh,
with the Affections and Lusts. For what-
soever is born of God, (which, in St John's
language, is the same as what St Paul
calls having the Spirit of Christ;) What-
soever is born of God, overcometh the
World, that is, effectually resists the
Temptations of a sinful and debauched
World. And this is the Victory that o-
vercometh the World, even our Faith; our
Faith, or firm Belief of a Life to come,
and of a Resurrection to eternal Judg-
ment. If any man is not influenced by
This Belief, to live soberly, righteously
and godly in the World; the Scripture
calls him not a Christian. 1 Joh. iii. 6;
Whosoever sinneth, hath not seen him, nei-
ther known him. Happy were it for men
who call themselves Christians, if they
would seriously and frequently consider
with themselves, wherein That Christia-
nity consisted, which our Saviour himself
and his Apostles taught; and if they
would

S E R M. would in earnest endeavour, to amend
IX. their Lives and Manners by that Rule.

~ HAVING thus at large shown, that the person the Apostle here speaks of in the Text, *I had not known Lust*; and whom he very particularly describes thro' this *whole chapter*; can neither be *St Paul himself*, no, not even *before* his conversion; nor *Any regenerate* person, either *Jew or Christian*; nor yet (as is usually supposed) an *unregenerate Christian*; it remains (which was the *First* thing I proposed to clear) that This whole Discourse, of which the Text is a part, must necessarily be understood to be a Description of an *unregenerate or sinful* person not yet converted to Christianity. I say, this whole *viith* chapter to the *Romans*, is plainly intended of a person in his profession *not yet Christian*, and in his life *vicious*. Which though possibly it might equally be the case either of a *Jew* or a *Heathen*; yet because the Apostle is here more particularly directing his discourse to those of his *own Nation the Jews*, for This reason (I suppose) it is, that, according

according to his usual method of giving S E R M. them as little Offence as possible, he introduces his Discourse in the first person, IX.  ver. 5, *When We (we unconverted Jews) were in the Flesh, the motions of Sin----- did work in Our Members.* And so, thro' the whole chapter, *I had not known Sin,* and, *I (speaking in the person of an unconverted Jew, I) am carnal, sold under Sin,* and the like. The

II. *Second* particular I proposed to consider in the Text, is, *how* we are to understand that the *Knowledge* of any Sin is *by the Law*: *I had not known Lust, except the Law had said, Thou shalt not covet.* Now This Assertion of the Apostle, it is evident, must be understood either in a *larger*, or in a more *restrained* sense; according as we suppose the word, [*Lusting* or] *Coveting*, to be here taken either under the *general* Notion of *Sin*, or under the more limited consideration of its being a Sin of a *particular kind*. If we consider it under the notion of *Sin in general*; then the Meaning of the assertion, that *by the Law is the knowledge of Sin*, is This Only;

S E R M. Only; that the Knowledge of Sin is more
 IX. *plain, more clear and distinct*, and Sin
 consequently made more *inexcusable*, by
 the *Law* which expressly forbids the com-
 mitting of it. *I had not known Sin, but
 by the Law*; that is, I had not known it in
 so *clear and convincing a manner*. Thus
 our Saviour speaking of the perverseness
 of the *Jews*, *Job. xv. 24*; *If I had not
 (says he) done among them the Works which
 none other man did, they had not had Sin.*
 His meaning is, not that they would have
 been wholly guiltless, but that their Sin
 would have been comparatively much
 smaller than it now was. Men *have* the
 knowledge of Sin by the *Light of Na-
 ture*, by *natural reason and conscience*; But
 the *guilt and inexcusableness* of Sin, is great-
 ly increased and aggravated, by the clear
 prohibition of an *express law*. *Rom. vii.
 11, 13*; *Sin, taking occasion by the com-
 mandment, ----- slew me; ---- that it might
 appear Sin, working Death in me by that
 which is good, that Sin by the commandment
 might become exceeding sinful.* And This
 is what the Apostle means, when he says
 else-

elsewhere, that *by the Law is the Knowledge of Sin*, ch. iii. 20 : That *where there is no law, there is no Transgression*, ch. iv. 15 : That *the law entered, that the Offence might abound*, ch. v. 20 : And that *the Strength of Sin, is the law* ; 1 Cor. xv. 56.

THIS is *universally* true concerning *all Sin in general*, that the Guilt of it is greatly increased by the Clearness of the Law that forbids the Commission of it. But now, if we take the word, [*Lust* or] *Coveting*, in the Text ; if we take it in a more *restrained* and *limited* sense, as denoting a *particular Kind of Sin* ; Then the Apostle's assertion, *I had not known Lust, except the Law had said, Thou shalt not covet* ; may mean more strictly, that whereas, usually and properly speaking, not the *Desire* of Evil, but the *Complying* with evil Desires and *putting them in Practice*, is Sin, according to That of *St James*, *Lust when it hath conceived, bringeth forth Sin* ; therefore men would not naturally have been sensible of the Mischief and Danger of *Evil and inordinate*

S E R M.
IX.
~~~~~

SER. M. *nate Desires, except the Law had said,*  
 IX. *Thou shalt not covet.* And this brings me  
 to the


III. *Third and Last thing I proposed ;*  
 Which was, to consider the *Meaning and*  
*Extent of the particular Law itself,* here  
 referred to by the Apostle ; *Thou shalt not*  
*covet.* Which words are cited from *Ex-*  
*odus xx. 17,* wherein *Moses* delivers the  
*tenth Commandment.* Now it is plain,  
*That Commandment,* given there at the  
*conclusion of the Moral Law,* does not so  
 much contain a prohibition of any *parti-*  
*cular Vice,* as a general *Fence or Security*  
 for the Observation of all the foregoing  
 Precepts. *Mens Actions* will very hardly  
 be restrained from being inordinate, if their  
*Desires* be not under government and due  
 Subjection. For as *out of the abundance*  
*of the Heart the Mouth speaketh,* so the  
*Desires and Appetites* are the Spring from  
 whence flow the *Actions* of Life. Keep-  
 ing the *Passions* regularly under the Go-  
 vernment of Reason, is *laying the Ax to*  
*the Root of the Tree,* and preventing the  
 great Causes and Occasions of Sinning.  
 For

For this reason, our Saviour, in his Sermon upon the Mount, in order more effectually to prevent *Murders*; forbids all *causeless Anger*. That *Adulteries* and *Fornications* might not be so much as named among *His Disciples*, he commands them to restrain every inordinate *Inclination*. That they might be far from incurring any danger of *Perjury*, he forbids them to *swear at all* in common conversation. That they might be sure not to be of a *peevish and revengeful Temper*, he commands them to bear private *Injuries without retaliation*. That they might be far from all *Hatred and Animosities* among *Themselves*, he enjoins them to *love* even their *very Enemies*. In fine; that they might not *actually* transgress his *Commandments*, he teaches them to restrain every *Evil Thought and Desire* of transgressing them. The *Pharisees and Scribes* among the *Jews*, They also taught *Doctrines* which they stiled *Fences* or *Hedges* of the *Law*: But These *Doctrines* of theirs, were *Superstitious Traditions*, or mere *external Ceremonies*; tending, not to make men

S E R M.  
IX.

observe the Law of God more strictly, but, on the contrary, to make them lay a greater stress upon the *Injunctions* of men, than upon the *Commands* of God. The *Church of Rome* among *Christians*, They likewise have invented *Fences* highly *Superstitious*. Under pretence of greater *Holiness* in their *Clergy*, they have taken upon them to forbid lawful *Marriage*. Under pretence of preventing *Covetousness*, they have instituted certain *Orders of Men*, whom they call *Mendicants*, to live wholly upon *Begging*. Under pretence of hindring *Worldly-mindedness*, they have taught men to retire into *Monasteries*, from all useful *Duties* and *Employments* in the World. But These things evidently have *No* proper *Tendency* to cure the *Passions*. The true *Defences* of *Virtue*, are, not the laying *such kinds* of *Restraints*, as naturally *increase* the *Temptation*; but such as, by *preventing* *Temptation*, tend to cut off the *Means* and *Occasion* of *Sinning*. And of *This sort*, is That *Commandment* in the *Law*, *Thou shalt not Covet*. The best *Secu-*



rity, and most effectual Means of avoid- S E R M.  
 ing *sinful Actions*, is, *not to indulge* any IX.  
 inordinate *Desire*. For, as the Wise man   
 excellently expresses it, *Prov. vi. 27; Can*  
*a man take Fire in his bosom, and his*  
*cloaths not be burnt? Can one go upon hot*  
*Coals, and his feet not be burnt?*

THE *Sins* here spoken of by *Solomon*,  
 and alluded to by *St Paul* in this whole  
 vii<sup>th</sup> chapter to the *Romans*, and to which  
 the *Commandment itself* cited in the Text  
 had a *primary* Regard; are those men-  
 tioned by the same Apostle at the Head  
 of his Catalogue of the *Works of the Flesh*.  
 But *besides* These, there are also some  
*Other* Particulars included in This Law,  
*Thou shalt not Covet*; As appears in the  
 Commandment delivered more at large  
 by *Moses*; *Exod. xx. 17*. I shall briefly  
 mention one or two Instances; and so  
 conclude.

1<sup>st</sup>, IN the *first* place, here is forbidden  
 the Sin of *Covetousness*. That is; Not the  
 foolish Desire of Riches for Riches sake,  
 and a Penuriousness in the Use of what  
 men already possess of *their Own*; (Tho'

SERMON. *That also is a Vice:)* But the thing here forbidden, is such an inordinate *Desire* in men, of *increasing* their own Substance, as tempts them to use the *irregular Methods* of *defrauding* or *deceiving* their *Neighbours*. I say, the *irregular methods*, of *Fraud*, *Deceit*, *Violence*, and the like. For *otherwise*, the *Desire* of any thing belonging to our *Neighbour*, which *he* may *lawfully* part with, and is *willing* to do so, and which *we* can obtain by *just* and *equitable Means*, is not a *Sin*, nor at all here *forbidden*.  
But

2dly, ANOTHER thing prohibited in the Command here cited by the Apostle, is *Enviousness* or *Requining at what Others enjoy*. Which as it is a *Reproaching of the Distributions of Providence*, and a continual *Temptation to Sin*; so it is a perpetual *Torment* and *Uneasiness* to a man's *self*. *Envy*, says *Eliphaz* in the book of *Job*, (ch. v. 2.) *slayeth the silly one*; and, as *Solomon* elegantly expresses it, *Prov. xiv. 30*; *is the Rotteness of the Bones*.

3dly and lastly; **T**HIS Law, *Thou shalt not Covet*, is a *forbidding* men to be *Discontented with their own Condition*. **S E R M. IX.**  
 Whatever *Any* of us enjoy, is the *Free Gift of God*. And as no man knows the *Deserts of Others*, comparative with his *Own*; As he knows not the *Designs and Methods of Providence*, in the present unequal *Distribution of things*; As he knows not how much *better* his *present Circumstances* may possibly be for him, than even those he would most earnestly *covet* to be in; So he *can* have *no* just reason to murmur, at what the *Divine Wisdom* has thought fit to allot him.







# S E R M O N X.

Reason the Judge of Religious  
Actions.



I JOHN iii. 20, 21.

*For if our Heart condemn us, God is Greater than our Heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our Heart condemn us not, then have we Confidence towards God.*




S, in the case of the *Bodily* S E R M.  
Senses, a man, without *shut-* X.  
*ting his Eyes* or *stopping his*  
*Ears*, cannot avoid *discerning*  
*the Light*, or *hearing the*  
*Sounds*, with which he is encompassed ;

## Reason the Judge

S E R M. So the *Mind* likewise, or *rational* Faculty, can no other way avoid *perceiving* the natural *Dictates* of *Reason* with regard to things *present*, or its *Judgment* concerning what is *past*, or its *Apprehensions* of what is *to come*; but by forcibly *withdrawing* its *Attention* from *This* its proper Object, and fixing it entirely and habitually upon matters of *Sense*. Did not *the Cares of This World*, and *the Deceitfulness of Riches*, and *the Lusts of other things* continually *entring in*, *choke the word*; that is, divert men perpetually from hearing the *Dictates* of *Reason* and *Religion*; they could not possibly but have continually before their *Eyes* the *difference* of *Good* and *Evil*, and a perpetual *Apprehension* of the *suitable Consequences* of their *Actions*, in the course either of a *virtuous* or a *vicious* *Life*. They could not possibly but be continually *judging Themselves*: And the *judgment* a man passes upon *Himself*, either of *Approbation* or *Condemnation*, whenever he deliberately weighs his own *Actions*; is, in other words, the *Sentence* which his *Reason* suggests that *God the Judge*

Mark iv.  
19.

*Judge of All* will pass upon him. To S E R M.  
X.  

 stifle this judgment of reason, by artfully or laboriously withdrawing his attention from it, by drowning himself in Drunkenness and Debauchery, by plunging himself in a perpetual Hurry of Business, or in an uninterrupted Succession of Diversions; is to no more purpose, than for a man walking upon a Precipice, to comfort himself by shutting his Eyes; or for a person in great Dealings, to please himself with being ignorant of the ill state of his own Accounts. Things are what they are, whether men will consider them, or no: And the Time must come, when every man will necessarily *feel* the Condition he is in, whether it be Good or Bad. The proper Business of Wisdom, is to see and observe beforehand, *whither* the way we are going will lead us. That if the *End* is likely to be happy, we may have rational assurance and satisfaction in the *Way*: Or, if the *Event* will probably be *ruinous*, that we may prevent the Evil, by changing our Course, before it be too late. The most *momentous* Concern of  
 Man,

S E R M. Man, is the State he shall enter upon, after this short and transitory Life is ended.  
 X.  
 And in proportion as Eternity is of greater importance than Time, so ought men to be solicitous upon what Grounds their Expectations, with regard to That Durable State, are built; and upon what Assurances their Hopes, or their Fears, stand. The Apostle, in the Text, has laid us down a Rule; by which if men would *seriously* and *attentively* try themselves, they could not *generally* be much mistaken concerning the State and Condition of their own Souls. *If our Heart condemn us, God is greater than our Heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our Heart condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God.*

IN discoursing upon which words, I shall observe, *1st*, That the Apostle's Reasoning here *supposes*, that there is a necessary and essential *Difference* between *Good and Evil*, and that men are naturally *conscious* of This Difference, and of the consequent *Desert* of their Actions accordingly. *2dly*, That the Apostle's Argument



gument proceeds upon This *further* Sup-  
 position, that *God* who is the Judge of All,  
 makes generally the *Same Judgment* of  
 mens Action, as their *Own Reason* does ;  
 only much more perfect in the same kind,  
 as having a Knowledge infinitely more  
 perfect and unerring than *Theirs*. From  
 whence, *3dly*, it will be necessary that I  
 endeavour to show, how far the Truth of  
 this Rule is affected by that *false* appli-  
 cation, which the *wrong Judgment* of an  
*erroneous Conscience* is apt to make of it.

I. *First*; THE Apostle's Reasoning in  
 the Text, *supposes* that there is a necessary  
 and essential *Difference* between *Good and*  
*Evil*, and that men are naturally *conscious*  
 of this Difference, and of the consequent  
*Desert* of their Actions accordingly. There  
 is no man that has so low a capacity, (of  
 those who have at all the Use of their  
 Reason;) there is no man, I say, of so  
 mean and low a capacity, but, when his  
 Neighbours oppresses him by Violence, or  
 impose upon him by Fraud, has an ill  
 opinion of the Persons who so oppress or  
 defraud him; thinks them blame-worthy,  
 and

S E R M.  
 X.



S E R M. and justly punishable; would punish them  
 X. Himself, if it was in his Power, till they  
 make him Satisfaction; appeals to any  
 Friend or Magistrate, if any such be  
 within his reach, in order to have justice  
 done him; and, if he believes there is  
 any invisible Governour and Judge of the  
 World, superiour to all Earthly Powers,  
 he cannot avoid making a silent Appeal to  
*Him*, in case all other Redress fails, and  
 the Injury be Great or Lasting. There  
 never was any person in *Any Age*, there  
 never was any person in *Any Country* upon  
 Earth, but thus judged concerning any  
 Violence or Fraud put by *Another* upon  
*Himself*. The Case is precisely the same,  
 whenever any Fraud or Violence is used  
 by *Him* towards *Another*. And therefore  
 the Judgment passed by him in That  
 Case upon *Other men*, is in fact a Judgment  
 passed by him upon *Himself*. The  
 same may be said concerning any *Other*  
 known Instance of *Wickedness*: Concern-  
 ing every kind of Impiety, Unrighteous-  
 ness, or Debauchery. The person who  
 commits the Crime, always *condemns*  
*Himself*;

*Himself*; and is conscious that he *deserves* S E R M. to be punished. Men may *divert* and X. *turn away* their Thoughts from the un-  
 pleasing Subject, by variety of Amuse-  
 ments, and numberless vain Imaginations.  
 They may *flatter* themselves, as they  
 please, with Objections against the unal-  
 terable and essential Difference of Virtue  
 and Vice; and resolve to *say* within them-  
 selves, though they can never really be  
 perswaded of it, that they *shall have*  
*Peace, though they walk in the imagination*  
*of their own Heart, to add one Sin to*  
*another; Deut. xxix. 19.* They may con-  
 fidently and presumptuously *dispute* and  
*argue in general*, that all Actions are na-  
 turally and originally alike; that Morality  
 is but a Fiction of Speculative Men; and  
 the Notion of Vice and Virtue, only a  
 Creature of the Laws or Customs of Na-  
 tions. But the Judgment in *particular*,  
 that every wicked man necessarily and im-  
 mediately makes concerning any unjust  
 Action of *Another*, by which he *Himself*  
 happens to suffer; will *for ever* convict  
 him of *knowing well* That difference of  
 Moral

S E R M. Moral Good and Evil, which he is not willing to *acknowledge*, or which however he is not willing to make the Rule of his *own* Behaviour. This is what the Apostle calls, *the Law written in mens Hearts*, by which they are a *Law unto themselves, their Conscience also bearing Witness, and their Thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another*; Rom. ii. 14, 15. It is, in the words of my Text, *our Heart condemning or not condemning us.*

AND This is true, not with regard to the Dictates of *Natural Reason* only; but, in those who profess themselves *Christians*, it is true also with regard to the Terms or Conditions of the *Gospel of Christ*. Whatever Difficulties there may be in some of the Historical, or Prophe-tical, or Controversial parts of the Books of Scripture; yet as to the *Practical* part, the Duties required of a Christian in order to Salvation, there is no man that ever *read* the Sermons of Christ and his Apo-stles, or ever *heard* them read, but under-stood perfectly well what our Saviour meant by commanding us to worship the One True God of Nature, the Author  
and

and Lord of the Universe, and to do to all men as we would they should do to Us; and that, denying ungodliness and worldly Lufts, we should live *soberly, righteously, and godly* in this present world; in expectation of being righteously and impartially adjudged, according to our Works, to a State of Happiness or Misery in the world to come; by our Saviour himself, our merciful and compassionate Judge. There never was any man in the Christian World, but *felt* the reasonableness and importance of this doctrine; and, whenever these things have been repeated to him, was immediately conscious to himself, either of having followed or transgressed these Precepts. And whatever loose or superstitious Notions may have confounded his Understanding, or influenced his Practice; yet the uniform voice of universal and eternal Reason, has always suggested to him, so far as he has been at all a rational Creature, a secret sense or judgment of the *Desert* of his own Actions, as measured by the Rules of *This everlasting Gospel*; and filled him


SERM.  
X.



Rev. xiv;  
6.

with

S E R M. with secret *Hopes* or *Fears* arising irresistibly in his Mind accordingly, in spite of the Weight and Power of all the possible Prejudices either of *Unbelief* or *Superstition*.


X.  II. *Secondly*; T H E Apostle's Argument in the Text, proceeds upon this *further* Supposition, that *God* who is the Judge of all, makes generally the *Same Judgment* of mens actions, as their *Own Reason* does; only much more perfect in the same kind, as having a Knowledge infinitely more perfect and unerring than *Theirs*. *If our Heart condemn us, God is Greater than our Heart, and knoweth all things*: But *if our Heart condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God*. The Reason is, because This Moral *Judgment* concerning Good and Evil, is nothing else but a *Perceiving* the nature of Things to be what it is. And consequently it cannot but be the *Same* in *All* rational Beings, at *all* Times and in *all* Places. It is One and the same in *All* men; and the same in all *Other* intelligent Beings whatsoever, as in *Men*; and the same necessarily in *God Himself*,

Himself, the Supreme Law-giver and Judge of All. The Nature and the necessary Relations of Things, arise from the immutable Nature of God: But the Things themselves, the existence of the World and of all things in it, is wholly owing to his Will and good Pleasure. Now God cannot possibly deny Himself; 2 Tim. ii. 13.

S E R M.  
X.



So long as he pleases that things shall exist, he cannot but see the nature of them to be what it is: Nor can he possibly either judge or will any thing contrary to Truth. The Difference is This only; that whereas frail and mortal men are frequently blinded with Prejudices and false Appearances; God, who is perfect and infallible, always judges according to the Reality of things. And when Men deceive themselves by erroneous judgments, it is not that the Moral nature of things is ever in itself dubious and indiscernible, or that the Faculty of Reason ever misleads men; but it is because they, either wilfully or negligently, misapply the Faculty, and will judge by some wrong Rule; making the Laws, or Customs,

S E R M. *toms, or Traditions, or Examples of Men,*  
 X. (things infinitely *various, mutable, and*  
 *uncertain,*) to be the *Measure of Right,*  
 instead of the *uniform and unalterable*  
*Nature of Things.* But *This* case will be  
 considered under my *Third* Head. *Gene-*  
*rally* speaking, the secret and *inward*  
 Reason of mens Minds is apt to judge  
*rightly* concerning Good and Evil; as  
 the Eye, the *external* Organ, does con-  
 cerning the Differences of Light and Co-  
 lours. And what judgment this secret and  
 inward Reason of mens *Own* Minds, pas-  
 ses upon their own Actions; the same  
 they have all possible Reason to think  
 that *God* also passes upon them. For,  
 whatever a man's *own eyes* plainly see; he  
 cannot doubt but a person of *better Eyes*  
 must see the *same* more perfectly. And  
 whatever a man free from passion and wil-  
 fulness, upon calm consideration clearly  
 and distinctly discerns within his *own*  
*Mind*; he is very sure the *Infinite and All-*  
*knowing Mind* cannot but discern still  
 more clearly and distinctly. Hence, when-  
 ever a man's *own Heart* condemns him;  
 that



that is, not when he is disturbed with melancholy and unaccountable *Fears*, but when he is condemned by the *Judgment of his own Reason*; that is, when he *knows* that he is doing a wicked or unjust Action, contrary to the Reason of Things and to the Will of God; he cannot but be tormented with terrible Apprehensions (and he has just *reason* so to be,) of the righteous Judgment of God. On the contrary, *if our own Heart condemn us not*; that is not, if we be negligent, thoughtless, or Atheistical; but if, upon an impartial Review of our past Lives, we can satisfy our selves that we have really and sincerely been Followers of Truth and Virtue; that we have lived soberly, righteously, and godly in This World; or, if in any of these respects we have formerly been faulty, that yet Now at least we have effectually reformed and amended our Manners; then, as the Text expresses it; we may *have confidence towards God*; Or, as it is in the 19th Verse, then may we *assure our Hearts before him*. If a man can say with St Paul, *Acts xxiii. 1,*

S E R M. *I have lived in all good conscience before*  
 X. *God, until This day: And (ch. xxiv. 16.)*  
 herein do I exercise my self Always, to have  
 a Conscience void of Offence, toward God  
 and toward Men: And again, (2 Cor. i.  
 12,) *Our Rejoycing is This, the Testimony*  
*of our Conscience, that in Simplicity and*  
*godly Sincerity ----- we have had our Con-*  
*versation in the World: If a man can say*  
*This to himself upon careful and serious*  
*examination of his own past Behaviour,*  
*then may be applied to him those words*  
*in the Book of Job, ch. xxii. 26; Then*  
*shalt thou have thy delight in the Al-*  
*mighty, and shalt lift up thy Face unto*  
*God. And ch. xi. 15; Then shalt thou*  
*lift up thy face without Spot; yea, thou*  
*shalt be stedfast, and shalt not fear.----*  
 ver. 18. *Thou shalt be secure, because there is Hope;*  
 19. *-----Also thou shalt lie down, and none*  
*shall make thee afraid. Or, as the Author*  
*of the Book of Ecclesiasticus expresses it,*  
*ch. xiv. 2; Blessed is He, whose Conscience*  
*hath not condemned him, and who is not*  
*fallen from his Hope in the Lord. Never-*  
*theless, even in This case, there is no*  
 I ground

ground for confident *Presumption*. For S E R M.  
 when we *have done all those things that are* X.  
*commanded us, we are still but unprofita-*  
*ble Servants.* And in judging whether we  
 have really done our Duty, or no, *God*  
*is greater than our Hearts, and knoweth*  
*all things*; that is, cannot possibly be im-  
 posed upon, as we may impose upon our  
*selves*, by any Negligences or Prejudices  
 whatsoever. And therefore *St Paul* justly  
 says, *1 Cor. iv. 4, I know nothing by my*  
*self; yet am I not hereby justified; but he*  
*that judgeth me, is the Lord.* It remains  
 in the

III. *Third* and Last place, that I en-  
 deavour briefly to show, how far the  
 Truth of the Rule I have laid down in  
 This Discourse, is affected by that *Falsè*  
 application, which the *wrong* Judgment  
 of an *erroneous* Conscience is apt to make  
 of it. It is certain, men are *naturally*  
 Conscious of the difference of *Good* and  
*Evil*, and of the consequent *Desert* of  
 their own Actions. It is *natural* for  
 them to *apprehend*, that this Judgment  
 of their own Consciences, is the Judg-

S E R M. ment that *God* also passes upon them ; And  
 X. the *Scripture* very clearly affirms that it is  
 so. Whence then comes it to pass, that  
 many truly *virtuous* and *pious* persons have  
 been under the strongest melancholy ap-  
 prehensions, that *God* would *condemn*  
 them ; and on the contrary, many *impious*  
 and very *wicked* men, seem to have been  
 fully persuaded in their own imaginati-  
 ons, that they have been doing *God* service,  
 even by unrighteous Actions ? I answer :  
 It proceeds from hence ; That, in some  
 cases, through innocent and pitiable *Weak-*  
*ness* ; in other cases, through wicked and  
 corrupt *Prejudice* ; men set their own  
*Passions* of *Fear* or *Presumption* in the  
 Judgment-Seat of *Reason* and *Conscience*.  
 It is not the Judgment of *Conscience* that  
 condemns or acquits them ; but their own  
*Fears* or *Passions* over-ruling That Judg-  
 ment. The Judgment of *Conscience*, is the  
 Result of mens *comparing* their own Lives  
 and Actions, with the *Law* or *Rule* of  
*Sobriety*, *Righteousness* and *Godliness*,  
 taught by the Light of *Nature*, and ex-  
 plained and confirmed by the Gospel of  
*Christ*.

Christ. But *pitiable Fears*, and *superstitious Presumptions*, judge by *no Rule*; nay, they often judge *contrary* to all the most evident and fundamental Rules both of Reason and Religion. *Some*, when their Fears condemn them even to the Brink of Despair, yet cannot accuse themselves of the gross and wilful Breach of any *One* of God's Commandments *in particular*: And therefore their own *Reason and Conscience* plainly *acquits* them, at the very same time that they are *condemned* by their *Fears*. *Others*, when their *Superstitious Imagination* flatters them with the highest *Applause*, in the *idolatrous* or *cruel and inhumane* Practices of a Religion founded upon Custom, and Authority, and blind Submission, may yet really at the same time be *condemned* by their own *Heart and Conscience*, which they refuse to hearken to. For they will own, that, what they do, is contrary to *Reason*; and that it ought not to be done, but in order to do *God Service*. That is; They know it to be *Evil*; and, by Arguments of Superstition, endeavour to *force* themselves to

SERMON. *approve what cannot be approved.* And,  
 X. in effect, they make *God* himself to be an  
 Evil Being; by supposing him to be Arbitrary, in making *Absurd* things to be *True*, and *Evil* to be *Good*: Which is subverting both the Nature of Things, and the Foundation of all Religion, and indeed the very Being of God. The Truth therefore of the Apostle's Doctrine in the Text, is not affected by these Errours. He *supposes* the judgment of Conscience to be founded upon *comparing* our Lives with the *Rule* of Morality: And a Judgment so founded, will hardly differ from the Sentence of *God*.





# S E R M O N XI.

Of the Nature of Temptations.



JAM. i. 14.

*But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own Lust, and enticed.*



THE Sense of Guilt is so necessarily uneasy upon the Mind of Man, that even the most hardened Sinners are perpetually endeavouring to shift off the Blame of their Wickedness from *themselves*, and to throw the Fault upon whatever comes in their way. Sometimes

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S E R M. Sometimes the Reason of their Wickedness is, because *God* has not made them Better than they are: And *who has resisted His Will?* Sometimes it is the *Devil* that tempts them: And *How* can frail man withstand so potent and so cunning a Deceiver? Sometimes it is the *original* corruption of their *Nature*: And *who* can alter the condition, to which he was *born*? Sometimes it is the general *Fashion and Custom* of the *World*: And *Who* can be singular, in opposing so violent a Torrent? The Apostle in my Text, cuts off at once both *These* and all *Other* Excuses; by determining distinctly, that, whatever *Aggravations* or *Extenuations* of Sin, may or may not arise from external Circumstances; yet *Sin itself*, the *Nature and Essence* of Sin, consists entirely in the *Free Choice* of a man's own *Will*; and that his *Guilt* is always just so much in proportion, as his *Choice* deviates from the Dictates of his *Reason*. *Every man is Tempted, when he is drawn away of his own Lust, and enticed.*



## Of the Nature of Temptations.

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THE word, *Lust*, signifies in This S E R M.  
place *Every Desire* or *Inclination* after XI.  
things *unlawful* in *Any* kind. The De-  
sire of *unlawful Pleasures*; which is the  
Vice of *Sensuality*. The Desire of *unlawful*  
*Riches*; which is the Foundation of *Un-*  
*righteousness, Oppression, and Fraud*. The  
Desire of obtaining *Honour* by *corrupt*  
methods; which is the Sin of *Ambition*.  
The Desire of being *Religious* without  
*True Virtue*, without the sincere *Love* of  
*God* and of our *Neighbour*; which is the  
Foundation of *Idolatry*, and of *All Su-*  
*perstitions*. When by any of *These* De-  
sires, a man is *drawn away* from what  
he knows is *Right*; and *enticed* to do,  
what the Reason of his Mind condemns;  
*then*, is he led into *Sin*. The *entire Pro-*  
*gress* of which, with its *Nature* and *Con-*  
*sequences*, and the *Inexcusableness* of it;  
is very distinctly and very fully set forth  
in That Whole Period, of which my Text  
is a part. *Let no man say, when he is*  
*tempted, I am tempted of God: For God*  
*cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempt-*  
*eth he any man: But every man is tempted,*  
*when*

S E R M. *when he is drawn away of his own Lust,*  
 XI. *and enticed: Then, when Lust hath con-*  
 ~~~~~ *ceived, it bringeth forth Sin; and Sin,*  
when it is finished, bringeth forth Death.
 The Ground and Foundation of Temptation; are the Good things of this Present Life, the Pleasures and Enjoyments of the World. The Agreeableness of these Objects to the Imagination; the Prospect of Riches, Honour, and Pleasure; naturally, necessarily, and innocently excites Desires after them. The Continuance of these Desires, to such Degrees and in such Circumstances, wherein they cannot be gratified but by unrighteous and unlawful means: is Temptation to Sin. The Submitting of the Mind, to This Temptation; the choosing to come at the pleasing Object through unrighteous Means; the preferring, in these Circumstances, the gratification of an unreasonable Passion or Appetite, in opposition to the Dictates of Reason and to the Laws of God; is the formal Nature, or Essence, of Sin. And the just Consequence, of Sin thus chosen and consented to; is Death. And in all
 This,

