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McBryer









# SERMONS

ON THE

Following SUBJECTS,

VIZ.

Of the Sin against the Holy Ghost.	The End of GOD's afflicting Men.
Of receiving the Holy Ghost.	The Event of Things not always answerable to Second Causes.
Of the Power and Authority of CHRIST.	The Practice of Wickedness generally attended with great Evil.
Of the different Gifts of the Spirit.	The Character of oppressive Power in Religion.
Of the Desire of Knowledge.	Providential Deliverances from Slavery.
Of the Testimony of our SAVIOUR's Doctrines.	Of the Duty of Charity.
Of our SAVIOUR's Temptation.	Of the Necessity of Offences arising against the Gospel.
The Shortness and Vanity of Humane Life.	
Of Resignation to the Divine Will in Affliction.	

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

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V O L. VI.

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L O N D O N,

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said

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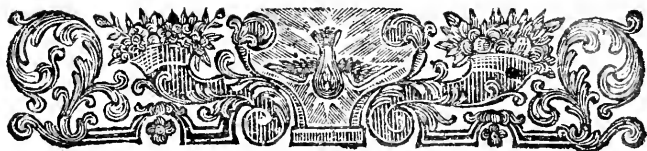
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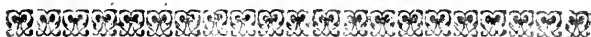
S E R M O N



# S E R M O N I.

Of the Sin against the *Holy Ghost*.

[*Preached on Whitsunday.*]




MAT. xii. 31, 32.

*Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of Sin and Blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; But the Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men: And whosoever speaketh a Word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him neither in this World, neither in the World to come.*



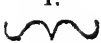
WE are met together This day, SERM.  
thankfully to commemorate I.  
the greatest and most important  
Gift, that was ever sent  
down from Heaven upon the  
Sons of Men; the Gift of the Holy Ghost

S E R M. at Pentecost; that plentiful Effusion of the Holy Spirit, which was the Accomplishment both of the Predictions of all the *Antient* Prophets, and of all the *later* Promises made by our Saviour to his Disciples; that Gift of Tongues, which was so peculiarly proper and necessary a *Means* to the great End for which it was designed, and the *Effects* whereof have been of such universal Extent over the Face of the whole Earth. The Gospel of *Christ*, was not, like the Religion of *Moses*, to be confined to One Nation or People; but to be preached, as the general Doctrine of Salvation, to All Mankind: And the Gift of Tongues, wherewith the first Preachers of it were indued, was equally both a *necessary Means* to inable them to preach to all Nations, and a *strong Proof* of the Truth of that Doctrine which they were so miraculously inabled to spread. 'Twas a *necessary Means*, without which the Gospel could by no labour whatsoever; no, not by the most indefatigable Industry, in compassing Sea and Land to make a Profelyte; have in the Course of *many Ages* been propagated thro' so many diffe-

different and so remote Countries, as S E R M.  
 by This means it was spread in the space I.  
 of *not many years*. And at the same Time   
 that it so *swiftly* conveyed the *Knowledge*  
 of the Gospel, 'twas likewise a *strong Proof*  
 of the *Truth* of the Doctrine itself, both  
 upon account of the *Greatness* of the Mi-  
 racle in its own Nature, and the *Clearness*  
 of the Evidence wherewith the Miracle  
 was set forth. The *Greatness* of the Mi-  
 racle in its own Nature, consisted in This;  
 that it was worked upon *many Persons*, at  
 one and the same Time; that it was a  
 producing in them such an Effect, as was  
 equivalent to the Result of a *long Habit*;  
 and that it was not a short and transitory  
 Effect, but of a *permanent Duration*; and,  
 in its *whole Continuance*, equally miracu-  
 lous, as in the first Operation. Upon the  
 whole therefore, 'twas such a Miracle in  
 all its Circumstances, as there had been  
 no Example of any like it before; and  
 probably referred to by our Saviour in that  
 Promise, *Job. xiv. 12. He that believeth on*  
*me; the works that I do, shall he do also,*  
*and greater Works than these shall he do.*  
 The *Clearness* of the Evidence wherewith

S E R M. the Miracle was set forth, consisted in  
 I. This; that Matters were so disposed by  
 the Wisdom of Providence, that the bitterest Enemies of the Apostles, did themselves, by their own Testimony, remove the only Objections that could be brought against it. For, all that could possibly be alledged against the Truth of the Miracle, was, either that the New Tongues wherewith the Apostles began to speak, were *not real languages*; or, if they were, that then the Apostles, who spake them, had *studied and been taught* those *Languages* before. But now the former of these Suspicions, was removed by the *Strangers* then present; and the latter was taken off, by the *Inhabitants of Jerusalem* themselves. The *Strangers* then present, who understood the Languages, took off that foolish Objection, *Acts ii. 13.* that the Apostles were *full of new Wine*; for they heard and understood them *speaking in their own Tongues, the wonderful Works of God*, ver. 11. And the *Inhabitants of Jerusalem* themselves, removed the *other* Suspicion, of their having been *taught* the Languages; for they knew them to be il-

literate

literate men, and said, *Are not all these, SERM.*  
*that speak, Galileans?* ver. 7; just as they <sup>1.</sup>  
 had formerly said concerning Jesus him-   
 self; *How knoweth this man letters, hav-*  
*ing never learned?* Joh. vii. 14; And,  
*whence has this man these things? --- Is*  
*not this the Carpenter, and Son of Mary?*  
*the Brother of James and Joses and Juda*  
*and Simon? and are not his Sisters here*  
*with us?* St Mar. vi. 2. Both the *Stran-*  
*gers* therefore, and the *Inhabitants of Je-*  
*rusalem* themselves, bore Testimony to the  
 Truth of the Miracle, even at the same  
 Time and with the same Arguments by  
 which they opposed it; And they were of  
 all Others the *best* and most *competent*  
 Witnesses, for that *very* reason, because  
 they were *prejudiced* against the *Thing*, and  
*Enemies* to the *Men*. Besides all which;  
 the Miracle itself (as I before observed)  
 was *permanent* in its *Continuance*, as well  
 as *publick* in the *manner* of its being work-  
 ed: So that in all respects, it was both  
 the *Greatest* in the *Nature* of the *Thing*  
*itself*, and the *Glearest* in the *Evidence* of  
 its being *really performed*; that can pos-  
 sibly be imagined. To *Us* indeed, who live

S E R M. at This Distance of Time, the Evidence  
 I. of a Fact done so many Ages since, cannot be so perfectly and entirely clear, as  
 to those who were themselves Eye-Witnesses and Ear-Witnesses of it. But if there *are* Matters of Fact so attested, even at much *greater* Distances of Time, as that no reasonable Person can in the least question the Truth of them; and *This*, of all Other distant Facts that are recorded in any History, has the greatest and most remarkable Attestations; the Evidence of it even to *Us*, can with as little Reason be rejected, as that which was offered to those very Persons who lived at the Time. Nay, in *some* respects, we may seem even to have the *Advantage* over them, in Point of Certainty of our not being deceived. For, besides that we are Now free, from many of those inveterate Prejudices, which both *Jews* and *Gentiles* then laboured under; and which we cannot assure ourselves we should less obstinately have adhered to, than They did; We have moreover, what They at that Time could not have; We have the concurrent *Examination* of many Ages, and the Advantage  
 of




of considering and comparing the *Objections of Adversaries* on all Sides; We have the *additional* Proofs, arising from the *continued Effects* of this miraculous Power, in different Times and Places; We have seen the Truth of the Apostles Doctrine confirmed, by the accomplishment of several Prophecies; by the Destruction of *Jerusalem*; by the final scattering of the whole Nation of the *Jews*; by the incredible Success, and universal Propagation of the Gospel, over all the World.

S E R M.  
I.  


Now These *additional* Confirmations, of the Truth of the Doctrine delivered by the Holy Ghost in the Revelation of the Gospel, are to *Us*; (what the Strength of the Evidence arising from the Nearness of the Time, was to *Them* who lived in the first Ages;) a proportionable *Aggravation* of the Guilt of Unbelief, in those who, notwithstanding all reasonable Proof, yet obstinately reject the Counsel of God against Themselves, by *disbelieving* or (which is the same thing) *disobeying* the Gospel. For the Sin of Unbelief, does not consist in *not believing* what men have *no* sufficient Reason to believe; but in refusing to at-

S E R M. I  
 tend to reasonable Evidence; in being unwilling to examine into a Doctrine, which would oblige them to amend their Lives; in *hating the Light*, and fearing to come into it, *lest their Deeds should be reprov'd* thereby. *This is the Condemnation*, saith our Saviour, *that Light is come into the World, and men loved Darknes rather than Light, because their Deeds were evil*, Joh. iii. 19. *They are of those* (as Job elegantly expresses it) *who rebel against the Light; they know not the Ways thereof, nor abide in the Paths thereof*, ch. xxiv. 13. Upon this Account; (that Knowledge, or, which is all one,) the Means of Knowledge fairly propos'd to men, is the great Aggravation of the Sin of Unbelief; shewing plainly, that in such Case nothing but Obstinacy and the Love of Sin, is the real Cause of their rejecting the Truth: Upon this Account, I say, it is, that our Saviour thus declares concerning the Jews, St Job. xv. 22. *If I had not come, and spoke unto them, they had not had Sin; but now they have no cloke for their Sin: and ver. 24. If I had not done among them the Works which none other man did, they had not had Sin; but*

but now they have both seen and bated, S. E. R. M.  
 both me and my Father. And to the Ci- I.  
 ties, wherein most of his mighty Works were   
 done, Mat. xi. 21; Wo unto thee, Chora-  
 zin; Wo unto thee, Bethsaida, For if the  
 mighty Works which were done in you, had  
 been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would  
 have repented long ago in Sackcloth and  
 Ashes: But I say unto you, It shall be more  
 tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of  
 judgment, than for you. And thou, Caper-  
 naum, which art exalted unto Heaven, shalt  
 be brought down to Hell; For if the mighty  
 Works which have been done in Thee, had  
 been done in Sodom, it would have remain-  
 ed until this Day; But I say unto you, that  
 it shall be more tolerable for the land of  
 Sodom in the day of judgment, than for  
 you. And upon the same Ground it is,  
 that the Apostle in like manner so high-  
 ly aggravates the Sin of rejecting the Gos-  
 pel, Heb. xii. 25. See that ye refuse not  
 him that speaketh: For if They escaped  
 not, who refused him that spake on Earth;  
 much more shall not we escape, if we turn  
 away from him that speaketh from Hea-  
 ven. And ch. ii. 2. If the Word spoken by  
 Angels,

SERM. *Angels, was stedfast; and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great Salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him: God also bearing them witness, both with Signs and Wonders, and with divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own Will. A careful Consideration of the Sense of these Passages, will lead us to the true meaning of the like, but more difficult, and seemingly more severe Expressions in the Text. For, if the great Aggravation of Sin, be the Knowledge of our Duty; and the Condemnation of the World, be the Light that is come into it; and the Guilt of the Jews was proportionably greater than that of other men, for this reason, because our Saviour did among them the Works which no other man did elsewhere; and those particular Cities of the Jews, wherein most of our Lord's mighty Works were done, were condemned with a more particularly severe judgment; and in general, every Sin against the Word spoken by our Lord himself*

himself from Heaven, and confirmed with S E R M.  
*Signs and Wonders, and with divers Mi-*  
*racles and gifts of the Holy Ghost,* can less I.  
 expect to escape unpunished, than those  
 committed against the Law given by *An-*  
*gels* and delivered by *Moses* upon *Earth* :  
 It follows, that if there be Any Sin, more  
 heinous than All others ; if there be Any  
 Guilt, which in Event will terminate in  
 final Perdition ; if there be any Crime,  
 of which it may beforehand be judged  
 that it will never be expiated ; it must  
 be Mens obstinately sinning against That  
 Light, a greater and clearer than which,  
 will never be afforded them ; it must be  
 mens hardning themselves in such a Dis-  
 position, as in the Nature of the Thing  
 cuts off from itself the Means of Recove-  
 ry ; it must be such a Corruption and  
 Depravity of Mind, as, like a Mortal and  
 incurable Disease, precludes all Methods  
 of applying a Remedy. And This, 'tis  
 evident, cannot be any *particular* Sin, but  
 a *general and total* Rejection of the only  
 Means of recovering *from* Sin. The Ge-  
 neration that lived at the Time of the  
 Flood, sinned unpardonably ; not by any  
 of

S E R M. of the *particular* Crimes they were guilty of; but by rejecting the preaching of Righteous *Noah*, which was the last Call God vouchsafed them to Repentance; For he resolved, that whosoever blasphemed the preaching of *Noah*, should never be forgiven, but be destroyed by the Flood. The Inhabitants of *Sodom* sinned unpardonably; not by any of their *particular* Wickednesses, which yet were extremely heinous; but by refusing to hear *Lot's* Exhortations to Repentance; who was the last Monitor God intended to send them; and he determined judicially, that whosoever blasphemed the preaching of *Lot*, it should never be forgiven him, but he should be destroyed in the Desolation by Fire. The Pharisees in our Saviour's Time, sinned likewise unpardonably; not by any of the *particular* Iniquities, with which they are charged in the Gospel; (For the whole *Design* of our Lord's preaching, was to exhort them to *repent* of these, that they might be forgiven:) But they sinned unpardonably, by opprobriously rejecting our Lord's Invitation to Repentance; and by scornfully  
 reviling

reviling the greatest and the last Miracles, which he intended to work in that Place amongst them; And therefore, after This, God resolved to leave them to themselves, to live and die in their Sins without further conviction, and *never to be forgiven*, or to have any New Means of Pardon offered them, *either in this World or in the World to come.* Verily I say unto you, *All manner of Sin and Blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, shall not be forgiven unto men: And whosoever speaketh a Word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him neither in this World neither in the World to come.* The Words are the severest Words in the whole New Testament; and therefore ought very carefully to be considered and explained, in their true and proper meaning; that neither melancholy pious persons may on the one hand be terrified with Fears of what they have not the least reason to apply to themselves; nor wilful and incorrigible Sinners, presumptuously

S E R M.  
I.  


S E R M. sumptuously imagin themselves to be in  
 I. less danger than they really are.

THE Occasion of the Words, was This. Our Saviour having cast out a Devil, and healed the diseased person, so that he who had been dumb and blind, immediately both spake and saw; the People, astonished at the greatness of the Miracle, began to express their opinion, that he must needs be the Messias, *ver. 23.* Upon which, certain Pharisees, hardened by their Malice and Hypocrisy beyond all Conviction, suggested to the People, that possibly it might be by Confederacy with the Prince of the Devils, that Jesus thus cast out Devils, *ver. 24.* To This our Saviour replies; Whatever is done by Confederacy with evil Spirits, must be something that promotes the *Interest* of the Kingdom of Satan, and not any thing directly *contrary* thereto; unless a Kingdom can be supported by Divisions within itself; *ver. 25.* *Every Kingdom divided against itself, is brought to Desolation; and every City or House divided against itself, shall not stand.* If therefore casting out Devils, and that



in Proof of a Doctrine directly *opposite* to the *Interest* of the Kingdom of Satan, be a thing not to be done by Confederacy with Evil Spirits; than nothing, says he, can be more absurdly malicious, than this your Accufation of me; *ver. 26, If Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how then shall his Kingdom stand?* But if the thing itself be apparent; and ye cannot without extreme Unreasonableness and the utmost Degree of Malice, deny it, that what I do, is by the immediate Power of God; then here is a convincing Proof offered you, that I am truly sent from God, and that the Doctrine I preach is for the establishment of *His Kingdom*; *ver. 28; But if I cast out Devils by the Spirit of God, then the Kingdom of God is come unto you.* For, as one's entering into a strong man's house, and forcibly dispossessing him of his Goods, is an evident Demonstration, that he who so enters, is stronger and comes with greater Authority, than he that had the first Possession: So my breaking the Power of Devils, by casting them out of the Bodies, and destroying their Dominion over the Minds of Men, is

S E R M. an undeniable Proof of my being sent by  
 I. a Power and Authority greater than theirs;  
 ver. 29. *Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man, and then he will spoil his goods?* The connexion of the following Words, ver. 30, is more difficult to be understood; for they may seem at first sight to be abrupt, and independent on what went before; *He that is not with me, is against me; and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth abroad:* But the True intent of them, is, to illustrate and confirm what went before, in some such Manner as This: When two great Powers are at [open and] irreconcilable Enmity against each other, even he who *only forbears* joining with one side, is thereupon reputed to be against it; according to the usual Proverb, *He that is not with me, is against me:* How much more therefore (infers our Saviour) ought ye to believe that *I*, who have actually done *so much* towards destroying the Power and Kingdom of the Devil, am really and in Truth acting in opposition against him, and not by confederacy with him!

And

And then he adds in the Words of the S E R M.  
Text; Wherefore *I say unto you, All man-*  
*ner of Sin and Blasphemy shall be forgiven*  
*unto men; but the Blasphemy against the*  
*Holy Ghost, shall not be forgiven unto men.*

I.  


The meaning is: Since 'tis as evident, as 'tis possible for any thing to be, that the Works which I do, are by the immediate Authority of God, and by the Power of his Holy Spirit; *Therefore* whosoever shall resist this great Conviction, by so unreasonable and obstinate a degree of Malice, as to ascribe these very Works, these greatest and highest Evidences of Divine Authority, to the Power of the Devil; To such a Person God will never afford any further Means of Conviction: And therefore tho' all other Blasphemies and all *particular* Sins whatsoever, may be repented of and forgiven; yet He who is guilty of *this Total* corruption of Mind, this maliciously perverse and desperate Rejecting of the greatest and highest Conviction that God vouchsafes to afford men; shall never have granted him any further Means, of Repentance and Forgiveness. Every particular Kind, or Sort of Sin, whatsoever;

S E R M. and all other *Blasphemies* whatsoever, shall be forgiven men: Even he that speaks against *Me*, (says our Lord,) in all *other* respects; or calumniates *me*, upon any *other* account whatsoever; and is not at first convinced by *my* preaching and Exhortations; may yet afterwards be convinced by the mighty *Works* he shall see, and by the *Power* of the *Holy Ghost*; and so repent and be forgiven: But he who obstinately resists even this greatest and most extraordinary Method, which God has thought fit to make use for the Conversion of Mankind; and maliciously reviles the most evident Operations of the Spirit of God; such a One has no further Means left, by which he might be convinced and brought to Repentance, and consequently he can never be forgiven. *Whosoever speaketh a Word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this World, neither in the World to come.*

THE Connexion and *general* Meaning of the Words being thus explained, I shall for the further and more *particular* clearing

ing



ing of what difficulties may remain in them, and for removing such Scruples as may be apt to arise from them, take leave to add the following Observations, 1<sup>st</sup>, That Our Saviour does not say, *The Sin against the Holy Ghost*, but *the Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost*, shall not be forgiven. Neither in *This*, nor in any *other* Passage of Scripture, is there *any* mention at all of a *Sin against the Holy Ghost*. For indeed our Saviour is not here speaking of a *Sin*, of a particular *Act of Sin*; seeing on the contrary he expressly declares, that *All Manner of Sin*, nay and all *Blasphemy also wherewith soever* men shall blaspheme, shall be forgiven unto them; But he speaks of a certain incurable *malicious Disposition of Mind*, which by venting itself under such peculiar Circumstances in Blasphemy against the *greatest* of our Lord's Miracles, plainly discovered itself to be incapable of Amendment, by *any* Means which God would vouchsafe to make use of. And 'twas not the *particular Act of Blaspheming*, that itself rendred the Men unpardonable; But *That* particular *Blasphemy*, in *those* particular Circumstances,


S E R M. I. was a *Sign* only or an *Evidence*, which our Saviour knew and declared to proceed from an *incurable* and therefore *unpardonable* malicious Disposition of Mind. And This is evident from the Words immediately following the Text, whose *connexion* usually is not sufficiently taken Notice of. For thus, when our Saviour had declared the Pharisees Blaspheming against the Holy Ghost, to be *unpardonable*; he adds, as a *Reason*, in the very next Words, ver. 33. *Either make the Tree good, and his Fruit good; or else make the Tree corrupt, and his Fruit corrupt: For the Tree is known by his Fruit. O generation of Vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? For out of the Abundance of the Heart, the Mouth speaketh.* 'Tis evident therefore, that not for the particular *Act* of Blasphemy, but for That *incurably wicked Disposition of Mind*, of which Blaspheming in those Circumstances was a plain indication, were these Pharisees declared to be unpardonable. Nothing therefore can be gathered from this passage, concerning any particular *Sin against the Holy Ghost*, (as Many have without Reason

fon


son imagined,) in its own Nature unpardonable. For in reality *All wilful Sin whatsoever is against the Holy Ghost*; against the good Motions, against the guidance and direction of the good Spirit of God; Yet not every, nay not any wilful Sin is upon that Account absolutely unpardonable; as appears from the whole Tenor of Scripture: Much less are blasphemous *Thoughts*, which melancholy pious persons are apt to complain of, and which therefore are not wilful at all; much less (I say) are uneasy blasphemous *Thoughts*, of This highest Malignity; when, generally speaking, they are not so much as *chosen* or *wilful Sins at all*. Even those *wilful Sins against* or in opposition to *the Holy Ghost*, (which yet is a Phrase never used in Scripture-language,) are in the Gospel always supposed pardonable upon true Repentance. The Blasphemy our Saviour here speaks of, is a thing of another Nature; 'Tis not singly sinning *against the Person of the Holy Ghost*, or *against his good Motions*, but presumptuously *reviling the greatest Works of the Holy Ghost*, and so obstinately *rejecting*

S E R M.  
I.  
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S E R M. the last and solemnest Call to Repentance.