This, *God* is in no way the *Cause* of any man's *Guilt*, nor takes Any *Pleasure* in his *Punishment*. For all the *Creatures* that *God* has created, are originally and in their own nature *Good*. But Any thing may be *misapplied* to *unreasonable* Purposes. And in This *misapplication*, consists the Nature of *Sin*. Now whatever is in itself *unreasonable* to be done, it is fit should be *punished* by a *reasonable* Governour ; and it is necessary, for the Support of *Truth* and *Right*, that such *Punishment* should be inflicted. As certain therefore as it is, that there *Is* a *God* ; so certain is it, that *Sin* will finally be punished. But This is beyond the Bounds of my present Subject.

THE Words of my *Text*, contain *One* plain and obvious Proposition ; that the *Nature* of *Sin*, consists in a man's suffering himself to be *drawn away*, by the *Enticement* of some *Appetite*, *Passion*, or *Interest* ; to do what he is sensible is *not*, in itself, *Fit* and *Right* ; to do what his *Mind* feels to be contrary to the *Law* of *God*, made known to him either by *Reason*



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son or Revelation; contrary to Piety, or Godliness; contrary to Sobriety, or Temperance; contrary to Truth, Justice, Equity, or Charity. And because This *Appetite, Passion, or Interest*, or whatsoever it be that *entices* him, is the *Desire* of his *Own Mind*; *without which*, the Allurements of External Objects would have no Power to seduce him; and *which Desire or Appetite* it is the proper Business of Reason to *govern*, to *direct* always to its proper *Object*, and to restrain continually within its due *Bounds*; Hence it is, that *Sin* becomes altogether *inexcusable*. *Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own Lust, and enticed.*

I N the following Discourse, I shall 1st prove and explain the *Doctrine*, from the consideration of the *intrinsic Nature and Reason* of things: And 2^{dly} I shall illustrate it, by comparing it with some remarkable *Examples* of *Sinful Men* and *Sinful Actions*, recorded in *Scripture* for our Admonition.

I, *First*;

I. *First*; IN the Nature of things, every Sin is a *Deviation* from some Rule; and *such* a Deviation, as the person is *sensible of* at the time he acts, and *knows* that he ought not to have so acted. This it is, that makes the Action *blame-worthy* in its own Nature, and justly *Punishable* by a Wise and Good Governour. The *Sense* of this Blame-worthiness, is the *Consciousness* or *Shame of Guilt*: Which makes the person necessarily to *condemn himself*, and consequently to be pursued continually with a just *Fear* or *Apprehension of Punishment*. Every Being therefore, which is either *so Perfect*, as that it cannot possibly have any *Temptation* to depart from the Rule of Right; or, on the contrary, *so imperfect*, as not to *know and understand* What *Right* is; must be essentially *incapable of Sin*. God, by reason of the *absolute Perfection* of his Nature, is wholly *incapable* of being at all *Tempted with Evil*. And All *Creatures, inferiour* to Men; for a *contrary Reason*, they also are *incapable* of being *Tempted with Evil*, because they know not *What*

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SER M. Moral Good and Evil *is*. But *Man*, being endued with *rational* Faculties, and knowing well the *Difference* between *Good and Evil*, and having continually the *Reasons* and *Motives* of Action, and the *Obligations* of *Conscience* and the *Consequences* of his Behaviour, offering themselves to his View; is still placed in Such a Situation, as to be frequently *Tempted* to depart from Reason, and to act contrary to what he knows is Right. For the *Good things* of this life, being naturally, necessarily, and in Themselves innocently, *Desirable*; are yet, by a numberless variation of Circumstances in the State of Things in This World, very often so constituted, as that they cannot be obtained but by *Unlawful Practices*. Likewise, the *Evil things* or *Calamities* of life, which we naturally and necessarily dislike, and desire to flee from; yet in many cases cannot possibly be avoided, but by very *wicked* and *unrighteous Compliances*. And hence arises the *Struggle* in a man's own Mind, between what the Scripture calls the *Flesh*, and the *Spirit*; between

between the *Desires* and *Inclinations* of S E R M.
Sense, Appetite, or Passion, on the one XI.
hand; and the *Dictates* of *Reason* and true
Religion on the other hand. When, in
This Contest, *Reason* prevails as the go-
verning Principle; and *Passions* and *Ap-*
petites are kept under due *regulation*, and
gratified only within the Bounds of Vir-
tue and Integrity; then is the man truly
a *religious* person. And if, besides *despi-*
sing all *unlawful Pleasures* and *Profits*, he
moreover suffers at any time *actual Da-*
mage and *Opression*, upon account of his
adhering to what is just and right; he is
then in a *particular* manner a *Witness*
bearing *Testimony* to the *Truth*, and do-
ing *Honour* to the Cause of *Virtue* and
Religion. On the contrary; if men,
through *Fear* of any *Temporal Inconve-*
niences, sacrifice the *Interests* of *Truth*
and *Virtue*; and are less awed by the
Conscience of *Right*, and by the *Appre-*
hensions of the *Judgment* of *God*, than
by the *Threanings* of a *vicious* and *cor-*
rupt World; they may then justly be
deemed in the number of *Those*, who

S E R M. are *Fearful* in *That* sense, wherein St *John*
 XI. joins together the *Fearful* and *Unbelieving*
 ----- and *Idolaters* and *Liars*, as involved
 in one common *Condemnation*: *Rev.* xxi. 8.
 And if, which is still much *more inexcusable*
 than being *terrified* out of their *Duty*,
 they suffer themselves to be *withdrawn*
 from it by the *Allurements* of *Ambition*,
Pleasure, or *Profit*; and be prevailed up-
 on by these *Temptations*, to do things
 contrary to *Reason*, *Justice*, and *Truth*;
 This is what the *Apostle* in the *Text*
 particularly represents, by a man's being
drawn away of his own Lust, and *enticed*;
 drawn away and inticed by some unrea-
 sonable *Inclination* or *Appetite* in his *own*
Mind: Which uncontrolled *Desire* or *Ap-*
petite, when it hath conceived, it bringeth
 forth *Sin*; and *Sin*, when it is finished,
 bringeth forth *Death*. The *State* and
Condition of a person thus seduced into a
 sinful *Course*, is by St *Paul* emphatically
 set forth, *Rom.* vii. 15; *That which I do,*
I allow not: For, what I would, That do
I not; but what I hate, That do I.----*For,*
the good that I would, I do not; but the
 evil

evil which I would not, That I do. There S E R M.
is *one* case indeed, wherein possibly This XI.
Contest between *Reason* and *Appetite*, is
scarce at all perceived: And That is,
when men by long *Habits of Vice* are be-
come stupid and insensible with regard to
the Obligations of *Morality*, or, through
some great *Superstition*, have brought
themselves to think perhaps some of the
worst of Vices to be even a part of *Reli-*
gion itself; having their very *Consciences*
(as *St Paul* expresses it) *seared* as it were
with a hot iron. In which case, men
cannot indeed so properly be said to be
enticed and *tempted* and *drawn away* into
Sin; but rather (as the Scripture else-
where expresses it) to be *Dead in Tres-*
passes and Sins; Sin having *already*, in
the *Moral* sense, *brought forth Death*, and
in part *anticipated* the *Righteous Judg-*
ment of God.

HAVING thus shown from the intrin-
sick Nature and Reason of things, (which
was the *First Point* I proposed to speak
to,) that the *Essence* or *Formal Nature*
of Sin, consists in a man's suffering him-

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self to be *drawn away*, by the *Enticement* of some *Appetite*, *Passion*, or *Interest*, to do what he is sensible is *not*, in itself *Fit* and *Right*; And that *herein* lies the great *inexcusableness* of Sin: It remains that I proceed now, in the

II. *Second* place, to illustrate and confirm this Doctrine, by comparing it with some remarkable *Examples* of *Sinful Men* and *Sinful Actions*, recorded in *Scripture* for our Admonition. Men at *all* Times, and in *all* Places, when they have been seduced by Sin, and begun to apprehend the ill Consequences of it; have indeavoured to shift off the *Blame* from *Themselves*, and to lay at least *Part of the Fault* upon whatever else they could. But the *Scripture*, in Every History there recorded, has always taken care to direct us with sufficient Clearness to the true Source of the Evil.

OUR First Parent *Eve*, when she had eaten of the forbidden Fruit, immediately her Excuse was; *The Serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.* And when her Husband had done the same, His Apology was; *The*

The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the Tree, and I did eat. Yet, 'tis plain, Neither of these Deceits would have had Any Effect, had not the Tree appeared good for food, and pleasant to the Eyes, and a Tree to be desired to make one wise. In *This* therefore consisted their Sin: that the Desire of pleasing their *Appetite*, and gratifying their *Curiosity*, was of greater Weight with them than the Command of God. And in *This* they were too truly the *Representatives* of Mankind: Representatives, not in the way of One person's incurring *Guilt* for Another; which is contrary to the Nature of things: But Representatives, as a just *Emblem* of the Behaviour of Mankind in general. For every unlawful Appetite, every Appetite tending towards an unlawful Object, is the Desire of the *forbidden Fruit*; And the complying with That Desire, in opposition to the Will of God made known either by Reason or Revelation, is the *Essence* of Sin.

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BALAM flattered himself, that he *could not* go with the Messengers of the King of *Moab*, without the Divine Permission; and when he *did* go with them, that still he *could not* curse *Israel*, without leave from God: and if he *did* curse them, that yet this *could not* hurt them, unless God approved the Curse; and when he brought a real Curse upon them, by advising the *Moabites* to tempt them to Fornication, that still This was only the Consequence of *their own* Fault. But the *True Reason* of all his Proceedings, was the Hope of a *Reward* from the King of *Moab*, and the Ambition of being *advanced* by *Balak* to *Honour*.

SAUL comforted himself under his Disobedience to an express Command of God, with an imaginary intention of *sacrificing* the Choice of his forbidden Spoils *unto the Lord his God*. But the *true* Motive, that *drew him away* from his Duty, was a *Covetous Desire* of the Spoil. And his Heart was so sensible of its own Falseness, that, in the very same Breath, he insinuates that the *People* were *Faulty* for preserving Those Spoils; which he acknowledges

knowledges they had by his *Own* direction preserved for Sacrifice; 1 *Sam.* xv. 21, 24. S E R M.
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DAVID, in the committing of That Great Crime, the Murder of *Uriah*; flattered himself with that *shameful* Apology, because *Uriah* fell by the hand of the *Ammonites*, 2 *Sam.* xi. 25; *The Sword devoureth one as well as another*. As if his being killed by the Enemy, among whom he had ordered him to be deserted; was not the very same thing, as to have slain him immediately with his own Hand.

AHAB was willing to persuade himself, that he had a *Right* to *Ramoth-Gilead*; and that *God* too, by his Prophets, encouraged the undertaking. Yet, had not his Ambition and his Passions *drawn* him away, and blinded his Attention; 'twas easy for him to have perceived, that, in this whole matter, he was acting contrary to the Will of *God*. For he had express Warning given him, how his Prophets were deceived: And he had no other objection against giving credit to *Micaiah*, but only that the Truth was what he

S E R M. *liked not to hear, and that he hated the*
 XI. *person for refusing to flatter him in his*
 Prophefying: *I hate him; FOR he doth*
not prophesy good concerning me, but evil;
 1 Kings xxii. 8.

THE case is the very same with *All* wicked men, in some proportion; in *All* Ages, and in *All* Kinds of unrighteous Practices. Whatever *Pretences* they make, and whatever false *Appearances* they blind possibly even *Themselves* withal; it is always in reality some unreasonable *Appetite, Passion, or Interest*, by which they are either violently hurried, or else perhaps insensibly *drawn away and enticed*. I shall mention one standing and continual Instance. The fiercest and most violent Persecutors in the Church of *Rome*, constantly *profess*, and it is probable Many of them really *believe*, that they are *doing God good Service*, when they are destroying his Servants with the most inhumane Cruelties. Yet that the *real*, however perhaps sometimes almost imperceptible, Spring and Motive of these their Proceedings, is *Ambition*, or the Love
 of

of Power and Dominion ; of This, I say, S E R M.
there is always one evident and infallible XI.
Demonstration: Which is, that they are
in No degree so zealous and diligent in re-
forming Mens manners, nor so cruel in
punishing the most enormous Immoralities,
as they are in forcing men over into their
Seēt or *Party*. And This plainly shows,
that such kind of corrupt *Religion*, as well
as Vices of other Denominations, are real-
ly and properly what the Apostle calls
Works of the Flesh; being founded in, and
supported by, corrupt Passions, partial
Affections, and evident iniquities of Inclination ; *The God of this World having blinded men's eyes, lest the Light of the Truth of the glorious Gospel of Christ, should shine unto them.*

HAVING thus at large shown both from the *Reason of Things*, and from the *Practice of Men*; that the *Nature* or *Essence* of *Sin*, consists in a man's suffering himself to be *drawn away*, by the *Enticement* of some *Appetite*, *Passion* or *Interest*, to do what he is sensible is *not* in itself *Fit and Right*, nor agreeable to the
Will

S E R M. *Will and Laws of God: The Inferences*

XI.



I shall now proceed to draw from this doctrine, are briefly as follows.

1st; IF every man is then only tempted to Sin, when he is drawn away of his own Lust, and enticed; The first evident Inference from hence, is That made by the Apostle himself in the words preceeding my Text; *Let no man say, when he is tempted, I am tempted of God.* In the Reason of Things, and in the Nature of a Moral Government over the World, there must be proper Tryals of Obedience and Disobedience; which the Goodness of God does not oblige him to remove, because, without such Tryals, God's Government of the World could not be at all a Moral Government over rational Creatures. But God never tempts any man, with design to draw him into Sin; Nor will he suffer men to be tempted above what they are able, but will with the Temptation also make a way to escape, that they may be able to bear it: I Cor. x. 13.

2^{dly}; No

2dly; No man can with just reason lay the Blame of his Vices, upon that Nature wherein God has created him, or upon those *Frailties* he may be supposed to have derived from his *First Parents*. For, Men are not accountable for the *Appetites* of Nature, nor for its *Infirmities* any further, than they suffer their *own Wills* to be drawn away irregularly, contrary to the *Reason of Things*, and to the *Laws of God*.

3dly; No man can justly excuse his own Wickedness, by alledging that he was tempted of *the Devil*. For *the Devil* has no Power to tempt men any otherwise, than as *Wicked Men* tempt one another, by suggesting to them the *Allurements* of Pleasure and Profit. *Judas* was covetous and a *Thief*, Joh. xii. 6, before *Satan* entered into him, ch. xiii. 27, and prevailed with him to betray his Lord for Money. *Ananias's* Crime likewise, *Acts* v. 3, was not *extenuated*, but *aggravated* by his suffering *Satan* to fill his Heart with *Deceitfulness* and *Fraud*. The *Prince of the Power of Darkness*, Ep. ii. 2; is a Spirit
that

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that worketh, Only in the children of disobedience: And the strong Delusion God permits him to send upon the world, is nothing but the deceivableness of Unrighteousness, in them who love not the Truth, but have Pleasure in Unrighteousness; 2 Theff. ii. 10, 11, 12. They who resist the Devil, and who give not Place to him, by yielding to Sin; he will flee from them; Jam. iv. 7: Eph. iv. 26, 27: 1 Pet. v. 9. And whosoever keepeth himself, that is, guards himself against Sin, we know that That wicked One toucheth him not; 1 Job. v. 18. The Prince of this world, when he came to our Lord, he found nothing in him; Joh. xiv. 30. And of every sincere Mind, it may in proportion be said in a lower degree, that he finds in it nothing to lay hold upon. This was the Security of Abraham. His own Heart, was perfect with God. And had God in That case permitted Satan to deceive him, where there was no corrupt disposition in his own heart; the Deceit had been inevitable; and Satan, in That circumstance had not been Satan, but an

In-

Of the Nature of Temptations.

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Instrument only in the hand of Providence. S E R M.
And the *Security of every good man*, is in XI.
proportion the same. God will not suffer
him to be tempted *above what he is able*,
nor to be *deceived* where he is not *drawn*
away of his own Lnst and enticed.



SER-



S E R M O N XII.

Of the Nature of Lying.



EPHES. iv. 25.

Wherefore putting away Lying, speak every one truth with his Neighbour.



THE duty enjoined in these S E R M. words, *Speak every one truth* XII. *with his neighbour,* has ever been acknowledged by men of all conditions, to be our necessary and indispensable duty. Heathens as well as Christians, men of all ranks and professions, of all Sects and Religions whatever, have

S E R M. have agreed in this; that there is an eter-
 XII. nal obligation founded in the nature of
 things, [which every man that attends to
 the dictates of his reason and conscience,
 cannot but own and be sensible of,] that
 our words should be agreeable to our
 thoughts; and have been sensible that
Lying, or endeavouring to deceive each
 other, is a base and mean practice, un-
 worthy the dignity of a rational nature,
 and highly displeasing to God, who has
 given us the use of that noble faculty of
 Speech to this very end, that it might be
 the Interpreter of our Thoughts to each
 other. This is what every man under-
 stands, and readily assents to; but then
what may properly be called a *Lie*, and
how far this obligation of speaking truth
 extends, hath been much disputed among
 learned men. Many have been of opinion,
 that it doth not bind us in all circumstan-
 ces; and it is certain there are many in-
 stances alledged, [as the learned *Grotius*
 observes,] wherein not only the best *hea-*
then Moralists, but many ancient Christian
 Writers also, have thought men not under
 any

any obligation to speak the truth. That S E R M. the abusing the power of speech to the XII. Damage and subverting of all civil Society, (when on the contrary it was given us on purpose to be the *bond* of Society;) that *This* is a great and crying Sin; is readily acknowledged by all: But whether the making use of speech to deceive another in cases wherein it may seem that some *publick good* is promoted thereby; whether *This* be such an abuse of speech as will come under the notion of a sinful *Lie*, is not so obvious to determine.

I N discoursing therefore upon this Subject, I shall first endeavour to state clearly the nature of a *Lie*, and what may properly be so called; and Then proceed to consider the cases of difficulty arising thereupon.

G O D has created man a *reasonable* and a *sociable* creature: *reasonable*, as he is indued with that excellent faculty of Thinking; and *sociable*, as he has a power of communicating those Thoughts. By the Powers of *thinking and reasoning*, every individual man in particular, is exalted above the rank of brute creatures;

S E R M. is enabled to contemplate his own nature,
 XII. and that of his fellow-creatures; and,
 through them, the perfections of his Almighty Creator: But then by the power of *communicating their thoughts*, Societies of men have this peculiar advantage, that they can further improve and be assistant to each other; they can acquaint one another with their wants and necessities; they can comfort, instruct, exhort, reprove; in a word, they can so communicate their counsels, that as every particular person is concerned for the whole body, so the whole is concerned for the welfare of each particular. The natural way of communicating these thoughts, is by the use of *Speech*: and as every particular man, without the faculty of thinking and reasoning, would be nothing superiour to a beast; so societies of men without the use of some way of communicating their thoughts, could make no advantage nor improvement of *each other's* Reason and Understanding. Now to make use of That means to the *deceiving* each other, which God gave us on purpose for mutual *instruction*,

tion, is a manifest Perverſion of ſo excellent a Gift.

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XII.


THE proper notion of a *Lie* therefore, is an Endeavouring to *deceive* another, by ſignifying that to him as true, which we ourſelves think not to be ſo; in the ordinary way of communicating our thoughts.

1^{ſt}, I ſay, It is ſignifying that to another as true, which we ourſelves think not to be ſo. For if a man *thinks* a thing to be true, and relates it to others as ſuch; though in the event it ſhould prove really not to be true, yet this is not a *Lie*, but only an Error. For here it is plain the perſon himſelf is deceived, and hath no intention to impoſe upon another. Whatever therefore is amiſs here, is accidental and involuntary; and all the fault he is guilty of in it, is raſhneſs and haſtineſs of ſpeech, in too poſitively declaring That to be true, which he has not taken ſufficient care to be duly informed of. On the contrary, if a man thinks a thing not to be true, and yet declares it to another as certain; though in the event the thing ſhould chance to prove true, yet ſince he knew

S E R M. it not, and believed it not to be so, his
 XII. act is still the same, and may properly be
 called a Lie.

2dly, I say, This must be done in the ordinary and natural way of communicating of our thoughts; That is, either by speech; or else by such signs as shall be agreed to be equivalents in the place of words. For though men do often conjecture at each other's thoughts and designs, from other various actions; yet if a man so orders his actions, as thereby to conceal from another his designs, which That Other has no Right nor just ground to expect to be acquainted with; and therein deceives him; (which in many cases is unquestionably lawful;) this cannot properly be accounted a Lie.

Lastly, To compleat the Notion of a Lie, and which is the principal thing of all; the signifying That to another as true, which I know or think not to be so, must be done with a direct design to *deceive* him. For, *agreed* forms of speaking, have no deceit. From hence it follows that all usual Forms or Schemes of

Rhetorick, all *figurative* expressions, though they seem to signify That as true, which is not literally so, yet can by no means be accounted Lies: And the same may likewise be said, of fables, and parables, and mythological descriptions. For these were never intended to deceive men, or to give them false and wrong notions of things; but on the contrary to convey some certain truths more easily into their minds, and make a firmer impression upon them. Mankind is therefore well agreed about these things; that they are not to be understood literally; that there is a further sense in them which may be easily discovered, and will preserve us from all mistakes about them. We frequently in Holy Scripture itself, find the divine nature represented to us under corporeal similitudes; we find eyes and hands, and other parts of humane bodies ascribed to God; which expressions, all Men well understand to be only in way of condescension to us, a help to the imperfection of our Understandings; to express his infinite perfections, his knowledge and his power,

S E R M.
XII.
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S E R M. in such a way, as we think and conceive  
 XII. of these things in ourselves.



IN all such ways of speaking as these, we always have reason to presume, that those we speak to, will understand our words in the same sense as *we* do. Although it may sometimes for very good reasons be allowable, when we use such words as are fairly capable of different meanings, to take them in any one of those senses, notwithstanding it be probable that the persons spoken to will take them in another; (though I say this may sometimes be allowable, because as no man is obliged always to discover his whole mind, so doubtful ways of expressing himself are often one of the best means of concealing it; and our Saviour himself is observed to have sometimes used this manner of speaking;) yet great prudence and caution is to be used in this matter; and above all things we ought to take heed, that we fall not by degrees into those deceitful and pernicious equivocations, which have been allowed and encouraged by the great corrupters of Religion in the Church  
 of

of Rome, and which tend manifestly to the subversion of all humane society.

S E R M.  
XII.




FURTHER, from hence it follows that such untruths as are told by vain persons in a jesting manner, and in which there is no deceit; cannot in the *strict* and most *proper* sense of the word, be called Lies. For though all such discourse may justly seem unbecoming the gravity of a Christian, and may perhaps be properly enough ranked under that foolish jesting, which St Paul stiles *not convenient*, or, as the word may be rendred, *unbecoming*; Eph. v. 4: Yet we cannot affirm that it is always strictly and absolutely unlawful. We often speak in an Ironical manner, or there are in our discourse such evident signs and marks, as plainly enough show, that we mean not in earnest, and that we have no design to deceive or impose upon the person we converse with. For *otherwise*, if a man *really* intends to *delude* another with a thing that is false, though but in way of humour and abuse only; this is by no means excusable upon *any ground*; For to endeavour to deceive a man by

S E R M. abusing his credulity, in order to expose  
 XII. him for it afterward, this is really an in-  
 jurious Lie, and can no way be excused by  
 being told in jest: *As a madman who casteth  
 firebrands, arrows and death, so is the  
 man that deceiveth his neighbour and saith  
 am I not in sport?* Prov. xxvi. 18, 19.