I.  And This is further evident from what our Saviour adds, that *he who speaks against the Son of Man, might be forgiven*; As the *Jews*, who reproached him as being *the Carpenter's Son*, as a *wine-bibber and a glutton*, as a *Friend of publicans and Sinners*, might be forgiven, if they repented upon the further Conviction that should afterward be afforded them: But he that blasphemed against the *Holy Ghost*, against the highest Evidence of our Lord's *greatest* Miracles, was never to be forgiven; Not because even *This was in itself* and in the Nature of the Thing, absolutely unpardonable; (For no reason can be given why speaking against the *Person* of the *Holy Ghost*, should be *in itself* of greater Malignity, than speaking against *Christ*, or against *God the Father Himself*;) but because it was an obstinate rejecting the last means of Conviction, and an evident Token of incorrigible Malice. Among the Antient Jews, *Heb. x. 28. He that despised Moses's Law, died without Mercy*: Our Saviour in like manner declares, that he who by blaspheming against the Works  
of




of the Holy Spirit, despises and rejects S E R M.  
 the final Offer of *the Gospel*, he also shall  
 perish without Mercy. And This possi- I.  
 bly may be the meaning of the other   
 Phrase; that such a malicious Temper  
 should not be pardoned, *neither in this*  
*World neither in the World to come*; name-  
 ly, neither in that present Age, which was  
 the Time of the *Law*; nor in the Age to  
 come, which is the Times of the *Messiah*.  
*2dly*, It is reasonable to suppose, that this  
 peremptory declaration of our Saviour,  
 concerning the unpardonable Wickedness  
 of those who thus blasphemously rejected  
 the highest Evidence of the Gospel, ought  
 to be applied and understood of *those*  
*Persons* only, who themselves *saw* his Mi-  
 racles, and rejected them purely out of a  
 wicked Disposition; namely, the Phari-  
 sees, and unbelieving *Jews*. For, tho'  
 those who live in after Ages, and are not  
 Eye-witnessees of his mighty Works, have  
 indeed nevertheless sufficient Evidence of  
 the Truth of the Gospel; and in some  
 few respects, as I before intimated, have  
 even the Advantage over the greater Part  
 of those who lived at That Time; yet,

S E R M. These Advantages arising from Arguments  
 I. of Abstract Reason, Consideration, and  
 Inquiry; which work differently upon  
 Men at different Times; and may prevail afterwards, upon more mature consideration, over the same person who at present rejects them; therefore no man's rejecting the Gospel Now, can be known or supposed to proceed from the like incurable Malignity, as the Blasphemy of those who themselves *saw* our Lord's Miracles. 3dly, It may yet further be conceived, not without probability, that these severe Words of our Saviour, are applicable, not even so much as to *All* Those Pharisees, who saw and rejected his Miracles; but to those only, who saw *That* particular *great Miracle* recorded in This chapter, and who reviled it with *That* particular *malicious Blasphemy*, of ascribing it to the Power of the Unclean Spirit. For so St *Mark* intimates, by adding in the Words immediately following the Text, *Mar. iii. 30.* that Jesus spake thus severely of them, because *they said, he hath an unclean Spirit.* And indeed, since we do not find that any Persons whatsoever were  
 ever

ever rejected from Baptism; 'tis reasonable to suppose, that many of the *other* Pharisees, who had *seen* and perhaps also *spoken against* our Saviour's Miracles, might yet afterwards repent, be baptized, and obtain forgiveness. But *These*, who blasphemed in *This particular* manner, he *knew* were *incorrigible*, and perhaps *judicially* also resolved that no farther means should be offered them. And then the Words of the Text will be prophetic, and equivalent to those other expressions, *Job. x. 26; viii. 21, 24. Ye are none of my sheep, ye shall die in your Sins: which is the same as to say, Ye will never be forgiven neither in this World neither in the World to come.* 4thly, If this Threatning is to be extended to any *other* Persons, it may seem most properly to reach the case of such, as, after the giving of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost, should in like manner revile that miraculous Dispensation. But there is no reason to think (as some have done,) that it belongs *only* to such as should blaspheme *after That*: For the Power of the Holy Ghost did as visibly appear to the Pharisees with whom our Saviour

S E R M.  
I.  


S E R M. Saviour Now converted, as to those who  
 1. saw that wonderful gift at Pentecost; and  
 the Words themselves seem *more naturally*  
 to confine it to *those Pharisees only*: At  
 least, it can be applied to Both, *only* upon  
 account of their *seeing* the Miracles; which  
 was the highest Evidence that could pos-  
 sibly be given them. And if there had  
 been any such thing as any *other* Sin a-  
 gainst the Holy Ghost, which Christians  
 in after-times could be in danger of fall-  
 ing into; it cannot be imagined, but the  
 Apostles in their Epistles, wherein they  
 are diligent to caution men against all *o-  
 ther* Crimes, would have been much fuller  
 and more pressing in their warnings to  
 take heed of *This*, as being of more des-  
 perate consequence than any *other* whatso-  
 ever: Whereas, on the contrary, we find  
 not in their writings any direct mention  
 of any such Sin at all. *5thly* and *Lastly*;  
 Yet This we may observe, that the A-  
 postles frequently warn men to take heed  
 of the *Approaches* towards the like Guilt,  
 and of Sins which may seem next in Ma-  
 lignity; such as wilful Apostacy from the  
 Profession, or from the whole Practice of  
 Reli-

Religion; Concerning Persons guilty of S E R M. which Crimes 'tis said, that 'tis *impossible* I. [exceeding difficult] *to renew them to Re-*   
*pentance*; that there *remains no more Sacri-*  
*fice for their Sin*, Heb. x. 26,----29; that  
 like *Esau*, they *for one morsel sell* their  
*birth-right*; and, when 'tis joined with  
 obstinacy, that their *Sin is unto Death*, i.e.  
 that 'tis like a Disease which appears to  
 be *mortal*, with little or no Hopes of Re-  
 covery. From which God of his infinite  
 Mercy, &c.







# S E R M O N II.

Of receiving the *Holy Ghost*.

[*Preached on Whitsunday.*]



A C T S xix. 2, 3.

*He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized?*



IN the following Discourse up- S E R M.  
 on these words, I shall *first* II.  
 endeavour briefly to explain  
 the full Meaning of the se-  
 veral *particular* expressions  
 here made use of by the Apostle, and by  
 the

S E R M. the new Converts with whom he discoursed; and then, *secondly*, I shall consider the *general* doctrine, concerning the Nature and Gifts of the Holy Spirit, which was the Foundation and Occasion of the *particular* incidents referred to in the Text. It was the Method of the Apostles, when they had preached the Gospel in a Number of places, to return after a certain Time through the same places where they had formerly preached; to confirm, and strengthen the Believers; to set in order, the several Churches; to redress, what was amiss; to exhort and comfort them, under the Persecutions they were likely to meet with; and to examine how far they preserved pure and uncorrupt, That Doctrine which had been delivered unto them, with regard both to Faith and Practice. *Acts xv. 36. Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us go again and visit our Brethren, in every City where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they do. Ver. 41. And he went thro' Syria and Cilicia confirming the churches. And ch. xvi. 5. And so were the churches established in the Faith, and increased in*  
*Number*



## Of receiving the Holy Ghost.

31

*Number daily.* The Text, with the fore-  
going and following verses, is an Account  
of part of this Progress of St *Paul* in vi-  
siting the Churches, and of the Design  
and Effect of that his journey amongst  
them. *Paul having passed through the  
upper coasts, came to Ephesus, ver. 1. And  
finding certain Disciples, he said unto them,  
have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye  
believed?* As the Apostles were them-  
selves baptized with the Holy Ghost at  
Pentecost, so it pleased God, at the *first  
preaching of the Gospel*, generally to endue  
*others* likewise, who were baptized by the  
Apostles, with some visible gifts of the  
Holy Ghost, such as speaking with tongues,  
propheying, and the like. Not that This  
was the principal and most valuable Ef-  
fect of Baptism; For *That* consisted in  
the *internal* Benefit on the Mind of the  
persons *themselves*, Remission of past Sin,  
and Sanctification of the Spirit for the fu-  
ture: But in order to a more effectual  
conviction of *Others* to whom the Gospel  
was to be preached, and for the speedier  
propagating of the Doctrine of Christ, it  
pleased God that the Power of the Holy  
Ghost

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S E R M. Ghost in Them who were baptized, discovered itself in those first times by *external* Evidences and miraculous Operations: *Tongues*, says the Apostle, *are for a Sign, not for them that believe, but for them that believe not*, 1 Cor. xiv. 22. Tho' therefore these miraculous Effects of the Spirit conferred in Baptism, were not the *principal* with regard to the persons *themselves* on whom they were conferred; yet being the most *visible* to *others*, and at that Time generally attending the other more secret and invisible Gifts, it was very natural for the Apostle, when he came to examine into the State of such Disciples as had been converted in his absence, to express himself after this manner, *Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?* The Matter he was chiefly concerned to know, was the *thing signified*; whether they were true Believers, and had received the Gospel in the Truth and Purity thereof. But the thing demanded in his question, was the *Evidence* or *external Sign*; Has God bestowed upon you those visible Gifts of the Spirit, which are now the usual Character-

isticks

sticks of the Disciples of Christ? To this S E R M.  
 Question, they returned a very surprizing II.  
 Answer indeed, if our Translation ex-  
 prest it rightly; *We have not so much as*  
*heard whether there be any Holy Ghost:*  
 As if any either Jew or even Gentile,  
 much less Christian Convert, could possi-  
 bly have been so ignorant, as to know  
 nothing at all, nor ever have heard any  
 thing, either of the Being or Influences of  
 the Spirit of God. The Meaning evi-  
 dently is, (and so the words ought to  
 have been rendred,) *We have not heard*  
*that there has been any such Giving of the*  
*Holy Ghost; We have neither received*  
*any of these extraordinary Gifts ourselves,*  
*nor been informed of their being bestowed*  
*on others, or that we were to expect any*  
*such thing upon our believing. And in-*  
*deed it may seem very wonderful, how it*  
*should happen they could be, even so far*  
*ignorant as This. But the reason appears,*  
*in what follows. For when the Apostle*  
*hereupon asks them again; Unto what then*  
*were ye baptized, if not unto the expecta-*  
*tion of the Gifts of the Holy Ghost?*  
 they reply, ver. 3. *Unto John's Baptism.*

S E R M.

II.



Which Baptism of *John the Baptist* being preparatory only to the reception of Christ, and intended only as a *Means* to a further *End*; 'tis no wonder it was not accompanied with the Effusion of those perfective Gifts of the Spirit, which would have made needless that Baptism into the Name of Christ, which was to follow. This therefore is the Meaning of what the Apostle thereupon answers them again, ver. 4. *John* (says he) *verily baptized with the Baptism of Repentance; saying unto the people, that they should believe on Him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.* The Intention of which Reply, is; *John indeed baptized you* (saith he) *into the expectation of the Messiah that was to come; But before you enjoy the Benefit of his actual Coming, you must verify that expectation by receiving him now he is come; and fulfil the intention of John's Baptism, by being consequently baptized into the Name of Christ.* *John's Baptism* was but a *Promise* or Declaration of your *Intention*, of being afterwards baptized into *Christ*; And the Advantage you expect from being

ing baptized by *John*, can be made good S E R M. to you only by *fulfilling* that Promise, in embracing the Doctrine and the Religion of *Christ*. *When they heard This*, ver. 5. *they were baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus; And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them, and they spake with tongues and prophesied.* II.

THE Occasion and Meaning of the words being thus explained, we may from this History, whereof the words of the Text contain the principal circumstances, make the following Observations.


1<sup>st</sup>, THAT the Nature and Spirit of the Christian Religion, is to lay as little stress as possible upon all *external* Rites; and to have the greatest regard that can be, to the *moral* Qualifications of mens Minds. The *Persons* to whom *St Paul* puts the Question in the Text, are, in the verse before, stiled *Disciples* or Believers, that is, *Christians*; though they had been instructed in nothing yet, but in the Doctrine of *John the Baptist*. Repentance from dead works, and Reformation of Life, and a preparatory Disposition to

S E R M.

II.




receive the Will of God when made known to them by the Meſſias to come, was here judged ſufficient to denominate men *Disciples*; even *before* they had been *baptized* into the Name of *Chriſt*, or had received any of the *external Gifts* of the Holy Ghost, or had ſo much as *heard* that ſuch Gifts were to be beſtowed upon them. There is *no external Rite* in matters of Religion, more poſitively and expreſſly commanded by God, or more indiſpenſably and without any exception required by our Saviour, than that of *Baptiſm*: *Except a man be born, ſaith he, of Water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God*: And yet even in *This very caſe* of ſo expreſſ a command, (to ſhow how much Religion is judged of in the ſight of God by the moral and virtuous Diſpoſition of the Heart, more than by the outward Form,) there are *many* inſtances in Scripture, where the *inward* Diſpoſition has been accepted inſtead of the *outward* Form; but *no* caſe, where the *Form* or *Ceremony* has in any wiſe ſupplied the want of the *inward* Diſpoſition. The Thief upon the Croſs was aſſured by our

Saviour, that he should be with him That S E R M.  
 day in Paradise ; because in the Disposi- II.  
 tion of his Heart he was fitly qualified for   
 Baptism, though there was no possibility  
 of his having the Ceremony performed  
 upon him. The Persons mentioned in the  
 Text, had they died before their being  
 baptized in the Name of Christ ; it can-  
 not be questioned, but that those whom  
 the inspired Writer calls *Disciples here*,  
 would by our Lord have been acknow-  
 ledged for his true Disciples *hereafter*.  
*Cornelius* the good Centurion, was *before*  
*his Baptism* filled with the miraculous  
 Gifts of the Holy Spirit : And *no reason*  
 can be conceived why That Testimony  
 of the Divine Favour should be conferred  
 upon him just *before* his Baptism, which  
 the Apostles themselves expected could not  
 have been bestowed till *after* it ; but on-  
 ly that the Spirit of God thought it of  
 importance to declare in so extraordinary  
 a manner, that even where to the Use of  
 a Form or Ceremony God *has* annexed  
 his Gifts, yet even there, not *upon ac-*  
*count of* the Form, or the Rite itself, but  
 upon account of the *inward Qualifications*

S E R M. of the *Mind*, does he bestow his spiritual Blessings. In the regular Administration of Baptism itself, 'tis not the *washing away of the Filth of the Flesh*, that saveth us; but *the Answer of a good Conscience towards God*, 1 Pet. iii. 21. Many *Martyrs* in the Primitive times, upon their professing their Faith in Christ, were *immediately* hurried away to bear Testimony for him with their Blood: And no man doubted, but that they who *in reality* were buried *with him* and *for him* into Death; were at least equalized with those, who by Baptism died with him only *in a Figure*. *Infants*, who die unbaptized; unavoidably, and not possibly by any fault of their own; cannot with reason be worse and more hardly thought of, than *grown persons* in the like condition. For concerning *Infants, as Infants*, and merely upon Account of their Innocency, it is, that our Saviour affirms, that *of such is the Kingdom of Heaven*. And the *reason why* they are saved, is not *because* they are *baptized*; but they are *therefore* baptized, *because* they are capable of *Salvation*; They are *therefore* fit to be



be admitted into the Body of God's S E R M.  
Church on *Earth*, because they are by II.  
their Innocence qualified to become Mem- 

bers of his eternal Kingdom in *Heaven*.

Nevertheless, though the *thing signified it-*

*self*, is always of much more importance

than the *Sign*; and often accepted by God

in the stead of and without the external

Form; yet this is always so to be under-

stood, when the external Form *cannot* be

had. For where, by the person's own

wilful and contemptuous neglect, any Ce-

remony of God's express appointment is

omitted; there *he that despiseth, despiseth*

*not Man, but God*; who has also annexed

to what means he pleaseth, the Gift of

his Holy Spirit. *Except a man be born of*

*Water and of the Spirit*, saith our Sa-

viour; except he that has the Means and

Opportunity of doing it, makes use of

those Means of Grace which God has

been pleased to appoint; 'tis reasonable he


should fall short of the Grace itself, and

*he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.*

*Except ye Eat my Flesh and Drink my*

*Blood*, saith our Lord in another place;

His *principal* Meaning is, except ye re-

S E R M. II.  ceive my *Doctrine*, and, by obeying it, incorporate yourselves into my spiritual Body; *ye have no Life in you*: This (I say) is plainly his *principal* Meaning, because the words were spoken *before* any *external Symbols* of his Body and Blood were instituted: Yet, *when* such Sacramental Symbols *were* appointed; *then* it became the Duty of every sincere Christian, not only to eat our Lord's Flesh and drink his Blood *spiritually*; not only so to imbibe his *Doctrine*, as to make it the Support and Nourishment of a Spiritual Life, the Spring and Ground-work of a Holy and Virtuous Conversation; but it became their Duty also to participate of the *External Sacrament*, and to make use of the *Means*, as well as desire the *End*, of Christ's own Appointment. The *Disciples* in the Text, when they heard St *Paul* preach about the Gift of the Holy Ghost, immediately they were baptized *in the Name of the Lord Jesus*; And *without* so doing, they would not have received the Gifts of the Spirit, notwithstanding that the Text does *before* call them *Disciples*, upon their having been baptized with the Baptism of Repentance

penitance by *John*. This shows how well consistent, the *Necessity* of observing any Rite or Ceremony of God's own Appointment is, with the Christian Religion's laying at the same time *no stress at all* upon the *external* Form or Ceremony itself, but only on the *internal* moral Disposition or virtuous Qualification of the Mind. To which *inward* Qualification of Mind, great regard is always shown in Scripture, even where *all external* Advantages have been wanting. Thus to the *Scribe* who was so well-disposed, as to judge that the Love of God and of our Neighbour, was more valuable than all whole burnt-offerings; our Saviour immediately replies, *Thou art not far from the Kingdom of God*, Mar. xii. 34. Of the *young man* who had observed the Commandments from his youth, 'tis recorded that *Jesus beholding him loved him*, Mar. x. 21. To the *Syrophænician woman*, whom at first our Lord seemed to reject with great severity, for not being of the house of *Israel*; yet at length he replies, *O woman, great is thy Faith, be it unto thee even as thou wilt*, Matt. xv. 28. And of the

S E R M.  
II.  