To sum up therefore what has been said on this point. A Lie strictly and properly so called, is such a manner of speaking, wherein, according to the ordinary signification of words, a man signifies that to another as true, which he himself either certainly knows or believes to be false, and That, with a design of imposing upon him.

AND now, as to the several *sorts* or *kinds* of these Lies, I hope it may here be premised in the *first* place, that *Much* needs not to be said concerning *That* sort of *Lying*, which yet is of all others the most generally practised; namely, those mean ways of deceiving and over-reaching one another, which are so frequently used in traffick and bargaining. These, it is so evidently impossible to have any  
 thing

thing so much as pretended to be alledged S E R M.  
 in justification or excuse of them; they XII.  
 are so plainly and confessedly odious both   
 to God and men, (*lying lips are an abomi-*  
*nation to the Lord*, Prov. xii. 22; and a  
*righteous man hateth lying*, Prov. xiii. 5;) these I say are so manifestly hateful both  
 in the sight of God and all good men;  
 they tend so apparently to the subversion  
 of all justice and honesty, and consequent-  
 ly to the destruction of all civil society;  
 that even some *barbarous* nations have  
 made them severely punishable. The  
 consciences of men do so naturally start  
 at the baseness and meanness of This prac-  
 tice, that nothing needs be said to con-  
 vince their *judgments*, of the sinful-  
 ness and unlawfulness of it. They need  
 only to have their *passions* moved, and  
 their consciences awakened, by being put  
 in mind, that *the getting of treasures by a*  
*lying tongue, is a vanity tossed to and fro of*  
*them that seek death*; Prov. xxi. 6. For if  
 men will but give themselves time to think;  
 they cannot but see, that if there be any  
 such thing as right and wrong, if there  
 be any such thing as justice and injustice,  
 if

S E R M. if there be any obligation to maintain faith  
 XII. and truth amongst men, to preserve society,  
 ~~~~~ order and good government in the  
 world; this kind of Lying cannot but be
 in the highest degree unnatural and un-
 lawful. Wherefore not enlarging further
 upon this; I shall proceed now to the
 consideration of such cases, wherein many
 even learned men have pleaded with very
 plausible reasons, in justification and de-
 fence of the use of divers manners of fal-
 sifying. And

1st, IN the case of those, to whom we
 have openly and justly declared ourselves
enemies, as in the case of a lawful and ne-
 cessary War. And these, they *think*, may
 not only be lawfully deceived by feints
 and stratagems, (for these are granted on
 all hands to be unquestionably lawful,)
 but they further *contend*, that it is allow-
 able to make use of Contracts and Agree-
 ments, to the bringing about the same de-
 sign; to effect this deceit by the use of
 falsehood and treachery, by breaking pro-
 mise, and the like. The reason and equity
 of which manner of proceeding, they *ima-*
gin


gin to be this ; that those who have openly professed themselves enemies, have (as they *conceive*) forfeited all the right they had to truth, as they have to many other parts of justice, charity, and other virtues, which we are bound to exercise to others ; and that therefore, as we may use all means we can to annoy and endamage them, and may dispoil them of their goods and even of life itself, so they *fancy* we may also deprive them of the benefits of words and contracts, without any injury or injustice.

2dly, IN the education of *Children* ; that is, of such as are already arrived to some, though not a perfect, use of their reason ; To these, the persons I am speaking of, *conceive*, we are not obliged to speak the truth ; not because they have no right to truth, or have lost that right by any forfeiture, but because they are not capable of receiving and judging of it ; so that because they are not come to a full use of their reason and judgment ; *i. e.* are not in a state capable of judging truly of our thoughts by our words, therefore

S E R M. though our words be not agreeable to our
 XII. thoughts, yet we cannot, they *suppose*, be
 said to do them any wrong.

3dly, T H E last case, wherein falsehood has been by many thought justifiable, is when some *publick benefit* is thereby promoted; in which case they *fancy* they may *presume upon* mens consent, that they are *willing* to be deceived; that they would give up their right by which they might exact truth of us, did they know the reasons that moved us to deceive them. To this case may be referred those *pious* frauds, when, without any apparent injury to any man, as they *think*, men contrive certain forgeries for the promotion of *religion*, as they *imagine*, and for the service of God.

T H E S E are the chief cases *in which*, and the reasons *why*, several of the Hea-then Philosophers, and even some Christian Writers also, have thought falsehood allowable or at least excusable. Whether they had any just and sufficient *reason* so to do, will best appear by inquiring first into the nature of truth, and the
 foun-

foundation of our obligation to speak S E R M.
always what we think agreeable to it ; and XII.
their applying it to the particular cases. 
Now They who think a Lie, properly so
called, to be in several cases lawful ; con-
sider Truth merely as a civil compact, to
which mankind tacitly consents; an agree-
ment (as it were) amongst men, for
their more convenient living together, to
represent things to one another faithfully
and as they really are. They look upon
Truth as matter of private concern, as
if one man laid upon another all the ob-
ligation he has to it, and consequently
could release him from that obligation ei-
ther by his fault, or his incapacity, or his
consent. Thus Truth becomes merely one
and the same thing with justice ; and false-
hood ceases to be a fault, unless when it is
joyned with manifest injury and wrong :
From hence it follows, that, since when a
man has forfeited or voluntarily receded
from his right to any thing, it may without
injustice be with-held from him ; in such
cases as those, according to This Notion, a
Lie will seem to be no longer blame-worthy.


B U T

SERM. BUT now, that we are on the contrary
 XII. really under an obligation to Truth, distinct from and independent on that of mere justice, may appear from the following considerations.

Firſt, THAT every man's Conſcience naturally convinces him, that he is under an obligation to Truth, diſtinct from all other conſiderations; ſo that it will not without reluctance ſuffer him to deceive his Neighbour with a Lie, even though he does not foreſee any real injury or damage that will thereupon accrue to him. In the natural judgment of our Minds, we cannot forbear thinking, that there is ſomething in Truth that is great, and noble, and honourable; and ſomething in Falſehood that is mean and baſe, unworthy of a man, and which renders him contemptible and vile, even abſtracted from what benefit or miſchief we may fancy will enſue. It is a Fault which always hides its head, as being aſhamed of itſelf, and may even be remitted to its own convictions. Hence *Lying* has always been eſteemed the vice of ſlaves and vaſſals, of the mean-
 eſt

est and most contemptible sort of persons: S E R M.
But men of any honour and reputation, XII.
have always necessarily an abhorrence and
detestation of it; so that though they
should even be persuaded of the *lawfulness*
of it in any particular cases, yet would
they still avoid it in those very cases as
much as they could, and never practise it
without reluctance and regret. Now all
This is very unaccountable, if Truth were
nothing more but only a part of justice;
For why then should it not be thought as
honourable to spread a Lie at any time
for the *publick* Advantage, (which is a
Vice that *Parties* and *Factions* of men are
very apt to be guilty of;) as to speak the
Truth for the same end? And if all the
moral evil of Falsehood consisted only in
the injustice of it, why should it be thought
dishonourable or base to make use of it in
cases where that reason ceases, when it is
certain all the *real* dishonour of any action
can arise only from the badness or moral
evil of it? Wherefore since even in such
cases, where we may *fancy* that no injury
is done by it, yet nature nevertheless starts
and

S E R M. and recoils at Falsehood as at a thing unworthy of us ; since we feel always a secret judgment within our minds, that moves and prompts us to truth, and forcibly perswades us of its obligation ; since we feel an inward satisfaction when we strictly practise it, and on the other hand are ashamed when we have acted contrary to it ; This shows us the native and genuine excellency of Truth, considered simply in itself ; and that the inward sense of our conscience is against all Falsehood and Lies ; in a word, this shews us that there is something sacred and divine in truth which will never suffer us to be discharged from its Obligation. It must be confessed indeed, it may sometimes happen, that a man's speaking truth will be a hindrance to another, when falsifying would turn to his advantage ; but then this arises from the unhappy circumstances of that state, into which men have brought themselves by Sin. Were men in a state of innocence and perfection, our duty would be inseparably united with our interest ; and there could be no case wherein

wherein a man's performing his duty, S E R M.
could be any disadvantage either to him- XII.
self or his neighbour. If therefore 
men's sins make no alteration in their
obligations to moral duties, and in an
innocent world Truth would be con-
fessedly our unalterable and universal du-
ty ; it is hard to say why it should not be
so now, though through the *Sin* and cor-
ruption of men it may so fall out, that
Falseness would promote my neighbour's
interest, and that Truth must necessarily
turn to his disadvantage.

2dly, T H A T our obligation to truth,
is distinct from that of merely not inju-
ring our neighbour, appears further from
this consideration ; that in our Notion of
the supreme and most perfect Being, Ve-
racity and Justice are two distinct Per-
fections or Attributes. For as Religion in
general is an Imitation of the Life of God,
so particular moral virtues are imitations
and transcripts of the divine perfections.
Now if the Veracity and Justice of God
be not allowed to be distinct perfections,
it will not be easy to show how God can

SERM. XII. be said to be absolutely (*ἀψευδής*) a God that *cannot lie*, as the Apostle styles him; for then it must be granted that *he* might also represent things to us otherwise than they are, as well as *men* may one to another; and might make false Revelations to his creatures in all those instances, wherein *men* may use Deceit one to another, *i. e.* where there appears no injustice or injury in so doing; where it should happen to be our advantage, or at least no disadvantage to be thus dealt with. For what can make any difference in this case? Justice is unquestionably the same in God as in men; and if Truth be nothing else but justice; whatever Falsehood is not injurious, might as well be used by God as by men.

BUT now this has always seemed too harsh, for our reason to apprehend: And therefore we find that *Plato*, though he was *weakly* of opinion that earthly princes might sometimes make use of Falsehood for the benefit and good of the Commonwealth, as he fancied; yet he would not affirm the same of *God*, the supreme Governour

vernour of all things; because he thought S E R M.
it would argue some kind of infirmity and XII.
imperfection in *him*, to stand in need of
having recourse to such means as these.
From whence it manifestly appears, that
men are naturally convinced in their con-
sciences, that veracity is a virtue distinct
from justice; and that there is a moral
obligation to truth, immutable, and found-
ed in the nature of things, distinct from
that of not injuring our neighbour. Now
this being so; the cases of difficulty be-
forementioned, will easily be accounted
for. For

First, IF one man's not performing his
duty, cannot excuse another from per-
forming his; then are we as certainly
bound not to break our word with an ene-
my, as we are obliged to perform several
other acts of faithfulness and charity to
him. To which purpose it is observable,
that when the *Roman* Empire was in its
greatest Splendour and most flourishing
estate; *i. e.* when they were most eminent
above other nations for their virtue and
honour; they would sooner die, (of which

SER M. there are several instances given us by
 XII. Tully and others,) than break their faith
 or word with an enemy.

Again, IF another's incapacity in some degree, to judge of my performing rightly my duty to him, cannot excuse me from my obligation to that duty; then are we certainly obliged to have regard to Truth, in what is said even to *Children*: And it would perhaps be of more considerable consequence in the education of Children, than is generally imagined, if care was taken not to amuse them with *false* Promises, which they very early discover, and which do but insensibly wean them from that veneration they ought always to have for truth, and reconcile them by degrees to Falseness, from which nature is averse: For which reason it is excellent advice that is given by a Heathen Writer, *Maxima debetur puero reverentia*; Great heed ought to be taken not only what is *done*, but even what is *spoken* also in the presence of a Child.

Lastly, IF we may not in other cases do any small evil, *that good may come of it*; why

why should it be thought lawful to Lie, S E R M.
though even for an appearance of publick XII.
advantage. Which *publick* Advantage is
never indeed any thing else, but the pre-
sent interest of some particular Party or
Faction. And as for matters of *Religion*,
it is certain nothing is more odious in the
sight of God, *than to accept his person,*
and speak deceitfully for him, as it is ex-
pressed, *Job xiii. 7.* God is truth, and
his religion is truth; and men might as
well undertake to make light darkness, or
darkness light, as pretend to endeavour to
advance the truth of God, by making
Lies and pious Frauds their instrument.
Those of the Church of *Rome* have often
been very guilty in this particular; and
great occasion has thereby been given to
the enemies of God to blaspheme. For
whilst some ill-designing men have pre-
tended to advance the interest of Religion,
that is, their own errors, by such indirect
means; others have been tempted to think
that the whole is nothing but a fiction;
and that religion itself has little counte-
S 3 nance

S E R M. nance from truth, when its professors
 XII. choose to make Lies their refuge.

IT remains that after what has been said, I make a practical observation or two, and so conclude. And

1st, Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord, saith Solomon, Prov. xii. 22; and Prov. vi. 16, &c. These six things doth the Lord hate, yea seven are an abomination unto him; A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, an heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, a false witness that speaketh Lies, and him that soweth discord among brethren. And it is very observable, that both in the *Old and New Testament*, idols and corruptions in divine worship, which are the greatest abominations in the sight of God, are described under the Name of Lies and Lying Vanities; and Idolaters, under the Title of Lyars. *Jerusalem hath wearied herself with Lies, i. e. with Idols; Ezek. xxiv. 12. So Rev. xxi. 8; The fearful and unbelieving and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters,*
and



and all Lyars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone; After which, giving a large description of the heavenly Jerusalem, he adds, ver. 27; *And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a Lie: And Rev. xxii. 15; Without, are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a Lie.* God in Scripture is sometimes called *Truth*; and as the perfection of religion is the imitation of God in his communicable Attributes, so a necessary part of that imitation, is an endeavouring to be like him in his veracity. *The Devil is a Lyar and the father of Lies; and they that follow him therein, are said to be in covenant with hell; If. xxviii. 15; We have made a Covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us; for we have made Lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves: The punishment follows,* ver. 17; *Therefore thus saith the Lord,*

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Judgment will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet, and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of Lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place; and your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then shall ye be trodden down by it. Again, Jeremy ix. ver. 5, 8 and 9; They will deceive every one his neighbour, and will not speak the truth; they have taught their tongue to speak Lies, and weary themselves to commit iniquity; Their tongue is an arrow shot out, it speaketh deceit; one speaketh peaceably to his neighbour with his mouth, but in heart he layeth his wait: Shall I not visit for these things, saith the Lord, and shall not my Soul be avenged on such a nation as this?

2dly, As Lies are thus abominable in the sight of God, so are they also to all good men; *A righteous man, saith Solomon, hateth Lying; Prov. xiii. 5: And King David in the cift Psalm, which contains a brief account of his religious and pious conversation, declares that he*
would

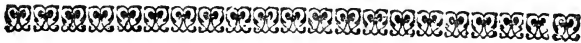
would not so much as suffer a servant, that S E R M.
was used to tell Lies, to continue in his XII.
house, ver. 6 and 7; He that walketh in a
perfect way, he shall serve me; but he that
worketh deceit, shall not dwell within my
house; he that telleth Lies shall not tarry
in my sight.

3dly, T H I S Sin of Lying tends in its
own nature to the destruction of all civil
society; Lie not one to another, saith St
Paul, for we are members one of another;
members of the same political body, as we
are men; and by a stricter tie, members of
the same mystical body, as we are christians:
Wherefore as there is one hope of our calling,
one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God
and Father of us all, so ought there to be
one mind and one heart, with simplicity and
sincerity, that speaking the truth in love we
may grow up into him in all things, who is
the head, even Christ.



SERMON XIII.

Uprightness a Man's greatest Security.



PROV. X. 9.

He that walketh uprightly, walketh surely.



IN all the vastly different Designs that men are carrying on in the World, and in all the variety of means which they make use of to pursue those different Designs; the great care and business of their lives, the subject of all their thoughts and consultations, is how to secure that which they esteem their *chief* interest, and how to pursue it upon the surest grounds.

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S E R M. He that can best order his affairs so, that
 XIII. notwithstanding all the hazards he must
 necessarily run, and all the disappointments he must probably meet withal, yet in the end he succeeds in his *main* design; is generally reputed a prudent and wise man: And if the ends which he pursues, be indeed as commendable, as the means which he makes use of are proper to those ends; then he really *is*, what he is reputed to be, a truly wise person. Now the great and ultimate End which all men in general pursue, and to which all other ends are but subordinate; is *Happiness*: And he that can so direct his life, that whatsoever becomes of all other concerns, yet he may be sure not to fail of this at last; acts the wisest and most prudent part that it is possible for him to act. How to accomplish *This* therefore; ought to be the great inquiry and study of our lives; the principal subject of our thoughts and meditations. *Solomon*, to whom God gave a wise and understanding heart, so that before him there was none like him, neither shall any like him arise after him; who

who had carefully considered and through-
 ly examined all things under the Sun; and
 was therefore most likely to give a true
 judgment of them; gives us *his* opi-
 nion of this whole matter in that affec-
 tionate conclusion of his book of *Eccle-
 siastes*; ch. xii. 13; *Let us hear the con-
 clusion of the whole matter; Fear God and
 keep his Commandments, for This is the
 whole; the whole duty, and the whole
 Happiness of man*; This is that alone,
 which will carry him securely through
 the world, and lead him without error
 to his final Happiness. Agreeable to which
 are the words of the Text; *He that walk-
 eth uprightly, walketh surely*. I shall first
 explain the words briefly; and then en-
 deavour to prove the Truth of the asser-
 tion therein contained.

Now, *walking*, in Scripture stile, signifies,
 by an easy metaphor, the course of our Lives.
 Thus, *walking honestly* or *deceitfully*, *walk-
 ing* in light, in darkness, and the like; is
 nothing else but *living* righteously or wick-
 edly, behaving a man's self honestly or
 deceitfully in the world. Thus of *Enoch*
 it

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SER M. it is said that he walked *with God*, Gen. v. 24 ; that is, he *lived* piously and in the fear of God : And of *Noah*, Gen. vi. 9 ; *Noah was a just man, and perfect in his generation, and Noah walked with God* ; the meaning is, he did not engage himself in the Sins of the people among whom he lived ; but, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, obeyed the commandments of his God. On the contrary, *he that hateth his brother*, saith St *John*, I Joh. ii. 11, *is in darkness, and walketh in darkness* ; that is, he is no good Christian, but goes on in a sinful course of life. In like manner in St *Paul's* exhortation to the *Romans*, ch. xiii. ver. 13 ; *Let us walk honestly as in the day* ; that is, let us *live* and behave ourselves honestly, as becometh such, who enjoy the Light of the Gospel of Christ ; And in the words of the Text ; *he that walketh, i. e. that lives, uprightly*. The word which we render *uprightly*, signifies *in perfection* or *with integrity* ; and denotes most properly, *Honesty and Sincerity of intention* : So that *he that liveth uprightly*, is he who
in

in the general course of his life bears a constant regard to God and his commandments; so as not to be prevailed upon by any interest or passion to undertake any thing, but what may conduce to the glory of God and his own future happiness, or at least not be inconsistent with those two great ends. To *walk surely*, is to be in a safe condition; to be out of danger of falling into any extreme calamity; and to have our main interest so secured, that, notwithstanding whatever may happen for a time, yet our great and chief designs shall certainly succeed happily in the end. The sum therefore of the wise man's assertion, is briefly this; He that in the whole course of his life acts sincerely and justly, with a continual respect to the Reason of things, and to the law of God; that carries on all his undertakings by fair and equitable means, avoiding all frauds and deceits, all base and unworthy practices; This man takes the wisest and surest course to succeed in all his designs, respecting either his present or his future Happiness. Having thus briefly explained the words, I
come

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S E R M. come now in the second place to prove the  
 XIII. Truth of the assertion; and That I shall  
 endeavour to do from these three con-  
 siderations; 1<sup>st</sup>, That the upright man  
*begins* to act, or *sets out* upon the best and  
 surest grounds; 2<sup>dly</sup>, That in the conti-  
 nuance and whole course of his affairs, he  
 has the greatest probability not to fall  
 into any considerable Disappointment or  
 Calamity; and 3<sup>dly</sup>, That in the end  
 and last issue of things, he has the ut-  
 most security, whatever disappointments  
 he may before meet with, that his designs  
 shall then be crowned with the most per-  
 fect Success.

I. *First*; T H E upright man *begins* to  
 act, or *sets out* upon the best and surest  
 grounds. To the undertaking and prose-  
 cuting any design upon good grounds, it  
 is requisite, 1<sup>st</sup>, That the Reasons upon  
 which a man undertakes it, be firm and  
 stable, and such as will not change;  
 2<sup>dly</sup>, That he be well assured that the  
 way he intends to go, will lead him right  
 to that end; and 3<sup>dly</sup>, That he be sure  
 not to mistake that way. Now in all  
 these

these respects the upright man evidently S E R M.  
begins to act, or sets out upon the best XIII.  
and most sure grounds : For 

1<sup>st</sup>, T H E reasons upon which he enters into such a course of life, are firm and stable, and which will never change. That there is a God, who as he created all things by the word of his power, so he upholds and governs them by his all-wise Providence ; that this Supreme Being takes notice of the lives and actions of men ; and, according to their different works, will reward or punish them, either in the present or in a future state ; That there is a natural and unchangeable Difference between Good and Evil ; by choosing of which respectively, we therefore render ourselves acceptable in the sight of God, or necessarily fall under his anger and displeasure ; That true peace and content of mind can arise only from Sincerity and Innocence of life, as Horror and Anguish will certainly accompany sin and guilt ; lastly, That all the real Happiness of this world, consists only in that quiet and peace of mind, and

S E R M. the joyful assurance of the favour of God,  
 XIII. as all its real misery does in a guilty and  
 troubled conscience, and the fearful expectation of the revelation of the wrath and righteous judgment of God: These are some of the reasons, upon which the upright man chooses his course of life. As impossible therefore as it is for God not to be, or not to govern the world; as impossible as it is for that supreme Governour of the Universe, not to take notice of the lives and actions of men, and according to their different works to reward or punish them for them; as impossible as it is for the difference of Good and Evil to cease, and for impiety to become acceptable in the sight of God; lastly, as impossible as it is for sincerity and innocence of life, to fail of procuring true peace of mind; or wickedness, of causing horror, anguish, and despair; so impossible is it for the reasons, upon which the upright man chooses his course of life, to cease or alter. *Hence* his resolutions become firm and unvariable, in all the vicissitudes of Time and Fortune; and



and no storm can make him waver from his main purpose, because his hopes and expectations are founded upon a Rock, whose foundations are deeper than those of Heaven and Earth. He is not liable to those doubts and misgivings, those fears and anxieties, that uncertainty and sollicitude, which is the endless uneasiness of other men's lives; because he is infallibly certain that he acts upon good grounds, and that the reasons he goes upon are permanent and unalterable. The reasons upon which *worldly* men choose the crooked paths of Deceit and Wickedness, are either absolutely false, and such as have no real Being at all; or at least such as cease and *alter* perpetually with the circumstances and casualties of Time; leaving them to repent, of having grounded their actions upon a foundation, which they knew not how soon the next storm might wash away. They who go on in a course of Sin, upon the hopes of impunity *here*, and some slight arguments against the certainty of a state of recompence *hereafter*; do for the most part *here*,

S E R M. but without fail *hereafter*, find that the  
 XIII. ground they went upon, was absolutely  
 false. They who upon This imagination, that sensual pleasure is their chief good, make That the only object of their hopes and endeavours; do find in Age or Sickness that they were totally mistaken; and that the remembrance of those pleasures, whereof they thought the enjoyment their only happiness, is indeed a more real and lasting Misery. They who upon an opinion that Riches are their chief happiness, prosecute the design of growing wealthy, by all the indirect means of fraud and deceit, of unrighteousness and over-reaching their neighbours; do very seldom enjoy that satisfaction long, before they become sensible, that they had not sufficient reason, to make shipwreck of a good conscience for its sake. Honour, Passion, Humour, and the like, are still far weaker and more mutable grounds of action; so that he who is guided by *them*, must needs be *wavering* and unstable in all his ways, *like a ship tossed about with every blast of wind*; Jam. i. 6.

But

But now he that upon the forementioned S E R M.  
 grounds walks in the streight paths of up- XIII.  
 rightness and sincerity, is sure that the  
 reasons he goes upon are true, and that  
 they are eternally and unchangeably so.

2dly, As the Reasons upon which the  
 upright man acts, are firm and stable,  
 and such as will never change; so he is  
 well assured that the way he resolves to  
 walk in, will lead him directly to his in-  
 tended end. For, both by the natural  
 Tendency of things, (as I shall presently  
 have occasion more particularly to ex-  
 plain,) has he the best probableness of  
 Success *at present*; and by the promise  
 of God he is infallibly ascertained, that  
 at least *finally* he shall not fail of being  
 happy *hereafter*: Whereas, on the con-  
 trary, in the ways of unrighteousness and  
 iniquity, ambitious and covetous men,  
 who for the obtaining of Riches or Plea-  
 sure make use of sinful and indirect means,  
 do not only find that the reasons upon  
 which they prosecute those designs by  
 such means, are weak and false, but also  
 very often that those means *themselves*

S E R M. are insufficient to obtain those ends. For  
 XIII. besides that they are never sure but God  
 may blast their designs by some peculiar  
 Providence, as he very frequently does; Besides this, I say, how often do they fall into *dishonour* by those *very* indirect means, by which they were endeavouring to raise themselves to *honour*; and by a discovery of their Fraud and Injustice, deprive themselves wholly of that very profit, which they designed to gain more expeditiously, as they imagined, by those shorter methods of Unrighteousness? The upright man has both the promise of God and the natural constitution of things, to secure him from failing in his great designs; than which what greater security can be desired? But of this more fully when I come to show, that the upright man in the continuance of his course has the greatest probability not to fall into any considerable disappointment, or at least, whatever disappointments he may before meet with, that yet at the final upshot of things, he shall be sure to be crowned with the most compleat Success: Wherefore

3dly, As the upright man is well assured that the way he intends to walk in, will lead him right to his designed end; so he is very certain that he shall not mistake that way. The paths of Virtue and Righteousness are plain and streight; so that the blind, *i. e.* persons of the meanest capacity, with an upright intention, shall not err therein. The ways of iniquity and injustice, of fraud and deceit, are infinitely various and uncertain; full of intricate mazes, perplexity, and obscurity: It requires great skill and industry to find out such methods of over-reaching our neighbours, as will have any probability of success; it requires much study and intentness, to manage the design to the best advantage; and it cannot but cause much sollicitude of mind, to be always in fear of being disappointed by a discovery. How many do we meet with in the world, who (out of a greedy desire of a little greater gain) endeavouring to over-reach and deceive their neighbours, have for want of laying their contrivances cunningly enough, and managing

S E R M. them with secrecy and advantage, fallen  
 XIII. short of that gain which they might  
 without farther trouble have gotten in the  
 plain way of Honesty and Uprightness?  
 But now Uprightness and Sincerity is a  
 plain and a smooth road; and though  
 perhaps not always the shortest way to  
 Riches and Honour; yet he that keeps  
 constantly on in this path, is surer not to  
 mistake his way and lose himself, than  
 he that climbs over rocks and precipices  
 in hopes of coming sooner to his jour-  
 ney's end. The upright man lays no pro-  
 jects which it is the interest of his neigh-  
 bour to hinder from succeeding; and  
 therefore he needs no indirect methods,  
 no fraudulent and deceitful practices, to  
 secure his own Interest by undermining  
 his neighbour's: He frames no designs,  
 (if he be in a *private* station,) which  
 depend much upon Secrecy for success;  
 and therefore he is not in a continual an-  
 xiety and sollicitude of mind, lest a dis-  
 covery should make them prove abortive.  
 In a word, as the ways of Iniquity are  
 rough and slippery, dark and crooked,  
 intricate

intricate and perplexing; so the paths of SERM.  
Uprightness are clear and even, plain and XIII.  
direct, that the wayfaring men, though  
fools, shall not err therein. *The way of  
the wicked, saith Solomon, is as darkness,  
they know not at what they stumble; But  
the path of the just is as the shining light,  
that shineth more and more unto the perfect  
day; Prov. iv. 18, 19.* And This of the  
1st thing I proposed, namely, that the  
upright man *begins* to act, or sets out  
upon the best and surest grounds.

II. *Secondly*; IN the *continuance* and  
whole course of his affairs, he has the  
greatest probability not to fall into any  
considerable disappointment or calamity.  
And that for these two reasons. 1st, Be-  
cause the way of Uprightness is in itself  
freest from danger, and, according to the  
natural constitution of things, least liable  
to misfortunes and Disappointments; and  
2dly, Because it is moreover guarded and  
protected, by the peculiar favour and  
providence of God. *Prov. iv. 11, 12; I  
have taught thee in the way of Wisdom,  
I have led thee in right paths: When thou  
goest,*

S E R M.  
XIII.

*goest, thy steps shall not be straitned; and when thou runnest, thou shalt not stumble.*

That the way of Uprightness is in itself freest from danger, and, according to the natural constitution of things, least liable to misfortune and disappointments; must needs be confessed, by every one that considers the nature of things, the general causes of men's miseries and calamities, and the true and natural tendency of Uprightness and Sincerity. If the constitution of things be evidently such, that the Society of mankind and the Peace of the world cannot possibly be maintained without some degree of Faith and Sincerity amongst men; and that the less of this Uprightness there be found in the world, so much the nearer things draw to confusion and dissolution: If the general causes of mens misfortunes and disappointments, lie manifestly in their own Irregularities and Disorders; and the ruine of most men be evidently owing, to their own deceitful and indirect practices: as (I think) it cannot be denied to be: Then is Uprightness undeniably the securest



curest and least dangerous course. If the securing our good name and reputation in the world; if the gaining the generality of mankind, the best and wisest of them at least, to be our friends; if the making our *private* interest the same with the *publick*, and founding the hopes of our *own* advantages not on the *ruin* but *prosperity* of our *neighbours*; be the likeliest way to prosper in the world; then has Uprightness clearly the advantage. For, what certainer method can a man take, to secure his credit and reputation, than to do nothing, but what the *more* nicely and exactly it be scanned, the greater approbation it will be sure to receive? And what better and more effectual means can a man make use of, to secure to himself lasting and beneficial Friendships; than *to lead an uncorrupted life, and to do the thing which is right, and speak the truth from his heart; to use no deceit in his tongue, nor do evil to his neighbour; but to swear to his neighbour, and disappoint him not, though it be to his own hindrance;* as it is expressed, *Psal. xv. ver. 2, 3, 5.*

BUT

S E R M. BUT farther; as Uprightness is *in itself*  
 XIII. the safest and least dangerous course; so is it  
 moreover guarded by the peculiar favour  
 and providence of God. He that lives up-  
 rightly, in a constant and sincere regard to  
 all God's commands; is an immediate Ser-  
 vant and Imitator of God; a Promoter of his  
 glory, and of the establishment of his King-  
 dom upon Earth: And besides that it is the  
 nature of infinite Goodness to delight in the  
 prosperity of his Servants; and to make  
 those persons partakers of his *happiness*,  
 who have endeavoured to be like him in  
*holiness* and purity; he has moreover ob-  
 liged himself by innumerable promises in  
 Scripture, *That those who trust in him, shall*  
*be safe under the shadow of his wings, i. e.*  
 under his Almighty protection. *He that*  
*hath clean hands and a pure heart, who*  
*hath not lift up his soul unto vanity, nor*  
*sworn deceitfully; he shall receive the*  
 *blessing from the Lord, and righteousness*  
*from the God of his salvation; Ps. xxiv.*  
 ver. 4 and 5. And *Pf. xv*; the Royal pro-  
 phet having given a particular description  
 of a just and upright man through the  
 whole

whole *Pſalm*, concludes all with theſe S E R M. words, *He that doth theſe things ſhall never fall*; or, as we elſewhere render it, *ſhall never be moved*. XIII. Which words are thus paraphraſed by the Prophet *Iſaiab*, ch. xxxiii. ver. 15, 16; *He that walketh righteouſly, and ſpeaketh uprightly; he that deſpiſeth the gain of oppreſſions; that ſhaketh his hands from holding of bribes; that ſtoppeth his Ears from hearing of blood, and ſhutteth his eyes from ſeeing evil; He ſhall dwell on high; his place of defence ſhall be the munitions of rocks; his bread ſhall be given him, his water ſhall be ſure:* The meaning is; he that is juſt and righteous in all his dealings, ſhall by the favourable protection of the Divine Providence, as by an impregnable fortrefs, be defended againſt all extreme calamities. Whether God does this by inclining the hearts of men to be favourable to thoſe that are truly and ſincerely good, as the Scripture ſeems ſometime to intimate, as when he is ſaid to have ſtirred up the heart of *Cyrus* King of *Persia* to make a proclamation for the rebuilding of *Jeruſalem*,

S E R M. *salem*, and to have given *Nebemiab* favour  
 XIII. in the eyes of *Artaxerxes*, and *Daniel* in  
 the eyes of *Darius*, and *Joseph* in the  
 sight of the *Egyptians*, and the like; or  
 whether he does it by so disposing the  
 operations of second causes, as to defeat  
 the designs of the wicked, and make all  
 things work together for good to them  
 that fear him; we need not now inquire.  
 That he does some way interpose to pre-  
 serve and protect the righteous, is a most  
 certain truth, and the Scripture every  
 where attests it and confirms it by exam-  
 ples. It is said of *David*, and the whole  
 course of his life sufficiently demonstrates  
 it, *that the Lord preserved him whitherso-*  
*ever he went*; 2 Sam. viii. 6. But not  
 to instance in particulars, the whole *Jewish*  
 Nation are an eminent and continued  
 example of this, as will appear to any  
 one who reads the History of that people  
 from the coming out of *Egypt* to their  
 final captivity in *Babylon*. In like manner  
 that in the Primitive times a few weak and  
 resistless Christians, should bear up against  
 the united force and counsel of the Ro-

*man* Empire ; a few weak and good men, against the open violence of lawless and outrageous oppressors ; nay that they should thrive and prosper, increase and multiply, whilst their adversaries by apparent judgments or secret curses dwindled away and perished ; is a thing not to be conceived without the immediate interposition of the divine Providence. It is true indeed, that now under the Gospel dispensation, wherein life and immortality are more clearly brought to light, and the rewards and punishments of virtue or vice more expressly referred to a future state, God seems not to concern himself in such a peculiar manner, and by such remarkable providences to secure the prosperity of good men in this world, as he did formerly under the Mosaical dispensation ; The way of virtue seems now to be more accompanied with danger, and to lie more open to the misfortunes and calamities of the world ; and it must be confessed that good men are now more frequently persecuted, and oftner given up into the hands of their enemies, and delivered to  
the

S E R M. XIII. the will of their merciless oppressors: But yet certainly it is still true, that the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and that his Providence still watches over them for good; 'Tis still true, that Godliness hath the promise of this life as well as of that which is to come; and excepting the single case of persecution for religion, I believe it is still certain in experience, that upright and religious men do more generally in the whole course of their lives thrive and prosper in their worldly concerns, and meet with fewer calamities and disappointments, than such as endeavour to enrich themselves by sinister and indirect means. Excepting, I say, the case of persecution for religion: For in that case indeed, I do not see how religious men can be said to have the advantage in this world, when *St Paul* himself confesses, *that if in this life only they had hope, they were of all men the most miserable*; 1 Cor. xv. 19. Therefore One case it must be confessed there is, wherein pious and sincere persons *cannot* indeed enjoy the benefit of these promises; And that

that is, in the case of persecution for religion: But then in That case, their comfort is, that their hope is not only in this Life: They have a joyful expectation of a future and a better state; and That expectation is many times so glorious and so comfortable, as to make them evidently more happy, even under the severest Persecutions, than their persecutors are in their greatest splendour and glory. And this I suppose is that which our Saviour intends, when he promises that there shall be no one *who shall leave father, or mother, or wife, or children, or houses, or lands for his sake and the Gospel's, who shall not in this world receive an hundred fold,* that is, such comfortable assistance and joy in the Holy Ghost, as infinitely exceeds all worldly enjoyments. Thus the upright man through the whole course of his life, from his first beginning to act, to the time of his departure out of this world, has evidently in all respects the advantage over the wicked. How much more *at and after* death will he appear to have chosen infinitely the wisest part? And this is the

S E R M.

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III. *Third* thing I propos'd to show ; namely, That in the *End* and last issue of things, the upright man has the utmost security, whatever disappointments he may before meet withal, that his designs shall then be crowned with the most perfect Success. It is the event and final issue of things, that determincs the wisdom or folly of any action. Many undertakings may seem wise or foolish, to him that looks no farther than the present ; which to another, who can foresee the end of things, may have a very different aspect. *David* when he considered the present prosperity of the Wicked, without looking any further ; was very much shaken in mind, and almost tempted to pronounce their condition happy ; but when he went into the temple of God, and considered the end of those men, he saw good reason to alter his opinion, and wonder at the short-sightedness of his former judgment. He that renounces his title to a large estate in reversion, for some very small and inconsiderable present advantage, may to heedless persons seem to make a



wiser bargain, than he who parts with some present advantages for good security of far greater ones to come. But whoever can look to the end of things, when time shall bring That to be present which is now remote, and shall represent it in its true value; will see that this other makes so much the wiser choice, as the future advantage is greater than the present. Now This, and generally much *more* unequal than this, is the case between the righteous man and the wicked. For, the righteous man secures to himself his *eternal* Interest, and yet at the same time runs no greater hazard of his *temporal*, than the wicked man does; whereas on the contrary the wicked man, without at all securing his *temporal* Happiness, forfeits for nothing his title to that which is *eternal*. But more particularly; The upright man will at the *end* appear to have chosen the wiser course,

1<sup>st</sup>, UPON account of that peace of conscience which will attend him, at the hour of death. *The work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteous-*

S E R M. *ness quietness and assurance for ever*; Isai.  
 XIII. xxxii. 17. When he looks back upon his  
 past life, and finds that in the general  
 course thereof he has with simplicity and  
 sincerity obeyed the dictates of his own  
 conscience; that his actions have not been  
 biaſſed by paſſion or appetite, by any mean,  
 unlawful, or private intereſt; but that he  
 has done all things in obedience to the  
 law of God; with a ſincere deſign of pro-  
 moting only the glory of God, the Wel-  
 fare of his Neighbour, and his own true  
 and eternal Intereſt; in a word, that  
 whatever *particular* infirmities he may  
 have been guilty of, yet the *main*, the  
*general*, the *prevailing* deſign of his life,  
 has always been upright and ſincere; the  
 Reſult of this, muſt needs be ſuch a joy  
 and ſatiſfaction of mind, as is infinitely  
 preferable to all other pleaſures in the  
 world. He can look upon Death, that  
*King* of terrors to the wicked, to be to  
*Himſelf* a paſſage only into that ſtate,  
 where he is as ſure of being made happy,  
 as he *is* that true Holineſs is acceptable  
 to God, and cannot fail of being reward-

ed by him. This is the estate of a truly S E R M. sincere and righteous man at the hour of XIII. death. *Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright ; for the end of that man is peace ;* Ps. xxxvii. 37.

2dly, THE Wisdom of the upright man's choice, appears still *more* compleat, by considering the greatness of that Happiness which will attend him *after* Death ; a state of joy unspeakable and full of glory ; of glories, *which eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entred into the heart of man to conceive.* All the hope, all the possible ground, that a wicked man can proceed upon, is that vain and unreasonable surmize, that possibly there may be no such future state, no judgment, no Happiness, - no Misery to come : And were this his vain hope to prove true, 'tis manifest he could gain nothing by it more than the righteous, in that state where all things would be equally forgotten ; whereas if it proves false, he is miserable and undone for ever. On the contrary, the upright man's assurance is, that after this short and transi-

S E R M. tory life, there will succeed an eternal  
 XIII. state of Rewards and Punishments, where-  
 in God the righteous Judge shall render  
 to every man according to what he has  
 done in the flesh, whether it be good or  
 evil : And were this his hope to prove  
 false, it is evident he runs no hazard of  
 being more miserable than the wicked,  
 when Both were to *be* no more. But if  
 these things be true, (as he has all pos-  
 sible evidence that they are,) he is un-  
 speakably happy, and that for ever. And  
 is not this undeniably, walking most sure-  
 ly and most wisely ? Is not this, building  
 upon the strongest foundation ? As cer-  
 tainly as there *is* a God, and that That  
 God concerns himself in the government  
 of the world ; As certainly as Vice is  
 odious, and Virtue acceptable and well-  
 pleasing in his sight ; As certainly as  
 such a just God will reward those who  
 obey his Laws, and punish those who af-  
 front and despise them ; so certain is  
 it, that the upright man shall be justi-  
 fied and fully rewarded, at the final judg-  
 ment and decision of things ; in the day  
 when

when God shall judge the secrets of men S E R M.  
 by Jesus Christ. *The wicked worketh a* XIII.  
*deceitful work, but to him that soweth*  
*righteousness shall be a sure reward;* Prov.  
 xi. 18. What the upright man has *done*,  
 shall then be vindicated and approved;  
 and what he has *suffered*, shall be abundantly  
 made good; every thing shall then  
 be perfectly laid open, and exposed in its  
 true and proper light; Plainness and Sincerity,  
 shall then appear the most perfect  
 beauty; and the craftiness of men who  
 lie in wait to deceive, be stript of all  
 its colours; All specious pretences, all the  
 methods of deceit, shall then be disclosed  
 before men and angels; and no artifice,  
 no false colours, to conceal the deformity  
 of iniquity, shall there take place. In  
 a word, the ill-designing men of this  
 world shall then with shame be convinced,  
 that That upright Simplicity, which  
 they despised and derided, is the truest  
 Wisdom; and that those dishonest arts,  
 which they so highly esteemed, were in  
 reality the meerest Folly: Then shall it  
 appear, *that the Fear of the Lord,* That

S E R M. *only is Wisdom. and to depart from evil,*  
 XIII. *That alone is Understanding. And when*  
 they see the exaltation of the righteous in  
 that day they shall be forced to exclaim,  
 (as it is expressed in the vth of *Wisdom,*  
 ver. 4 and 5,) *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 !*





# SERMON XIV.

Religion consists in keeping the  
Commandments only.



REV. xxii. 14.

*Blessed are they that do his Commandments,  
that they may have Right to the Tree of  
Life.*



THE Books of Scripture ha-  
ving set before men, in the  
clearest Light, the *Command-*  
*ments of God*, as the *Rule of*  
*their Duty*; and the *Happi-*  
*ness* he has promised them, as the *Reward*  
*of their Obedience*; are, at the conclusion  
of

SERMON,  
XIV.

SERMON. of the Whole, closed up with this noble  
 XIV. *and majestick, as well as affectionate ex-*  
 ~~~~~  
clamation ; Blessed are they that do his
Commandments, that they may have Right
to the Tree of Life.

THE word, *Blessed*, is in This Place particularly *emphatical*; because it is the *Result* or *Conclusion* of a large and *distinct* description of the Happiness of Heaven, under the Similitude of a *City* whose *Streets* were *pure gold*, and her *Walls* and *Buildings* of *precious Stones*; In which the *Tabernacle* of *God* shall be fixt among *men*, and he shall dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and he shall be their *God*; And they shall see his *Face*, and his *Name* shall be in their *foreheads*; And *God* shall wipe away all tears from their *Eyes*, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away: And they shall be before the throne of *God*, and shall serve him day and night in his *Temple*: Day and Night, that is, continually; For there shall be No Night there; Neither need they the *Light* of the *Sun*;

Sun; for the Lord God giveth them Light, and they shall reign for ever and ever.

S E R M.


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Which *last* Circumstance, the Continuance of That happy State *for ever and ever*; is expressed still *more particularly*, by the *Tree of Life* being there; which yielded her Fruit every month, and the Leaves thereof were for the healing of the Nations. After this large and distinct description of the Happiness of Heaven, under such figures and similitudes, as set forth to us in much stronger Terms the Greatness of that Happiness, than any literal expressions could do; After This, I say, it is with the greatest *Emphasis*, and in the most moving and pathetic manner, that the *Result of the Whole* is, as it were by way of Inference or Application, summed up in the words of the Text; *Blessed are they that do his Commandments, that they may have Right to the Tree of Life, and may enter in through the Gates into the City.*

THE *Tree of Life* was the Ancient and Original Emblem of *Immortality*. *Gen. ii. 9; Out of the ground made the*
Lord

SERM. Lord God to grow every Tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for Food; the Tree of Life also in the midst of the garden. The Meaning is : God furnished our first parents in Paradise, with every thing that was needful to complete their Happiness; and, as the principal part of All, he put them in a possibility of obtaining Immortality, without passing through Death at all. Adam was not; (as some have, without Any ground from Scripture, imagined;) Our first parent, I say, was not created *actually immortal* : But he was created with a possibility of escaping Death, and of becoming immortal without ever dying. The Means by which Flesh and Blood was to have been preserved from mortality, to which it could not but be by nature subject; was the Use of the Tree of Life. This appears, Gen. iii. 22; *And now lest the man put forth his hand, and take also of the Tree of Life, and eat and live for ever; therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden.* The expression, *lest the man put forth his hand, and take of the Tree of Life, and eat,*

eat, and live for ever; shows plainly and SE R M.
undeniably, that Man was not created *na-* XIV.
turally immortal; but that, by the Use of 
the *Tree of Life*, (whatever is implied un-
der That expression,) he was to have been
preserved from dying. By *Sin*, our first
parent forfeited this high Privilege; being
from thenceforth justly excluded out of the
Paradise of God, and put out of the reach
of the *Tree of Life*. That is; He was,
by the righteous sentence of God, left sub-
ject to That Mortality which in the
course of Nature must necessarily and un-
avoidably come upon *Him* and his *Poste-*
rity, when they were no longer suffered
to have recourse to This miraculous Means
of being preserved from Death. And
This is the meaning of that figurative ex-
pression, *Gen. iii. 24*; *The Lord God*
placed Cherubims and a flaming Sword, to
keep the way of the Tree of Life: Man,
being excluded out of Paradise, had no
longer any possibility of escaping That
Death, to which the natural mortality, in
which he was created, made him necessa-
rily Subject.

BUT

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BUT though from henceforth there was no more possibility of escaping Death; it being irreversibly appointed for all men once to die: yet through the redemption purchased for us by Christ, we are now restored to a possibility of obtaining That immortality *after* Death, which our first Parent had in his Power to have obtained *without dying*. And this bringing again of *Life and Immortality to Light* through the Gospel, is in the *New Testament* elegantly set forth by the same Ancient Emblem, the *Tree of Life*. Rev. ii. 7; *He that hath an Ear, (he that is unprejudiced) let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches; To him that overcometh, will I give to eat of the Tree of Life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.* Chap. xxii. 2; *In the midst of the Street was the Tree of Life, which yielded her Fruit every month; and the Leaves of the Tree were for the Healing of the Nations.* And again, in the words of the Text, at the conclusion of the whole Book; *Blessed are they that do his Commandments, that they may have Right to the Tree of Life.*

THE

THE word, which we render, may have *Right*; is, in the Original, may have *Power*; may have free *Admission*: As, 2 *Pet.* i. 11; *So an Entrance shall be ministred unto you abundantly, into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.* But had the word been literally, as we translate it, may have *Right*; yet even so, the expression would have afforded no foundation to the *Romish* Doctrine of *Merit*. For *Merit* signifies such a claim of *Right*, as is founded upon a *natural proportion* between the *Work* and the *Reward*. But *such a Right*, as arises merely from the performance of certain *Conditions*, to which *Conditions* there is freely annexed a *Reward*, Great and infinitely disproportionate to the *Conditions* performed; *such a Right*, I say, does not at all diminish from the *Reward's* being merely a *Free Gift*. God has been pleased freely, of his mere *Grace* and *Bounty*, without Any original obligation, to promise eternal *Life* to them that obey him. *Obedience* was our indispensable *Duty*, whether he had made any such *Promise*,

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S E R M. Promise, or no : And when we have obeyed his Will to the best of our Power; we have still *merited* nothing at his hands, more than barely the escaping of Punishment; having done only what was our Duty to do. Nevertheless, God having been graciously pleased to annex to such Obedience the Promise of eternal Life; from That Promise there does arise, to such as perform the Conditions, a *Right* to the Reward: Which *Right*, at the same time, has nothing of *Merit* in it; because That very *Right itself* is founded entirely on such a *Free Gift*, as God was under No obligation of having bestowed at all.

T H E *Last* phrase to be considered in the Text, is, that of *Doing his Commandments*: Blessed are they, that *Do his Commandments*. Concerning which phrase, there needs *This only* to be observed; that it is emphatically expressive of that righteousness or virtuous Practice, which is the Essence and the End of true Religion. And to That of *St John*, 1 Joh. iii. 7; *Little children, let no man deceive*

*deceive you ; he that doth righteousness, is* S E R M.  
*righteous : And of St Paul, Rom. ii. 13 ;* XIV.  
*Not the Hearers of the Law are just be-*  
*fore God, but the Doers of the Law shall*  
*be justified.*

HAVING thus given a particular explanation of the several *Phrases* made use of in the Text ; The *general Doctrinal Observation* arising now naturally from the Whole, is This : That Whatever else, besides *keeping the Commandments of God* in the course of a virtuous and good Life, according to the Rules delivered in the Gospel ; goes among vain men under the Name and Character of Religion, and is weakly and superstitiously valued or esteemed as such, is All of it Errour and Deceit. Let no man deceive us with vain words : For *Blessed are They* only, *who Do his Commandments, that they may have Right to the Tree of Life.*

THE *Errours* contrary to this great and fundamental Truth, and which consequently subvert the Whole Design of Christianity, are such as follow.

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Ist, SOME have imagined themselves entitled to the Rewards of the Gospel, merely upon account of their *professing* themselves *Christians*; and of their observing certain outward Forms, Rites and Ceremonies, by which they think *Christians* distinguish themselves from those of other denominations. Just as the *Jews* of old, esteemed themselves the peculiar People and Favourites of God, merely on account of their being descended from the Patriarch *Abraham*, and distinguished as such by Circumcision. But, in like manner as St *Paul* argued against such foolish *Jews*, *Rom. ix. 6*; that they were not all *Israel*, which were of *Israel*; Neither because they were the Seed of *Abraham*, were they all children; For that they which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God, but the children of the Promise are counted for the Seed: And *ch. iv. 12*; that *Abraham* was the Father, not to them of the circumcision only, but to Them also that walk in the Steps of the Faith of our father *Abraham*: And *ch. ii. 28*; that he is not a *Jew*



*Jew which is one outwardly, but he* ----- *which is one inwardly; and that Circumcision is that of the Heart, in the Spirit, and not in the letter: So our Saviour, in the very same manner, and with the same plainness and earnestness, argues against such Christians as valued themselves merely upon their Profession, Matt. vii. 21; Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but he that doth the will of my Father which is in Heaven. Vain men, who have no true Sense of Virtue and real Goodness, are apt to imagine, that professing themselves Christians, and being diligent perhaps in certain external Forms and Ceremonies of religion; is being In Christ, being members of his Body, and received (as it were) into the Ark of Christ's Church. But the Scripture on the contrary expressly declares, that no man is in Christ, (whatever his Profession be, and whatever his zeal for any outward Performances may be,) if he is not a new Creature, if he is not effectually reformed in his life and manners, 2 Cor. v. 17; and*

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that, except a man be *born of the Spirit*, as well as of *Water*, he cannot enter into the *Kingdom of God*. Blessed therefore are they, (not, who profess his religion, but) who *Do his Commandments*, that they may have *Right to the Tree of Life*.

2dly; OTHERS have conceived, that undoubtedly All the Promises in the Gospel belonged to *Them*; because they have, *not only professed the Religion of Christ*, but have been *eminent also and conspicuous* in his Church; have been endued perhaps with *Great Gifts and Abilities*, with *Great Power and Authority*; and have with *Zeal* promoted the temporal Establishment and Dignity of the *Christian Name* upon Earth. But This also our Saviour admonishes us carefully to distinguish, from That *Virtue and Righteousness of Life*, That *Justice and Goodness*, That *Meekness, Temperance and Charity*; which alone will at the day of Judgment be accepted unto eternal Life. *Matt. vii. 22; Many will say to me in That day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy Name, and in thy Name have cast out Devils, and*

*in thy Name done many wonderful Works? SERM.  
And then will I profess unto them: I never XIV.  
knew you; Depart from Me ye that work  
Iniquity. There shall be weeping and gnash-  
ing of Teeth, when ye shall see ---- your- Luke xiii.  
selves thrust out: And others shall come 28.  
from the East and from the West, and from  
the North and from the South, (men of  
true virtue, piety and charity, out of all  
Nations under Heaven,) and shall sit down  
in the Kingdom of God. The same Notion  
is again, with great emphasis, expressed by  
our Lord to his Disciples; when at their  
returning to him with Joy upon the De-  
vils being subject unto them through his  
Name, he thus admonishes them, Luke x.  
19; Behold, I give unto you Power ----  
over All the Power of the Enemy; ----  
Notwithstanding, in This rejoice not, that  
the Spirits are subject unto you; but rather  
rejoice, because your Names are written in  
Heaven: Written in Heaven; That is,  
Not, by an absolute, unalterable and un-  
conditionate Decree; (for, him that sinneth  
against me, saith God, will I blot out of  
my Book; and, of Transgressors, They shall*

S E R M. *not, says he, be written in the Writing of*  
 XIV. *my People;)* But, having *their Names*  
 written in Heaven, signifies, being approved and accepted of God, upon account of their sincere *Love of Truth*, and *Practice of Virtue*. *Blessed are they*, (not, who have Great extraordinary *Gifts* and *Abilities*; not, who have perhaps Great *Eminence* and *Authority*; not, who are endued with *Power*, even to *work Miracles*; But *blessed are they*,) *who* in the sincere *Practice of Universal Virtue* and *Charity*, *Do his Commandments, that they may have Right to the Tree of Life*.