S E R M. the *Gentiles themselves*, St Paul makes no  
 II. scruple to affirm, that their Uncircumci-  
 sion, if they keep the Righteousness of  
 the Law, shall be counted unto them for  
 Circumcision, *Rom. ii. 26.* But now, on  
 the *other* side, no *external* Advantages, no  
*Rites* or Observations whatsoever, are ever  
 accepted in the stead of, or without, the  
*inward* Moral and virtuous Disposition of  
 the Heart and Mind. Not *Baptism* it-  
 self; not the Sacrament of the *Lord's*  
*Supper*; not even the *miraculous* Gifts  
 and Graces of the Holy Ghost, are of  
 any avail to an unrighteous person. *Many*  
*will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord,*  
*have we not professed in thy Name, and*  
*in thy Name have cast out devils, and in*  
*thy Name done many wonderful works?*  
*And then will I profess unto them, I ne-*  
*ver knew you; depart from me, ye that*  
*work iniquity,* *Matt vii. 22.*

2. T H E next Observation we may  
 draw from the words of the Text, is,  
 that *every* Disciple of Christ is here *sup-*  
*posed* to have received the *Gift of the*  
*Holy Ghost.* For so St Paul, as in words  
 equivalent to asking them whether they  
 had

had been *baptized* or no, thus puts the S E R M. Question to them, *Have ye received the* II. *Holy Ghost since ye believed?* And what was then meant by *receiving the Holy Ghost*, appears from the following words, ver. 6. *And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues and prophesied.* This was the immediate Effect of the Holy Ghost's *first* coming upon the *Apostles* at Pentecost; And This was generally the Effect of its coming *afterward* upon *new Converts* at their Baptism. And when this miraculous Effect ceased, yet still the receiving of the Holy Ghost was as constant and as necessary as ever; because *Except a man be born of the Spirit, as well as of water, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.* 'Tis *Now* true, as well as it was *Then*, that *if any man has not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his; and that the Spirit of Christ dwelleth in us, except we be reprobates.*

THE way to *know* whether any person has this Spirit dwelling in him, or *no*; is by the *Fruits* of the Spirit; For *the Tree is known by its Fruit*, Mat. xii. 33. Now  
the

S E R M. the *Fruits* of the Spirit, are either *temporary* or *perpetual*. *Temporary*; such as are the *miraculous* Gifts of *speaking with tongues, prophesying, healing diseases, and the like*. Or *Perpetual*; such as are the *moral* Dispositions and Habits of the Mind, worked in us by the Spirit of God, improved in us by his continual Assistance, and acceptable to him in the Performance; Namely *goodness, righteousness, and Truth*, as St Paul reckons them up, *Eph. v. 9*; and more largely, *Gal. v. 22*. *The Fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance*. These are the *permanent* Fruits of the Spirit, necessary to be found *at all times* in every baptized person; Otherwise his Baptism is nothing else, but merely the washing away the Filth of the Flesh; so that, being born of *Water* only, and not of the *Spirit*, he cannot enter into the *Kingdom of God*. In whomsoever these *moral Fruits* of the Spirit are found, the other *miraculous and extraordinary* ones are *Now* unnecessary; And even *Then*, at the first preaching of the Gospel, when they were the *most needful* of all, yet were they

they useleſs and unprofitable to thoſe very S E R M.  
 perſons in whom they moſt abounded, if II.  
 the *moral Fruits* of the Spirit were not   
 found in conjunction with them. By the  
 Habits of Piety and true Holineſs, men  
 may *Now* ſhow themſelves as full of the  
 Holy Ghoſt as ever, *without* any miracu-  
 lous Gifts; *with* the greateſt abundance  
 of which, they were ſtill void of the Holy  
 Ghoſt even *Then*, if not indued with pie-  
 ty and true Holineſs. For, *miraculous*  
*Gifts*, were but *Signs* of the Holy Spirit  
 working *by* them, not *in* and *upon* them.  
 And therefore ſuch Gifts were uſeful, ra-  
 ther to *Others* than *themſelves*; to con-  
 vince *beholders*, rather than to ſanctify the  
*perſons*: *Tongues*, ſaith St Paul, are for a  
*Sign*, not to *them that believe*, but to  
*them that believe not*. But *moral Vir-*  
*tues*, are Evidences of the Spirit's dwel-  
 ling *in* men, and *ſanctifying* mens Hearts  
 and Lives: Which *to themſelves* is the  
*End* and the *Effect* of That *Belief*, the  
 producing but the *firſt Beginnings* whereof  
 in *Others*, is all that is intended by *mira-*  
*culous Gifts*. Theſe extraordinary Gifts  
 therefore, were only *Operations* of the Spi-  
 rit;

S E R M. fit ; But Righteousness and Holiness are properly called its *Fruits*. *Fruits of the Spirit* ; because worked, not as the others, extrinsically, necessarily, and without the concurrence of the persons themselves ; but worked *in* the mind, and *with* the free choice and *Will* of the person, by the *approbation, assistance, and help* of the *Spirit* of God, *concurring with* him, not barely operating *by* him. For which reason, *These* are never found but in *Good* men ; being indeed the *Qualifications* which *denominate* men such : But the *Others* were often bestowed even upon *hypocritical* persons ; whom our Saviour, though they had done in his Name many wonderful Works, yet declares he will reject from him, as being at the same time Workers of iniquity. And hence it is, that our Lord makes that remarkable Distinction, St Luke x. 20. *In This rejoice not, that the Spirits are subject unto you ; but rather rejoice, because your Names are written in Heaven* : That is, 'tis a thing much more valuable, to be a good man, than to be able to cast out Devils. Hence also it is, that St Paul gives so manifest a preference



to works of *righteousness*, before *miraculous* Gifts, 1 Cor. xii. 30; *Have All, the gifts of healing? do All speak with tongues? do All interpret? But covet earnestly the best Gifts, and yet show I unto you a more excellent way; a way yet more excellent, even than the best Gifts. And what That is, he tells us in the next words; Though I speak with the Tongues of Men and of Angels, and have not Charity, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling Cymbal: And tho' I have the Gift of Prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge; and tho' I have all Faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have no Charity, I am nothing. If I have no Charity; that is, if I am not indued with a Spirit of Universal Love and Goodness towards Men. For so it is remarkable in the whole New Testament, that the word *Charity* never signifies, as it does Now in common speech, the mere giving of *Alms to the poor*; but it always means, in a larger Signification, That *Love and Desire of doing good to all men*, which is opposed to uncharitableness, peevishness, Hatred, Animosity and Factiousness. As is particularly*

S E R M. larly evident in the Verse next following ;  
 II. where *Charity* is expressly distinguished  
 from *giving Alms to the Poor*, as the  
 whole of a Duty from its part: *Though I  
 give* (saith he) *my body to be burned, and  
 though I bestow all my goods to feed the  
 poor, and have not Charity*, (that is, have  
 not an universally good and righteous  
 Spirit,) *it profiteth me nothing.*

3dly, FROM the character of the persons described in the Text, we may observe that those words, *we have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost*, cannot possibly be a right translation ; but that they ought to have been rendred thus, *we have not so much as heard whether there be any Giving of the Holy Ghost* ; any such Gift or Distribution of it, as the Apostle inquired after. (There is a like expression, *Job. vii. 39* ; *The Holy Ghost was not yet* ; so 'tis in the original ; which in the Translation we very rightly express, *The Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified.*) Now of *This* indeed, of the extraordinary Gifts and miraculous Effusion of the Holy Ghost, the persons mentioned in the Text  
 might

might in their present circumstances be S E R M. ignorant: But, *whether there be any Holy Ghost*, This is what they could not possibly make a Question of. For, not to say that even the *Gentiles themselves* were not without *Some Notion of a divine Afflatus*, 'tis well known that the *Jews* had in the Writings of the Prophets perpetual mention of the *Spirit of God*: And therefore the Persons in the Text, who were of all other Jews or Profelytes the *best instructed*, as having been baptized with *John's Baptism*, 'tis plain could not possibly be ignorant of *That*, however they might not yet have heard of the extraordinary and miraculous Effusion of it since the Ascension of Christ.


4thly, FROM the manner of the Apostles putting the Question, *Unto What then were ye baptized?* unto *what*, if not unto the expectation of the Gift of the *Holy Ghost*? from This manner of the Apostle's putting the Question, it appears, that the following words, ver. 5, *when they heard This, they were baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus*; and the like Expressions in other parts of this book,

S E R M. ch. viii. 16. *they were baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus*; and ch. ii. 38. *be baptized every one of you in the Name of Jesus Christ*; and ch. x. 48. *he commanded them to be baptized in the Name of the Lord*; it appears (I say) that these Expressions do by no means signify, as if any one was ever baptized *barely* into the Name of *Christ*; but on the contrary, that they are an abbreviate way of speaking, (such as is every where very usual in matters supposed to be already perfectly well known,) to put the *part* for the *whole*. Baptizing into *Jesus Christ*, was well known by all Christians, to signify baptizing in *That Form*, which our Lord *Jesus Christ* had appointed; that is, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: And where-ever *part* of this Form is express, the *whole* is always understood to be implied. Had it been usual, according to the *Letter* of these expressions, to baptize men into the Name of *Christ* only; the Apostle could not properly have asked those who had not yet heard of the Gift of the *Holy Ghost*, *unto what then were ye Baptized?*

. but

## Of receiving the Holy Ghost.

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but his question should have been, *after* S E R M.  
*what manner have ye been instructed?* But II.  
putting the Question in the manner he   
does; *if ye are ignorant of the Gift of*  
*the Holy Ghost, unto what then were ye*  
*Baptized?* shows plainly, that not only  
in the doctrinal *instruction* of a Christian,  
but also in the *Baptism* itself, there must  
have been mention of the *Holy Ghost*, not-  
withstanding that abbreviate manner of  
speaking, wherein they are said only *to*  
*have been in the Name of the Lord Jesus,*  
in contra-distinction to *John's Baptism*.  
And from hence also it appears further,  
*what* was then understood by those words  
in the form of Baptism, *And of the Holy*  
*Ghost, or in the Name of the Holy Ghost:*  
Namely, that the person, as he was bap-  
tized into the Knowledge of *God*, and in-  
to the Death of *Christ*; so he was bap-  
tized also into the Expectation of the  
Gifts of the *Holy Ghost*; whether those  
Gifts were *extraordinary*, as the miracu-  
lous Powers conferred at that particular  
Time; or *ordinary*, as the Sanctification  
of mens Hearts for ever.


*Lastly,* FROM the History in the Text,

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we

S E R M. we may learn the difference between the  
 II. Baptism of *John* and that of *Christ*, how  
 they were Both really but One thing, the  
 former being imperfect without the latter,  
 and the latter perfecting only what the  
 former had begun, and therefore not be-  
 ing called a Rebaptizing. When the  
 Disciples, to the question, *Unto what then  
 were ye baptized?* made this Answer, *Un-  
 to John's Baptism*; The Apostle replies,  
 ver. 4. *John verily baptized with the Bap-  
 tism of Repentance, saying unto the people,  
 that they should believe on Him which  
 should come after him, that is, on Christ  
 Jesus: And when they heard This, they  
 were baptized in the Name of the Lord  
 Jesus; and when Paul had laid his hands  
 upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them.  
 John baptized into the Expectation only,  
 of Him that was to come after; And  
 therefore This his Baptism was imperfect,  
 till the intention of it was fulfilled by the  
 same persons being afterwards baptized  
 into the Name of Christ when he was  
 come, and receiving actually his Gifts, of  
 which the Former Baptism was but de-  
 claring a preparatory Expectation. And  
 This*

This is what is set forth in those Texts, S E R M.  
 where *John the Baptist* expressly acknow- II.  
 ledges and declares, *I indeed* (saith he)   
*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, Matt. iii. 11. Mar. i. 7, 8.*  
*Luk. iii. 16, 17. Acts i. 5. and xi. 16. With*  
*the Holy Ghost and with Fire;* that is,  
 with the Gifts of the Holy Ghost, both  
*ordinary and extraordinary:* Which was  
*literally fulfilled upon the Apostles at Pen-*  
*tecost;* and, in the *virtual Effect,* upon  
 all the *other Disciples* who were baptized  
 afterwards. And again: *John bare re-*  
*cord, saying, Joh. i. 31, 32. that He [viz.*  
*that Christ] should be made manifest to*  
*Israel, therefore am I come baptizing [only]*  
*with Water:* According to the Account  
 the Angel prophetically gave *before* of  
 his Office, *Luk. i. 16. Many of the chil-*  
*dren of Israel shall be turn to the Lord*  
*their God; and he shall go before him in*  
*the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the*  
*hearts of the Fathers to the children, and*  
*the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to*  
make

S E R M. *make ready a people prepared for the Lord.*

II. These are the *particular* Observations I thought useful to draw from the History in the Text: It remains that we consider in the next place the *general* doctrine concerning the Nature and Gifts of the Holy Spirit, which was the Foundation and Occasion of the *particular* Incidents referred to in the Text.







# S E R M O N III.

Of receiving the *Holy Ghost*.

[*Preached on Whitsunday.*]



A C T S xix. 2, 3.

*He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized?*



I N a former Discourse upon S E R M. these Words, I have indea- III. voured briefly to explain the meaning, of the several *particular* expressions here made use of by the Apostle, and by the new

E 4

Converts

S E R M. Converts with whom he discoursed. It remains at this time, according to the Method proposed, that I proceed in the next place to consider the *general doctrine*, concerning the *Nature and Gifts* of the Holy Spirit, which was the Foundation and Occasion of the *particular Incidents* referred to in the Text. And

III.  


I. WHEN *John the Baptist* came preaching and baptizing with Water; with whose Baptism *only*, the Disciples in the Text having been baptized, had neither received the Gift of the Holy Ghost *themselves*, nor so much as *heard* of its miraculous Gifts being bestowed on *others*; he modestly and plainly confessed, *Matt. iii. 11. 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.* According to This Declaration of *John the Baptist*, our Saviour, a little before his Ascension, promised his Disciples, *Acts i. 5. John truly baptized with Water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.* And This his Promise was

was effectually made good to them, in that miraculous Effusion of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, which we this day commemorate, and which is particularly described in the second chapter of the *Acts*. Where that *Circumstance* of *there appearing* unto the Apostles *cloven tongues, like as of Fire*, ver. 3 ; explains the meaning of that prophetic Phrase used by *John the Baptist* concerning our Lord, *He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with Fire* ; He shall baptize you with the *Holy Ghost*, descending at first *visibly* in the appearance of *Fire* ; and continuing with you afterwards, in pursuance of what That emblem represented, by an Assistance as much more powerful and efficacious than what *John Baptist* pretended to, as *Fire* is more powerful and more purifying than Water. To the Apostles and first Disciples, who were to spread the Gospel over the World, this their being baptized with the Holy Ghost, was accompanied with miraculous Gifts and Powers ; such as speaking with tongues, healing diseases, and the like : But when the reason of these miraculous operations ceased, yet *still* every Christian