3dly; O T H E R S there are, who have esteemed and valued themselves upon a fanciful and Enthusiastick *Knowledge* of Christ; as if by certain unaccountable fond *Notions*, and *Expressions* of imaginary *Love* towards him, they could obtain his personal *Favour* and *Affection*. This groundless *Conceit*, the *Apostle St John* cuts up by the *Roots*, 1 *Job*, ii. 3; *Hereby*, saith he, (by *This One way* only, in opposition to all enthusiastick imaginations whatsoever; *Hereby* only) *do we know*

know that we know him, if we keep his S E R M.  
Commandments; He that saith, I know XIV.  
him, and keepeth not his Commandments, is  
a Liar, and the Truth is not in him; But  
whoso keepeth his word, in Him verily is the  
Love of God perfected. Were Any Other  
Knowledge or Love of Christ, besides This  
One which expresses itself in doing his  
Commandments; Were (I say) Any Other  
Knowledge or Love of Christ, of Any Use  
or Value; most reasonably might it have  
been expected to have been of Advantage  
to Those, who personally conversed with  
him here upon Earth, and saw his Glory,  
and heard the gracious Words of his  
Mouth. Yet concerning some of These,  
who heard him (it seems,) but did not  
Do what he said; but valued themselves  
however, upon their personal familiarity  
with him; we find him declaring, *Luk. xiii.*  
*26; Then shall ye begin to say, We have*  
*eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou*  
*hast taught in our Streets; But he shall*  
*say, I tell you, I know you not whence*  
*you are; depart from Me, all ye Workers of*  
*Iniquity.* Nay, even with regard to his

S E R M. *own Disciples, who so saw and heard him,*  
 XIV. *as to believe and obey his Word; and to*  
 whom he had himself declared, *Matt. xiii.*  
*16; Blessed are your Eyes, for they see;*  
*and your Ears, for they hear: For verily*  
*I say unto you, that many Prophets and*  
*Righteous men have desired to see those things*  
*which Ye see, and have not seen them; and*  
*to hear those things which Ye hear, and*  
*have not heard them: Even with regard to*  
 These very Disciples, that This Blessed-  
 ness of Theirs might not be placed upon  
 a mistaken foot, he says, *Blessed* (that is,  
*more blessed,)* *are they that have not seen,*  
*and yet have believed. Nay, still further;*  
*When one said unto him, Matt. xii. 47;*  
*Behold, thy Mother and thy Brethren stand*  
*without, desiring to speak with thee; He*  
*answered, Who is my Mother, and Who are*  
*my Brethren? And stretching forth his*  
*hands towards his Disciples, he said, Be-*  
*hold my Mother and my Brethren; For*  
*whosoever shall do the Will of my Father*  
*which is in Heaven, the same is my Bro-*  
*ther, and Sister, and Mother. And when*  
 a Woman among the Multitude, admiring

Joh. xx.  
29.

at the Wisdom and Goodness of his Dis-  
course, lift up her voice, and said, *Bles-*  
*sed is the Womb that bare thee, and the*  
*Paps which thou hast sucked*; immediately  
he replied, *Yea rather, Blessed are they*  
*that bear the word of God, and keep it.*  
They of the Church of Rome, who are  
so apt to place I know not what imagina-  
ry virtue, in the *Blood*, and *Relicks*, and  
*Bones* of Dead *Saints*; would do well to  
consider, how little Virtue our Saviour  
here declares there was, in having born  
the nearest relation even to his *Own Living*  
*Body*. And they who flatter themselves  
with the Great Benefits they hope to reap  
by paying forbidden Honours and Will-  
worship to the *Blessed Virgin*, should ob-  
serve how our Lord, as it were on purpose  
to prevent All Superstition of That kind,  
seems, not only upon Other occasions, to  
affect in *general* to speak with small regard  
to her, *Woman, what have I to do with*  
*Thee*; but moreover, in the passage now  
before us, he seems to diminish expressly  
and in *particular*, that which is the  
whole foundation of the Honour they  
would

S E R M.

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Luke xi.

27.

S E R M. would desire to pay her, he seems ( I say )  
 XIV. expressly to diminish the Value even of  
 the *Relation* she stood in to *Him himself*.  
*Relation*, comparatively speaking, he would  
 allow no one to bear to *Him* ; any other-  
 wise than as they were, *with Him*, Ob-  
 servers of his Father's Commandments.  
 This was the Great Bond, of Unity and  
 Affection; and in it, all *Other* affinity  
 2 Cor. v. was entirely swallowed up. *Henceforth*,  
 16. saith St Paul, *know we no man after the  
 Flesh ; yea though we have known Christ  
 [ himself ] after the flesh, yet now hence-  
 forth know we him no more : There is Now,  
 Col. iii. neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor  
 11. uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond  
 nor free ; but Christ, ( Obedience to the  
 Gal. v. 6. Gospel of Christ, ) is all, and in all : And  
 1 Cor. vii. In Christ, Circumcision is nothing, and Un-  
 19. circumcision is nothing, ( Forms and Ce-  
 remonies of all other distinctions are no-  
 thing, ) but the keeping the Commandments  
 of God. And to the same Purpose it is,  
 that our Lord tells his Disciples, *Joh. xvi.*  
*7 ; I tell you the Truth ; it is expedient  
 for you that I go away ; For --- if I de-  
 part,**




*part, I will send the Comforter unto you.* His Meaning is, that the *spiritual* Gifts and Graces worked in men by the Assistance of the Holy Ghost, and bringing forth the Fruits of Righteousness and sincere Obedience, bring Men nearer to Christ, and unite them to him in a truer and more strict Alliance, than even conversing with Himself personally upon Earth *according to the Flesh*. Blessed therefore are they, (not who fancy they converse with Christ by enthusiastick imaginations, but) *who Do his Commandments, that they may have Right to the Tree of Life.*

S E R M.  
XIV.  


4thly; OTHERS have imagined, that by *laying hold on Christ* with a *strong and confident Faith*, they might secure to themselves the *Salvation* which he has purchased for his Followers. But though very great things are indeed spoken concerning *Faith* in Scripture, as *That* by which we are *saved*; yet these persons do not consider, that all the commendations There given to *Faith*, are constantly of the same kind with That given to a *Root*  
or

SERMON. of *Tree*, which beareth excellent *Fruit*.

XIV.  The *Root*, or *Tree*, is excellent ; *because* it brings forth good *Fruit*, and *because* the *Fruit* cannot be brought forth *without it* : But it is valuable for *no other* reason, but for bringing forth such *Fruit* ; and whenever it fails of so doing, it is of *no value* at all. Most properly and justly therefore, does our Saviour direct us to judge of a *Tree by its Fruit* : And *Blessed* does the Text pronounce, not Them who *fancy* they have a *strong Faith* in him, but Them *who Do his Commandments*, that *they may have Right to the Tree of Life*.

5thly; OTHERS depend that they shall be saved, by relying *on the Merits of Christ*, instead of *obeying his Laws*. Not considering, that the Merits of Christ were never intended to *supply Their Want of Repentance and Amendment*, but to *render their Repentance acceptable unto Pardon*. And so far was our Lord from ever giving encouragement to any such Notion as This, of wicked mens obtaining Salvation by relying on *His Merits*, without amend-  
ing

ing their *own* lives; that on the contrary S E R M.  
he expressly and with great earnestness XIV.  
warns his Disciples, that, not by vainly  
and carelessly *relying upon* Him, were they  
to expect Salvation, but by *Doing*, (as He  
had taught them) *the Will of his Father*  
*which is in Heaven.* Far from encour-  
aging them to rely upon His *Merits*,  
without their Own *Amendment*; he, by a  
most remarkable carefulness of expression,  
insists not even upon their Doing His Own  
*Will*, but the *Will of his Father which*  
*sent him*; Joh. vi. 38. And in the words  
of the Text, which our Lord himself  
speaks in his *Own person*, [he does not say,]  
*Blessed are they which Do* [Mine, but]  
His, (that is, my Father's) *Command-*  
*ments, that they may have Right to the*  
*Tree of Life.*

6thly and lastly, to draw towards a con-  
clusion: *Others* there are, who expect to  
obtain Salvation, by their zealous Adhe-  
rence to some particular *Seēt* or *Party*,  
to some peculiar *Body* or *Denomination* of  
Christians, to certain particular *Setts* or *Sy-*  
*stems of Opinions* of which they understand  
little

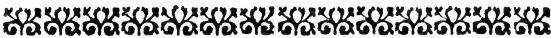
S E R M. little or nothing. And This is perhaps of  
 XIV. All Others the most *common*, though at the  
 same time the most *senseless* of All Deceits.  
 For what can be more absurd, what can be  
 more destructive of all true sense of reli-  
 gion, than to imagine that men should be  
 carried to Heaven in *Bodies politick*; or  
 that *Names*, and *Parties*, and *Factions*,  
 (prevailing variously, according to the dif-  
 ferent Humours or different Successes of  
 certain Worldly Powers,) should entitle  
 men to Any share in *That Blessedness*,  
 which (at That Great Day, when God  
 shall judge the World in righteousness by  
 Jesus Christ,) shall severally, according to  
 the Degree and Proportion of every man's  
 work, be assigned to Those, and to Those  
 only, who *Do his Commandments, that they  
 may have Right to the Tree of Life?*

SERMON



# SERMON XV.

Of Suffering upon the Account  
of Religion.



COL. i. 24.

*Who now rejoice in my Sufferings for you,  
and fill up that which is behind of the  
afflictions of Christ in my flesh, for his  
Body's sake, which is the Church.*



THE Apostle in the words before my Text, according to his usual method upon frequent occasions in all his epistles, sets forth to the *Colossians* a brief Summary or Recapitulation of

SERMON XV.

SERMON of the Doctrine of the Gospel of Christ:  
 XV. Ver. 19 ; *It pleased the Father, says he, that in Him should all fulness dwell : And, having made peace through the Blood of his Cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself, whether they be things in Earth, or things in Heaven. This doctrine of the Gospel in general, he applies, (ver. 21,) to the Colossians in particular : And You that were sometimes alienated, and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet Now hath he reconciled, In the body of his flesh through Death, to present you holy, and unblameable, and unreprouable in his sight. Nevertheless, the Effect of This reconciliation depends, he tells them, upon their own Perseverance in virtuous Living, in Obedience to the Doctrine they had been taught : Ver. 23 ; If ye continue in the Faith, grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the Hope of the Gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature under heaven ; whereof I Paul am made a Minister. And then, in order to encourage and support them in thus persevering, he proceeds in*  
 the

the words of the Text, to assure them of his *own readiness* to partake *with* them and *for* them, of *Any Sufferings* or *Afflictions* whatsoever, which might befall them upon account of their Adherence to Truth and Virtue. *Who now rejoice in my Sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the Afflictions of Christ in my flesh, for his body's sake, which is the Church.*

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IN discoursing upon These words, I shall *First* consider what is *supposed* in the words, that *Christ himself* was to *suffer*; and that his *Disciples* afterwards, according to the good pleasure and appointment of God, must *generally*, after the Lord's *example*, expect many kinds of *Sufferings* and *Afflictions* likewise. And Then I shall proceed to explain *what* it is that St Paul meant, when he said concerning his *own Sufferings in particular*; *I rejoice in my Sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the Afflictions of Christ in my flesh, for his body's sake, which is the Church.*

S E R M. I. *First*; I T is supposed in the words,  
 XV. that *Christ himself* was to suffer. God,  
 the Supreme Author and Governour of  
 all things, has *numberless Creatures* con-  
 stantly obeying his Will; even *those Ser-*  
*vants of His, who* in Heaven continually  
*do his Pleasure.* And to These, in pro-  
 portion to their several Capacities, he  
 communicates unspeakable degrees of  
 Happiness. He *has no need* therefore of  
*the sinful man*; nor any obligation upon  
*him* to deliver Apostate Creatures from  
 That *Death* which by the nature of  
 Things, and by the Appointment of God,  
 is the proper *Wages of Sin.* Nevertheless,  
 being essentially Good and Merciful, he  
 resolved to have Pity upon all such Sin-  
 ners, as should by true Repentance and  
 real Amendment of Manners become Ob-  
 jects of Compassion. And at the same  
 time, that the Honour, and Dignity, and  
 Authority of his Laws might in a con-  
 sistent manner be vindicated against Sin,  
 he was pleased to appoint so *great an ex-*  
*piation,* as the voluntary *Sufferings* and  
*Death* of his Son. This Appointment  
 therefore



therefore was *foresignified* from the Beginning of the World, by the typical *Sacrifices* of Beasts: And it was *more clearly* predicted all along by the *Prophets*; the *Spirit of Christ*, which was in them, constantly *testifying before-hand* the *Sufferings of Christ*, and the *Glory that should follow*. In order to accomplish these predictions; he who, in his *original state*, was not *capable* of suffering, did in the *Fulness of time* condescend to assume our nature, and become *Man*; that he might *make his Soul an Offering for Sin*, and that *on Him* might be *laid the Iniquities of us all*. And the *first part* of his *Sufferings*, was *this very Humiliation*, even his *Incar-nation itself*; his *laying aside* the *Glory which he had with God before the World was*, and being *made in the likeness of Sinful man*. Then, *in That Form of a Ser-vant*, during the whole course of his *Life*, besides the *general Wants and Infirmities* of *Humane Nature*, he was in a *parti-cular* manner *poor and afflicted*, and for the most part *had not where to lay his Head*. He all along bore the *contradic-*

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SERM. *tion of Sinners, and the Weaknesses of his*  
 XV. *own Disciples. He went about, doing good*  
 to *Others*; but was perpetually despised  
 and affronted *Himself*. And at last, was  
*betrayed* by *One* of his Disciples, and for-  
 saken by *all the rest*; was *accused* by the  
*Jews*, as a *Rebel* against the *Emperour*,  
 and a *Blasphemer* against *God*; was abu-  
 sed by the *Roman Soldiers*, buffeted, scour-  
 ged, crowned with *Thorns*, spit upon,  
 and mocked; and, after all *This*, was put  
 to a *cruel and ignominious Death*. *This*  
 was the *Accomplishment* of the *Prophe-*  
*cies* that went before concerning him;  
 and of *That Great Counsel and Appoint-*  
*ment of God*, which those *Prophecies* did  
 by degrees reveal and open, that he should  
 be made a *Sacrifice and Expiation* for *Sin*.  
 For since *God*, in the *Wisdom* of his *Go-*  
*vernment*, and in *Vindication* of his *right-*  
*eous Laws*, had thought fit to appoint,  
 that *without shedding of Blood* there should  
 be *no Remission*, and the *Wages of Sin* was  
*Death*; it was *necessary*, (whether *abso-*  
*lutely in the nature of things*, or not, it  
 becomes not *Us* to presume to judge; but,

in the *Appointment of God, necessary* it was) that he who was to redeem Transgressors from *Death*, must, to accomplish That Redemption, *die himself*.

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W H E N therefore pious and devotional Writers represent, as in the Church of *Rome* they frequently do ; when they represent *one drop of this Blood of Christ* to be of sufficient value to redeem the whole World ; from whence it might seem as if there was *No necessity* absolutely, that he should *at all* have *Died* : It is to be observed, in Answer to This, that, in the *strict* and *proper* sense, not the *Blood*, but the *Death* of Christ, is the Expiation for Sin ; and that therefore, when we are declared in Scripture to be redeemed by his *Blood*, it is only a figurative expression for being redeemed by his *Death*. From whence, by the way, clearly appears the extreme Folly of the Church of *Rome* ; Who, if they had in their Possession *literally and truly*, as they most *vainly pretend*, some of the *Real material Blood*, not of *Saints only* and of *Martyrs*, but even of *Christ himself* ; yet there would not

S E R M. therefrom arise *any Benefit* at all, or any  
 XV. *Indulgence to Sin.*

IF it be here further inquired, how *That Forgiveness* of Sin is *Free*, or of *mere Grace and Favour*, as the Scripture everywhere represents it; which yet God did not think fit to grant without so great a *Satisfaction*, as the Redemption purchased by the *Death of Christ*: The Answer is plain; That it was no less truly and properly a *Free Gift* of God, to *appoint* and to *accept* That Satisfaction; than it would have been to have granted Remission, if he had so pleased, without Any Intercession or Satisfaction at all. For He who *Freely*, and without *Any Obligation* or *Constraint*, grants and appoints the *Means*; must be acknowledged to have as *Freely* granted the *End*, as if he had thought fit to grant it in any *Other* way or method whatsoever.

THIS therefore is the *first* Particular, remarkable in the Text: It is *Supposed* in the words, that *Christ himself* was to *Suffer*.

II. *Secondly*;

II. *Secondly*; IT is *Supposed further* in S E R M. XV.  
the words of the Text, that Christ's *Disci-  
ples* afterwards, according to the good  
pleasure and appointment of God, must  
*generally*, after the Lord's Example, ex-  
pect many kinds of *Sufferings and Afflic-  
tions* likewise. *I now* (saith the Apostle)  
*rejoice in my Sufferings, and fill up that  
which is behind of the Afflictions of Christ  
in my Flesh.* We know by Experience;  
and God, who is greater than All, and  
seeth what is in man, knoweth more per-  
fectly; how exceedingly apt *Temporal Pro-  
sperity* is, to corrupt the Minds and Man-  
ners of Men. Infomuch that our Savi-  
our declares, that *'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*: Meaning, not that it is *impossible*;  
but that, *comparatively* speaking, it is ve-  
ry *difficult*, for those who are continually  
surrounded with the Pleasures, and Gran-  
dour, and Temptations of this present  
World, to preserve *that habitually vir-  
tuous* disposition of mind, which is neces-  
sary to qualify men for the Life to come.

S E R M. The Deceitfulness of *Riches*, blinds mens eyes; The *Pleasures* of Life, steal from them their Understandings; *Power*, is very apt to lead them into Ambition and Tyrannicalness; *Plenty*, into Intemperance; And *continued Prosperity*, into a careless Spirit, and into a Neglect and Forgetfulness of God. On the contrary, *Afflictions* of all kinds, though for the present they cannot but be grievous, yet they have naturally a Tendency in the end to *yield the peaceable fruit of Righteousness, unto them that are exercised thereby*; Heb. xii. 11. They are naturally apt, to lead men into sober Thoughts, and considerate Counsels; to wean them from the numerous Vanities and Follies of the World; and to amend the Habit and Temper of their Minds, by addicting them to the expectation of a better and more lasting State. For *These*, and perhaps for *Other* more Secret Reasons, which We at present may not be able to judge of; but which will then most fully and clearly appear, when God shall finally come to be glorified in his Saints, and to be admired

*mired in all them that believe ; when all* S E R M.  
*mouths shall be stopped before him, and he* XV.  
*shall be justified in his Saying, and be*  
*clear when he is judged: For These, I say,*  
*and perhaps for Other more Secret Rea-*  
*sons which shall finally appear, it has*  
*pleased God much more generally to try*  
*his Best Servants with various Afflictions*  
*and Sufferings, than with Temporal Pro-*  
*sperity. By the Wisest and most Rational*  
*men even in the Heathen World, was*  
*This Conduct of Providence observed ;*  
*and it was very reasonably applied by*  
*them as a strong Argument, to convince*  
*themselves of the Certainty of a Future*  
*Life. The Patriarchs of old, had still*  
*greater Experience of This Truth : Who*  
*(as it is most affectionately represented in*  
*the xith to the Hebrews,) confessed that*  
*they were Strangers and Pilgrims on the*  
*Earth, declaring plainly that they sought*  
*a better country : Choosing rather to suffer*  
*Affliction with the people of God, than to*  
*enjoy the Pleasures of Sin for a season :*  
*For they endured, as seeing Him who is*  
*Invisible ; and frequently were tortured,*

S E R M. *not accepting Deliverance that they might*  
 XV. *obtain a Better Resurrection.* In after-  
 times, when the people of *Israel* were  
 established in the Possession of the *Pro-*  
*mised Land*, still Providence was pleased  
 to permit, that over Ten of the twelve  
 Tribes of *Israel*, from *Jeroboam* their first  
 Ruler untill their *Final Captivity*, there  
 reigned *not One King* who was not an  
*Idolater*; Infomuch that the only Account  
 we have of the True Worshippers of God  
 in That whole period of time, is what  
 the Spirit declared to *Elijab*, *Yet have I*  
*left me seven thousand in Israel, that have*  
*not bowed the knee to Baal.* And the *Pro-*  
*phesy* concerning the *Restoration* of *Israel*,  
 Dan. xii. 1; is still in the same style; *There*  
*shall be a time of Trouble, such as Never*  
*was since there was a Nation; and at*  
*That time shall thy people be delivered.*  
 In like manner, when we come to the  
 Times of the *Gospel*; we find, that as it  
 pleased Him, for whom are all things, in  
 bringing many Sons unto glory, to make the  
 Captain of our *Salvation perfect* through  
*Sufferings*, Heb. ii. 10: So our Lord con-  
 tinually



tinually warns his *Disciples* to expect the same; forasmuch as *the Disciple is not above his Master, nor He that is sent, greater than He that Sent him.* And particularly in his *Prophecy* concerning the *latter Ages* of the World, he foretels that *Days* should come, which *unless they were shortened, no Flesh should be saved*; that is, the *True Religion* would be extinguished upon Earth. And accordingly *the Apostles*, in all *Their Writings*, are perpetually assuring us, that *we must thro' much tribulation enter into the Kingdom of God*; That, *if in This life only we had Hope, Christians are of all men the most miserable*: That, *whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth, and scourgeth every Son whom he receiveth*; That *Christians ought not therefore to think it strange concerning the fiery Tryal that is at any time to try them*; But ought rather to rejoice, though now for a season they are in *Heaviness through manifold Temptations*; that *the Tryal of their Faith, being much more precious than of Gold that perisheth, though it be tried with Fire, might be found un-*  
to



SERM. to Praise and Honour and Glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.

XV.





IT may here naturally be thought, and not altogether without Reason, that the *greatest part* of these Passages have reference *peculiarly* to those *Times of Persecution*, wherein the *Apostles themselves* and their *immediate Followers* preached the Gospel. But though This is in great measure *True*; yet it is also to be remembered, that both our *Saviour himself*, as I before observed, and the *Apostles* likewise, do expressly declare, that in the *Last*, as well as in the *First* days, *perilous times should come* St Paul speaking of the Great Hindrances to the spreading of the Gospel from the *Opposition and Persecutions* of both *Jews and Gentiles*, foretells, that when *He who Now letteth, shall be taken out of the way*, 2 Th. ii. 7; he foretels that *Then*, not (as might naturally have been expected) *True Religion* should prosper and flourish in the World, but *on the contrary* *Then shall That wicked one be revealed, That man of Sin, the Son of perdition,*  
*sitting*

*sitting in the Temple of God, whom the Lord shall consume with the Spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his Coming.* And St John in his Revelation, having described a great multitude which no man could number, of all Nations and Kindreds and People and Tongues, giving Glory to God; was shown that *These are They which came out of Great Tribulation*, ch. vii. 14; in the original it is, out of *The Great Tribulation*; meaning the times of Apostacy, and great Corruption in the Body of the Christian Church itself. And even in such times, wherein (according to the vulgar sense of That word) there is no direct persecution, either from open Infidels or from Corrupt Professors; yet even *Then*, even in all times, saith St Paul, all good Christians, yea, *All that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer Persecution*; shall, in some manner or other, upon Account of their adhering to Truth and Virtue, be ill-treated in an unrighteous and debauched World.

SERM. ALL which, abundantly makes good  
 XV. This *Second* Observation drawn from the  
 words of my Text ; that as *Christ him-  
 self*, according to the Predictions that  
 went before concerning him, *was to suf-  
 fer* ; so his *Disciples* afterwards, accord-  
 ing to the good pleasure and appoint-  
 ment of God, must *generally*, after their  
 Lord's *example*, expect many kinds of  
*Sufferings and Afflictions* likewise. Upon  
 which Account *St Paul* professes, *Phil. iii.*  
*8* ; *I have suffered the loss of all things,*  
*and do count them but dung,---- That I*  
*may know Him, and the Power of his Re-*  
*surrection, and the Fellowship of his Suf-*  
*ferings, being made conformable unto his*  
*Death* ; *If by any means I might attain*  
*unto the resurrection of the Dead*. It re-  
 mains that I proceed Now in the

III. *Third* place, to explain *what* it is  
 that the Apostle meant, when he said in  
 the words of the *Text*, concerning his  
 Own Sufferings *in particular* ; *I rejoice in*  
*my Sufferings for you, and fill up that*  
*which is behind of the Afflictions of Christ*  
*in my Flesh, for his Body's sake, which is*  
 the

*the Church.* And here it is evident the S E R M. Apostle, by his *suffering* for *the Church*, XV. and *filling up that which is behind of the*  *Afflictions of Christ*, had no Thought of what has in later Ages been pretended by the Church of Rome; that the *Afflictions* and *Good Works* of the *Saints* are *meritorious*, to purchase remission of Sin, not only for *themselves*, but for *Others* also; in *some proportion*, as the *Sufferings* of *Christ* were for the redemption of the *Whole Church*. This, I say, the Apostle never had the least Thought of. But his plain and full Meaning is *This* only; that, as it was foretold and appointed that *Christ*, the *Head* of the Church, should *first* suffer; so it was appointed that his *Body* also, the *Members* of his Church, should in many respects (generally speaking) suffer *after* him, being *conformed to the Image of the Son of God*. This is, *filling up that which is behind of the Afflictions of Christ*; accomplishing that which remained to be fulfilled, of the *Sufferings*, *first* of *Christ*, and *then* of his *Church*. And the Reason  
*why,*

S E R M. *why*, in representing to the *Colossians* his  
 XV. *Own* Sufferings, he stiles them *my Suf-*  
 *ferings* for You, and for *Christ's Body's*  
*sake, which is the Church*; is, because the  
 Sufferings he underwent, were brought  
 upon him by his Zeal in instructing and  
 confirming *Them* in the doctrine of the  
 Gospel; and because his Sufferings were  
 an Example and an Encouragement to  
*Them*, to suffer likewise patiently for  
 their Adherence to the Truth. The *same*  
 manner of expression therefore, he uses  
 upon the like occasion, in *Other also* of  
 his Epistles. Thus 2 *Cor.* i. 5; *As the*  
*Sufferings of Christ* (says he) *abound in*  
*Us, so----- when We be afflicted, it is*  
*for your consolation and salvation, which*  
*is effectual in the enduring of the same*  
*Sufferings which We also suffer, ch. iv.*  
 8, 9, 11, 15, 16; *We are troubled on*  
*every side,----- persecuted,----- alway deli-*  
*vered unto Death for Jesus sake;----- for*  
*all things are for your sakes, that the a-*  
*bundant grace might, through the Thank-*  
*giving of Many, redound to the Glory of*  
*God: For which cause we faint not. So*  
 in

in his epistle to the *Ephesians*, ch. iii. S E R M. XV.  
ver. 1, 13; *I Paul* (says he) *the Prisoner of Jesus Christ, for You Gentiles,----desire that ye faint not at my Tribulations for You, which is your glory.* Again, *Phil.* ii. 17; *Yea, and if I be offered* (says he) *upon the Sacrifice and Service of your Faith, I joy and rejoice with you all.* And *2 Tim.* ii. 9; *I suffer Trouble* (says he) *as an Evil-doer, even unto Bonds; but the word of God is not Bound: Therefore I endure all things for the Elect's sake, that They may also obtain the Salvation which is in Christ Jesus, with eternal Glory.*

THE proper *Inferences* from what has been said, are:

1<sup>st</sup>, IF God, in the infinite wisdom of his Government over the Universe, saw fit to permit, that *our Saviour himself*, and *his Apostles after him*, should suffer in this manner; how much more ought *We*, with *Patience* and even with *Thankfulness*, to submit to whatever Afflictions his Divine Providence shall at any time permit to fall upon us for Truth and Righteousness sake; or shall upon Any Ac-

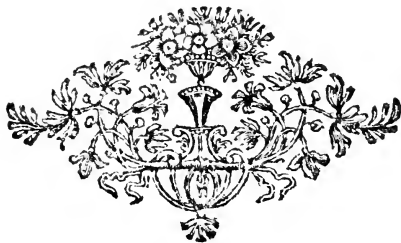
S E R M. count, judge needful for us, in our Passage through a sinful and corrupt World; that we may at last safely arrive at the Regions of eternal Security, and escape his final and everlasting Wrath. *For if these things be done in the Green tree, what shall be done in the Dry? And if the Righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the Ungodly and the Sinner appear?*

2dly, FROM what has been said in explication of St Paul's particular manner of expressing himself in the *Text*, we may infer, that, if not in *This place*, much less in *any other* part of Scripture, is there any Ground or Foundation for setting up any *Other Mediator* besides Christ alone; or for imagining that *Any Other Person* whatsoever, can be capable of *Doing*, or *Suffering*, or *Interceding* any way *meritoriously* for us. The *Apostles themselves*, never either *claimed* or *thought* of any such thing. The *earthly Relations*, and even the *Mother of our Lord*, the *Blessed Virgin* herself, were in the whole History of the Gospel constantly treated by him after such a manner, as if it were





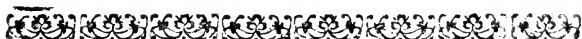
SERM. *taries*; so to *Any wicked man*, to any  
XV. *debauched, unrighteous, or profane person,*  
in *Any Profession of Religion whatsoever,*  
the *Real Mediation of Christ himself* will  
be of no *Avail*. For, *not every one that*  
*saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter in-*  
*to the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that*  
*Doth the Will of my Father which is in*  
*Heaven.*





# SERMON XVI.

Of the Nature of the Sufferings of  
Christ.