is

S E R M.  
III.  
~~~~~

S E R M. is baptized with the *Holy Ghost* as well as  
 III. with *Water*; and his *internal* sanctifying  
 Gifts and Graces, are to continue with us  
 always even unto the end of the World.  
 If any one has not received *these* Gifts of  
 the Holy Ghost, it may still be asked him  
 with the same propriety as in the Text,  
*Unto what then was he baptized?* If any  
 man has not in him the Spirit of Christ;  
 if he does not show forth in his Life the  
 Fruits of the Spirit, by Works of Right-  
 eousness and true Piety; if his Heart be  
 not sanctified by this Spirit of Holiness; if  
 his Mind approves not, and delights not in  
 things spiritual; if his Will obeys not the  
 good Motions of this Divine Assister; if  
 the Actions of his Life are not guided by  
 the Commands of God, revealed to us in  
 Scripture by the Inspiration of the Holy  
 Ghost; *to what purpose then was such a  
 Person baptized?*

IT may here perhaps be inquired, *Does  
 not the Spirit of God distribute to every  
 man severally as he himself willeth? Does  
 not the wind blow where it listeth, and so  
 (saith our Saviour) is every one that is born  
 of the Spirit? Are we not justified freely  
 by*

by God's grace? And does not the Apostle S E R M. accordingly require us humbly to acknowledge, *Who maketh thee to differ from another?* III. How then can it be objected to any man as a *Fault*, or as a *Defect* in himself, that he has not received the Holy Ghost, or that he is not indued with those Gifts and Graces, which are not his own acquisitions, but free distributions of the Spirit of God? To give a clear and satisfactory Answer to this Difficulty, it is necessary that we attend to the following Distinction.

SOME Gifts of the Spirit are mere external miraculous Powers; such as speaking with Tongues, healing diseases, and the like: And of these it is, that the Apostle declares, that the Spirit *so* divides to every man severally as he willeth, and *so* maketh One to differ from another, that nothing at all of these kinds of Gifts depends in any measure upon the Will of the Persons themselves. And therefore as by *having* these Gifts, no man was the better Christian; so no man by *wanting* them, was the worse; these Gifts being bestowed, not for the Benefit of the *Per-*  
*sons*

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S E R M. *sons themselves, but for the Conversion*  
 III. *of Others.*

OTHER Gifts of the Spirit, are particular Powers and *Qualifications* for particular *Offices*; Of which the Apostle speaks, *Ephes. iv. 7, 11. To every one of us is given grace (or a gift,) according to the measure of the Gift of Christ; who gave some Apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the Saints, for the work of the Ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ.* And, with respect to *These*, the Goodness of a Christian did not consist in his having *This* or *That* particular Gift, but in making a right *Use* of his Talent, whatever it was. *Rom. xii. 3. 'Twas God that dealt to every man the measure of Faith; that is, (as it appears from the words immediately following;) God, according to his own good pleasure, distributed to each one a particular Trust or Employment; That is in this place the meaning of the Measure of Faith; 'Tis a Trust committed to each one's Fidelity or Faithfulness. Having therefore Gifts (adds the Apostle, ver. 6.)*

differing according to the grace that is given to us; whether it be prophecying, let us prophecye according to the proportion of Faith, (according to the proportion of the Gift entrusted to our Fidelity; so the words properly signify;) Or if it be Ministry, let us wait on our ministring; or be that teacheth, on teaching; or be that exhorteth, on exhortation; He that giveth, let him do it with Simplicity, (that is, liberally;) he that ruleth, with diligence; he that showeth mercy, with cheerfulness.

AGAIN: Other Gifts of the Spirit, are particular and personal Advantageous Circumstances in the peculiar Constitution of Mens Bodies, the natural Frame and Temper of their Mind, or their external State of Life and condition in the World; by which they are peculiarly fitted for the Exercise of some particular Offices, or for the continuing in some particular Manner and Course of Life. Of These the Apostle speaks 1 Cor. vii. 7. I would, says he, that all men were even as I myself; But every man hath his proper gift of God, (a natural Qualification or Fitness for certain particular Duties or States of Life,)

one


S E R M.  
III.

S E R M. one after *This* manner, and another after

III. *That*. And, with respect to *These*, the  
 Goodness of a Christian does not consist  
 in his being indued with *This* or *That* par-  
 ticular Qualification; but in his behaving  
 himself *suitably* to *These* Qualifications  
 wherewith God *has* indued him.

LASTLY, *Other* (and indeed the *Prin-*  
*cipal*) Gifts or Fruits of the Spirit, are  
*moral Virtues*; Righteousness, Peace,  
 Goodness, Meekness, Temperance, and  
 the like. And in *These* lies the only diffi-  
 culty of the Question. If they be Fruits  
 of the *Spirit*, and worked in us by the  
 Power of the *Grace* of God; how then  
 can it be objected to any man as a *Fault* or  
 as a *Defect* in *himself*, that he has not  
*Thus* received the Holy Ghost. The  
 True Answer is; that these *moral* Graces,  
 are not, like those others before-mention-  
 ed, worked on men necessarily by an ex-  
 ternal operation, but depend on the indea-  
 vours of their own *Will*, at the same time  
 that they are promoted by the Assistance  
 of the *Holy Spirit*. Every person that  
 embraces the Gospel and is baptized, has  
 received the Promise of the Holy Ghost;  
 and



and 'tis wholly his own Fault, and his S E R M.  
 own Wickedness only, if, with That Af- III.  
 sistance, he brings not forth the Fruits of   
 the Spirit. The Assistance of the Spirit,  
 is indeed necessary to *inable men* to bring  
 forth Fruits meet for the Kingdom of  
 God; But then, because 'tis the *Assistance*  
 only, and not (like the miraculous ope-  
 rations) the *entire* Work of the Spirit;  
 and because That Assistance is always af-  
 forded men in proportion to the sincere  
 endeavours of their *own Will* co-operat-  
 ing; therefore 'tis justly charged upon a  
 man as his own Fault, if he wants those  
 Virtues and Graces of the Spirit, which,  
 were it not for his own wilful rejecting  
 its good Motions, the good Spirit of God  
 would never be wanting in assisting him  
 to practise. *Examine yourselves* (saith St  
*Paul*) *whether ye be in the Faith: Prove*  
*your own selves: know ye not your own*  
*selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you,* (or,  
 as it is elsewhere expressed, *the Spirit of*  
*Christ dwelleth in you,*) *except ye be repro-*  
*bates,* that is, except by your own per-  
 verse wickedness ye drive him from you,  
 2 Cor. xiii. 5. And for this reason (I sup-  
 pose) it is, that whereas the *miraculous*


S E R M.  
III.

operations, are generally in Scripture stiled the *Gifts* of the Spirit; the *moral* Virtues are on the contrary called, not the *Gifts*, but much more usually the *Fruits* of the Spirit. *Fruits*; to the production of which, it is as necessarily requisite, that there be *good ground* in which the root is planted; as that the *root* be good, which is planted in that ground. 'Tis as necessary in order to bringing forth the *Fruits* of the Spirit, that the Will and good Disposition of the Person himself, concur with the good Motions of the Spirit; as 'tis necessary that the Spirit affords his Assistance, to enable the person effectually to fulfill his own good dispositions. Our Saviour has illustrated This to us, in the Parable of the Sower; where the Fruit brought forth in several places, is represented exactly proportionable to the Goodness of the Ground. The Seed sown, is the Word of God; and the Rain which caused it to grow, is the Assistance of the divine Spirit. Now though without Seed sown in the Earth, and without Rain from Heaven, no Fruit indeed could have been produced; yet to the Badness of the *ground* only, is all the Failure

Failure justly ascribed in this Parable by S E R M.  
 our Lord, because the other Necessaries III.  
 were supplied from above. In like man-  
 ner, though Christian Virtues are indeed  
 the Fruits of the Spirit, and could not,  
 without the Assistance of the divine Spi-  
 rit, be acceptably and effectually produ-  
 ced; yet because This Assistance from a-  
 bove is never wanting but thro' our own  
 unworthiness, therefore most justly is eve-  
 ry wicked person blamed and punished,  
 for being void of those Virtues, which are  
 the Fruits of the Spirit. The same thing  
 is expressed to us in the Parable of the  
 Vine-yard, *Is. v. 2*; where God complains  
 by the Prophet concerning the people of  
 the *Jews* whom he compares to a *vine-*  
*yard*; that he had *fenced it, and gathered*  
*out the Stones thereof, and planted it with*  
*the choicest Vine; and he looked that it*  
*should bring forth grapes, and it brought*  
*forth wild-grapes. The planting and dres-*  
*sing the Vineyard was necessary to its*  
*bringing forth good Grapes; but when it*  
*failed to do so, the Fault was in the Vine-*  
*yard itself, ver. 4. What could have been*  
*done more to my vineyard, that I have not*  
 done

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S E R M. *done in it? Wherefore, when I looked that*  
 III. *it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth*  
*wild grapes? God does, on his part, always*  
 what is necessary for our Assistance; and no more denies his Holy Spirit to such as worthily ask him, than a tender Father, *if his Son asks an Egg, will give him a Scorpion*, Luk. xi. 12. But men by their own unworthiness, and resisting his good Motions, do quench and grieve and drive him from them; and then most justly is it charged upon them as their *own Fault*, if they have not in them the Spirit of God, which yet at the same time is God's *free Gift* when bestowed at all. *Free*; because originally God had no obligation, but his own mere Goodness, to confer it on *any*; and yet nevertheless 'tis every man's *own Fault*, if he receives it not; because God never with-holds this his Free Gift, but from Those only who are not sincerely willing to co-operate with it; in bringing forth those Fruits of Righteousness and true Holiness, which, upon account of That concurrence, are, at the same time, both the *Virtues* of the *Man*, and the *Fruits* of the *Spirit*. When therefore

the Scripture affirms that we are *justified* S E R M.  
*freely by his Grace*; the meaning is not, III.  
 that the Grace of God operates upon Men   
 as Machines; and that *he* so acts upon  
 them, as to make needless their acting for  
*themselves*. But the intention of the Phrase  
 is to declare, that 'tis owing to the free  
 Grace, or undeserved Favour of God,  
 made known in the Gospel; that the im-  
 perfect Fruits of Righteousness which by  
 our best indeavours we are able to bring  
 forth, are *accepted* of him unto justifica-  
 tion; and that the *Assistance* of the good  
 Spirit of God is always at hand, to  
 strengthen and enable us to bring forth  
 those Fruits. In like manner, when our  
 Saviour declares, that *the Wind bloweth*  
*where it listeth, and we hear the Sound*  
*thereof, but know not whence it cometh, nor*  
*whither it goeth*; and that *so is every one*  
*that is born of the Spirit*; the meaning is  
 not, that the Spirit regenerates men with-  
 out any care or co-operation of their own;  
 (for That would make all the Exhortations  
 of the Gospel vain and absurd;) but the  
 Intent of the passage is, that the *Manner*  
 and *Degrees*, by which the Grace of the  
 VOL. VI. F 2 Gospel

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III.



Gospel enables a man to reform the whole moral Frame and Temper of his Mind, are as imperceptible to Sense, as the secret Causes of many great Effects and Operations in Nature. That Regeneration is owing to the Assistance of the *Holy Ghost*, our Saviour plainly shows in this argument, both by the similitude itself, and by expressly calling it our being *born of the Spirit*; Yet that at the same time it depends upon the man's own Will, whether that divine Assistance shall take effect in him; he no less plainly declares in the very same discourse, by *requiring* it of *Us* as an indispensable *Duty*, that we *be born of the Spirit*: *Except a man, saith he, be born of Water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.* From hence we may understand how it comes to pass, that usually in Scripture-Phrase, both all the good that *men do* is ascribed to *God*, and all the good that *God works in them* is still nevertheless ascribed to *themselves*. 'Tis *God* that *worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure*; And yet in the very same verse we are commanded to *work out our own Salvation* ourselves; nay, we  
are

are commanded to do it for that very reason, because God has given us the Power both of Willing and performing it. As every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own Lust, and enticed; and yet at the same time all Sin is ascribed to the Temptations of the Devil, because the Devil is the Head of Apostacy, and delights in the Sins of Men, and lays before them opportunities of being enticed and drawn away by their own Lust and Wickedness, without which he could otherwise have no Power over them; so, because God is the original Author of all good, and the Giver of all the Powers by which we do good, and encourages and assists us in the performance of it; therefore most justly in Scripture is all the good we do, ascribed to Him; and yet, because without our own Care and concurrence to put them in Action, all these Powers and Assistances are in vain; 'tis therefore very reasonably urged as a Duty incumbent upon Ourselves, to grow in grace, 2 Pet. iii. 18; and it is required of us by an indispensable Obligation, that We bring forth the Fruits of the Spirit. And This

S E R M.  
III.  
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S E R M. is implied to us in the very Form of  
 III. Baptism: For when we are baptized in  
 the Name of the *Holy Ghost*, into what is  
 it that we are so baptized, but into the  
 expectation of the Assistance of the Holy  
 Spirit, and into a solemn Promise of sub-  
 mitting ourselves accordingly to his holy  
 Guidance and Direction? As, being bap-  
 tized in the Name of *the Father*, is de-  
 claring our Assurance of Reconciliation and  
 Return to his Favour, who had been just-  
 ly offended with us; and a solemn Dedi-  
 cation of ourselves to His Service for the  
 future, as the One supreme Governour  
 and Lord of the Universe: And being  
 baptized in the Name of *the Son*, is be-  
 ing baptized into the Remission of Sins by  
 his Blood, and into a solemn Obligation,  
 on our own part, of dying with him un-  
 to Sin, and rising again unto Newness of  
 Life: So, being baptized in the Name of  
*the Holy Ghost*, is at the same time a so-  
 lemn Declaration both of our Hoping for  
 his Guidance, and of our Resolving to  
 obey it.

2. I HAVE been the longer upon This  
*first* Head concerning the Gifts of the  
 Spirit,



Spirit, because it is a Doctrine of the S E R M.  
 Highest Importance to us, and of great III.  
 Moment in Practice. That which re-  
 mains in the 2d place, concerning the  
*Nature and Offices* of the Holy Spirit, be-  
 ing more speculative, I shall explain very  
 briefly in few words. As to the proper  
*Nature* of this divine Spirit, the Vanity  
 and Pride of learned men has often con-  
 founded their Understandings, while they  
 have presumed to be wise above what is  
 written, intruding into things which they  
 have not seen, and attempting to explain  
 what God has not revealed. The Essence  
 and inmost Nature of the smallest *Body*,  
 we cannot fully understand: The Life of  
 the meanest *Animal*, is beyond all our Phi-  
 losophy to explain: The Nature of the  
*Soul of Man*, is still a more unsearchable  
 Mystery; The Nature and essence of *An-  
 gels*, is yet far more unfathomable than  
 any of These: How then should vain  
 man presume to search out the Nature  
 of the *Spirit* of God? the Nature of the  
*only begotten Son* of God? the Nature of  
 the *Father* himself, the incomprehensible  
 God and Father of all things? What the

S E R M. Scripture expressly declares to us, is all  
 III. we can ever know concerning these Mat-  
 ters; and This the meanest Christian is as  
 capable of understanding, as the learnedest  
 Disputers in the World. Concerning the  
*Nature of the Holy Spirit* therefore, That  
 which the Scripture teaches us, is *This*  
 only; that He is a Divine Person, in an  
 ineffable manner deriving his Being, pro-  
 ceeding from, or being sent forth from,  
 the Father; *whereby* he is, and *upon which*  
*account* he is stiled, in a singular and pe-  
 culiar manner, *The Spirit of God*. And  
 because after the Ascension of Christ, the  
 Gifts distributed by the same Spirit, were,  
 according to the Promise of the Father,  
 poured forth in *much greater plenty and*  
*abundance* than before; therefore he is fre-  
 quently stiled likewise, *The Spirit of Christ*:  
 And before that *Jesus* was *glorified*, 'tis  
 affirmed therefore of the same Spirit in  
 the Gospel, (comparatively to that *much*  
*larger Effusion* which was to follow after,)  
 that he *was not yet given* at all, St *Job*. vii.  
 39; In which Passage 'tis very remarkable,  
 that the words in the original are, *The*  
*Holy Ghost was not yet*; meaning, was not  
 yet

yet given; just as in the Text the Disciples are said *not to have heard whether there was any Holy Ghost*; meaning, that they had not heard whether he was yet given. There have been *Some*, both in Antient and Modern times, who have taught that the *Holy Ghost* was nothing but a *mere Power*, and Operation or Action of the Father: But tho' it is True, that *Powers* are indeed sometimes in Scripture, according to the nature of the *Jewish* language, spoken of figuratively as *Persons*; yet in the present case 'tis plain on the contrary, that the *Person* of the Holy Spirit is often represented and spoken of as the *Power* of the Father, only because *By Him* it is that the Father works all Miracles and bestows all Gifts. Nor can those Texts be understood any otherwise, than of a real Person; in which it is expressed that *He*, (in the original it is, *That Person*;) *the Spirit of Truth is come*, Joh. xvi. 13; that *he maketh intercession for us*, Rom. viii. 26; that *he divideth spiritual Gifts, to every one severally as he willeth*, I Cor. xii. 11; and that *he shall not speak of himself, but what he shall hear, or receive*

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S E R M. ceive from the Father, *That shall be speak,*  
 III. Joh. xvi. 13. These, and other the like  
 ~~~~~ Texts, do plainly declare the Holy Spirit  
 to be, not a mere Power or Operation,  
 but a real Person sent forth from the Fa-  
 ther and the Son, for the perpetual Go-  
 vernment and Direction of the Church.

I N which Mission, the several *Of-  
 fices* which the Scripture teaches us he  
 performs, are as follows; that it was He  
 who inspired the Prophets of old, to testi-  
 fy before-hand the Sufferings of Christ,  
 and the Glory that should follow: that he  
 was afterwards sent forth in a more parti-  
 cular and extraordinary manner, to be the  
 Comforter, Director, and Guide of the  
 Apostles; to lead them into all Truth;  
 to bring to their remembrance all things  
 whatsoever Christ had before said unto  
 them; to support them against the Power  
 of the World; to instruct them what to  
 answer to their Persecutors; to be the  
 great Witness of our Saviour's Resurrection,  
 by working Signs and Wonders and migh-  
 ty Works, by inspiring the Apostles with  
 the Gift of Tongues, and dividing to their  
 Followers Diversities of Gifts; Finally, to  
 continue

continue with all good Christians even un-  
 to the End of the World, as the great  
 Sanctifier of the Hearts of Men; sanctify-  
 ing them, not by working upon them  
 mechanically as Machines, but by moral  
 Motives as rational Beings; assisting them  
 with his Grace, admonishing them with  
 his Holy Influences, working with them  
 and inspiring them with his good Gifts,  
 and helping the infirmity of their Pray-  
 ers with an energy that cannot be ex-  
 pressed.

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3. HAVING thus briefly discoursed concerning the *Nature* and *Offices* and *Gifts* of the Spirit; the *Application* of what has been said, is, what *Returns* we are bound to make for the Benefit of those Divine Gifts bestowed upon us. And *1<sup>st</sup>*, it will become us to return continual and hearty Thanks to *God*, as the original Author and Fountain of all Good; because it is *He*, who has thus *given* unto us *His* holy Spirit, 1 *Thess.* iv. 8; and who has *sent forth* the Spirit of his Son into our Hearts, *Gal.* iv. 6. *2<sup>dly</sup>*, As we are to return hearty Thanks for the Gifts already received, so we are continually to pray to  
 God

76 *Of receiving the Holy Ghost.*

S E R M. God in the whole course of our Lives,  
 III. that *This* his holy Spirit, into whose Name  
 we were at first baptized, *i. e.* dedicated wholly to his Guidance and Direction in the work of our Salvation; may never be withdrawn from us, but may continue to guide us by his perpetual influence, communion and fellowship. *3dly*, With regard to the Holy Spirit himself, it becomes us to endeavour to frame right and worthy Notions concerning him; that we acknowledge him to be the Inspirer of the Prophets and Apostles; the Author and Worker of all Signs and Miracles; the Sanctifier of all Hearts, and the Distributer of all spiritual Gifts: that we believe and receive his Testimony, as delivered by the Inspired Writers; that we obey his good Motions; be solicitous to obtain his gifts and graces; and infinitely careful not to grieve and quench and drive him from us, lest we be found to do despite unto the Spirit of grace; which in Scripture is represented as a more unpardonable fault, than offending against the Person even of our Saviour himself. *How is it* (says the Apostle,) *that ye have agreed together to tempt*

tempt the Spirit of the Lord? Acts v. 19; S E R M. III.

To tempt; that is, in Scripture-language, to provoke him: In the day of Temptation in the wilderness, when your Fathers tempted me; the meaning is, provoked me to anger, Pf. xcv. 9, Again, Ephes. iv. 30, And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the Day of Redemption: The word, sealed, is a figurative expression; the meaning of which may be understood from Rev. vii. 3. Hurt not the Earth,----- 'till we have sealed the Servants of our God in their fore-heads, i. e. distinguished them by a peculiar mark, in order to preserve them from a general destruction. In Allusion to which, good Christians are said to be sealed by the Spirit unto the day of Redemption; i. e. distinguished by the Fruits of the Spirit, in order to be delivered from the Wrath to come. And in pursuance of this figure, is the like expression, 2 Cor. i. 22, who hath also sealed us, and given the Earnest (in the original it is, the Pledge or Token) of the Spirit in our Hearts: And, 2 Tim. ii. 19, The Foundation of the Lord standeth sure, having this Seal, The Lord knoweth them