I PET. iii. 18.

*For Christ also hath once suffered for Sins,  
the just for the unjust, that he might  
bring us to God.*



THE design of the Apostle in SERM.  
XVI.  
these words, is to exhort  
Christians to suffer persecuti-  
on chearfully for the sake of  
a good conscience, from the  
example of the sufferings of our Saviour  
Christ: *If ye suffer for righteousness sake,*  
Z 3 happy

S E R M. *happy are ye, ver. 14; And ver. 17; It is*  
 XVI. *better, if the will of God be so, that ye*  
 suffer for well-doing than for evil-doing;  
 For Christ also hath once suffered for sins,  
 the just for the unjust, that he might bring  
 us to God. But I shall not at this time  
 consider the words under this particular  
 respect, with relation to the context; but  
 shall treat of them absolutely and in ge-  
 neral, as a brief and summary account of  
 the Work of our redemption, and of the  
 design of our Saviour's sufferings; *Christ*  
*has once suffered for sins, the just for the*  
*unjust, that he might bring us unto God.*

IN which assertion of the Apostle,  
 there are plainly contained these three  
 things; 1<sup>st</sup>, A *Supposition* of mens being  
 unjust or unrighteous, and consequently of  
 their being alienated from the favour of  
 God; 2<sup>dly</sup>, An *Affertion*, of Christ's ha-  
 ving suffered for the sins of those, who  
 were thus alienated from the favour of  
 God; And 3<sup>dly</sup>, An account of the *Es-*  
*fect* of those sufferings; *that he might*  
*bring men to God, or restore them to his*  
*favour.*

THE *Estate* wherein the Apostle sup-<sup>S E R M.</sup>poses men to have been, antecedent to <sup>XVI.</sup>their redemption by Christ, is a state of sin and enmity against God: *Rom. v. 8; God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us: and ver. 10; When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God, by the death of his Son.* Now This is most *eminently* and remarkably true, of those *Heathens*, who at the first preaching of the Gospel, were converted to the faith; and, by being baptized in the Name, and into the religion of Christ, were made partakers of the benefits of his death and passion. They had been formerly, in the most *proper* sense, enemies of God and of his holy religion; being altogether in a state of idolatry and unrighteousness, and liable to the wrath of God. *Ephes. ii. 1, 2, 3; Ye were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in times past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience; Among whom also we all had our conver-*


Z. 4 sation

S E R M. *sation in times past, in the lusts of our flesh,*  
 XVI. *fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the*  
 mind, and were by nature the children of  
 wrath; by nature, that is, not, as we were  
 born, or created by God; but, in that  
 state of ignorance, corruption and wick-  
 edness, wherein you Gentiles were, before  
 your conversion to Christianity. That  
 This is the true meaning of the Phrase,  
 appears plainly from the 11th Verse, where  
 the Apostle bids them remember, *that be-*  
*ing in time past Gentiles in the flesh, they*  
*were at that time without Christ, being ali-*  
*ens from the commonwealth of Israel, and*  
*strangers from the covenants of promise, ha-*  
*ving no hope, and without God in the world.*  
 This (I say) is most *eminently* true, of  
 those who were converted from *Heathenism*  
 to Christianity; But it is true also in great  
 measure of the greatest part of *Christians*;  
 who through the unhappiness of a bad  
 education, or the prevailing temptations  
 of Sin, have been engaged in any vicious  
 course, before their conversion to a life of  
 holiness; by which they first begin to be  
 reconciled to God, and to be entitled to  
 the

the benefits of the sufferings of Christ. S E R M.  
 Nay even they who have been so happy, XVI.  
 as by a good education, and an early sense  
 of religion, to have escaped the great pol-  
 lutions that are in the world through Sin;  
 yet even These have not conquered the  
 corruption of their nature and their too  
 great propensions to Sin, but with reluc-  
 tance and by *degrees*, before they could  
 arrive to such a fixt and stedy course of  
 piety, as is not to be obtained but by great  
 consideration, and a perfect knowledge of  
 the religion of our Lord and Saviour Jesus  
 Christ. The *estate* therefore, wherein the  
 Apostle supposes men to be, antecedent to  
 their redemption by Christ, is a state of  
 sin and enmity against God. The *Means*  
 by which we are delivered from this evil  
 state, he tells us are *the sufferings of Christ*;  
 Christ *has once suffered for sins, the just for*  
*the unjust*. By which words nothing less  
*can* be meant, than that the Son of God,  
 in order to the effectual expiation of Sin,  
 suffered in the sinner's *stead*; and, by bear-  
 ing the wrath of God for us, made a per-  
 fect *atonement* for the Sins of all True Pe-  
 nitents,

S E R M. nitents. For so the Scripture most expressly declares in many parallel places; as where Christ is affirmed *to have redeemed us by his blood*; to have *born our sins in his own body on the tree*; to have *given himself a sacrifice for us, and a propitiation for the sins of the whole world*. The meaning of all which can be nothing less than This; that when men had by Sin put themselves in a state of wrath, and out of the favour of God; our Saviour by taking upon *himself* the punishment of Death, due to *their* sins, and by suffering in *their* stead, and thereby establishing a Covenant for the accepting of Repentance, delivered them out of that miserable and lost condition. Wherefore the death of Christ was truly and properly an expiatory sacrifice, and in the fullest sense a perfect and sufficient satisfaction for the sins of the whole world: Satisfaction; not as an *equivalent, without which God could not, and with which he could not but pardon Sin*; (for the Scripture no where speaks of satisfaction in *That Sense*, as some have erroneously conceived;) but as an *atone-*



ment which the Wisdom and Goodness of S E R M. God was pleased freely to appoint and XVI. freely to accept, as supreme Governour of  the Universe.

*Lastly*; T H E *design* and *effect* of this redemption, the Apostle briefly intimates to us in *These* words, *that he might bring us to God*, i. e. that having by his sufferings made an Atonement for our sins to the divine justice and wisdom, he might restore us again to the favour of God; and by establishing a new and gracious Covenant upon the merits of those his sufferings, might enable all true Penitents to continue in the favour of God, by obeying the conditions of that new Covenant.

T H E meaning of the Apostle's words being thus explained; I shall from hence take occasion, for the more clearly illustrating the wisdom, and justice, and mercy of God in finding out this method for the redemption of mankind, endeavour briefly to prove the following particulars. *1<sup>st</sup>*, That it was from the beginning infinitely reasonable, that all possible Honour and Obedience, should at all times be paid by  
all

S E R M. all Creatures, to all the Laws and Com-  
 XVI. mands of God. *2dly*, That This Honour  
 due to the Laws of God, is diminished, as  
 much as in *Us* lies, by the Sins and Im-  
 pieties of *Men*. *3dly*, That it is highly  
 reasonable and necessary, after such pre-  
 sumptuous transgressions, that God should  
 make *some* proper vindication of his divine  
 Authority. *4thly*, That the first and most  
 obvious method of doing This, is by the  
 punishment or destruction of the offen-  
 ders. *5thly*, But because God hates not  
 the persons of sinners, and hath no plea-  
 sure in their destruction, but only a just  
 zeal for the honour of his divine and  
 righteous Laws, therefore when That is by  
 any means vindicated, his wrath is ap-  
 peased. *Lastly*, That our Saviour, by  
 his Obedience and Humiliation even unto  
 death, *has* in the most glorious manner  
 vindicated the Honour and Authority of  
 God ; and, by establishing a Covenant of  
 Grace upon the merits of his sufferings and  
 obedience, has secured to all that truly  
 repent, pardon and remission of sin, con-  
 sistent

sistent with the Honour of the divine Laws. SERM.  
XVI.

I. *First*; IT was from the Beginning infinitely reasonable, that all possible Honour and Obedience, should at all times be paid by all Creatures, to all the Laws and Commands of God; as being in themselves eternally and essentially reasonable, and proceeding moreover from the Authority absolutely supreme. *Honour* is a duty which in the nature of things is owing to those that are in a superiour relation to us; and the very notion of it implies its being due to such. By how much therefore God is infinitely greater than those whom we acknowledge to be our Superiours upon Earth, by so much ought we to have a profounder regard and veneration for *him*. He that created all things by the word of his power, and on whom they depend perpetually for the continuation of that Being, which they at first received from *him*, has unquestionably reason to demand all the honour that is possible to be rendred him by his creatures. And this is evident even from the  
light

S E R M. light of nature itself; there being no at-  
 XIV. tribute of God, from which it is not most  
 obvious and necessary to conclude, how  
 great an obligation we are under, to pay  
 him all possible Honour. His Goodness,  
 Holiness, Justice and Mercy, are the most  
 proper and immediate objects of that Love  
 and Fear, in the mixture of which con-  
 sists that due veneration, which we call  
*Honouring of God*: His infinite *Power*,  
*Wisdom*, and *Knowledge*, are Perfections so  
 adorable in the natural sense and judgment  
 of men; that the consideration of these  
 attributes has extorted the most profound  
 expressions of reverence and devotion,  
 even from the *heathen* Philosophers.  
 “ *Who* would not, (says one of their Wri-  
 “ ters,) fear and reverence That God, who  
 “ sees and takes notice of all things, and  
 “ has a peculiar concern for every action  
 “ and person in the world?” And the  
 same Argument may be drawn from all  
 the rest likewise of the divine attributes.  
 Now the only way wherein *we* can express  
 the *Honour* we have for *God*, is by ho-  
 nouring, *i. e.* by *obeying* his laws. We  
 cannot

cannot by any act of ours, by any honour or regard we can show, add any thing to the greatness and majesty of God; as we cannot diminish from it by any contempt or disrespect: But we can testify our veneration for him by obeying his commandments; and the honour we thus give to his laws, he is pleased to accept as done immediately to himself. Them that *honour me*, saith he, *i. e.* them that *obey my Commandments*, I will honour; 1 Sam. ii. 30: *And they that call the sabbath a delight, not doing their own ways, nor finding their own pleasure, nor speaking their own words*, are said to honour God; *Isaiab lviii. 13.* And almost every where in Scripture, righteous and good men are described by this Character, that they *feared* or *honoured* God; A life of holiness and sincere obedience being the only certain evidence of a mind that is truly affected with a sense of the divine Majesty; as it was also the distinguishing Character of those that worshipped the *True God*, in opposition to all kinds of superstition and idolatry. Whatever obligation

S E R M. gation therefore we have, to *fear* and *ho-*  
 XVI. *nour* God; the same obligation lies upon  
 us to *obey* and give *honour* to his *Laws*:  
 And This the most abandoned finners are  
 so sensible of, that the only refuge they can  
 find in their own minds to excuse to  
*Themselves* their folly and their wicked-  
 ness, is to imagine, either atheistically,  
 that the *Laws* which they transgress, are  
 not indeed the *Laws* of God; or pre-  
 sumptuously, deceiving themselves with  
 certain false Notions, that God will be  
 so merciful, as not to punish them for the  
 contempt of those laws, notwithstanding  
 it be a dishonour done immediately to  
*himself*. So that without this extremely  
 vain and unreasonable supposition, that  
 God will not punish the greatest possible  
 dishonour done unto *himself*, in contempt  
 of his authority, and in defiance to his  
 threatenings; wicked men cannot hope to  
 escape unpunished for the breach of his  
 just and righteous *Laws*; it being indeed  
 but one and the very same thing, (and  
 therefore equally *reasonable* and *necessary*,)  
 to

to give honour to the *Laws* of God, SERM.  
and to give honour to God *himself*. XVI.

II. *Secondly*; THIS Honour due to the laws of God, is diminished, as much as in *Us* lies, by the Sins and Impieties of Men. Every Sin, is a transgression of the law; and every transgression of a law, is a contempt of that Authority by which the Law was given. By Sinning therefore against any express law, we diminish, as much as in *Us* lies, the honour due unto that law; and if it be a *divine* law, the transgressing thereof is a dishonouring of *God*, who was the Author of it. *Thou that makest thy boast of the law, saith St Paul, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God?* Rom. ii. 23. Every Sin that a man wilfully commits, is a Contempt of the Commandments of God, and consequently a Contempt of God himself; It is saying, we will not have *Him* to reign over us. And herein principally consists the heinous nature of Sin, that it is such a despite and dishonour done to the authority of God. Hence are those earnest and affectionate expos-

S E R M. tulations of the prophets with the people  
 XVI. of the *Jews*, for *despising* the commandments of God, for *polluting* his holy Name, and for causing his great Name to be *blasphemed* among the *Gentiles* through their iniquities: *Ezek. xx. 27*; *In This your Fathers have blasphemed me, (or caused my Name to be blasphemed) in that they have committed a Trespass against me*: And *Isaiab v. 24*; having reckoned up several of their greatest wickednesses, he adds; *Therefore as the fire devoureth the stubble, and the flame consumeth the chaff, so their root shall be as rottenness and their blossom shall go up as dust; because they have cast away the law of the Lord of hosts, and despised the word of the holy one of Israel.* Upon This account also it is, that the Sin of *Apostacy from Christianity*, is in the *New Testament* so highly aggravated by the Apostle, as even in a manner to question the pardonableness of it; because it is a kind of *treading under foot the Son of God, a counting the blood of the covenant, wherewith we are sanctified, an unholy thing,*  
*and*



*and a doing despite unto the Spirit of* S E R M.  
*grace, Heb. x. 29: or, as it is expressed,* XVI.  
*ch. vi. ver. 6; it is a crucifying to our-*  
*selves the Son of God afresh, and putting*  
*him to an open shame; i. e. it is doing the*  
*greatest dishonour to the religion which*  
*our Saviour has instituted, and to the*  
*laws thereof, that can possibly be done.*  
*It is for This reason likewise that St*  
*James tells us, that whosoever shall keep*  
*the whole law, and yet offend in one point,*  
*he is guilty of all; i. e. he as truly dimi-*  
*nishes the honour of the law, and de-*  
*spises the authority of the law-giver, as*  
*he that offends in more points. For since*  
*the same authority that said *Do not com-**  
**mit adultery,* said also *do not kill;* if a*  
*man commits no adultery, yet if he kil-*  
*leth, he is as truly become a transgressor*  
*of the law, and as really derogates from*  
*its authority, as if he were guilty of more*  
*transgressions. Not that he Who offends*  
*in one point, is as great a Sinner, or de-*  
*erves as severe punishment, as he that*  
*offends in more; but he as truly derogates*  
*from the authority of the law, and of*  
*VOL. VIII. A a 2 him*

S E R M. him that gave it, tho' not in so *great a*  
 XVI. *degree.* The honour therefore due to the  
 laws of God, is diminished by Sin ; and  
 by how much the more wilful and con-  
 temptuous any Sin be, by so much the  
 greater is the infringement of that ho-  
 nour.

III. *Thirdly* ; I T is highly reasonable  
 and necessary, after such presumptuous  
 transgression, that God should make some  
 Vindication of his divine Authority. The  
 same reason that there is, why honour  
 and obedience should at all be paid to  
 the Laws of God ; the same reason there  
 is, that this honour should be vindicated,  
 after it has been diminished and infringed  
 by Sin. To imagin, that God requires  
 obedience to his commandments, and yet  
 that he will not support their authority  
 against the contempt and disobedience of  
 men ; to suppose that God has constitu-  
 ted just and righteous Laws to be obeyed  
 by his creatures, and yet that he will not  
 maintain that constitution, by vindicating  
 the honour of those Laws whensoever it  
 shall be insulted by any wilful transgres-  
 sion ;

tion; is contrary to the wisdom, and al-S E R M.  
 together inconsistent with the govern-XVI.  
 ment of God, and with the Nature of  
 Government in general. For tho' it cannot indeed be denied, but that the supreme Lord and Governour of all things, may deal as mercifully with his Creatures, and remit as much of his right as he pleases; yet this we are sure of, that he never will shew himself *so* far indulgent to *presumptuous* transgressors, as to bring his Laws and his Authority into contempt. And yet this *must* necessarily be the consequence, if God should show no concern for the honour of his laws, nor give any testimony of his displeasure against Sin; For how *small* a part of the World could, in such a case, from the mere reasonableness of the thing itself, retain upon their minds a just awe and regard for God's commands? Or how could men be convinced, that the violation of them, is in reality so extremely offensive to him? If therefore the Laws of an *earthly* government, which are perhaps only positive and temporary, cannot


S E R M. be presumptuously transgressed, but the  
 XVI. temporal Power will immediately assert  
 and vindicate their authority; how much  
 more unreasonable is it to suppose, that  
 God the all-powerful Governour of the  
 Universe, who in his nature is infinitely  
 Holy, and is infinitely concerned to main-  
 tain the eternal distinction of Good and  
 Evil, and who has declared that he is  
 infinitely tender of his honour, and that  
 he will not be mocked; should suffer the  
 violation of *his* supreme Laws, which are  
 of eternal and unchangeable obligation,  
 without any way vindicating the Honour  
 of them?

IV. *Fourthly*; THAT which seems the  
 first and most obvious way of effecting  
 This, is by the punishment or destruction  
 of the offenders. To vindicate the ho-  
 nour and authority of a Law, is to do  
 something, whereby the example of a for-  
 mer transgression may be prevented, ei-  
 ther from encouraging the offender to  
 transgress again, or from giving occasion  
 to *others* to venture upon the like trans-  
 gression. Now the most natural and ob-  
 vious

vious way of doing this, is either by punishing the offender, to deter *him* from repeating his offence; or by destroying *him*, to discourage *others* more *effectually*, by this more severe and exemplary punishment, from disobeying the same Law. When therefore man had transgressed the Law of God by Sin, the wisdom of God, considered as Governour of the World, was obliged in vindication of his divine Authority, to inflict a suitable punishment upon him: And because the punishment naturally due, and actually threatned to Sin, was death; therefore, unless some means could be found out to prevent it, the inflicting of this punishment must have been his Destruction. But

V. *Fifthly*; BECAUSE God hates not the persons of Sinners, and hath no pleasure in their destruction, but only a just and necessary Concern for the honour of his divine and righteous Laws; therefore whenever *That* is by any means vindicated his wrath is appeased. God does not at any time punish for punishment-sake; much less, like mortal men, to gratify a

S E R M. Passion, or satisfy his revenge: Far be it  
 XVI. from God to delight in any one's misery, or to take any pleasure in the destruction of his creatures: *As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked*; Ezek. xxxiii. 11. The design of God, is to make men good and happy; and tho' the wisdom of his government obliges him to vindicate the honour of his laws by the punishment of offenders, yet it is not without great compassion and regret, that he sets about This which the Scripture calls his *strange* work. *How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, O Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah! how shall I set thee as Zeboim? mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together*; Hosea xi. 8. It is *Sin* only, that God hates; and when, because of *it*, he is forced to inflict any severe punishments upon his Creatures, the Scripture always represents him doing it with greater reluctance, than the most merciful Prince or tender Father upon earth, punishes the disobedience of his most beloved Subject or Child.

Child. Nay, if it be any way possible S E R M.  
to maintain the authority of his govern- XVI.  
ment, and vindicate the honour of his   
Laws, without punishment; he never in-  
flicts it. And this brings me to the


*Last* Proposition I offered, which con-  
cludes this Subject; namely, that our Sa-  
viour by obeying and suffering, and That  
to death, *on* our behalf and *in* our stead,  
has actually vindicated in the most glo-  
rious manner, the Honour and Authority  
of God; and by establishing a Covenant  
of grace, upon the merits of his Suffer-  
ings and Obedience, has secured to all  
that truly repent and amend, pardon and  
remission of Sin, consistent with the ho-  
nour of the divine Laws. This is that  
wonderful composition of Justice and  
Mercy, which men and Angels must for  
ever adore, but can never sufficiently  
praise and celebrate: In This dispensa-  
tion Mercy and Truth are met together,  
righteousness and peace have kissed each  
other. The *Justice*, or at least the *Wis-*  
*dom* of God required, that when man  
had sinned, the Sacredness and Authority  
of

S E R M. of the divine Laws should be vindicated  
 XVI. by a condign punishment; and our Sa-  
 viour, (a person of inconceivable dignity  
 and merit,) by suffering *on* our behalf  
 and *in* our stead, has effectually vindica-  
 ted that Authority. The *Mercy* and  
*Goodness* of God required, that those  
 who truly repented and amended, should  
 obtain pardon and remission of their Sins;  
 And our Saviour, by establishing a new  
 Covenant, upon the merits of his Suf-  
 ferings and Obedience, has secured this  
 Grace to us, consistent with the honour  
 of the divine Laws. Had God out of  
 his infinite grace and goodness, freely  
 vouchsafed a pardon to all past Sins,  
 without exacting any Satisfaction at all,  
 or by accepting of such infinitely insuf-  
 ficient satisfaction, as sinful man could  
 have been capable of making; we must  
 indeed have admired the exceeding abun-  
 dance of his *Mercy*; but his *Severity* and  
 infinite *Hatred* against Sin, would not so  
 clearly have been displayed. But now,  
 when at the same time that he is par-  
 doning the *Sinner*, he inflicts the heaviest  
 punish-



punishment of *Sin*, upon the best and most innocent person that ever lived in the world, voluntarily choosing to undergo these Sufferings for us; this is an abundant proof what a high and tender concern God has for the honour of his just and righteous Commandments; and of what unspeakable ill consequence *Sin* is. The lively descriptions that the Scripture gives us of our Saviour's Sufferings, both in the prophets predictions of his passion, and in the Evangelists accounts of its accomplishment, are convincing demonstrations of God's irreconcilable Hatred against *Sin*, and how very consistently with the sacred and unalterable Authority of his laws it is, that he has granted pardon to true Repentance. The liiid Chapter of *Isaiab*, is a prophecy of our Saviour's passion long before it came to pass, as moving and affectionate, as any description of a thing then actually present, could have been. *He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; surely he hath born our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet*

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we

S E R M. *we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God*  
 XVI. *and afflicted; But he was wounded for our*  
 ~~~~~ *transgressions, he was bruised for our ini-*  
quities; the chastisement of our peace was
upon him, and with his stripes we are
healed; All we like sheep have gone astray,
we have turned every one to his own way,
and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity
of us all; He was oppressed, and he was
afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; he
is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and
as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so
openeth he not his mouth; ver. 3 to the 7th.
 And the accounts the Evangelists gives us
 of the *accomplishment* of this prophecy,
 are such as ought in all reason to raise in
 the most obdurate heart an eternal ha-
 tred of those Sins, which were the cause
 of such Sufferings falling upon the most
 innocent person that ever lived; and to
 fill our Breasts with the most ardent Love
 and Thankfulness, to *God* who gave, and
 to our *Saviour* who was contented to be
 given, a ransom for our sakes.

AND now, having given you a brief
 account of the reason and method of our
 Redemp-

Redemption by Christ, in these particu-
lars, namely; 1st; That it was from the
beginning infinitely reasonable, that all
possible Honour and Obedience should
at all times be paid by all Creatures
to all the Laws and Commands of God.
2^{dly}, That this Honour due to the Laws
of God, is diminished, as much as in *Us*
lies, by the Sins and Impieties of men.
3^{dly}, That in the nature of Govern-
ment it is highly reasonable and ne-
cessary, after such presumptuous trans-
gression, that God should make *some* vin-
dication of his divine Authority. 4^{thly},
That the first and most obvious method
of doing This, is by the punishment or
destruction of the Offenders. 5^{thly}, But
because God hates not the persons of Sin-
ners, and hath no pleasure in their de-
struction, but only a just zeal for the
Honour of his divine and righteous Laws;
therefore whenever That is by any means
vindicated, his Wrath is appeased. *Lastly*,
Our Saviour, by obeying, and that to
death, *on* our behalf, and *in* our stead,
has in the most glorious manner vindic-
ated the Honour and Authority of God;
and

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~~~~~

S E R M. and by establishing a Covenant of grace  
 XVI. and mercy upon the merits of his Sufferings and Obedience, has secured to All that truly repent and amend, pardon and remission of Sin, consistent with the honour of the divine Laws.

IT remains that I draw two or three useful and practical Inferences from what has been said, and so conclude. And

*First*, FROM the Doctrines therein explained, we may learn the true nature of Christ's Satisfaction; namely, that his Death was *truly* and *properly*, in the strictest meaning of the word, an expiatory Sacrifice. For if Sinners by having diminished the Honour and despised the Authority of God's Laws, were become liable to the Justice and Vengeance of God; If the Son of God in our nature, by vindicating the Honour of God's Laws, hath discharged this obligation, and obtained remission for us; And if the obtaining this remission was by the shedding of his blood, which is called the *price of our Redemption*, 1 Cor. vi. 20; it follows, that the Wrath of God


was

was appeas'd by the Death of Christ, and that God was graciously pleas'd to accept this vicarious Suffering of his Son, in the *stead* of the punishment that was due to the Sinner in his own person; which is the express and most proper notion of an expiatory Sacrifice: For so we read that under the Law, the Sinner laying his hand upon the Sacrifice, to signify the transferring upon *it* the punishment due unto himself, the Sacrifice was slain, and it was accepted for him to make an atonement for him. Which, if it was intended for a type of Christ, (as the Apostle to the *Hebrews* largely shows, and as the whole nature of the Law abundantly declares;) nothing can be more unreasonable, that to make the Substance less real than the Shadow, to make the Death of Christ less truly expiatory, than the Sacrifices that were merely types and representations of it. St. *Paul's* argument on the contrary is strong and clear: *If the blood of bulls and of goats, saith he, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh:*

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S E R M. *flesh: How much more shall the blood of*  
 XVI. *Christ, who through the eternal spirit offered*  
 ~~~~~ *himself without spot to God, purge your*  
conscience from dead works to serve the
living God; Heb. ix. 13. Wherefore to
say That Christ died for our advantage,
but not in our stead; that his death was
not properly a sacrifice for Sin, but mere-
ly a testimony to his doctrine, and an ex-
ample to encourage us to suffer persecu-
tion chearfully for the will of God; is
really to diminish from the grace and
mercy of God, and from that exceeding
Love of our Saviour to Mankind, which
the Apostle extols principally from this
very consideration, that he laid down his
Life for us, or in our stead; dying, not
for a good man, which some one might
even dare to do, but for those who were
yet enemies and offenders against God.
It is true the Death of Christ was a great
testimony to the truth of his doctrine;
(for what greater testimony can be given
to any truth, than to die for it?) 'Twas
also an example of exceeding great en-
couragement to those who should follow
 him

him, to suffer patiently for well-doing: S E R M.
 To which purpose the Apostle himself XVI.
 applies it even in the words of the Text; 
It is better, saith he, if the Will of God
be so, that ye suffer for well-doing than for
evil-doing; For Christ also has once suf-
fered for Sins, the just for the unjust. But
 though this was indeed one part of his
 design, yet certainly the *great* and *prin-*
cipal end of our Saviour's dying, was that
 Other and First intention of it, the ma-
 king an expiation for the Sins of mankind.
 This was the *main* design of his appearing
 in the flesh; and this the Scripture every
 where expresses as *fully*, as it is possible al-
 most to be expressed in words. *What the*
Law could not do, saith St Paul, in that
it was weak through the flesh, God sending
his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh,
and for Sin (or as the words may more
 properly be rendred, by being *a sacrifice*
for Sin,) condemned Sin in the flesh; Rom.
viii. 3. Hence our Saviour is affirmed to
have obtained redemption for us, Heb. ix. 12:
to have put away Sin by the sacrifice of
himself, Heb. ix. 26: to have purchased a
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S E R M. *Church with his blood, Acts xx. 28 ; to be*
 XVI. *the propitiation for our sins, 1 Joh. ii. 2 ;*
 and to have given his life a ransom for
many, St Matt. xx. 28 ; for many ; that is,
for so many as should believe and obey
him ; as it is explained by St Paul, 1 Tim. ii.
6 ; and Heb. ix. 28 : In one of which
places he says Christ suffered to bear the
Sins of Many ; in the other chapter, that
he gave himself a ransom for All. By com-
paring which places of Scripture one with
another, it appears, that there is no ground
at all for that vain imagination which some
have entertained, as if Christ died only for
a certain determinate number of particu-
lar persons : On the contrary it is evident,
that what is affirmed in some places con-
cerning Christ's having died for many, is of
the very same import with what is affirmed
in others, concerning his having died for
All. For where it is said he died for All ;
it is plain the meaning is, for all such only, as
should believe and obey ; and where it is said
he died for many, it is evident the meaning
is, for so many as should likewise believe and
obey : Which is in other words the very
 same

same thing. When St Paul affirms that *God would have All men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the Truth*; and that *Christ gave himself a ransom for All*: and St Peter; that *God would not that any should perish, but that All should come to repentance*; the words themselves, and the whole tenour of Scripture do sufficiently intimate, that Christ's giving himself a ransom for *All*, is for *All such only*, as come to Repentance by receiving the knowledge of the Truth. And on the contrary when our Saviour tells us, that *the Son of man came to give his life a ransom for Many*; and that *this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for Many for the remission of Sins*; and St Paul, that *Christ suffered to bear the Sins of Many*: The whole tenour of the same Scripture sufficiently declares, that by *Many* is *there* likewise meant *All such*, as should come to Repentance by receiving the knowledge of the Truth: Which is the very same in sense, with what is in other words affirmed in the former Texts.