S E R M. *them that are his, and, Let every one that*  
 III. *nameth the name of Christ, depart from*  
 ~~~~~ *iniquity.*

T H E R E is one thing more upon this head, which deserves particular observation, wherewith I shall conclude: And That is, that following the Guidance of the Spirit, is not following Enthusiastick Imaginations; but taking care to obey the doctrine which the Spirit inspired. The *Apostles* were directed by a miraculous Assistance of the Spirit, upon every particular occasion: But we have *Now* no promise of any such miraculous direction: Obeying the Spirit *Now*, is nothing else but obeying his dictates, as set down in the inspired Writings: And to inable us to do This, we *may*, upon our sincere indeavours, expect his continual blessing and assistance.





# S E R M O N I V.

Of the Power and Authority of  
C H R I S T.

[Preached on Trinity-Sunday.]



St M A T T. xxviii. part 18, 19, 20.

*All power is given unto me in Heaven and in Earth: Go ye therefore, and teach all Nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always even unto the End of the World.*



OUR Saviour in his last Discourse with his Disciples before his suffering; after he had instituted the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and was going out with them toward the Mount of Olives in

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S E R M. in order to be betrayed ; and had warned  
IV. them of their approaching Sorrow, ch.

xxvi. 31. *All ye shall be offended because of Me this Night ; for it is written, I will smite the Shepherd, and the Sheep of the Flock shall be scattered abroad ;* proceeds in the next verse to allay their Grief, and support them against Despair, by giving them a remote prospect of Light after Darknes, and of Comfort that should succeed That melancholy Scene : *But after I am risen again, saith he, I will go before you into Galilee.* What he intended to *Do* in *Galilee*, he did not then think fit to explain to them more distinctly ; But *Galilee* being the place wherein they had used to converse most freely with him, and where they had with pleasure heard the greatest part of his divine Discourses ; it gave them a general Hope or Expectation, that after the present Time of Trouble, and after their leaving *Jerusalem* the constant place of Persecution ; when he should be risen again, (the meaning of which, whether it was literal or only figurative, they seemed not then fully to understand ; but when it were fulfilled,) they

they thought they should again converse with him freely and safely, in their ancient places of retirement in *Galilee*.

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AFTER his Resurrection, This Promise was renewed and confirmed to them, by the Angel appearing to the Women at the Sepulchre, and saying, *Mar. xvi. 7. Go, -----tell his Disciples,-----that he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him, as he said unto you.* And the Fulfilling of it, is recorded in the words immediately before the Text; *Then the eleven Disciples went away into Galilee, into a Mountain where Jesus had appointed them; And there they saw him,----and he spake unto them.* What it was that he spake unto them; or what the Design was, of his meeting them there; St *Luke* tells us, *Acts i. 2. He gave Commandments unto the Apostles whom he had chosen, and spake to them of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God; He gave them full instructions concerning the Nature of his spiritual Kingdom, which before his Resurrection they did not rightly understand; and, in several Conversations during the forty days between his Resurrection and*

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Ascension, he furnished them with all proper Directions relating to the Doctrine of the Gospel, which they were to preach and propagate over the whole World. A Summary or short Abridgement of which Instructions, is delivered down to us in the Words of the Text: *All Power is given unto me in Heaven and in Earth: Go ye therefore, and teach all Nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even unto the End of the World.*

THE words contain in brief, the whole System of Christian Doctrine: And, for Method's sake, we may observe in them distinctly the following particulars; 1<sup>st</sup>, *An Account of the Extent, of our Saviour's Power*; that he is invested with *All Power*, both *in Heaven and Earth*. 2<sup>dly</sup>, A Declaration, of the *Original* of that unlimited Power and Authority; *All Power*, saith he, *is given me, i. e. from the Father*. 3<sup>dly</sup>, The *Commission* he thereupon grants his Disciples; *Go Ye therefore, and*  
*teach*


*teach all Nations; 4thly, The Doctrine,* SERM.  
 which all Nations were to be taught, and  
 into which they were to be baptized; IV.  
*Baptizing them in the Name of the Father,*  
*and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*  
 5thly, *The Practice,* of those who were  
 to be baptized into this Faith: *Teaching*  
*them to observe all things whatsoever I*  
*have commanded you; And Lastly, The*  
*Promise of effectual Assistance,* to the Dis-  
 ciples sent forth upon This Commiffion;  
*And lo, I am with you always, even unto*  
*the End of the World.*

1st, HERE is an Account, of the *Extent*  
 of our Saviour's Power and Authority; that  
 he is invested with All *Power*, both in *Hea-*  
*ven and Earth.* The *Jews*, in their expecta-  
 tions of the *Messiah*, imagined to themselves  
 the Character of a Temporal Prince, who  
 should deliver them from the Yoke of  
 their Enemies, and reduce all the World  
 under their Dominion; who should *subdue*  
*the People under them, and the Nations un-*  
*der their Feet:* who should *choose out an*  
*Heritage for them, even the Excellency of*  
*Jacob whom he loved,* Pf. xlvii. 3. And  
*This indeed our Saviour has begun, and*

S E R M. will continue to accomplish; according to  
 IV. the *True Intent* of the Prophecy, tho' not  
 after the manner of *Their Interpretation*,  
 If. ix. 6. *Unto Them, tho' they know it not, a  
 Child is born; unto Them, a Son is given;  
 and the government Is upon his Shoulder;  
 and his Name Is Wonderful, Counsellor,  
 The Mighty God; (Not, the everlasting  
 Father; For 'tis the Son here spoken of,  
 and not the Father everlasting; But) the  
 Governor, the Father or Lord of the Age  
 to come, (so the Phrase ought to be ren-  
 dered;) The Prince of Peace: And he shall  
 reign over the House of Jacob for ever, and of  
 his Kingdom there shall be no end.* The Jews,  
 at the time of our Lord's appearing in the  
 Flesh were extremely disappointed and pre-  
 judiced against him; because his *seeming*  
*meanness* fell so much short of that Gran-  
 dour, wherein they expected their Messiah  
 should have shown himself: And yet in rea-  
 lity his *True Power* and Authority was as  
 much Superiour even to that *expected* Gran-  
 dour; as his *seeming Meanness*, for which  
 they despised him, was inferiour to it. They  
 expected a *Temporal Deliverer*, and he pro-  
 posed to them a *Salvation eternal*: They  
 looked

looked for a Prince of *Men*, and he appeared to be the Lord of *Angels*: They expected a Messiah indued with great Power on *Earth*, and he showed himself to be invested with *All* Power both in *Earth and Heaven*. Thus did the Wisdom of God put to silence the ignorance of foolish men; And while the Lovers of Worldly Grandour despised and reviled our Lord for his appearing Meanness; under that Meanness there lay concealed, and to all well-disposed Persons (who looked for Redemption in *Israel*) there discovered itself a Power, infinitely superior even to the highest Expectations, of those whose Hearts were bent on nothing but Worldly Greatness. *O the depth of the Riches both of the Knowledge and Wisdom of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!* Our Saviour, as he ministred to the Father in *creating the World*; (For by Him, the Scripture declares, *God created all things*;) So in *governing the World*, he likewise *supports all things by the Word of his Power*. He does what he pleases, *in the Armies of Heaven, and among the Inhabitants of the Earth*; He is *King of Kings,*

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S E R M. *Kings, and Lord of Lords; and judges,*  
 IV. *punishes, or rewards, as he pleases: For*  
 *as the Father raises up the dead, and quick-*  
*neth them; even so the Son quickneth whom*  
*he willeth, St Joh. v. 21. He searches the*  
*Hearts and Reins, and declares that he*  
*will give to every man according to his*  
*Work, Rev. ii. 23. He hath the Keys of*  
*Hell and of Death, Rev. i. 18. the Key of*  
*David, that openeth and no man shutteth,*  
*and shutteth and no man openeth, Rev. iii. 7.*  
 The Words are of the same import with  
 those in *Job*, ch. xii. 14. where complete  
 and irresistible Power is thus described;  
*Behold, he breaketh down, and it cannot be*  
*built again; he shutteth up a man, and*  
*there can be no opening: And they are an*  
 Application of that antient Prophecy, to  
 our Saviour; *Is. xxii. 22. The Key of the*  
*House of David will I lay upon his shoul-*  
*der; so he shall open, and none shall shut;*  
*and he shall shut, and none shall open.*

AND THIS, as it is a full Declaration of  
 the *Extent* of our Saviour's Power, that  
 it is *universal*, All Power both in *Heaven*  
 and *Earth*; which was the 1<sup>st</sup> particular  
 observable in the Text; so it leads us in  
 the 2<sup>d</sup> place, to the consideration of the  
 Original





*Original* of this unlimited Power and Authority. *I will lay upon his shoulder the Key of the House of David.* I will invest him with *All Power*, saith God in the *Prophecy*; And, at the Accomplishment of the *Prophecy*, All Power is Given unto me, saith our Saviour in the Text; *i. e.* given unto me *by the Father*. Underived Power, is peculiar to the Person of the Father; the incommunicable Property of Him alone, *who is made of None, neither created, nor begotten, nor proceeding,* nor in any manner whatsoever derived from Another. All Power is derivative from *Him*; derivative from the Father, to the Son; and from the Son, by the Spirit, to all Creatures. In our Saviour therefore, is vested all Dominion and Authority; because *in Him dwelleth the Fulness of the Godhead*, (the Fulness of Divine Power, the Glory of the Father,) *bodily, visibly,* as in the Person of a Man: And therefore he is stiled, *the Image of the invisible God*; because (as the Apostle expresses it,) *it pleased the Father, that in him should all Fulness, the Fulness of all Power, dwell.* This is, in a most lively Figure, repre-

S E R M. fented to us by the Prophet *Daniel*, ch.  
 IV. *vii. 13. I saw in the Night-visions, and*  
 *behold, One like the Son of Man, came with*  
*the Clouds of Heaven, and came to the An-*  
*tient of Days, and they brought him near*  
*before him; And there was given him Do-*  
*minion, and Glory, and a Kingdom; that*  
*all people, nations and languages should*  
*serve him; His Dominion is an everlasting*  
*Dominion, which shall not pass away; and*  
*his Kingdom, that which shall not be de-*  
*stroyed.* And the Expressions in the New  
 Testament, wherein is recorded the Ful-  
 filling of this Prophetick Vision, are ex-  
 actly agreeable to it. The Angel at the  
 Annunciation, thus declares concerning  
 him, before his Conception, *He shall be*  
*great, and shall be called the Son of the*  
*Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto*  
*him the Throne of his Father David; and*  
*he shall reign over the House of Jacob for*  
*ever, Luk. i. 32.* Concerning Himself he  
 professes accordingly, *Matt. xi. 27. All*  
*things are delivered unto me of my Father:*  
 And again, *Job. xiii. 3. Knowing that the*  
*Father had given all things into his hands:*  
 And yet more expressly, *Job. v. 22. The*  
 Father

Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son; and ver. 26, *As the Father hath Life in Himself, so hath he given to the Son to have Life in Himself; And hath given him Authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of Man; and ver. 19, Verily I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what he seeth the Father do; for what things soever He doth, these also doth the Son likewise.* In the same manner with these declarations of our Lord concerning himself, do the Apostles also speak of Him in their Epistles. *Whom God hath appointed Heir of all things, saith St Paul, Heb. i. 2; and ch. ii. 8, Thou hast put all things in Subjection under his Feet.* And still more largely and particularly, *Phil. ii. 9; Wherefore God also has highly exalted him, and given him a Name which is above every Name; that at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, (should become subject to His Dominion,) of things in Heaven, and things in Earth, and things under the Earth; And that every tongue should confess (in acknowledgment of That Subjection,) that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glo-*

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S E R M. ry of God the Father ; and Eph. i. 20, be  
 IV. raised Christ from the dead, and set him at  
 his own right hand in the heavenly places ; Far above all principalities and Powers, and Might and Dominion, and every Name that is named, not only in this World, but also in that which is to come ; And hath put all things under his Feet, and gave him to be the Head over all things to the Church. And accordingly upon account of this derivation of our Lord's Power, by way of Delegation from the Father, it is, that the same Apostle declares, 1 Cor. xv. 24. that at the End, he shall deliver up again the Kingdom to God, even the Father, when he shall have put down all Rule and all Authority and Power : For ----- when he saith, All things are put under him, 'tis manifest that He is excepted, which did put all things under him : And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto Him that put all things under him, that God (even the Father) may be all in all. It may here justly be thought a Difficulty, how in This place it is declared, that our Lord shall at the End deliver

*liver up the Kingdom to the Father; and* S E R M. IV.  
 yet in *other* Passages before-mentioned it is expressly affirmed, that *he shall rule for ever, and of his Kingdom there shall be no End.* But the Answer is obvious; that, when 'tis said, *his Kingdom shall have no End,* and that *'tis a Kingdom which shall never be destroyed;* the meaning is, that it shall never be prevailed over by any *opposite Power,* but shall subdue all things to itself; In which Subjection of *all things* to him, 'tis yet manifest that *He* cannot I Cor. xv. 21. be included, by whose original Power they were *All* made subject to him: But as our Lord was at first sent forth by the good Pleasure of the Father, so unto Him shall he at last return again; and when, by the Power of Judgment committed unto him, he shall have *brought many Sons unto glory,* he shall, together with *Them,* deliver up again the *Power itself* also into the hands of the Father, when he *presents them faultless before the presence of his glory,* and instates them in the eternal Kingdom of their heavenly Father: In which Kingdom of the Father, He himself shall continue to *reign* over them that  
are

S E R M. are saved, as King of Kings and Lord of  
 IV. Lords, for ever and ever. The *Socinian*  
 Writers, from these and some other the  
 like Texts of Scripture, have *very unrea-*  
*sonably* presumed to collect, that our Sa-  
 viour was no greater a Person than a mere  
 Man, born of the Virgin *Mary* without  
 any former Existence, and exalted by the  
 Power of God to this State of Dignity in  
 Heaven: But This their Inference (I say)  
 is *very unreasonable*: For tho' the Deriva-  
 tion of our Lord's Power from the Fa-  
 ther, must and ought to be acknowledg-  
 ed; that all mens *confessing Jesus to be*  
*Lord*, may be (as *St Paul* directs) *to the*  
*glory of God the Father*; yet from those  
 other Texts of Scripture, wherein 'tis af-  
 firmed that *by Christ God created all*  
*things*; that he was in the *Form of God*,  
 before he appeared in *the Form of a Ser-*  
*vant*; that he *was with God*, and *had*  
*Glory with God before the World was*;  
 from these Texts, I say, it undeniably ap-  
 pears, that our Lord's having *all Power*  
 given him both in Heaven and Earth,  
 cannot signify the *original Exaltation*, of  
 One who had no Being before he was  
 born

born of the Virgin; but the Exalta-  
 tion of *Him* into the Form of God,  
 who voluntarily emptied himself of  
 that Glory he<sup>e</sup> had *before*, and with  
 unparalleled Humility took upon him-  
 self the Form of a Servant, and suffered  
 in that Form for our Sakes, and *There-*  
*fore* was *worthy to receive Power and*  
*Riches and Wisdom, and strength and ho-*  
*nour, and glory and blessing,* because he  
*was slain, and redeemed us to God by his*  
*own Blood, out of every Tongue and Kin-*  
*dred and people and Nation.*

S E R M.

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Rev. v.

ver. 9 and  
12.

3dly, THE next thing observable in the  
 Text, is the *Commission* our Saviour grants  
 his Disciples, upon his having received  
 all Power in Heaven and Earth; *Go Ye*  
*therefore, and Teach all Nations.* The  
 Word, therefore, is the Ascertaining of  
*Their* Authority, from the Security of his  
*own.* All Power is given unto *Me*; *Go*  
*Ye* therefore, and teach all Nations. This  
 particular is more fully expressed by St  
*John*, ch. xx. 21. *As my Father hath sent*  
*me, even so send I you: ----- whosoever*  
*Sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them;*  
*and whosoever Sins ye retain, they are re-*  
*tained:*

S E R M. *tained*: Not that the Apostles were intrusted with any Power, to pardon or condemn any man according to their *own Pleasure* : For *This* even our Saviour *himself*, does only according to the Will of the Father which sent him : But the meaning is, that they were intrusted to preach *That* Doctrine of Repentance, by the Terms of which it was to be determined, *whose* Sins should be pardoned and *whose* retained. A like Expression is used by our Saviour to St *Peter*, Matt. xvi. 19, *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* : Not that St *Peter*, or Any, or All the Apostles, had Power to let whom they pleased into Heaven ; but that they were appointed and commissioned to preach *That* Doctrine, by the Terms of which, Men were to be admitted into, or excluded out of Heaven.

Go ye, and Teach all Nations : The Word, *Teach*, signifies in the original, *Make Disciples* : In like manner, as  
*Acts*



*Acts xiv. 21, When they had preached the Gospel to that City, and had Taught many; in the original it is, and had made many Disciples.*

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TEACH, All Nations: The words, *All Nations*, signify *primarily*, the Nations of the *Roman Empire*; and *then*, in a *larger Sense*, all the Kingdoms of the World. In *St Mark* it is, *Preach the Gospel to every Creature*. And, in the *1st* chapter to the *Colossians*, what in the *6th* verse is expressed, the Gospel came into *All the World*, is at the *23d* verse said to have been *preached to every Creature under Heaven*. The meaning of which is so obvious, that it would hardly need to be mentioned, but that it helps to illustrate a more difficult passage in the *viii<sup>th</sup>* to the *Romans*; where, when the Apostle had said at the *21st* verse, *The creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of Corruption, into the glorious Liberty of the children of God*: He adds, ver. 23. *And not only they, but ourselves also which have the First-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the Adoption, to wit, the Redemption of our*

Body.

Rom. x.  
18.  
Mar. xvi.  
15.

S E R M. *Body.* So that the words, *Creature* or *whole Creation*, seem to signify those many Nations, or the *Bulk* of Mankind, to whom the Gospel was afterwards to be preached; in contradistinction to the *First-fruits*, who received it in the Apostle's Time.

IV. *4thly,* HERE is the *Doctrine*, which all Nations were to be taught, and into which they were to be Baptized; *Baptizing them, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.* This is that brief Summary of Christian Faith, which, in the Apostle's Time, Men were taught, and professed, and had explained to them at their Baptism; and the Explication of it was afterwards well expressed in that *Form of Sound Words*, which is now usually called the *Apostle's Creed*. To be Baptized in the Name of the *Father*, is to profess our Belief (as *St Paul* words it) in the *One God and Father of All, who is Above All, and Through all, and In All, even the Father Almighty, the Maker, and Lord, and Supreme Governour* of all things. To be Baptized in the Name of the *Son*, is to profess our Belief

Belief likewise in the One Lord, *Jesus Christ*, the only-begotten Son of God, the Messiah that was to come, the Redeemer and Saviour of Mankind, the Author and Purchaser of Forgiveness to Sinners, or of the Acceptation of Repentance through his Blood; our great High Priest or Intercessor with God, and by the Appointment of the Father, our Judge at the last day. To be Baptized in the Name of the *Son*, signifies also further, to be Baptized *into his Death*: Know ye not, saith *St Paul*, that so many of us as were baptized into *Jesus Christ*, were baptized into his Death, Rom. vi. 3. And what *That* means, he tells us in the following verse, *We are buried with him by Baptism into Death*, (that the Body of Sin might be destroyed, ver. 6.) *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*. Lastly, To be baptized in the Name of the *Holy Ghost*, signifies our Acknowledging the *Holy Spirit of God*, to be the Inspirer of the Apostles and Prophets; the Comforter, and the Director of Christians; that we submit ourselves

S E R M.  
IV.  


Col. ii. 12.

S E R M. to his Holy Guidance, receive the Doc-  
 IV. trine inspired by him into the Apostles  
 and Prophets, expect to be justified from  
 Joh. iii. 3, our past Sins by the renewing of the Holy  
 5. Ghost, and to be preserved from Sin for  
 I Cor. vi. the future by his Sanctification and As-  
 11. Tit. iii. 5. sistance; that we obey his good motions,  
 take great care not to grieve or quench  
 and drive him from us; and, forasmuch  
 I Cor. xii. as *by one Spirit we are all baptized into*  
 13. *one Body,-----and have been all made to*  
*drink into one Spirit*, that therefore we  
 endeavour by mutual Charity and For-  
 bearance, to *keep the Unity of the Spirit in*  
*the Bond of Peace*. This is the Meaning,  
 of being *baptized in the Name of the Fa-*  
*ther, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*,  
 with respect to the several *Offices* of these  
 three Divine Persons, in which Regard it  
 is that the Scripture always speaks of  
 them: As to their *Metaphysical Nature*;  
 the Vanity of Men, speculating about  
*That* beyond what is written, has been the  
 Occasion of many foolish Errors: Some  
 have imagined three co-ordinate Beings,  
 which is the Impiety of *Polytheism*, and  
 directly contrary to that Fundamental Ar-  
 ticle,

ticle, the Unity of God : Others have contended, that they are one Person only, with three Modes or Denominations ; Which is the Heresy of *Sabellianism*, and destroys the Personality both of the Son and Holy Spirit : Some, in the contrary extreme, forsaking likewise the Phrases of Scripture, have presumed to affirm, that there was a Time, when the Son and Holy Spirit had no Being, and were made out of Nothing even as the meanest of Creatures ; which was the notion of *Arius* : And Others, diminishing yet further the Dignity of our Saviour's Person, have made him a mere Man, and denied his having any Being before he was born of the Virgin ; Which is the Error of *Socinus*. And now among this multiplicity of Errors, how shall a sincere and unlearned Christian behave himself ? Why, His Rule is ; Let him not follow vain men, in being Wise beyond what is written ; but let him adhere to what he finds plainly and expressly delivered in Scripture : And This, as far as possible, in the very Scripture-Terms ; always remembering, where That cannot be done, yet so to

S E R M. understand all Phrases of human Composition, as to mean neither more nor less than the Scripture-Expressions. Now that which the Scripture declares concerning this Matter, is This: When one of the Scribes asked our Saviour, *Which is the first Commandment of all, Jesus answered him, The first of all the Commandments is; Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord: To which the Scribe replied, Well, Master, thou hast said the Truth; For there is One God, and there is none other but He,* Mar. xii. 29, 32. and 1 Cor. viii. 6. *To Us there is but One God, the Father, of whom are all things: and Eph. iv. 6. One God and Father of All, who is above All, and through All, and in you All.* Yet the same Scripture does likewise expressly affirm, that the *Son* also is God; and to the *Holy Spirit* it ascribes Divine Powers and Attributes: How Then shall This be reconciled? Plainly Thus: The Power and Authority of the Son and Holy Spirit, is neither *Another* Power and Authority, *opposite* to that of the Father; nor *Another* Power and Authority, *co-ordinate* to that of the Father; But it is *His* Power and Authority, communicated to Them, manifested in them, and exercised

cised by them: And so there is plainly preserved both an Unity of Power, and a Monarchy of Government in the Universe.

S E R M.  
IV.  


5thly, To the *Form* of Baptism, our Saviour adds in the Text, the *Practice* of those who are to be baptized into This Faith. *Teaching them to Observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.* And This, is the Great End and Use of the whole. As *Faith* without *Works* is dead; so *Baptism*, without the *Answer* of a good *Conscience* towards God, is but the *Washing away* of the *Filth* of the *Flesh*. He that is baptized, must *put off*, concerning the former conversation, the *old man*, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the *Spirit* of his mind; and *put on* the *new man*, which after God is created in *Righteousness* and true *Holiness*, Eph. iv. 22. He must, as St Paul elsewhere expresses it, *put on* the *Lord Jesus Christ*. Gal. iii. 27. *As many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ.* The Meaning is: He that is baptized into the Religion of Christ, must conform himself to the same pattern, must

1 Pet. iii.

21.  
Heb. x. 22.

Eph. v. 26.

Rom. xiii.


4.

SERM. observe all things whatsoever He has com-  
 IV. manded Us, must obey his Laws delivered  
 in the Gospel; otherwise his Baptism is  
 vain, and his Profession but Hypocrisy.

6thly and Lastly, HERE is the *Promise* of an *effectual Assistance*, to the Disciples sent forth upon This Commission: *And, lo, I am with you always even unto the End of the World.* Being *with them always*, 'tis evident did not signify his continuing *personally* with them; For this Promise was made to them at the very Time, when he had declared he was about to leave them and *ascend unto the Father.* But it signifies, that he would continue with them *by the guidance and direction of his Spirit*; which was in effect the same thing, as continuing with them *himself.* Thus God is in Scripture said to dwell in us *Himself*, when he dwells in us *by his Spirit*; and he that lies to the *Spirit of God*, is justly accused of lying consequently to *God Himself*; and he who rejects the preaching of an *Apostle*, is charged with rejecting *Christ*; and he that rejects *Christ*, with rejecting *God Himself* who sent him.

Eph. ii. 22.  
 Acts v. 4.



CHRIST'S being with his Disciples to S E R M.  
*the End of the World* therefore, is his be- IV.  
 ing with them by *his Spirit*. And This   
 imports *two* things: 1<sup>st</sup>, His giving them  
 the Holy Ghost at Pentecost, to inspire  
 them with the Doctrine of Truth, and to  
 enable them to confirm that Doctrine with  
 miraculous Gifts; according to the pro-  
 mise, *St Mar. xvi. 17. These Signs shall*  
*follow them that believe; In my Name*  
*shall they cast out Devils, they shall speak*  
*with new tongues, they shall take up Ser-*  
*pents; and if they drink any deadly thing,*  
*it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands*  
*on the Sick, and they shall recover.* And  
 2<sup>dly</sup> it implies, That, after this Founda-  
 tion of the Church, by the Teaching and  
 Miracles of the inspired Apostles; the  
 Blessing of Providence, and the Assistance  
 of the Divine Spirit, should continue to  
 preserve it; not by raising up infallible  
 Guides and unerring humane Authority,  
 which never was in any Others than the  
 Apostles themselves; but by supporting  
 the Doctrine once delivered by the Apo-  
 stles, against all the Violence and Frauds  
 of its Opposers. *Thou art Peter,* says our

S E R M. Saviour, that is, a Rock; *and upon this Rock*  
 IV. *will I build my Church, and the gates of Hell,*  
 i. e. Persecution and even *Death* itself, (for  
 so the words properly signify,) *shall not be*  
*able to prevail against it,* Matt. xvi. 18.  
 And what is meant by St *Peter's* being a  
 Rock, or Stone, upon which the Church  
 is built, is explained, *Eph.* ii. 20. where  
 the Church is compared to a Building,  
 the Apostles to Foundation-stones, and our  
 Saviour himself to the Head of the Build-  
 ing: *Ye are built,* saith St *Paul,* *upon the*  
*Foundation of the Apostles and Prophets,*  
*Jesus Christ himself being the chief Cor-*  
*ner-stone; In whom all the Building fitly*  
*framed together, groweth unto a Holy*  
*Temple in the Lord; In whom you also are*  
*builded together, for an habitation of God*  
*through the Spirit.*



# S E R M O N V.

Of the different Gifts of the Spirit.

[Preached on Trinity Sunday.]



I COR. xii. 4, 5, 6.

*Now there are Diversities of Gifts, but the same Spirit ; And there are differences of Administrations, but the same Lord ; And there are diversities of Operations, but it is the same God, which worketh all in all.*



IN these Words we have a distinct Account of three Divine Persons, concerned in bringing about the Salvation of Men ; and a brief Declaration of the nature of their several Offices, in accomplishing that great


S E R M.  
V.

S E R M. great and merciful Design. There are in  
 V. the *first* place Gifts of Miracles, of Signs  
 and Wonders, for the Conviction of Infidels; and there are Gifts of Grace, of virtuous and holy Dispositions, for the Sanctification and Improvement of Believers: And these are constantly ascribed in Scripture to the *Spirit of God*, the Holy Ghost, the Comforter: *There are diversities of Gifts; but the same Spirit.* There is in the *2d* place a wonderful Oeconomy in the establishment and Government of the Church: Mankind was to be redeemed from the Power of Satan, and the Repentance of Sinners made acceptable before God, and available to the obtaining of pardon, consistently with the Justice and Wisdom and Honour of the Laws of God; by the offering up of a sufficient Sacrifice, Oblation and Satisfaction, for the Sins of the Whole World: This Doctrine was to be revealed unto Men; and a Church gathered out of the whole World, of such as should embrace and obey this Revelation: An Order and Government was to be established, for the propagating this Church and conveying down  
 this

this Doctrine by a perpetual Succession, S E R M.  
even unto the End of the World: Perpetual  
Intercession was to be made to God by V.  
a Sinless High-Priest, to make the Prayers of frail and sinful men acceptable in the Sight of Him, who is of purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity: A Resurrection of the Dead was to be appointed, a final Judgment passed, and a just and impartial retribution made to every man according to his Works: And These things are all ascribed in Scripture to the *Son of God*, even our Lord Jesus Christ; who, before his Incarnation, was the Word of the Father, the Angel of his Presence, the Brightness of his Glory, the express Image of his Person; and after his Incarnation, was the Redeemer and Saviour, the Mediator and Intercessor, the Lord and Judge of Mankind: *There are Differences of Administrations*, says the Apostle, *but the same Lord*. There is in the 3<sup>d</sup> and last place a Supreme and Absolute, a self-original, undervalued and independent Authority, from whence all these things primarily and originally proceed, and to which the Glory of them must finally and ultimately be referred;


S E R M. referred: And this is in Scripture constantly ascribed to *God*, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; who is the First and Supreme Author of every good Gift; by whose good pleasure, our Lord himself was sent forth to redeem us; and the Holy Spirit given, to sanctify us; *There are Diversities of Operations, but it is the same God, which worketh all in all: Or, as the same Apostle elsewhere expresses it; Of him and through him and to him are all things, to whom be Glory and Dominion for ever.* This is the Account the Scripture gives us, of the several Offices of these three Divine Persons. *There are Diversities of Gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are differences of Administrations, but the same Lord; and there are Diversities of Operations, but 'tis the same God, that worketh all in all.* 'Tis *God*, by whose Supreme Authority every thing in the Universe is directed; 'tis the *Son of God*, by whom the Government of the Church in particular is administr'd; 'tis the *Spirit of God*, by whom all Gifts and Graces, for the Conviction of Infidels, and for the Sanctification of Believers, are dispensed.

The

The *God and Father* of our Lord Jesus S E R M.  
Christ, the infinite and incomprehensible V.  
Fountain of underived Majesty, is the   
Spring and Original of all Good: The  
*Son of the Father*, is to Us the Author and  
Purchaser, the Conveyer of all *Communi-*  
*cations* from that inexhaustible Fountain  
of Goodness; and by his Mediation and  
Intercession, the only Means of *Access and*  
*Approach* to that Throne of otherwise in-  
accessible Glory: The *Spirit of God*, sent  
forth from the Father and the Son, is the  
immediate Dispenser and Distributer of  
those Benefits, which the Father grants by  
the Intercession of the Son.

THIS is what the Scripture clearly  
and expressly declares to us, concerning  
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.  
In which Doctrine, because there are some  
things difficult to be understood, and not  
needful to be explained; wherein the vain  
Curiosity of men has often exposed its  
own Weakness, and which profane and  
careless persons have wrested (as they do  
other Doctrines) to their own Destruction;  
therefore this matter ought not to be fre-  
quently and slightly treated of; but upon  
the

S E R M. the most solemn Occasions, with the greatest Care, and with the utmost reverence.

V.  
 And upon such Occasions; since the whole ground and foundation of Christian Religion, is the Belief of our Reconciliation to God, the Father and Supreme Lord of All, thro' the Death of his Son, and by the Influence of his Holy Spirit; and since *This is Life eternal, to know Him who is the only true God, and to know Jesus Christ whom he has sent, and the Spirit by whom he worketh in us every good Work:* Since This, I say, is the very Foundation of Christian Religion; to have a right knowledge, of Him who is the Creator of the Universe, and Supreme Lord of the whole World; of him, who is the Saviour and Redeemer of Mankind; and of him, who is the Sanctifier of the elect people, which is the Church of God: it is therefore very fit, that upon particular solemn Occasions, This great Doctrine, which ought not to be frequently and slightly handled, should with great Caution and Reverence be *explained* at Once: *Explained*; that is, not unfolded according to the presumptions of human Imagination;



gination ; but *declared* so far, as 'tis expressly revealed in Scripture ; and so far forth, as 'tis therefore intelligible, because it is revealed. For in Doctrines which are not made known by the Light of Reason and natural Understanding, but discovered merely by Revelation, and which depend wholly on the Authority and Testimony of the Revealer ; in these things, human Imagination has no place, and the Opinion of no man is of any Importance, but only the express Words of the Revelation itself. In declaring therefore unto you, that which is clearly and without all controversy revealed in Scripture concerning the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost ; I shall 1<sup>st</sup> consider briefly that which is *speculative*, concerning their *Nature* ; 2<sup>dly</sup>, That which is *moral*, relating to their *Offices* ; and 3<sup>dly</sup>, That which is *practical*, concerning the *Honour* we are to pay unto them.

1<sup>st</sup>, I shall consider what is spoken in a *speculative* manner concerning their *Nature*. And This part being that, wherein we least concerned, and which we are least capable to understand ; the Scripture is very  
brief

S E R M. brief in this particular : It being of much  
 V. more importance that it should be clearly  
 revealed to us, what they are *Relatively*  
*to Us*, than what their Nature is *absolutely*  
*in themselves*. Yet even upon This Head  
 we find in Scripture, as follows. Con-  
 cerning the Nature of *God the Father* :  
 that, agreeable to the Light of natural  
 Reason, there is One Supreme Absolute  
 Independent Cause and Original of all  
 things, Eternal, Infinite, All-Powerful,  
 Self-Sufficient; the Maker and Lord of  
 all things, himself derived from None,  
 made of none, begotten of none, pro-  
 ceeding from none : *By* whom all Crea-  
 tures material and immaterial, visible and  
 invisible, animate and inanimate, rational  
 and irrational, mortal and immortal, in  
 Heaven and in Earth were made; by  
 whom the Land and Waters, the Air and  
 Sun and Stars, the Heaven and the Hea-  
 ven of Heavens, and all things that are  
 therein; Plants, and Beasts, and Men;  
 Angels and Arch-Angels; were *created* out  
 of nothing : *From* whom the Spirit of  
 Truth, the Comforter and Sanctifier of  
 all Holy men, *proceedeth* or is sent forth :

Of

Of whom lastly the Son himself, the Sa-  
viour and Redeemer of the World, in an  
ineffable manner, before all Ages was be-  
gotten. This is the Supreme Father and  
Lord of all, who dwelleth in Light in-  
accessible; whose Majesty, no Thought  
can comprehend; whose Glory, no Eye  
can behold; whose Power, no Strength  
can resist; from whose Presence, no  
Swiftneſs can flee; whose Knowledge, no  
Secrecy can conceal itſelf from; whose  
Juſtice, no Art can evade; whose  
Goodneſs, no Creature but partakes of.  
This is the God of the Universe, whom  
even the Heathen World has always ac-  
knowledged. This is the God of *Abra-  
ham, Iſaac* and *Jacob*; the God who  
brought the children of *Iſrael* out of the  
land of *Egypt*; the God and Father of  
our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; of whom, and  
thro' whom, and to whom are all things;  
to whom be Glory and Dominion for  
ever. But to proceed.

CONCERNING the *Nature* of the *Son*,  
That which the Scripture declares to us,  
(and otherwiſe than from Scripture we  
can have no Light, in matters of Revela-

S E R M. tion;) That which the Scripture, I say,  
 V. declares to us, is this: That, in the be-  
 ginning, before the Foundation of the  
 World, before all Ages, That Divine Person,  
 who after and by his Incarnation became  
 our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, had a  
 Being in the Bosom of his Father, and  
 Joh. i. 1. was Partaker of his Father's glory. *In the  
 beginning was the Word; and the Word  
 was with God, i. e. was with the Father;  
 and the Word was God, i. e. was Partaker  
 of his Father's Glory, of his Divine Pow-  
 er and Authority, in Creating and Govern-  
 ing the World. The reason why This  
 Divine Person was stiled *the Word*, has  
 been much disputed by Divines; and va-  
 rious Opinions have at different Times pre-  
 vailed. That which is most probable and  
 most agreable to the Scriptures, is, that  
 he was so called, upon account of his  
 being as it were the Mouth or Oracle of  
 God, the Angel of his Presence, the great  
 Declarer of his Will, the Mediator be-  
 tween God and his Creatures; by and thro'  
 whom, as all Creatures have Access to  
 God, and give Glory to him; so thro'  
 him likewise are derived and conveyed all  
 Com-*

Communications of God to his Creatures. S E R M.

*In the beginning was the Word: That Word, which afterwards was made Flesh and dwelt amongst us; to reveal to us with Authority the whole Will of God: That Word, concerning whom the same Author St John thus speaks in another place; when in his Vision, seeing the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, coming forth in righteousness to judge and to make war, and to tread the wine-press of the wrath of Almighty God; he thus describes him; that out of his mouth goeth a sharp Sword, and his Name is called, The Word of God; and ch. i. 16. he beheld one like unto the Son of man, out of whose mouth went a sharp two-edged Sword. Which Descriptions afford great Light to that passage of St Paul to the Hebrews, ch. iv. ver. 12. The Word of God is quick and Powerful, and sharper than any two-edged Sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of Soul and Spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the Thoughts and Intentions of the Heart. And this exactly answers the Description our Saviour gives*

V.  


Rev. xix.  
16.  
11.  
15.  
15.  
13.

SERM. of Himself, Rev. ii. 23. *I am he which*  
 V. *searcheth the reins and Hearts.* Further,  
 concerning the Nature of this Divine  
 Person, the *Word* or *Son of God*, the Scri-  
 pture adds; that he is *the only begotten of*  
*the Father*, and was in *Glory with him*  
*before the World* was; that he is the  
*Brightness of his Father's Glory*, and the  
*express Image of his Person*, and *upholding*  
*all things by the Word of his Power*, Heb.  
 i. 3: That he is *the Image of the Invisible*  
*God*, *the first-born of every Creature*, Col.  
 i. 15; or, as he himself styles himself,  
 Rev. iii. 14. *the beginning of the Creation*  
*of God*; that is, who was before and a-  
 bove all things, being the first Principle  
 and Head over all; Himself, deriving im-  
 mediately from the Father only; (and, as  
 to the manner of That, *who shall declare*  
*his generation?*) Whereas all other things,  
 all Creatures, were produced *mediately* by  
*His Operation*. For so St *John* affirms  
 expressly; *All things were made by him,*  
*and without him was not any thing made*  
*that was made*, St Joh. i. 2. And St *Paul*  
 still more distinctly, Col. i. 16. *By him*  
*were all things created, that are in Hea-*

ven, and that are in Earth, visible and invisible, whether they be Thrones or Dominions or Principalities or Powers, all things were created by him and for him; and he is before all things, and by him all things consist. If it be here demanded, how these two manners of Expression are to be reconciled, that God only is the Creator of all things, and yet all things are said expressly to be created by Jesus Christ; St Paul gives a clear and direct Answer, *Heb. i. 2.* By his Son God made the Worlds; and again, *Ephes. iii. 9.* Who created all things by Jesus Christ. To interpret these passages, as some have attempted to do, of a secondary and figurative Creation, the new Creation or Renovation of things by the Gospel; is wresting Texts by a forced and unnatural Sense to serve an Opinion, when in their plain and literal meaning there is no real Difficulty. For to conceive that God created all things at first by his Son, is no more contrary to Reason, than his renewing or redeeming all things by his Son; which is acknowledged by All. And if it pleased the Father, by Christ to reconcile all things unto Himself

S E R M.  
V.  
~

S. E. R. M. *whether they be things in Earth or Things*  
 V. *in Heaven; as St Paul expressly affirms,*  
 and all men understand him to affirm it  
 in the literal Sense; there is no more rea-  
 son to doubt, but in the literal Sense like-  
 wise, it pleased the Father *by Christ to*  
*Create* all things for Himself; which is  
 as expressly affirmed by the same Apostle.  
 And even in the Old Testament itself,  
 those passages which are spoken of Wis-  
 dom, *Prov. viii. 22.* are by all antient  
 Christian Writers understood of God's  
 creating the World by Christ: *The Lord*  
*possessed me in the beginning of his Way,*  
*before his Works of old; I was set up from*  
*everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the*  
*Earth was; When there were no Depths,*  
*I was brought forth; when there were no*  
*Fountains abounding with Water; Before*  
*the Mountains were settled, before the Hills*  
*was I brought forth; While as yet he had*  
*not made the Earth, nor the Fields, nor*  
*the highest part of the dust of the World;*  
*When he prepared the Heavens, I was*  
*there; when he set a compass upon the face*  
*of the deep; When he established the clouds*  
*above; when he strengthened the fountains*  
*of*



*of the deep; When he gave to the Sea his Decree, that the Waters should not pass his Commandment; when he appointed the Foundations of the Earth; Then was I by him, as one brought up with him; and I was daily his delight.* S E R M.  
V.

If it be here further inquired, how those Divine Attributes and Powers, which are ascribed in Scripture to the Person of the Son, are consistent with the Unity of God, which is the Foundation of all Religion both natural and revealed; the Answer is obvious; that the Divinity ascribed to the Son, is not another, a co-ordinate Divinity; but the Power, the Majesty, the Glory of the Father, communicated and derived to the Son. Could it be affirmed that there were two or more self-originate, unbegotten, underived Principles; this would indeed destroy the Unity of God, and fundamentally subvert the very first Ground of Religion: But since the Glory of the Son is not originally his own Glory, but the Glory of the Father manifested in him, and derived to him, in a manner which neither we nor Angels perhaps can presume to understand; 'tis manifest still,

S E R M. that the *Monarchy* of the Universe, is here  
 V. by preserved entire.



CONCERNING the *Nature* of the *Holy Spirit of God*, the Scripture speaks very little in a Metaphysical manner; nor gives any encouragement to the inquisitiveness and vain Curiosity of humane Speculation. Declaring only, that he is a Divine Person, proceeding or being sent forth from the *Father*; and in other places called the Spirit of the *Son*, and said to be sent forth from *Him*. Into the manner of his Derivation therefore, we ought not to presume to inquire; but be content with what the Scripture reveals to us, of his being in a singular manner, in a manner which we cannot presume to understand or explain, *the Spirit of God*. Only, because there have been some in these later Ages, who have denied the Being of this Holy Spirit, and have imagined it to be nothing but a mere Power or Attribute of God; it deserves to be taken notice of, that those Scriptures, which speak of him as being *grieved* at wicked men; as making *intercession* for us, and *helping our* infirmities;

as *dividing* spiritual gifts *severally*, as he S E R M. pleases; as *speaking*, not of himself, but V. what he *hears* or receives *from the Father*; these and numberless other Texts in the new Testament, do plainly declare Him to be, not a mere Virtue or Power, but a real Person distinct from the Father and the Son, and sent forth from Both for the perpetual Government and Direction of the Church.

THIS is what the Scripture briefly declares to us in a *speculative* manner, concerning the *Nature* of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. And Happy had it been for the Church of God, if learned men in all Ages had been content with what the Scriptures so declare, and had never entred further into Scholastic Speculations, from whence have arisen Endless Disputes, incurable Scepticism, and infinite Uncharitableness.

2dly, THERE is in the 2d place that which is *Moral*, concerning the several *Offices* of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost with relation to *Us*. And here the Scripture teaches us, concerning the *Father*, that he, being absolutely supreme over all, *made* the World by the *Ministration*

S E R M. V. stration of his Son, and *governs* it by a perpetual Providence, without which not a Sparrow falls to the Ground, or a Hair of our Head perishes. That having Compassion upon sinful man, and resolving to afford them the Grace of Repentance, he sent his Son to take our Nature upon him, and therein to reveal his gracious Will; and delivered him up to an ignominious Death, that he might make Expiation and Reconcilement for our Sins; and raised him from the Dead by his mighty Power; and exalted him to his own right Hand; and appointed him to be the Judge of Quick and Dead; and has made all things subject unto Him; and by him reconciles all things unto Himself, both which are in Heaven and which are in Earth: and has appointed a Kingdom of eternal Happiness to them that serve and obey him; and will destroy the wicked with an everlasting Destruction. This is the *Office* of the *Father*. Concerning the *Office* of the *Son*, the same Scriptures declare, that he, by the Appointment of the Father, is our Saviour, Mediator, Intercessor and Judge; that ha-

ving