As to the *Justice* of God's laying the Punishment of Sinners upon an innocent

S E R M. Person, and of forgiving one person's Sin
 XVI. upon account of the Merits of another per-
 son; which some have pretended to think
 not reconcilable with Right and Equity; we have this to reply. In general; that God being the Supreme and Absolute Lord of all things, has an absolute and unquestionable Right, to remit, upon what conditions he pleases, offences committed against himself; either without requiring any satisfaction at all, or upon whatever satisfaction he shall think fit to appoint, in conjunction with the sincere Repentance of the Offender, for the vindication of the Authority of his Laws and Government. For, the obligation to *Punishment*, is not, as in the case of *Reward*, any Right in the Person that is to *receive* it, but only a Right in the Law-giver to *inflict* it; which Right, being entirely his own, he may remit as much of it as he pleases, and upon what Terms or Conditions he thinks fit. And then in particular; as to the difficulty with regard to the *Justice*, of laying the punishment of Sinners upon an innocent person; this difficulty is entirely removed by the voluntary consent and choice of the Person,

son, in taking the Punishment upon himself. For though to punish an innocent person instead of the guilty, is evidently unjust ; yet to permit an innocent person to take it voluntarily upon himself, is by no means so. On the contrary it is an instance of the greatest Goodness and Mercy, to find out such an expedient ; And as the Love and Humility of Christ is inexpressibly great in condescending to assume our Nature, and submitting to an ignominious Death, *even the Death of the Cross* ; so the Mercy and Goodness of God can never be worthily and sufficiently acknowledged, in accepting this Sacrifice, and *so loving the world, as to give his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

Secondly, FROM the doctrine already explained, we may learn the weakness and insufficiency of all other Propitiations and pretended Satisfactions whatsoever. When the honour of God's Laws had been diminished by Sin ; it was reasonable and necessary, (notwithstanding God's Power and absolute *Right* of Forgiving ; yet in respect of his *Wisdom* in governing the

S E R M. World,) it was reasonable and necessary there
 XVI. should be a Vindication of the Authority of
 his Laws; and therefore it was necessary in
 That sense of Necessity, either that the Sinner
 should perish; or that some other Satisfaction
 should be made in his stead. Now had God
 accepted any such slight Propitiation, as
 could have been made or invented by men;
 the Honour of his Laws would not have been
 sufficiently vindicated, nor his hatred sufficiently
 declared against Sin. It was necessary therefore,
 that expiation should be made by *such* a
 person, whose innocence and dignity might
 make his Sufferings worthy to be accepted
 of God in the stead of the Punishment due
 to mankind; so that he might forgive the
 Sinner consistently with the Honour of his
 Laws, and with his irreconcilable hatred
 against Sin. Wherefore though the best men
 among the Heathens, had great and just
 hopes, (made good to them by Christ, though
 unknown,) that upon their sincere Repentance,
 the merciful and compassionate Governour of
 the World, would forgive their Sins, and
 graciously accept

accept their imperfect endeavours; yet S E R M. XVI. that their sacrificing of beasts as a kind of Propitiation for them, should be of any *real* value towards the expiating of Sin, was evidently impossible. And tho' the *Jews* by God's own appointment were to offer certain beasts in sacrifice, and God himself was pleased to declare that he *would* accept those offerings, so that the blood of the beasts *should* make atonement for their Sins; yet neither had *these* Sacrifices any real Efficacy in themselves to expiate Sin, but only as they typified that great Sacrifice, which was once to be offered for the Sins of the whole World. *For the first tabernacle, as the Apostle observes, was only a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; Heb. ix. 9: And ch. x. ver. 1. and 4; The law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very substance of the things, can never with those sacrifices, which they offered year by year continually, make the comers thereunto perfect;*

S E R M. *For it is not possible that the blood of bulls*
 XVI. *and of goats should take away Sins.* And
 if this be the case of those very propitiations, those Sacrifices which were of God's own immediate appointing; that they were in themselves of no real efficacy at all, but mere types; how much more useless and insufficient, and consequently deceitful to the people, and destructive of mens Souls, must be those vain Satisfactions of humane invention, those Penances and Pilgrimages, those empty Forms and Poms of Devotion, instituted in the Church of *Rome*, which instead of being any real Satisfaction for past Sins, do on the contrary tend to withdraw mens minds from a true Spirit of Piety, and from the practice of real virtue and holiness; filling them with endless and unprofitable Superstitions; and therefore rather provoking than appeasing the wrath of God! There is indeed one sort of Sacrifice, which if it were true, (as it is confidently pretended,) *would be really an available propitiation for Sin; and that is, the repeating of the great Sacrifice of the death*

death of Christ; which those of that Com-
munion now mentioned, affirm to be
done daily in their Sacrifice of the Mass.
But this, the Apostle expressly tells us, is
impossible; For Christ, says he, *does not
offer himself often, as the high priest entred
into the holy place every year with blood of
others; (for then must he often have
suffered since the foundation of the world;)*
*But now once in the end of the world hath
he appeared to put away Sin by the Sacri-
fice of himself; Heb. ix. 25. Having by
one offering perfected for ever them that are
sanctified, ch. x. ver. 14; having once suf-
fered for Sins, the just for the unjust, as
it is expressed in the words of the Text;*
and by St Paul still more emphatically,
Heb. ix. 27; *As it is appointed unto men
once to die, but after this the judgment; so
Christ was once offered to bear the Sins of
many; and unto them that look for him,
shall he appear the second time without Sin
unto Salvation.* In our rendring of
which last words, there seems to be a
transposition. For the intention of the
Apostle seems to be, not to say *that Christ*
shall

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SER M. shall come again without Sin, (which is
 XVI. nothing remarkable;) but that, having once
 suffered to take away mens sins, he should
 the second time, to them that looked for him
 without Sin, i. e. to them who returned
 not to the Sins from which they were once
 redeemed by him, appear again unto Sal-
 vation. There is therefore but one Sacri-
 fice truly and effectually available to the
 expiation of Sin, which is the death of
 Christ; and all other Propitiations and
 Satisfactions whatsoever, which have been
 or can be invented by men, are weak and
 ineffectual.

Thirdly; FROM the Doctrines now ex-
 plained, we may learn to have a deep sense
 of the wonderful Mercy and Goodness
 of God, in designing and appointing the
 redemption of mankind. When the Au-
 thority of God had been trampled upon,
 and the Honour of his Laws so diminish-
 ed by Sin, that it was not consistent with
 the wisdom of the supreme Governour of
 all things, to remit the punishment due to
 sinful man, without some greater satisfac-
 tion than it was possible for man to make;
 that

that then the only begotten Son of God, who was unspeakably happy in the bosom of his Father, should voluntarily condescend to assume our frail nature, and be contented to be cloathed with misery and mortality; that from the glorious Majesty of Heaven, from being in the form of God, and most high in the glory of his Father, he should stoop down to the earth, and submit to such cruel Sufferings and so ignominious a death, for the redemption of rebellious and Apostate Men, this is such an instance of Goodness and tender Mercy, as can never be embraced and entertained with sufficient joy and thankfulness. *O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!*

Fourthly; FROM hence we may observe the absolute necessity of our own reformation, in order to our being made partakers of this Mercy. God hath in this *very* dispensation of Pardon and Mercy, testified a greater and more irreconcilable Hatred against Sin, than if he had
even

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S E R M. even immediately punished it by the de-  
 XVI. struction of the Sinner. For if God, when  
 he was about to display the infinite abundance of his Mercy in the Forgiveness of Sin, would not accept of any smaller ransom than the blood of his only begotten Son; what Spark of hope can there be left to any man who yet continues in Sin, that he shall escape the vengeance of God? If such great and terrible afflictions fell upon the *beloved Son of God*, for the Sins of *others*; what dreadful vengeance must *we* expect, if neglecting this great Salvation we come at last to receive the punishment of *our own*? There have not been wanting some men, (as I before observed,) who have made it an objection against the truth of Christ's Satisfaction, that it would not be *just* in God to permit an innocent person to suffer instead of the Offender: And indeed to punish the innocent instead of the guilty, *is not* just: But to *permit* an innocent person, freely and *voluntarily* to give himself a ransom for the Offender, cannot be denied to be consistent with justice. But then we  
 ought

ought also to consider, that it is such a stupendous instance of Love and Mercy, as ought to raise in us an eternal dread and horreur of Sin, the forgiveness of which was purchased upon such difficult terms. And which forgiveness if we despise, by returning again to our Sins, crucifying to ourselves the Son of God afresh, and putting him to an open Shame, *counting the blood of the Covenant wherewith we were sanctified an unholy thing, and doing despite unto the Spirit of grace; the Apostle assures us, that our God even the Father of Mercies, is a consuming Fire; that there remains no more Sacrifice for Sin, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries; that our Lord shall come in flaming Fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God and obey not his Gospel; who shall be destroyed with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his Majesty; when the wicked shall cry to the Mountains to cover them and to the Hills to fall on them, and hide them from the wrath of him*  
that

S E R M.  
XVI.  
~

S E R M. *that sitteth on the throne, and from the*  
 XVI. *wrath of the Lamb.* The Wrath of the

W Lamb, is a very emphatical phrase, signifying that our Redeemer himself, who loved us and gave himself for us, will yet finally have no pity on the impenitent. The *very forgiveness* purchased by the blood of Christ, is obtained, not at all for those who continue in Sin, but for those only who forsake it. Wherefore unless we effectually reform our lives, and renounce all known Sin, perfecting Holiness in the fear of God; we have no part in the Death of Christ, nor any benefit of his passion. So that, without true repentance and amendment of life, Mercy itself, even this infinite Fountain of Mercy, *the Sufferings and Blood of Christ*, will do us no kindness; Nay, so far from That, that on the contrary the neglecting to embrace the terms of so gracious a Covenant, will (as has been shown,) infinitely inflame our guilt, and increase our condemnation. O that all those would seriously consider this, who taking no care to obey his commandments, yet hope to have their Sins  
 pardoned

pardoned through the merits of Christ, and, as the Apostle expresses it, *continue in Sin that Grace may abound, whose condemnation is most just.* It seems there were some men, even in the Apostle's time, so very unreasonable, as to imagine they might the more safely sin, because they were not under the Law but under Grace; and, because the Death of Christ had made atonement for Sins that were past, that therefore they might with less danger return to their Sins again for the time to come. Whereas just on the contrary *They* ought to have concluded, and it concerns *Us* to observe, that for That very reason, because we have once received Forgiveness, therefore we ought to take the more earnest heed to sin no more, least a worse thing happen unto us, and there remain no more Sacrifice for Sin. *Know ye not,* says St Paul to such persons, *that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his Death. Therefore we are buried with him by Baptism into Death, that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father,*

SERM. *ther, even so we also should walk in new-*  
 XVI. *ness of life; Rom. vi. 3.*



*Fifthly and Lastly; FROM what hath been hitherto said, we may learn the necessity of the destruction of the incorrigible, to vindicate the Authority of the Laws of God. By this last dispensation of the Gospel, God has done all that was consistent with the wisdom of his Government; and has gone even further than some men can think reconcilable with his Justice and Goodness, in laying the punishment of our offences upon an innocent person, that we might (consistently with the Rules of his eternal Government) become capable of pardon and forgiveness. If then, notwithstanding this last means, which God has made use of for our recovery, we still continue incorrigible, there is *no remedy* but we must fall into perdition. If we neglect this *last* and *great* Salvation, it cannot be but we must at length be found in that deplorable state, into which the children of *Israel* are described to have fallen, *2 Chron. xxxvi. 15*: which seems to be a type of the*

the Christian Apostacy : *They transgressed* S E R M.  
XVI.  
*very much after all the abominations of the heathen, and polluted the house of the Lord, which he had hallowed in Jerusalem ; And the Lord God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes, and sending ; because he had compassion upon his people and on his dwelling-place ; But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against his people 'till there was no remedy ; Therefore he brought upon them the King of the Caldees, who slew their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion upon young man or maiden, old man or him that stooped for age : he gave them all into his hand. Even thus we, if notwithstanding the clear knowledge of the truth, which God has revealed to us by his Son, and repeated by his ministers ; we still continue to sin wilfully ; there can be no remedy, there remains no more Sacrifice for Sin, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the*  
VOL. VIII.      C c      adversary.

S E R M. *adversary.* Wherefore to conclude; while  
XVI. this our space of life lasteth, and God  
graciously affords us time to repent; let  
us resolve by an immediate and thorough  
reformation to flee from the wrath to  
come, before our feet stumble upon the  
dark mountains, and the things that be-  
long to our peace be for ever hid from  
our eyes.



SERMON





# SERMON XVII.

Of the Humiliation and Sufferings  
of *Christ*.



MAT T. XVI. 21, 22, 23.

*From that time forth began Jesus to show unto his Disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things, of the Elders and chief Priests and Scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day. Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord; this shall not be unto thee. But he turned and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan, thou art an Offence unto me; for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of Men.*



HE Apostle *St Peter*, having made a generous Profession of his Belief, that *Christ* was the true *Messias*, the Son of the Living God; received from our Lord the

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following Answer, ver. 17 of this chapter; *Jesus said unto him, Blessed art Thou Simon Barjona; for Flesh and Blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in Heaven.* The Meaning is: The Confession you have Now made, is not a bare humane conjecture or opinion; as Some had before guessed him to be *Elias*, Others that he was *John the Baptist*, and Others that he was *one of the old Prophets* risen from the Dead: But *Your* confession, (saith he,) is the Very Truth, which the God whom ye serve, and whose Will you are desirous to know and to obey, has directed you to discover. *And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter; ver. 18: Thou Simon the Son of Jonah, shalt for the future be known by the Name of Peter, which signifies a Rock; a firm, unshaken, and immoveable Professor of the Truth.* Thus it is in Scripture very usual, to give men emphatical and significant Names. *Gen. xvii. 5; Thy Name shall be Abraham; for a Father of many Nations,* (so the word *Abraham* signifies in Hebrew,) *a Father of many Nations*  
have

have I made thee. Again, Gen. xxxii. 28 ; S E R M.  
*Thy Name shall be called Israel; for as a* XVII.  
*Prince hast thou Power with God and with*  
*Men, and hast prevailed.* So here like-  
 wise, *Thou art Peter*, thy Name shall  
 henceforth be called *Peter*, that is, a  
 Rock : *And upon this Rock will I build*  
*my Church, and the Gates of Hell shall*  
*not prevail against it.* The Church, is  
 the City and Temple of God ; a City, as  
 St John represents it, built upon twelve  
 Foundations, in which were written the  
 Names of the twelve Apostles of the  
 Lamb. And accordingly good Christi-  
 ans, saith St Paul, are builded together  
*upon the foundation of the Apostles and*  
*Prophets, unto an holy Temple in the Lord.*  
 And St Peter in his first epistle, ch. ii. 5 ;  
*Ye also, saith he, as Living Stones, are*  
*built up, a spiritual house----- unto God.*  
 When therefore our Lord said unto Peter,  
*upon this rock will I build my Church* ; his  
 meaning plainly was, Thou shalt be a  
*principal Founder* of my Church, a most  
 successful Preacher of my Doctrine to the  
 World, in the first Age of the Gospel.

S E R M. The *Foundation-stone* of a Building, a Rock or well-laid Support, is not (as the Church of *Rome* ridiculously supposes) an Emblem of *Authority* or *Dominion*; but it signifies *firm* and *constant*, effectual and successful Preaching of the Gospel at the Beginning; which was the *Foundation* of the Church of God.

IT follows, ver. 19; *And I will give unto thee the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on Earth, shall be bound in Heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on Earth, shall be loosed in Heaven*: The sense is; Thou shalt first *open* the Kingdom of the Messiah, and make the first Publication of the Gospel to the *Gentiles*; (which we read was accordingly fulfilled, in the *iiid*, *xth*, and *xvth* chapters of the *Acts*;) And by the Terms of That Doctrine which you shall preach *on Earth*, shall every man's Sentence be finally and judicially determined of God *in Heaven*. Profane, beyond all Profaneness, is the Doctrine of Those, who contend that the *Apostles themselves*, much less that any of their fallible

fallible *Successors*, had a *discretionary* Power of forgiving or retaining whose Sins they pleased. Honour sufficient it is for any mortal man, nay an Office which our *Saviour himself* did not disdain, to be appointed a Preacher or Messenger of That Covenant of Reconciliation, according to the Terms and Conditions whereof, *God* will either forgive mens Sins or retain them. *St Paul* expresses the Sense of this Trust, with the greatest Accuracy and Exactness of Expression, Rom. ii. 16; *In the day, saith he, when God shall judge the Secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to My Gospel.* To say that *God* will judge men *according to Our Gospel*, or by the Rule of *That Doctrine* which *We* are commanded to preach to the World; is the full and compleat meaning of those sublime words, *Whosoever Sins ye forgive, they are forgiven; and whosoever Sins ye retain, they are retained.*

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OUR Saviour having thus, in words more than usually plain, made known to *St Peter* and to the rest of his Disciples the Power and Glory of his Kingdom;

SERM. he thought it a fit season, to acquaint  
 XVII. them also with his *Humiliation* and Sufferings; that they might not, being puffed up with great Thoughts of his Glory, be surprized and terrified at the day of his Affliction. And therefore *from that time forth*, (as it follows immediately in the words of the Text,) *from That time forth, began Jesus to show unto his Disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the Elders and chief Priests and Scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.* It is very observable, that not only in This place, but in almost all other parts of our Saviour's History, it was his constant method, when he had acquainted his Disciples with something that was apt to exalt their Minds; it was his *constant* method, to take That opportunity of intermixing in his Discourse some plain Intimations of his approaching Sufferings and Death. Thus in the very next chapter of This Gospel; when he had been *transfigured* before three of his Disciples, ver. 2, *and his face did shine as the Sun, and his garment was white*

white as the Light; and they heard a voice from Heaven, saying, (ver. 5,) *This is my Beloved Son*; immediately after, he tells them, (ver. 12,) that *the Son of man should suffer*. And when the two Sons of *Zebedee*, (ch. xx. 21,) desired to sit, one on his right hand, and the other on his left, in his Kingdom; to repress their too hasty expectations, and prepare them for the Answer he intended to give them about the Necessity of *their* passing through many *Sufferings*, he took care in the first place, (ver. 18,) to foretel them of his *own*. Thus likewise in *St Mark's Gospel*, ch. x. 29; when he had given his Disciples that joyful promise, that whosoever lost any thing for *His* sake, should in the *present* time receive an hundred fold, and in the end eternal life; immediately he adds, ver. 33; that *the chief Priests should condemn him to death, and deliver him to the Gentiles to be crucified*. Again, in *St Luke's Gospel*, ch. x. 17, when the Disciples were transported with joy at the Devils being made subject unto them; immediately he turns their thoughts, (ver. 20,)

SERM. 20,) to a more distant prospect beyond  
 XVII. Death and the Grave; *In This*, saith he,  
 ~~~~~  
rejoice not, that the Spirits are subject un-
to you; but rather rejoice, because your
Names are written in Heaven. Lastly,
 to mention but one place more; St Luke
 xxii. 28; When our Lord gives his Apo-
 stles, That Great Promise, *Ye are they*
which have continued with me in my Temp-
tations; And I appoint unto you a King-
dom, as my Father hath appointed unto me;
That ye may eat and drink at my Table in
my Kingdom, and sit on Thrones judging
the twelve Tribes of Israel; he at the Be-
 ginning introduces it with that Admoni-
 tion to Humility, ver. 26; *He that is*
Greatest among you, let him be as the youn-
gest; and he that is Chief, as he that doth
serve: And at the End he concludes it
 with that Notice of his Sufferings, ver. 37;
I say unto you, that This that is written,
must yet be accomplished in me, And he
was reckoned among the Transgressors; For
the things concerning me, have an End.

IT is well worth remarking upon This
 place, that the Promise, *ye shall sit on*
 2 Thrones

Thrones judging the twelve Tribes of Israel, was made to the Apostles at That time when *Judas* was yet one of that number; and consequently, the Promise was as much made to *Him* as to Any of the rest. From whence it follows undeniably, that He was *not* predestinated necessarily to be a Traitor, but fell from his Apostleship and from his Right to This Promise, by his after-voluntary Transgression: As his Case is most accurately expressed in another place by our Saviour himself, *Job. vi. 70; Have not I chosen (in the Original it is, Have not I elected) you twelve? and One of you is a Devil.* But This by the way.

THAT which I would here chiefly observe, is: that in all these places, just as in the words of the Text, our Saviour never makes his Disciples any Great Promises either of *Temporal* Blessings, or *Eternal*; either of Success in *This* World, or of Glory and Happiness in the *next*; but he constantly mixes therewith some very plain intimations, of his own *Sufferings*, and of *Theirs*. From whence a careful

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SER M. careful Reader cannot fail to infer, that  
 XVII. Temporal Power, Dominion and Grandour, upon which False Religions always value themselves, and which Hypocrites always look upon as the Great Prosperity of the Church of Christ, is not in Truth at all a Character of Christ's true Religion, nor *a savouring the things that be of God, but those that be of Men.* The Prosperity of Christ's True Religion, consists in nothing but in the Prevalency of *Virtue and Righteousness*, and in establishing the *Fear of God* and the sincere expectation of a *future Judgment*, in the Hearts and Lives of Men.

THE Apostle St Peter, not yet sufficiently convinced of this great Truth; but having entertained, in common with the rest of the Disciples, That pleasing Prejudice, that our Saviour's Kingdom was to be a *Temporal Kingdom*; could not bear the unexpected and surprizing Thought, of our Lord's *Suffering and Dying*; no, not tho' it was joined with an immediate declaration of his Resurrection from the Dead. But, out of singular affection to him,

him, and zeal, as he thought, for his Service ; he took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, *Be it far from thee, Lord ; This shall not be unto thee.* But our Saviour, never angry upon any other occasion, than when something offered itself that would be a Hindrance to the Salvation of Mankind, and to His doing the Will of Him that sent him ; *turned and said unto Peter,* with a seemingly more than usual Sharpness ; *Get thee behind me, Satan ; thou art an Offence unto me ; for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of Men.* The word, *Satan,* in this place, carries with it an appearance of greater Severity in the Translation, than it does in the Original. For *Satan,* in the Jews language, signifies in general Any Adversary. Now because the *Devil* is in the highest sense the *Great Adversary* of Mankind ; hence the word, *Satan,* has by way of Eminence been usually, both in Scripture and in common Speech, appropriated to Him. But Originally it signifies only an Adversary in general ; and is accordingly, in  
different

S E R M. different places of Scripture, ascribed to  
 XVII. different Persons. 2 Sam. xix. 22 ; *David*  
 said, *What have I to do with you, ye Sons*  
*of Zeruiab, that ye should this day be Ad-*  
*versaries unto me?* in the *Hebrew* it is,  
 that ye should this day be *Satan* unto  
 me? Thus therefore in the Text ; when  
 our Saviour says to St *Peter*, *Get thee be-*  
*hind me, Satan ;* it is as if he had said,  
*Thou art not Now acting the part of a*  
*Friend to me, as thou thinkest thyself to be ;*  
*but That of an Enemy.* The *Sense* is the  
 same, as in that affectionate exhortation  
 of St *Paul* with those Brethren, who  
 would have persuaded him to avoid go-  
 ing to *Jerusalem*, where he must be in  
 danger to suffer : *Acts* xxi. 13 ; *What mean*  
*ye to weep, and to break mine Heart? for*  
*I am ready, not to be bound only, but al-*  
*so to die at Jerusalem for the Name of*  
*the Lord.* However ; though this Reproof  
 of our Saviour to St *Peter*, was in reality  
 nothing more but a friendly Rebuke, and  
 not a mark of *high* or *lasting* displeasure ;  
 yet probably the seeming Severity in the  
 manner of the Expression, might by the  
 divine

divine Wisdom be intended with a *particular View*, that it might be left upon Record as a Guard against that extravagant Opinion, which God foreknew future Ages would entertain, of St *Peter's* personal Authority. Of the same kind, seems to be the providential permitting of St *Peter* to *fall*, and to *deny his Master*, more shamefully than any of the Other Disciples; and the recording, in Scripture-history, how St *Paul* afterwards *withstood him to the Face, because he was to be blamed*; Gal. ii. 11. And with the like intention probably it was, that our Saviour seems to *affect* always, to speak as it were *slightly* of the *Blessed Virgin*; *Woman, what have I to do with thee?* and, *yea* rather, *Blessed are they, that hear the word of God, and keep it.*

BESIDES all which, it is to be observed further; that These Instances of our Saviour's so severely reprovng St *Peter*, and of St *Peter's* falling so shamefully, and the like; are moreover great Arguments of the *Sincerity and Plainness* of the Writers of the Gospel-history, in taking no  
care

S E R M. care to conceal their own and their Com-  
 XVII. panions Faults and Infirmities.



HAVING thus explained the *Circumstantial* parts of the Text; The *Last* thing I shall observe, is *That Great Doctrinal Truth*, which our Lord here opens to his Disciples; that *he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things, of the Elders and Chief Priests and Scribes; and be killed, and be raised again the third day.* The Question is; *why* does he say, *he must go*? What was the *Necessity* of Christ's delivering himself up into the hands of his Enemies, to be crucified and slain? The Answer to This Question, is,

I. *First*; IT was at *that time*, and in the sense our Saviour *Then* spake it, *Necessary* for *This* reason; because otherwise the *Prophecies*, that went before concerning him, could not have been fulfilled. This Reason, *our Saviour himself* gives, Matt. xxvi. 53; *Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve Legions of Angels? But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that Thus it must be?*  
 Again,

Again, *Mar. xiv. 48*; *Are ye come out as* S E R M.  
*against a Thief, with swords and with staves* XVII.  
*to take me? I was daily with you in the*  
*Temple, teaching, and ye took me not:*  
*But the Scriptures must be fulfilled.* And  
*Luke xxiv. 26, 44*; *Ought not Christ to*  
*have suffered these things, and to enter into*  
*his glory? --- And he said unto them, These*  
*are the words which I spake unto you while*  
*I was yet with you, that all things must*  
*be fulfilled which are written in the Law*  
*of Moses and in the Prophets and in the*  
*Psalms concerning me; --- And he said un-*  
*to them, Thus it is written, and thus it*  
*behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from*  
*the Dead the third day.* The same reason  
is alledged also by the *Apostles* in *Their*  
*Preaching*; *Acts xvii. 2*; *Paul* ----- *rea-*  
*soned with them out of the Scriptures;*  
*Opening and alledging, that Christ must*  
*needs have suffered, and risen again from* 1 Cor. xv.  
*the dead.* And, to mention but one place 5.  
*more*; *1 Pet. i. 10*; *Of which Salvation*  
*the Prophets have inquired and searched*  
*diligently, ----- searching what and what*  
*manner of Time the Spirit of Christ*  
V O L. VIII. D d which

SERM. *which was in them did signify, when it testified before-hand the Sufferings of Christ, and the Glory that should follow.*  
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THIS is the *first* reason: Christ must needs suffer, because the Scriptures of the Prophets had expressly foretold, that he should do so. But then

II. *Secondly*; THE Question returns; why was it originally appointed that the *Messiah* should suffer, and, in consequence of that appointment, foretold by the Prophets that he should do so? Could not God, if he had pleased, absolutely and of his Supreme Authority, without any Sufferings at all, have pardoned the Sins of those whose Repentance he thought fit to accept? Undoubtedly it becomes not *Us* to presume to say he had not *Power* so to do, if *That* were all the Question. But Sin is in its own Nature hateful to God, and it was *Fit* that he should testify his indignation against it. Wherefore though God in Mercy is always willing to pardon true Penitents, that is, those who actually forsake all vicious courses, and effectually return to the Obedience of God's Com-  
 mands;



mands ; yet the Scripture as constantly represents him doing it in such a manner, as that *without Blood there is no remission* ; Heb. ix. 21. The Death of Christ therefore was *necessary*, to make the pardon of Sin reconcilable, not perhaps absolutely with strict *Justice* ; ( for We cannot presume to say, but God might, consistently with mere *Justice* have remitted as much of his own Right as he pleased, by his own supreme and uncontrollable Sovereignty, without requiring Any satisfaction at all ; ) But the Death of Christ was *necessary*, at least in *This* respect, to make the pardon of Sin consistent with the *Wisdom* of God in his Good Government of the World, and to be a *proper Attestation* of his irreconcilable *Hatred* against all Unrighteousness. Hence Christ is stiled by the Apostle, the *propitiation for our Sins* ; 1 Joh. ii. 2 : And Rom. iii. 23 ; *All have sinned and come short of the glory of God ; being justified freely by his grace, thro' the redemption, that is in Jesus Christ ; Whom God has set forth to be a Propitiation thro' faith in his blood, to declare his*

S E R M. *righteousness, (that is, his Mercy,) for the*  
 XVII. *remission of Sins that are past, through the*  
 ~~~~~ *forbearance of God. This was the great*  
 Reason, the great End, Design, and Effect, of Christ's Suffering and Dying for us; that, consistently with the Honour of the Laws of God, and with his irreconcilable Hatred against all Unrighteousness, he might declare Remission of past Sins upon Repentance, and establish a new Covenant of Grace and Mercy, by which the Obedience of *Sinners* might become acceptable before God. In respect of the *former* part of this Design, the Remission of past Sins; we are said in Scripture, to *have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of Sins; Col. i. 14.* In respect of the *latter* part, the establishing a new Covenant of Grace; God is said to have *made us accepted in the Beloved, Eph. i. 6;* and Christ is accordingly represented as our Great High-Priest; who having *purchased a Church with his own blood, or (as it is elsewhere expressed) having given himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar*
 liar