ving been in the Form of God, he emptied himself of that Glory, and willingly took upon him the form of a servant; and died, to make our Repentance available; and now sits at the right hand of God, to intercede for us; and governs the whole Church, according to the Will of his Father; and searches and tries the Hearts of men at present, and will finally judge them according to their Works. Lastly, concerning the *Office* of the *Holy Spirit*, the Scripture teaches, that having been the Inspirer of the Prophets of old, testifying before-hand the Sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow; he was afterwards sent forth in a more extraordinary manner, to be the Comforter and Director of the Apostles; to lead them into all Truth; to bring to their remembrance all things which our Lord had said unto them; to support them against the Power of the World; to instruct them what to answer to their Persecutors; to be the great Witness of our Saviour's Resurrection, by working Signs and Wonders and mighty Works, by inspiring the Apostles with the gift of Tongues, and dividing

S E R M.  
V.



2 Pet. i. 21.  
1 Pet. i. 11.

Joh. xiv.  
1 Cor. ii.  
10.

S E R M. dividing to their followers diversities of  
 V. Gifts, to every man severally, as might  
 I Cor. xii. best serve the great end of their ministry:  
 II. finally, to continue with all good Chris-  
 tians even unto the End of the World,  
 as the great Sanctifier of the Hearts of  
 men; assisting them with his grace, ad-  
 monishing them with his Holy Influences,  
 working with them and inspiring them  
 with his good Gifts, and helping the in-  
 firmity of their Prayers with his own In-  
 tercession. This is what the Scripture  
 teaches us *distinctly and separately*, con-  
 cerning the several Offices of the Father,  
 the Son, and the Holy Spirit. They are  
 also in some few places all mentioned  
*together*; as in the Form of Baptism,  
 whereby we are dedicated to the Service  
 of God, baptized into the Death of his  
 Son, and given up to the guidance of his  
 Holy Spirit: In the form of Blessing,  
 wherein we are recommended by the A-  
 postle to the Love of God, to the Favour  
 of Christ, and to the Communion or Fel-  
 lowship of the Holy Ghost: By St Paul  
 I Cor. viii. again, *Eph. iv. 4, 5, 6. There is one Spi-*  
 I Tim ii. 5: *rit,----- one Lord,----- one God and Father*

of all, who is above all, and thro' all, and S E R M.  
 in you all: And in the Words of the Text; V.  
*There are Diversities of Gifts, but the*  
*same Spirit; and there are diversities of*  
*Administrations, but the same Lord; and*  
*there are diversities of Operations, but 'tis*  
*the same God, that worketh all in all.*

IT remains in the 3d and last place,  
 that we consider that which is *Practical*,  
 concerning the *Honour* due to the Person  
 of the Father, and concerning that which  
 is due to the Son and to the Holy Ghost.  
 To the Person of the *Father*, is to be di-  
 rected that absolute and supreme Worship,  
 by which he is acknowledged to be alone  
 Παντοκράτωρ, the Maker and Judge of all; Heb. xii.  
 by whose incomprehensible Power, the 23.  
 World was created; by whose unerring  
 Providence, the Universe is governed; by  
 whose supreme Authority, our Lord was Acts v. 32;  
 sent forth to redeem Us; by whose good xv. 8.  
 pleasure the Holy Spirit is given, to sancti- 1 Thes. iv.  
 fy us; to whose glory, every tongue now 8.  
 confesses that Jesus is the Lord; and to Heb. ii. 4.  
 whom, *at the Consummation of all things*, 2 Cor. i.  
 our Lord himself shall deliver up the King- 22; v. 5.  
 dom, and become subject to *Him* that put Phil. ii. 11.  
 all 1 Cor xv.  
24; xi 3.

S E R M. all things under him, that God may be all  
 V. in all: To *Him* we are to pray for the  
 Remission of our Sins; and that our Re-  
 pentance may be accepted, thro' the pow-  
 erful Intercession of Christ our great High  
 Priest; and that our Hearts may be re-  
 newed by the Inspiration of his Holy Spi-  
 rit: and to *Him* we are to give Continual  
 Thanks, for his *original* and undeserved  
 Goodness in sending his Son at first to be  
 the Saviour of the World, and to be unto  
 us a propitiation thro' Faith in his Blood;  
 and for the *continuation* of that Good-  
 ness, in affording us the perpetual assis-  
 tance of the Holy Ghost.

To the Person of the *Son*, there is due  
 this peculiar Honour; that we offer up all  
 our Prayers in his Name; (*whatsoever,*  
*says he, ye shall ask of the Father in my*  
*Name, he will give it you,* Joh. xv. 16.) that  
 we rely upon his merits, depend upon his  
 Intercession, obey him as our Lord, love  
 him as our Saviour, fear him as our  
 Judge. That we acknowledge his great  
 Condescension, in loving us and giving  
 himself for us; in that, when he was *in*  
*the form of God, he was not greedy of re-*  
*taining*



*taining that form, but willingly made him-  
self of no reputation, and took upon him  
the form of a Servant, and was made in  
the Likeness of men; and being found in  
fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and  
became obedient unto Death, even the  
Death of the Cross, Phil. ii. 6. For which  
reason, as the Apostle adds in the Words  
immediately following, God also has highly  
exalted him, and given him a Name which  
is above every Name; that at the Name of  
Jesus every knee should bow, of things in  
Heaven, and things in Earth, and things  
under the Earth; and that every tongue  
should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to  
the glory of God the Father. And accord-  
ingly upon this Account, we find the high-  
est Honour ascribed to him both by men  
and Angels; Rev. v. 8. The four and twen-  
ty elders fell down before the Lamb,----  
and sung a new song, saying, Thou art  
worthy-----; For thou wast slain, and hast  
redeemed us to God by thy Blood, out of  
every kindred and tongue and people and  
nation; ----- And I heard the voice of  
many Angels-----, saying-----, *Worthy is the  
Lamb**

S E R M.  
V.  
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S E R M. *Lamb that was slain, to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honour and glory and Blessing: And every Creature*  
 V. *---- heard I saying, Blessing and honour and Glory and Power be unto him that sitteth on the Throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever. And ch. i. 5. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our Sins in his own Blood, and has made us Kings and Priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever. This is the peculiar Addition of the Christian Religion; that whereas before, all men honoured the Father, they should now likewise Honour the Son, St Joh. v. 23. Which Honour paid to the Son of God, is therefore no diminution to the Honour of the Father, nor derogation from the Monarchy of the Universe; because the Greatness and Dignity, the Divinity and Majesty of the Son, is not contradistinct to, but derivative from, that of the Father; and consequently must be acknowledged to that very End, that it may be (as St Paul expressly declares) to the glory of the Father.*

*Lastly,*

*Lastly*, CONCERNING the Honour S E R M.  
peculiarly due to the person of the *Spirit*, V.  
that which the Scripture declares, is; that  
we acknowledge him to be the divine In-  
spirer of the Prophets, both of the old  
and new Testament; and the immediate  
Worker of all those Signs and Wonders in  
proof of the Christian Dispensation, which  
are properly stiled the Witness and Testi-  
mony, the Power and Demonstration of  
the Spirit; that he is also the Sanctifier of  
all Hearts, and the immediate Distributer  
of all the Gifts of God, for the Edifica-  
tion of his Church; that therefore we re-  
ceive and believe his Testimony, as deli-  
vered in the inspired Writings; obey his  
good Motions; be solicitous to obtain his  
gifts and graces; and infinitely careful not  
to grieve and quench and drive him from  
us, lest we be found to do despite unto the  
Spirit of grace; which is in Scripture re-  
presented as a more unpardonable fault,  
than offending against the Person even of  
our Saviour himself. But the Time al-  
lows me only to hint these things barely,  
and propose them to your Meditations;  
the enlarging upon which, would be to

Eph. v. 9.  
Gal. v. 22.  
v. 16.  
1 Joh. ii.  
27.  
Eph. iv. 30.  
1 Th. v. 19.  
Heb. x. 29.

S E R M. lay down the whole System of Divinity.

V.  God grant that every one of Us, may so give Honour to the Father of all things, thro' the Mediation and Intercession of his Son our Saviour, and by the Assistance and Operation of his Holy Spirit ; that by the communion and fellowship of the same Holy Spirit, and thro' the Merits and Death of the Son of God making our Repentance available, we may be presented faultless before the Throne of the Father of inaccessible Majesty, in the great Day.





# S E R M O N VI.

Of the Desire of Knowledge.

[*Preached on Trinity-Sunday.*]



D E U T. XXIX. 29.

*The Secret things belong unto the Lord our God; but those things which are revealed, belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.*



THE book of *Deuteronomy* con- S E R M.  
 tains a brief Summary, or Re- VI.  
 capitulation of the Law; To  
 which are added by *Moses*, fe-  
 veral earnest and most affectionate Exhor-  
 tations to the people of *Israel*, to per-  
 VOL. VI. K 2 fwade

S E R M. swade them to the Obedience and Observation of that Law. He tells them that *he hath set before them Life and Death, Blessing and Cursing, Good and Evil; and he perswades them to chuse their Duty, and cleave to it as their Life, and to refuse the Evil and flee from it as from Death.* He invites them to Obedience by the most affectionate promises of the love, and favour, and protection of God; and he deters them from Disobedience by the most severe threatnings of utter destruction. He proposes to them the Law of God, as the proper subject of their constant Meditation; exhorting them *to bind it for a Sign upon their hand, and as frontlets between their eyes; to write it upon the posts of their houses, and upon their gates; to teach it diligently unto their children, and to talk of it when they sit in their houses, and when they walk by the way, and when they lie down, and when they rise up, Deut. vi. 7, 8.* He tells them that *the commandments of God are the things revealed to them, to be studied by them and by their children for ever; that the knowledge of other things, is in*

comparison

comparison either unnecessary, or more S E R M.  
difficult at least, and less needful to be VI.  
attained; and that therefore nothing could  
be more unreasonable, than to pursue the  
knowledge of those things which were  
either wholly unnecessary, or at least far  
less needful to be known; by neglecting the  
study and the knowledge of that, in which  
alone consisted their Happiness and their  
Life. *The Secret things belong unto the  
Lord our God; but those things which are  
revealed, belong unto us and to our children  
for ever, that we may do all the words of  
this law.* The ultimate design and desire  
of Man, is Happiness; and as the only  
way to this Happiness is Religion, so the  
Knowledge of that Religion ought to be  
at least our principal and first study. Re-  
ligion is the *doing all the Words of the  
Law, i. e.* the obeying of the Command-  
ments of God; the Knowledge therefore  
of Religion, is the knowing particularly  
what are the Commands of God, and the  
knowing our obligation to obey those  
Commands. He that hath gained so much  
Knowledge, as to understand the Com-  
mandments of God, and to convince him-

S E R M. self of his *indispensable* Obligation to obey  
 VI. them; so as to live constantly *in* the sense  
 and under the power of that Conviction;  
 The *Words of this Law*, are the Com-  
 mandments of God; which he that has  
 studied so as to understand and practise  
 them, is sufficiently knowing, though he  
 were ignorant of all other things, because  
 he knows his Happiness which is his main  
 Concern, and the way to attain it. He  
 that is ignorant of this, though he had  
 all other Knowledge that were possible to  
 be acquired either by Men or Angels, is  
 yet miserably and foolishly ignorant, be-  
 cause he is ignorant of that, which is in-  
 deed the only thing that is necessary for  
 him to know. A religious man *may* law-  
 fully divert his thoughts, and exercise his  
 industry, in other Speculations; but he  
 will not so far engage his curiosity in the  
 search after *secret* things, as to neglect  
 those which are *open* and *revealed*, those  
 on which the true Knowledge or Worship  
 of God does any way depend. There are  
*some* Things, which are absolutely *beyond*  
 the reach of our Faculties, and therefore  
 not *possible* to be throughly understood by



us; and these a good man will not be ambitious to discover, because he considers that God has placed them wholly out of the sphere of our capacity, and reserved the Knowledge of them as a Prerogative to himself. There are *other* things, which if we can come at all to the Knowledge of, it must be by unwarrantable or unlawful means; and these likewise a religious man will not be inquisitive to know, nor uneasy for want of that Knowledge; because he considers that God has hidden them from us, by forbidding the use of the means to discover them. There are also some *other* things, which are neither impossible nor unlawful to be known, but the Search after them is difficult, and the Discovery unprofitable; they neither promote the true Knowledge, Honour, and Worship of God, nor the Benefit of Mankind; and these, a pious man, will not be too much solicitous to find out; because they would take up too much of that Time and those Meditations, which may be *more* usefully employed on the things that God has revealed. *Secret things belong unto the Lord our God; but the things*

S E R M.  
VI.  
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SERM. that are revealed, belong unto us, and to  
 VI. our children for ever. From the words

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I shall observe these three things; 1<sup>st</sup>, That there is naturally in Man, a very strong Desire of Knowledge; 2<sup>dly</sup>, That this Desire, ought to be regulated and limited by the Condition of our Nature, and by the Word of God; and 3<sup>dly</sup>, That not to regulate our Desire of Knowledge by these Rules, may be a very great occasion of Sin.

I. THERE is naturally in Man a very strong Desire after Knowledge. 'Tis the peculiar Attribute and Prerogative of *God*, to be infinitely perfect; and to be originally and unchangeably so. All *created* Beings, as far as we can judge of them, arrive at that Perfection which is the highest pitch and excellency of *Their* nature, by *degrees*; and they have always in themselves a natural and earnest tendency towards that perfection. In things void of Reason and Knowledge, the perfection of *Their* Nature is nothing else, but a compleat Number, a due Proportion, and a regular Composition of parts; and *Their* natural tendency towards this perfection,

is nothing but that Disposition which arises from the necessary qualities of Matter, and from the fixed laws of Motion. But in Creatures endued with Reason and Understanding, the Perfection of *their* Nature consisting principally in the Improvement of those more excellent Faculties; 'tis manifest *They* can aspire to what degree they please, and are apt to extend their Desires without limit. *I gave my Heart, saith Solomon, to seek and search out by Wisdom, concerning all things that are done under Heaven.* And the Scripture declares concerning him, *that he had Wisdom and Understanding exceeding much, and largeness of Heart even as the Sand that is on the Sea-shore; so that before him was none equal to him, neither after him should there arise any like him.* And yet even *He*, by departing from the study of the Law of God, and giving heed to strange Women, was a sad Example of falling from God in his latter days. Wherefore, though there *be naturally* in men a very earnest Desire after Knowledge, yet I add,

2dly,

S E R M.

II. THIS our Desire of Knowledge, ought

VI.



to be *regulated and limited*, by the *Condition* of our Nature and by the *Word* of God.

1<sup>st</sup>, WE ought not to be ambitious of That Knowledge, which the *condition and circumstances* of our Nature make it impossible for us to obtain. Knowledge is so amiable a perfection, that men will not readily be perswaded, they can possibly be too earnest in the pursuit of it, even though it be in things which have no relation to the Honour of God, or to the Good of men. 'Tis true, God hath given us Faculties, which we not only *may*, but *ought* to improve; but then we must always remember, that our Desires ought to terminate in *such* possible and useful Perfections, as are to be attained by the improvement of the Faculties God has given us. Wisdom indeed *is* the principal thing, says *Solomon*, *therefore get Wisdom, and with all thy getting get Understanding*, Prov. iv. 7. and ch. xviii. 15. *The heart of the Prudent getteth Knowledge, and the ear of the Wise seeketh it.* But by *Knowledge*, He always means *religious* Wisdom, and not that  
which

which terminates only in *Pride* and *Vanity*; much less, that which by nature we are not made capable of attaining. In which respect, a man's Desire after Knowledge may become faulty, either when he desires the Knowledge of such a *kind* of things, as the nature of the things does not permit him at all to understand; or when he desires such a *sort* of Knowledge of any thing, as the nature of his Faculties does not capacitate him to come up to. There are some *kinds* of things, of so abstruse a Nature, or at such a distance of Place or Time, or which have so little connexion with That Knowledge of God and of ourselves, on which our whole Duty depends; that they are altogether beyond the reach of our Faculties; so that we cannot possibly understand them at all; and in respect of *these* things, 'tis evident we ought *so* to limit our Desire of Knowledge by the *condition* and *circumstances* of our Nature, as not to attempt to understand them at all; and not to pretend that we *can* understand them, when indeed we can *not*. Of *other* things, which we can and ought to know according

S E R M.  
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S E R M. ing to the measure of our Faculties, there  
 VI. is yet such a *sort* or degree of Knowledge  
 as we cannot arrive to; and we have no  
 more reason to murmur, that we cannot  
 attain to this *degree* of Knowledge, than  
 we have to be displeas'd, that God has  
 not made us equal to the highest Orders  
 of Angels; or than the Angels have cause  
 to be angry, that God has reserv'd some  
 Attributes incommunicable from himself,  
 and has not made *them* Masters of all  
 Perfections. God hath communicated to  
 every sort of creatures, such Perfections  
 as himself pleas'd; and the condition of  
 each of their Natures is the Law of God,  
 by which they ought every one to limit  
 and regulate their Desires. In matters of  
*Religion* indeed, in order to frame right  
 Notions of God, and to serve him ac-  
 ceptably; we can never be too sollicitous  
 and careful in inquiring into the Truth:  
 But *some* Secrets there are, the knowledge  
 of which God hath reserv'd to himself;  
 and the highest Angels cannot presume to  
 look into them: And without question  
 Angels have a clear Knowledge of many  
 things, which humane Abilities cannot  
 without

without the utmost folly pretend to discover. Remarkable to this purpose is that Expostulation of God with Job; *Hast thou entred into the springs of the Sea? or hast thou walked in the search of the Depth? Have the gates of Death been opened unto thee; or hast thou seen the doors of the shadow of Death? Where is the way where Light dwelleth? and as for Darkness, where is the place thereof? Knowest thou it because thou wast then born? or because the number of thy days is great?* S E R M.  
VI.  
ch. xxxviii. ver. 16. The Meaning is, *Not* that men may not commendably inquire into the operations of Nature, which are the Works of God; so far as they have Faculties and Opportunities to do it; But that they ought to contain their Desire of Knowledge within the bounds of those Faculties, and not be proud and imperious, *intruding into things which they have not seen, and vainly puffed up by a fleshly mind.*


2dly, As we ought not to be ambitious of what 'tis *impossible* for us to attain; so neither ought we to be solicitous after that, which 'tis unlawful for us to desire. And here, that which the Scripture

ture

S E R M. VI. *ture determines in respect of our Desire after Knowledge, is this; 1st, That we ought not to endeavour to penetrate into things too deep for us, such as are the hidden and secret counsels, or unrevealed decrees of God. True Notions of God, as discoverable by Reason, and the full Meaning of his whole revealed Will; these things we can never be too inquisitive after: But what cannot be known clearly by Reason or Revelation, concerns us not. Secret things belong unto the Lord our God, but the things that are revealed, to us and to our children for ever. Vain men would be wise, Job xi. 12. intruding into those things which they have not seen, and desiring to impose them upon others. But can we by searching find out God? Can we find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as Heaven, what canst thou do? deeper than Hell, what canst thou know? Job xi. 7, 8. And Acts i. 7. It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath put in his own power. 2dly, The Scripture further forbids the desire of that Knowledge, the means of obtaining which are unlawful.*

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The Tree of the Knowledge of Good S E R M. and Evil, appeared to our First parents VI.  *to be pleasant to the Eye, and a Tree to be desired to make one wise, Gen. iii. 6.* But since God had expressly forbidden them *to taste of the Fruit of that Tree*, having reserved it as a single instance of Homage and Acknowledgement to Himself, as being the Creator and Lord of Paradise; 'tis evident the Desire of that Knowledge, which they thought the eating of that Fruit would furnish them with, was at least the Occasion and the Cause of their Sin. In like manner, the same Desire of *such* Knowledge, as God has not afforded us the means of acquiring; has since in all Ages of the world, through the deceit and temptations of the Devil, put vain and superstitious persons upon such courses and means to attain it, as God has absolutely and expressly prohibited. *3dly,* The Scripture forbids us *ſo* to search after the Knowledge of any thing else whatever, as in the too earnest pursuit of *that*, to neglect the study of the Law of God. Those divine Truths, which influence our practice, which furnish our minds

S E R M. minds with worthy Notions of God, and  
 VI. charitable Dispositions towards our Neigh-  
 w bours, and *make men wise unto Salvation*; are the things which God has proposed to us to converse with and meditate, to fix our thoughts and our studies upon. In *other things, There is a wisdom, saith the Wise man, that multiplieth bitterness; and there is a Knowledge which bringeth nothing but weariness.* To study the works of God and Nature *so*, as therein to admire and adore the Wisdom of their Almighty Creator; to study and search out the great Truths of Religion in such a manner, as thereby to be perswaded to conform our practice *in earnest* to the rules of the divine Law; *this* only is truly worthy of a Man, and acceptable to God; *this* only is a study which will yield us *present* Satisfaction and *future* also; which will afford us the truest Contentment *now*, and the solidest and most substantial Joy *at the last.* David found such satisfaction in this Contemplation of the works and of the Law of God, that he declares he could entertain himself with the Meditation of God's Law all the day long, *and in the*  
 night

night season also he could think upon the same, Pſal. cxix, 55. and Solomon, who had given his Curioſity the moſt unbounded liberty, and had beyond compariſon the largeſt extent of Knowledge that was ever attained by any mortal man; *whoſe Wiſdom compaſſed the whole Uni-<sup>S E R M.</sup>verſe, and his Underſtanding and largeneſs of Heart was exceeding great, even as the ſand upon the ſea-ſhore;* this great man (I ſay,) when he came ſeriouſly to compare all things that he had obſerved, and to conſider the laſt Iſſue of things, he concludes all his Meditations with this wiſe Reflexion, *Eccleſ. xii. 13. Let us bear the concluſion of the whole matter; Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole; the whole Duty, and the whole Happineſs of Man.* It remains that I proceed now in the