*liar people, zealous of good works ; is from henceforth our Advocate and Intercessor with the Father, that he may present to himself a glorious Church, not having Spot or Wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be Holy and without Blemish. For his Own Sins, no man is worthy to be the Minister of Reconciliation : For the Sins of Others, no man who is himself a Sinner, can with Confidence make intercession. Sacrifices and Expiations, were nothing else but Testimonies of Repentance : Neither was it possible, that the Blood of Bulls or of Goats, should take away Sins, or make Him that did the Service perfect as pertaining to the Conscience. But as these external and typical Expiations sanctified to the purifying of the Flesh ; so the Blood of Christ, who through the Eternal Spirit offered himself without Spot to God, purges the Conscience from dead works to serve the living God ; Heb. ix. 14. The Meaning is: God's appointing and accepting the Sacrifice of the Death of Christ, is to the Conscience an Assurance of the real and effectual Pardon of *past* Sins, to*

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S E R M. them that truly repent ; and an Encou-
 XVII. ragement to Obedience for the *future*, see-
 ~~~~~ ing *we have an High Priest who can be*  
*touched with the feeling of our Infirmities,*  
*and ever liveth to make intercession for us ;*  
 so that our Endeavours, if *sincere*, though  
 by no means *perfect*, yet shall not fail of  
 finding acceptance with God in and thro'  
 the Mediation of the Beloved.

T H E Practical *Inferences* from what  
 has been said, are as follows.

*First*; T H I S Doctrine concerning Christ's  
 dying for our Sins, is a strong Argument  
 for the indispensable Necessity of our *own*  
 Repentance and Reformation of Life. For  
 the Design of Christ's Suffering, was not  
 to purchase Grace that Sin might abound,  
 but to abolish Sin *past*, and to preserve  
 men from Sin for the *time to come*. 2 Cor.  
 v. 15 ; *He died for All ; that they which*  
*live, should not henceforth live unto them-*  
*selves, but unto him who died for them, and*  
*rose again ; Who died for them to This*  
 End, that they Themselves *being dead to*  
*Sin, should live unto righteousness ;* 1 Pet. ii.  
 24. This is what we are baptized into,  
 when

when we are baptized into his Death: S E R M.  
 Rom. vi. 4; *We are buried with Him by* XVII.  
*Baptism into Death, that like as Christ*  
*was raised up from the dead by the glory*  
*of the Father, even so We also should walk*  
*in Newness of Life.* And if we do not so  
 walk; it had been better for us, *not to*  
*have known the way of Righteousness;* it  
 had been better for us, that Christ had  
 not died for us at all.

*Secondly;* THE consideration of Christ's  
 giving himself a Sacrifice for our Sins, is,  
 to them who truly repent, an Encourage-  
 ment to approach with Confidence to the  
 Throne of Grace, in our *Prayers to God*  
*through Him.* *In him we have boldness*  
*and access with confidence by the Faith of*  
*Him;* Eph. iii. 12: *For he that spared not*  
*his own Son, but delivered him up for us*  
*All, how shall he not with Him also free-*  
*ly give us all things!* Rom. viii. 32: *If,*  
*when we were Enemies, we were recon-*  
*ciled to God by the Death of his Son;*  
*much more being reconciled, we shall be*  
*saved by his Life;* chap. v. 10. *Let us*  
*therefore, saith the Apostle, come boldly*

S E R M. *unto the Throne of Grace, that we may*  
 XVII. *obtain mercy, and find grace to help in*  
 ~~~~~  
 Heb ii 17 *time of need; Heb. iv. 16. Our Saviour,*
 iv. 15. *having himself been made like unto his Bre-*
thren, and knowing how to be touched
with the feeling of our infirmities; is be-
come to us a merciful and faithful High
Priest in things pertaining to God. The
Inference from which Doctrine, is, ch. x.
19; Having therefore, brethren, boldness
to enter into the Holiest by the Blood of Je-
sus, by a new and living way which he hath
consecrated for us; --- and having an High
Priest over the house of God; Let us draw
near with a true heart, in full assurance
of Faith, having our heart sprinkled from
an evil conscience, and our bodies washed
with pure water.

Thirdly and Lastly; THE Death of
Christ, is a great Example to us, of pa-
tient Suffering at any time in well-doing;
when the Providence of God shall call us
to bear Testimony in That manner to his
Truth. 1 Pet. iii. 17; It is better, if the
Will of God be so, that ye suffer for well-
doing than for evil-doing; For Christ also
has

has once suffered for Sins, the just for the unjust. And ch. ii. 20; If when, ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently; this is acceptable with God; For even hereunto were ye called; because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that ye should follow his steps; who did no Sin, neither was Guile found in his Mouth.





SERMON XVIII.

The Method of Deliverance
through *Christ*.



R O M. vii. 24, 25.

O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the Body of this death? I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then, with the mind I myself serve the Law of God, but with the Flesh the Law of Sin.



IN discoursing upon these words, S E R M.
XVIII.
I shall endeavour 1st to explain, *What* the Apostle here means by this phrase, *The Body of Death*. 2^{dly}, I shall consider, *wherein*

SERM. XVIII. *wherein* consists the *Wretchedness* of those mens condition, who are under the unhappy circumstances of That State, which the Apostle here signifies by the figurative expression, of being subject to *the Body of This Death*: *O Wretched man that I am!* 3dly, *Wherein* consists the *Difficulty* here represented, of mens *recovering* themselves out of this unhappy State: *Who shall deliver me from the Body of this Death?* 4thly, The *Means* here suggested, by which this *Difficulty*, though naturally very great, may yet nevertheless be overcome: It may be done, *Through Jesus Christ our Lord.* 5thly, The *Great reason* we have to be *Thankful* to God, for vouchsafing us this *Method* of *Deliverance* thro' Christ: *I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.* And in the *Last* place I shall endeavour distinctly to explain, *how*, and *for what reason*, the Apostle, in his representation of this *Whole* matter, does *himself personate* the *Sinner* he would describe; and chooses to express the miserable State of the *greatest Sinners*, in words seemingly spoken as if
it

it had been concerning *Himself: Wretched* S E R M
man that I am! Who shall deliver Me? XVIII.
 And, *With the mind I myself serve the*
Law of God, but with the Flesh the Law
of Sin.

I. *First*; I AM to explain, *What* the Apostle here means by *This* phrase, *The Body of Death*. The *Life* of every *Living Being* in general, and of every *rational Being* in particular, is the *Free Gift* of God; bestowed originally, without Any Claim of Right; continued all along, by his mere Good Pleasure; and whensoever *He* pleases, who freely gave it, it may without Any injustice be taken away. For God who was under no obligation to give Life to any Being at all, is much less under any obligation of Justice, to make any Creature immortal. The mere *Ending* therefore of that Life, which only by the Free good pleasure of God *ever Began*, is no Wrong or Injury to Any even the most innocent Being. And This would equally be so, whether Death were an entire Ceasing to exist, or whether it be considered as
 (what

S E R M. (what both Reason and Revelation teaches)
 XVIII. a Translation only from one State or
 Manner of being to Another. But though
Death be *in itself* thus *natural*, considered
 barely as the *Bound* or *Limit* of a *Finite*
Life ; yet by the *Time* or *Manner*, and,
 above all, by the *Consequences* of its be-
 ing inflicted, it *may* very properly, and
 frequently *is* appointed to be, the just
 and severe Punishment of Sin. Even by
 the Laws of *Men*, though they know
 that *Death* is *in itself* inevitable, and
after Death they *have nothing more that*
they can do ; yet to the most capital
 Crimes *Death* is the *Punishment* annexed,
 upon account of its being inflicted both
before the *Natural Time*, and with *Cir-*
cumstances of *Severity* and *Terrour*.
 Much more in the Laws of *God*, in
 whose hands the *Consequences* of *Death*
 are, and who *after Death* can continue
 what *Punishment* he pleases ; much more
 (I say) in *His* Laws, is the *Threatning*
of Death justly terrible. Our First Pa-
 rent in Paradise, was in all probability
 created *naturally* *subject* to *Mortality* ;
 Yet

Yet the Punishment threatned to his Transgression was *Death*: By which was meant the Excluding him from the Tree of Life, that is, from the only possible Means whereby his *actual Dying* might have been prevented: And what the *Consequences* of This Death might be in any Future State, was left uncertain. Since *That*, God has now *expressly* threatned *Eternal Death*, as the Punishment of Sin: That is, he has set before Sinners the Miseries of a *Future State*, as terrible in proportion to the Duration of *That* State; as the Miseries that attend Mortality, are in proportion to the *present* State. And in the Terrour of this *Future Punishment* it is, that the Sharpness of the *Sting of Sin* consists, and the true insupportable *Weight* of the *Body of Death*. To every *presumptuous*, to every *wilful* Act of known *Sin*, has God threatned this *Second Death*: How much more to Those who are *laden with Iniquities*, and oppressed with Habits of *Vice*, is the *Body of this Death* justly terrible! It is like lying under the Terrour of *Many Deaths*, under the *Weight* of numerous
and

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XVIII.

Heb. xii. 1.

and unremovable *Burdens*. The like manner of expression, is in Scripture made use of upon *Other* occasions. Thus *Rom. vi. 6*; *that the Body of Sin might be destroyed*; That is, that every wicked *Habit* might be rooted out; that the *Weight* the *Burden*, the *whole Power of Sin*, might be effectually removed. Again; *Col. ii. 11*; *Putting off the Body of the Sins of the Flesh, by the circumcision of Christ*: That is, (as the same Apostle elsewhere expresses it,) *laying aside every Weight*, breaking off every *Habit of Wickedness*, reforming every Instance in the *Whole Catalogue* of unrighteous Practices, casting off in every Particular the Works of the *Flesh*; *by the circumcision of Christ*, by the *Christian Circumcision*; that is, by the Practice of *real Virtue and Holiness*, of which the *Jewish literal circumcision* was but a *Type* or a *Figure*. After the same manner of speaking, the ceremonial Observances of the *Jewish Law*, are in the same chapter called *a Shadow of things to come*, ver. 17; *but the Body*, says he, (the *real Substantial Virtues* typified by those Shadows; *the Body*) *is of Christ*.

Christ. And thus therefore likewise in the words of the Text; the Body of *This Death*, signifies the *Reality*, the *Greatness*, the *Weight* and *Insupportableness* of the *Misery* here intended to be expressed.

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II. *Secondly*; I PROPOSED to show, in the *Second* place, *wherein* consists the *Wretchedness* of those mens condition, who are under the unhappy circumstances of That State, which the Apostle here describes by the figurative expression, of being subject to the *Body of This Death*: *O wretched man that I am!* The *natural* apprehension of Death, considered barely *in itself*, without *Any* additional aggravation; is, to Every Living Being, necessarily uneasy. Very affectionately is this expressed by the author of the book of *Ecclesiasticus* ch. xl. 1; *Great Travel is created for every man, and an heavy yoke is upon the Sons of Adam:---- Their imagination of things to come, and the day of Death, trouble their Thoughts, and cause fear of Heart; From him that sitteth on a Throne of Glory, unto him that is humbled in Earth and Ashes.* To Such espe-

S E R M.
XVIII.



cially, as enjoy great *Prosperity*, does this natural apprehension cause yet *more* Disturbance. *O Death, how bitter is the remembrance of thee, to a man that liveth at Rest in his possessions,-----and that hath Prosperity in all things!* ch. xli. 1. But This is what may in great measure be overcome by the considerations of *Reason*. The true *Sting* of Death, That which really and only makes the Thoughts of it justly *insupportable*, is *Sin*. In all other respects, it is only what *happens unto all flesh, both man and beast*; But it is *sevenfold more upon Sinners*; Ecclus. xl. 8. To *Sinners*, the *Fear of Death* is what the Apostle calls, being *all their life-time subject to Bondage*; Heb. ii. 15. It is, *the Spirit of Bondage to Fear*; Rom. viii. 15. For, so long as there is reasonable *Hope* in a *Future State*, *the Spirit of a man will sustain his Present Infirmary*, will bear the Thoughts even of *Death itself* with *Comfort*: But a *Spirit wounded* with the expectation of *Death* being *not the End*, but the *Beginning* of Sorrows; *who can bear?* The strong exclamation in the Text,

is infinitely too *weak* to express it: O S E R M.
wretched man that I am! XVIII.

III. *Thirdly*; I AM to consider, *Where-*
in consists the *Difficulty* here represented,
of mens *recovering* themselves out of this
unhappy State: *Who shall deliver me from*
the body of this Death? The manner of
expression, *Who shall deliver me?* is such
as usually denotes *such a kind of Difficul-*
ty, as there is very little hope of overco-
ming. And the *Ground* of this difficulty,
is *twofold*; partly arising from the ap-
pointment of *God*, and partly from the
natural circumstances of the State where-
in the *persons themselves* are involved. By
the appointment of *God*, Sinners are un-
der the just sentence of condemnation:
And out of *His Hands*, no Force, no
Fraud, no Artifice can deliver them.
What Expiation, what Atonement, what
Intercession will prevail with him to *re-*
verse the Sentence of Death, they cannot
naturally know: And the Inquiry after it,
is very apt to lead men into pernicious Su-
perstitions. *Repentance itself*, is but a
Ground of *Hope*; and a *probable Motive*

S E R M. of Compassion. Without *bringing forth*
 XVIII. Fruits Meet for Repentance, the Repen-
 ~~~~~  
 tance is nothing: And to bring forth such  
 Fruits *really and effectually*, is That *other*  
*part* of the difficulty, which I said *natu-*  
*rally* arises from the *circumstances* of the  
 State, wherein the persons here spoken of  
 are involved. To an *habitual Sinner*, real  
*Amendment* of Life and Manners, and  
 acquiring the Habits of the *Virtues* con-  
 trary to the Vices he has practised; is like  
*plucking out a right Eye* or *cutting off a*  
*right hand*; it is like *the Ethiopian chan-*  
*ging his Skin*, or *the Leopard his Spots*.  
 For, *to whomsoever men yield themselves*  
*Servants to obey*; his *Servants they are*, *to*  
*whom they obey*; Rom. vi. 16; And, *of*  
*whomsoever a man is overcome*, *of the same*  
*is he brought in bondage*; 2 Pet. ii. 19.  
 This *Slavery to Sin*, is with wonderful  
 affection described through this *whole chap-*  
*ter*, of which my *Text* is the *Conclusion*.  
 They who have thus *subjected* themselves  
 to vicious habits, are represented as being  
*sold under Sin*; ver. 14: *For, That which*  
*they do, they allow not*; ----- *but what they*  
*hate,*

hate, That they do; ver. 15: The good that they would, they do not; but the Evil which they would not, That they do; ver. 19: They delight in the Law of God, after the inner man; But they see another law in their members, warring against the law of their mind, and bringing them into captivity to the Law of Sin; ver. 22, 23; And, Who shall deliver them from the Body of this Death?

IV. Fourthly; HERE are the Means suggested, by which this Difficulty, though naturally very great, may yet nevertheless be overcome: It may be done, Through Jesus Christ our Lord. By the revelation of the Gospel, God has Now expressly declared, what expiation he has appointed and accepted for Sin. He has given assurance of Pardon, upon condition of Repentance and Amendment of Life. He has promised the Assistance of his Grace, and the Influences of his Holy Spirit, to make effectual the Endeavours of those who, under Great Trials, are sincerely desirous to obey him. He has strengthened the Motives of Religion, by appointing a day,

S E R M. *in the which he will judge the World in*  
 XVIII. *righteousness; and by bringing Life and*  
 ~~~~~ *Immortality more clearly to Light. A*  
 firm Perswasion and stedfast Belief of these
 Great Truths, will, with the divine assistance,
 effectually enable men to destroy the Habit and
 the Power of Sin: *This is the Victory that overcometh the World,*
even our Faith; 1 Joh. v. 4. And when once the
Habit of Sin is rooted out, and the Law of God
becomes the governing Principle, and the real
effectual Rule of Life and Manners; the
Sting of Death is then consequently taken away:
Rom. viii. 1; There is now No condemnation to
Them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not
after the Flesh, but after the Spirit: For the
Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus, hath
made me free from the Law of Sin and Death.
 The Sense is: Whosoever, under the Influences
 of *Christ's Holy Religion*, by the Instruction,
 by the Promises, and by the Assurances of the
 Gospel, is enabled to lead a truly virtuous
 and good life, in expectation of a righteous
 judgment to come, and of a future
 Reward

Reward from the Divine Goodness; for the same reason, and in the same proportion, as he is delivered from the Bondage and Slavery of *Sin*, he is delivered likewise from the *sentence of condemnation*, and from that *Fear of Punishment*, which in the Text is stiled *the Body of This Death*.

V. *Fifthly*, HERE is expressed the *Great Reason* we have to be *Thankful* to God, for vouchsafing us this Method of Deliverance thro' Christ: *I thank God, thro' Jesus Christ our Lord*. The Deliverance which God has mercifully vouchsafed to Sinners through Christ, is what he was under *no obligation* either of Justice or Goodness to have provided for them. He might very justly, and without any impeachment of his Goodness too, have suffered all those to perish, who had wilfully and perversely transgressed his righteous Commands; and could even *out of the Stones*, as it is expressed, *Matt. iii. 9; have raised up children unto Abraham*: That is; He could immediately have destroyed the wilful Transgressors, and have

S E R M. created others from whom he might have
 XVIII. expected a better Obedience. But when,
 instead of This, his Compassion moved
 him to grant Repentance to Sinners, to
 admit them to a further Trial, and, by
 his gracious Promise in Christ, to give
 Power to as many as would embrace and
 obey the Gospel, that they should receive
 an Atonement and obtain Reconciliation
 with God, that they should *become the Sons
 of God*, that they should *pass from Death
 unto Life*, that they should (as the Scrip-
 ture expresses it) be *redeemed from the Earth*,
 be *redeemed from among men*, be *redeemed
 from Death* and *ransomed from the Power
 of the Grave*; This is the highest possible
 Obligation to *Thankfulness*, and to the
 most diligent Endeavours of future Obe-
 dience.

Rev. xiv.

3. 4.

Hof. xiii.


11.


IV. *Sixthly and Lastly*; I PROPOSED in
 the last place to explain, *how and for what
 reason*, the Apostle, in his representation
 of this whole matter, does *himself perso-
 nate* the Sinner he would describe; and
 chooses to express the miserable State of
 the *greatest Sinners*, in words seemingly
 spoken

spoken as if it had been concerning *Himself*. *Wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver Me?* And, *with the mind I myself serve the Law of God, but with the Flesh the Law of Sin.* And This deserves to be the more carefully and distinctly cleared, because upon a wrong interpretation of these words, has been founded a Notion most pernicious to religion, as if it were possible, and even authorized by the Example of the Apostle himself, that a man living in the habitual Practice of Any Vice, might nevertheless be in a State of Salvation, by approving in his Mind the Law of God: That is, that his Wickedness might be rendred *excusable*, by *That very Circumstance* which is its highest Aggravation; namely, its being contrary to the *Reason and Conviction* of his own *Mind or Conscience*. Than which, nothing can possibly be more absurd. The plain and certain Meaning therefore of These words, *I myself serve with the Flesh the Law of Sin*; is, not *I Paul who wrote this epistle*, but *I the Sinner, I the miserable Person all along described*

S E R M.
XVIII.



SERM. *scribed in This chapter. And the reason*
 XVIII. *why the Apostle chose to speak after this*
 *manner, is because it carries with it more of*
tenderness and compassion, and is more mo-
ving and less offensive, to express things of
This kind in the First person, which is
more General; than to apply them direct-
ly and more particularly to the person in-
tended, who may usually with better ef-
fect be left to make the application for
himself. It is very common in All Lan-
guages, even at This day, for men to ex-
press themselves after This manner: And
innumerable Instances may be found in
Scripture, wherein this way of speaking
is used with the greatest propriety, and so
as, in the apprehension of Any reason-
able and unprejudiced person, to carry
along with it No ambiguity at all. Thus
when the same Apostle argues, Rom. iii.
7; If the Truth of God hath more abound-
ed through My Lie unto his Glory, why
yet am I also judged as a Sinner? It is e-
vident he does not there speak concern-
ing Himself; but puts That question in
the person of one of Those who said,
Let

Let us do evil, that good may come: S E R M.
 Whose damnation, says he, in the very XVIII.
 next Verse, is just. 

AGAIN: I Cor. x. 29; after having given his advice in these words, *If any man say unto you, This is offered in Sacrifice unto Idols, eat not, for the sake of His Conscience that shewed it; Instead of going on to say in the same style; for why is Thy Liberty judged of another man's conscience? he immediately proceeds as in his own person, for why is My Liberty judged of another man's conscience?----- and why am I evil spoken of for That for which I give Thanks? Meaning; why is Any man in This case evil-spoken of upon That account?*

IN the same chapter, having exhorted the *Corinthians to flee from Idolatry; For, ver. 14. Ye cannot* says he, *be partakers of the* ver. 21. *Lord's Table, and of the Table of Devils; He immediately adds, ver. 22; Do We provoke the Lord to jealousy? are We stronger than He?* meaning evidently not to include *Himself*, but *Those only* whom he was then charging with Idolatry. In like manner

S E R M. manner, *Eph. ii. 3*; *Among whom* (among
 XVIII. which wicked Heathens,) *also We all* (says
 he) *had our conversation in times past, in
 the Lusts of our Flesh*: Evidently speaking,
 not of *Himself* personally, who had
 always *exercised himself to have a conscience
 void of offence both towards God and to-
 wards Man*; but of the *Generality* of the
 corrupt *Jews* as well as of the *Gentiles*.

By the *same* figure of Speech, in his
 discourse about the Last Judgment, (and
 not through any mistaken apprehension, as
 some have imagined, of the World being
 to end in the *Age* then present: For, on
 the contrary, our Saviour himself express-
 ly prophesied that *Jerusalem should be
 trodden down of the Gentiles* for a long sea-
 son; and *St Paul* no less expressly fore-
 told, that, *before the day of the Lord came*,
 there should be a *Great and Long Aposta-
 cy* of Christians: Not therefore, I say,
 through any mistaken apprehension, as if
 the World was *Then* coming to an End;
 but by the same vulgar figure of Speech,
 which I am now explaining,) does the
 Apostle, speaking of Those who shall be
 found

found alive at the day of Judgment, say; S E R M.
 We shall all be changed; and We which XVIII.
 are alive and remain unto the coming of
 the Lord.

To mention but *One Instance* more:
 When *St Paul* reproveth the *Corinthians*
 for their *Factionous* manner of following
 different Teachers, he does it in these
 words; *1 Cor. i. 12; This I say, that every*
one of you saith, I am of Paul, and I
of Apollos, and I of Cephas, and I of
Christ. Not that *Paul*, and *Apollos*, and
Cephas, were themselves the persons, about
 whom the *Factions* were really raised:
 But, (as may well be gathered from what
 he adds at the conclusion,) he puts the
 Case of *Other Teachers*, in his own, and
Peter's, and *Apollos's* name; that, under
 That representation, he might reprove
 the unreasonableness of the *Corinthian* *Fac-*
tions, the more *inoffensively* and the more
effectually: *These things*, says he, *I have*
in a Figure transferred to myself and to
Apollos for Your sakes; that ye might
learn in Us, not to think of Men, above
that which is written; ch. iv. 6.

AND

S E R M. AND thus therefore likewise in the
 XVIII. words of the Text: *So then I myself*, (that
 is, not I *Paul*, but I the *self-same person*,
 the same miserable person represented thro'
 this whole chapter,) do at the same time,
 inconsistently and with the highest self-
 condemnation, both *with the mind serve*
the Law of God, and with the flesh the Law
of Sin.

THE Application of what has been
 said, is plain; that no man, while he
 lives in the habitual Practice of *Any known*
Vice, can possibly be in a state of Salva-
 tion. He is under the *Law of Sin and*
Death, wretched and miserable: Nor can
 he by any other means be *delivered from*
the Body of this Death, but *through Jesus*
Christ our Lord; i. e. by the gracious
 Helps and Assistances of the Gospel,
 working in him *effectual Amendment* of
 Life and Manners, in expectation of the
 righteous judgment to come. Which real
 Amendment of Life, when it has *actually*
and effectually taken place; *there is* Then
 (as the Apostle adds in the words next
 following my Text) there is *Then*, and

Then Only, no condemnation to Them that S E R M.
are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after XVIII.
the Flesh, but after the Spirit . . . the law
of the Spirit of life . . . Christ J. . . having
made them free from the law Law of sin and
Death.

The End of VOL. VIII.



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