III. *Third place,* To ſhow how great a *Sin* it is, not to regulate our Deſires of Knowledge, by the forementioned Rules. And 1<sup>ſt</sup>, To determine dogmatically in things not clearly revealed, and to take delight in *impoſing* upon each other ſuch Determinations, is in effect directly oppoſing

S E R M. and striving against that Order and Con-  
 VI. stitution of things, which God has ap-  
 pointed; and endeavouring to make *ourselves* what God has *not* made us. Instead of being thankful for those Faculties and Capacities, which God has freely indued us with, 'tis ungratefully murmuring against him, because he has not given us every thing that our unreasonable Fancies may suggest to us to desire, but has left us great occasions for Modesty, for mutual Charity and Forbearance. We are made capable of knowing and imitating our great Creator, and of being made happy by that Knowledge and that Imitation; and is not this sufficient for us, unless we be admitted also to determine with peremptoriness, and to *impose* upon each other our own Opinions concerning those Secrets, which infinite Wisdom has not thought fit to reveal clearly to us? All other created Beings contain themselves willingly within the bounds of their Natures, and cheerfully move within the limits of the sphere that God has prescribed them; except sinful men, lovers of Power, and insolent towards each other; and  
 excepting

excepting also those Apostate Spirits, who S E R M. VI.  
*kept not their first estate, but having re-*  
*volted from God, are reserved in chains*  
*under darkness unto the judgment of the*  
*great day.* That a proud aspiring after  
something not attainable by them in those  
circumstances wherein God had created  
and placed them, was the cause of these  
Angels Fall, the Scripture frequently in-  
timates to us; As in that Allusion of the  
Prophet *Isaiab*, ch. xiv. ver. 12. *How art*  
*thou fallen from Heaven, O Lucifer, Son*  
*of the Morning?-----For thou hast said in*  
*thine heart, I will ascend into Heaven, I*  
*will exalt my Throne above the Stars of*  
*God, I will sit also upon the mount of the*  
*Congregation, in the sides of the North; I*  
*will ascend above the heights of the Clouds,*  
*I will be like the most High; yet thou shalt*  
*be brought down to Hell, to the sides of the*  
*pit.* Which though applied indeed in  
that place by the Prophet to the King of  
*Babylon*, yet the Allusion seems to be  
borrowed from some greater and higher  
Event. What it was in particular, that  
this Pride prompted those wicked Spirits  
to aspire to, the Scripture does not ex-

S E R M.

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preſſly acquaint us; But ſince we cannot conceive that they could aſpire to the Power and Majeſty of God, which 'twas impoſſible they could be ſo weak as to imagine it could be aimed at by any created Being; 'tis probable their Crime might be the aſpiring proudly and imperiouſly to ſome degree or kind of Knowledge, which God had with-held from them. *2dly*, The not regulating this Deſire by the fore-mentioned rules, was the occaſion of our Firſt parents Fall. This appears from the deſcription of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, *Gen. iii. 6. When the Woman ſaw that the Tree was good for food, and that it was pleaſant to the Eyes, and a Tree to be deſired to make one wiſe or knowing, ſhe took of the Fruit and did eat.* 'Tis alſo evident from the deſcription of the manner of the Temptation, *ver. 5. God doth know, ſaith the Tempter, that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes ſhall be opened, and ye ſhall be as Gods, knowing Good and Evil.* The Temptation propoſed, was the Knowledge of Good and Evil; and That which principally prevailed upon the Woman

man

man to eat of the Fruit of the Tree, was S E R M<sup>o</sup>  
 its appearing desirable to make one wise. VI.

*What* is here meant particularly by the Knowledge of Good and Evil, the Scripture does not directly explain to us. That it was not the Knowledge of any particular *sort* of Good and Evil, is evident; For since the Understanding of our First parents, as all their other Faculties were much more perfect *before* than *after* the Fall; 'tis evident they could not but have a perfect Knowledge of all *natural* Good and Evil, and a right Understanding concerning the Nature of all *moral* Good and Evil; excepting only the *experimental* Knowledge of both these sorts of Evil, which 'tis impossible to suppose could be a temptation. It remains therefore that the Knowledge of Good and Evil, with which our First parents were tempted, was not the Knowledge of any particular *things*, but some particular *kind* or *manner* of knowing them: Possibly a Desire of *fore-knowing* things to come; or some other such *sort* of Knowledge, as in the present state and circumstances of their Nature they were not capable of attaining. *3dly* and

SERM. *lastly*, A Desire of Knowledge not regulated and limited by the Rules before set down, is very apt to put men upon unlawful practices, to attain what they so desire. For that which is not to be attained but by sinful and unwarrantable practices, the *Desire* of it cannot but be *also* sinful. What remains therefore, is by way of inference to apply what hath been said; and, by giving some particular instances, to reduce to practice what has been discoursed in general, concerning our Desire of Knowledge and the limitations of it.

AND *1<sup>st</sup>*, From what has been said, it follows, that the vain Desire of knowing beforehand things to come, is such a Desire of the Knowledge of secret things, as is not permitted us by the present circumstances and condition of our Nature, or by the Word of God. 'Tis the peculiar Attribute of God, and not communicable to any finite Being, to foreknow all things that *shall* be, before they come to pass; and therefore the Prophet, when he would expose the Vanity of worshipping Idols or false Gods, challenges



lenges them to foretel future Events; *Let* S E R M.  
*them bring forth their strong reasons, and* VI.  
*shew us what shall happen; show the things*  
*that are to come hereafter, that we may*  
*know that ye are Gods, Ifai. xli. 22 and 23.*

Yet because the power of Beings superior to us, is great and unknown; vain and superstitious men have therefore in All Ages been too apt to be seduced with Imaginations of the possibility of such Discoveries. In the times of Heathen Darknes and Ignorance, the Devil by giving sometimes doubtful and ambiguous Answers, which to be sure should be interpreted to the truest sense, which way soever the Event might happen to determine it; and sometimes by giving such dark and obscure Oracles, as, though no man could make any sense of them, yet they insensibly filled mens minds with an awful respect and veneration for the Author of them; by these means, I say, the Devil enslaved the *Gentile* World, and kept them in a constant course of Idolatry. Or, if most of these things were, as is probable enough, only the Frauds of wicked and profane *men*, to impose upon the

S E R M. Ignorant; yet still the Event was much the same, in abusing their Credulity and unjustifiable Desire of Knowledge, to confirm them in their Idolatrous Practices. The *Jews*, who by the Knowledge of the true God and the Discovery of his Will made to them in the Law, were in a great measure freed from the bondage of such Superstitions; yet whenever they fell away from God, and began to neglect his Worship and distrust his Providence, one instance of their Disobedience presently was, having recourse to unlawful ways of Inquiry after Knowledge. Thus when the Lord would not answer *Saul* because of his Disobedience, immediately he betakes himself to a Method, which *Moses* tells the *Israelites* was one of those Abominations, because of which *the Lord thy God doth drive the Nations out from before thee; For these Nations, which thou shalt possess, hearkened unto Observers of times, and unto Diviners*, Deut. xviii. 10. And among *Christians* 'tis observable, that those always who have least Knowledge of God, and least Trust in his Providence, and least Understanding in the true System and

Powers

Powers of Nature, have the greatest Confidence in groundless Pretences and unwarrantable Methods of pursuing Knowledge. It matters not, that the Pretences to supernatural ways of knowing things, are commonly mere Cheat and Fraud; it is a degree of this Sin, if Incouragement be given to such false Pretences. And to pretend to know things by the *Stars*, which introduces Fatality and destroys Religion; is not much different from pretending to know them by Arts that have worse Names.

2dly, FROM what hath been said it follows, that a Desire of prying into the hidden and unrevealed Decrees, Counsels, and Purposes of *God*, and desiring to impose upon Others our Opinions concerning them; is also such a Desire of the knowledge of secret things, as is not permitted us by the Law of our nature, or by the Word of God. The measure of our Knowledge of divine things, is That revelation, which God has been pleased to make to us in his holy Scripture; This, we can never study with too much care and exactness; But whatever pretends to

S E R M. go beyond these bounds, is presumptuous and unwarrantable. Those things which

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God has revealed to us, we may know, because God has discovered them to us; and we are *bound* with all diligence to search after the knowledge of them, because they are proposed to us as the rule of our life, and the condition of our happiness. *More* than God has made known to us of this kind, we *cannot* discover; and to pretend to understand, and confidently impose upon each other what God has not thought fit clearly to reveal, is no less foolish and absurd, than 'tis unreasonable and sinful. *For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been his Counsellour?* Rom. xi. 34. Only in general this *one* thing we may depend upon as certain, that no secret Counsel or Purpose or Decree of God can be contrary to his Will revealed in his Word. Upon what conditions God has appointed that men should be happy or miserable, he has clearly and fully revealed to us in his Holy Scriptures; and more than this, 'tis neither necessary nor possible for us to know.

3dly and lastly; AN over earnest Desire of knowing things subtle and unnecessary to be known, so as in the pursuit of the knowledge of these things, to neglect the Study of that which more nearly concerns us; is also a sort of that search after knowledge which is forbidden in the Scripture. Whatever hath no relation to the Honour and true Worship of *God*, and promotes not righteousness and charity among *Men*: Whatever tends not so to inform our judgments, as to rectify our practice and reform our lives, is useless and unprofitable. Let us then in the first place endeavour to attain that Knowledge which may make us wise unto Salvation; and always so regulate our inquiries after other things, as not to neglect the Study of that, which is our interest and our life. I conclude with the words of the wise Son of *Sirach*: *Ecclus. iii. 21. Many are in high places and of renown; but mysteries are revealed to the meek. Seek not out the things that are too hard for thee, nor search the things that are above thy strength: But what is*

S E R M.  
VI.  
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SERM. *commanded thee, think thereon with reverence; for it is not needful for thee to see with thine Eyes the things that are in secret.*





# SERMON VII.

Of the Testimony of our SAVIOUR'S DOCTRINES.

[Preached on Trinity-Sunday.]



I JOH. v. 8.

*And there are Three that bear Witness in Earth, the Spirit and the Water and the Blood; And these Three agree in One.*



THE Words of the foregoing S E R M.  
 Verse, which have no relation VII.  
 to the Argument the Apostle is here insisting upon, I shall not take into consideration at this time; for a reason Now well-known to all who carefully study the

S E R M. the Scriptures, and not needful to be mentioned in This place. But confining my  
 VII. Discourse to the words of the Text itself, I shall 1<sup>st</sup> endeavour to explain distinctly, their *connexion* with the whole Thread of the Apostle's Reasoning in this chapter; and 2<sup>dly</sup>, I shall consider, the *Doctrines particularly contained* in the words themselves.

I. IN the *first verse* of This Chapter, St *John* lays down the *General Doctrine*, which is the Subject of this whole epistle: *Whosoever* (says he) *believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God.* To be *born of God*, signifies, by an easy Figure of Speech, to be what the Scripture calls a *Child of God*, a *regenerate person*, one that *loves God and keeps his Commandments*; living in the habitual Practice of universal Virtue and Righteousness. And *such* a person is every one, who *believeth that Jesus is the Christ*: Not, every one who *professes* to believe, but who *does* believe: Not, every one who *pretends* to be, but who *really is*, a *sincere Christian*. The reason why the Apostle expresses sincere Christianity by this particular phrase of *believing*




believing that Jesus is the Christ, is because S E R M.  
 there were even Then some false Apostles, VII.  
 in whom *the mystery of iniquity did already work*: Who taught, that Jesus was not  
 indeed the Christ: That Christ, the Son of  
 God, was not indeed incarnate, was not  
*made Man* and *suffered* for us *really*, but  
*in appearance only*: That Jesus, the per-  
 son born of the Blessed Virgin, was not  
*himself* the Christ, the Son of God; but  
 that Christ, the Son of God, was *another*  
*person*, fictitiously and *in Name only* united  
 to Jesus who was the Son of Man. Against  
 These false Teachers, the Apostle argues  
 thro' this whole Epistle; ch. ii. 22. *Who*  
*is a Liar, but he that denieth that Jesus is*  
*the Christ?* From the Context it appears  
 evidently, that he is not there arguing  
 against professed Unbelievers, but against  
 pretended Christians, who denied the rea-  
 lity of our Lord's incarnation. Again,  
 ch. iv. 1. *Beloved, believe not every Spirit,*  
 (that is, every Prophet or Teacher,) *but*  
*try the Spirits whether they are of God;*  
*because many false Prophets are gone out*  
*into the World: Hereby know ye the Spirit*  
*of God; Every Spirit that confesses that*  
 Jesus

S E R M. *Jesus Christ is come in the Flesh,* (that is to  
 VII. say, that the Son of God was really in-  
 carnate and made Man for us,) *is of God:*  
*And every Spirit that confesseth not, that*  
*Jesus Christ is come in the Flesh; is not of*  
*God.* Again, 2 *Epist.* v. 7. *Many deceivers*  
*are entred into the World, who confess not*  
*that Jesus Christ is come in the Flesh.* And  
 in the 4<sup>th</sup> ch. of this 1<sup>st</sup> epistle, ver. 15;  
 and ch. v. 1, 5; the Phrases, *to confess that*  
*Jesus is the Son of God,* *to believe that Je-*  
*sus is the Christ,* and *to believe that Jesus*  
*is the Son of God,* are All used in the like  
 Sense, to express the *reality* of the incar-  
 nation of the *Son of God,* and that he  
*truly and personally,* (not in *appearance*  
*and Name only,*) became the *Son of Man.*  
 Hence, thro' this whole Epistle, these and  
 the like expressions are constantly to be  
 understood as signifying *True and Sincere*  
*Christians.* And therefore, I say, the *Ge-*  
*neral Doctrine,* laid down by St *John* in  
 the *first* verse of this Fifth Chapter, (and  
 the Subject-matter indeed of the whole  
 epistle,) is This; that *every sincere Chri-*  
*stian is a regenerate person, one that loves*  
*God and keeps his Commandments; living in*  
 the

the habitual Practice of universal Virtue and Righteousness. S E R M.  
VII.

ON the other side: Whosoever loves God, and desires to keep his Commandments, and is disposed to become a regenerate person; will hardly fail of being sincerely a Christian: For so the Apostle goes on in the latter part of the first verse; *Every one that loveth him that begat, loveth Him also that is begotten of Him*; Every one that sincerely loves God, every one that is of a good and virtuous Disposition, will naturally love the religion of Christ. And, that no man might mistake, wherein this Love of God consists; he defines it in express words, ver. 3. *This, says he, is the Love of God, that we keep his Commandments: and his Commandments are not grievous. And the Reason why his Commandments are not grievous, is because (says he, ver. 4.) whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the World*; A true Child of God, a sincere Christian, will despise and conquer all the Temptations of a sinful and debauched World. And the Means, by which he is enabled to

SERM. conquer these Temptations, is *Faith*;  
 VII. *This is the Victory that overcometh the*  
 *World, even our Faith: Our Faith, our*  
*firm Belief, of the Being and Govern-*  
*ment of God, and of his having appoint-*  
*ed a day wherein he will judge the World*  
*in Righteousness; this is what will not*  
*fail to prevail over the temptations, of*  
*a wicked and debauched World. And*  
*because 'tis by the Revelation of Christ,*  
*by the Doctrine and Preaching of the*  
*Gospel, that this Faith or firm Belief of*  
*a future Judgment is principally estab-*  
*lished in the minds of men; therefore in*  
*the 5th verse the Apostle proceeds to ex-*  
*plain this Faith in the following manner;*  
*Who is He that overcometh the World, but*  
*he which believeth that Jesus is the Son of*  
*God? that is, that he is the True Messiah*  
*which was to come into the World, the*  
*Person appointed to be the Judge of Quick*  
*and Dead.*

THAT This is plainly the Meaning of  
 the Phrase, appears from the parallel  
 places wherein the Scripture expresses the  
 same Sense in Other Words. Thus, what  
 in

in this 5th verse is, *believing that Jesus is the Son of God*; is in the 1st verse, *believing that Jesus is the Christ*. And St Peter's confession, which in St Matthew's words, ch. xvi. 16. is, *Thou art Christ, the Son of the Living God*; is, in St Mark's words, ch. viii. 29. *Thou art the Christ*. Again: The Question put to our Lord by the High-Priest, which in St Matthew's words, ch. xxvi. 63. is, *whether thou be the Christ the Son of God*; is, in St Luke's words, ch. xxii. 67. *Art thou the Christ?* And Nathanael, in His Confession, Job. i. 49, uses these two, as known Synonymous expressions; *Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel*.

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THE *Faith* therefore, which, St John here tells us, *overcometh the World*; is the believing that *Jesus is the True Messiah*, the person appointed of God to be the Judge of Quick and Dead. Which Truth whosoever is firmly perswaded of, will not easily suffer himself to be overcome by the Temptations of *Sin*, which he knows will expose him to the final Wrath of God at That Great Day.

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WHEREFORE This *Faith*, this *Belief* that *Jesus is the Son of God*, that he is the person by whom God will judge the World in righteousness; This, I say, being a Matter of so great importance, a Doctrine on which the Whole of Religion depends; the Apostle proceeds to tell us, ver. 6. that our Lord did not *barely affirm* this of himself, but came with powerful *Evidence and Proof*, with sufficient and undeniable *Witnesses* of so important a Truth: *This is he that came*, saith he, *by Water and Blood, even Jesus Christ*. He *Came*; that is, he manifested himself to be the True Messiah, and made it appear that he was really sent of God. For Thus the Messiah is described, in the Question put by *John Baptist's Disciples* to our Saviour, *Matt. xi. 3. Art Thou He that should Come, or do we look for Another? Before his appearing, his Title was, He that should Come*; And *after* it, the Apostle here styles him accordingly, *This is he that Came*. He came; *declaring* himself to be sent from God, as his Son, the Christ, the Judge of the World; and *proving* the Truth of what he affirmed, by the *evidence*


dence of *Three concurring Testimonies*, The *Water*, The *Blood*, and The *Spirit* : This is he that came by *Water and Blood*, even *Jesus Christ* ; not by *Water only*, but by *Water and Blood* ; And 'tis the *Spirit* that beareth *Witness*, because the *Spirit* is *Truth*.

S E R M.  
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THE words, *not by Water only, but by Water and Blood* ; seem to be an *Allusion* to what the same Apostle *St John* records in his *Gospel*, that, when our Lord's side was pierced, *forthwith there came out Blood and Water* : But it seems to be an *Allusion only* ; the Words in this place, having a different Sense ; and referring no otherwise to those in the *Gospel*, than as the *Blood and Water* there mentioned are recorded as an Evidence of the Reality and Certainty of our Lord's *Death* : Which *Death*, or voluntary *laying down of his Life*, the same Apostle here in his *Epistle*, alledges as *One Testimony* of the Truth of our Lord's Doctrine, styling it *the Blood*.

BY *Three concurring Testimonies* therefore, distinctly recited in the *sixth verse*, did our Lord *prove* himself to be the

S E R M. True Messiah. And because they are the

VII.  Three *Great* and most *undeniable* Evidences, that gave Testimony to our Lord and to the Truth of his Doctrine; therefore the Apostle *repeats them again*, (as it were by way of *recapitulation* of the Summ of his Argument,) in the words of the Text, ver. 8. *There are Three that bear Witness, the Spirit and the Water and the Blood; and these Three agree in One: They are One concurring or agreeing Testimony. And if we receive the Witness of Men*, says he, ver. 9; (that is, if *Two* Witnesses were in the Law sufficient Evidence of any matter of Fact among *Men*;) *The Witness of God is greater; this Threefold Testimony which God has given to the Truth of the Doctrine of Christ, is still more certain and undeniable.*


THE *End* and *Design*, for which this Doctrine of the Gospel was preached by Christ, and thus *attested of God*; is set forth, ver. 11; *And This is the Record, that God hath given to us eternal life; and this Life is in his Son: Which words are of the same import with those of our Saviour*




Saviour himself in the Gospel of St John; S E R M. VII.  
*This is Life eternal, that they may know Thee the Only True God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.*

THE Application of the Whole, follows, ver. 18. *We know, saith the Apostle, that whosoever is Born of God, sinneth not. And why doth such a one not sin? Even because the Son of God is come, ver. 20. and hath given us an Understanding that we may know Him that is True; that is, he hath taught us how the True God will be acceptably served and obeyed: And we are accordingly in Him that is true, (we do accordingly so obey and serve the True God,) in his Son, that is, by or through his Son Jesus Christ: This, says he, is the True God, and eternal Life.*

II. AND now, having explained distinctly the Connexion of the Text, with the whole Thread of the Apostles Reasoning in This chapter; I proceed in the *second* place to consider the *Doctrine contained particularly in the words themselves: There are Three that bear Witness, the Spirit, and the Water, and the Blood.* The Order in which they are ranked in the *Sixth*

SERM. VII.  verſe, is the true Order of nature; the *Water*, the *Blood*, and the *Spirit*; And in That order, I ſhall diſcourſe upon them.

*Fiſt* therefore; The *fiſt* of the three great Teſtimonies here recorded by *St John*, as given to the Truth of our Saviour's Miſſion and Doctrin; is That which he ſtiles *The Water*. His Meaning is; *That Teſtimony*, which God gave to our Lord in ſo very remarkable and illuſtrious a manner at the Time of his *Baptiſm*. Matt. iii. 16. *And Jeſus when he was baptized, went up ſtraightway out of the Water; and lo, the Heavens were opened unto him, and he ſaw the Spirit of God descending --- upon him: and lo, a Voice from Heaven, ſaying, This is my Beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleaſed.* *St John*, in his *Gospel*, anſwerable to the Streſs here laid upon it in his *Epistle*, enlarges very particularly upon *This Teſtimony*; alledging the Account given of it by *John the Baptiſt* in the following manner, ch. i. 31. *I knew him not; But that he ſhould be made manifeſt to Iſrael, therefore am I come baptizing with Water: And John*  
bare


*bare Record, saying, I saw the Spirit de-* S E R M.  
*scending from Heaven,---- and it abode up-* VII.  
*on him : And I knew him not ; But he that*   
*sent me to baptize with Water, the same*  
*said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the*  
*Spirit descending, and remaining on him,*  
*the same is He which baptizeth with the*  
*Holy Ghost ; And I saw and bare Record,*  
*that this is the Son of God. Again ; ch. iii.*  
*26 ; The same Testimony is referred to by*  
*the Jews, discoursing with John the Bap-*  
*tist, and saying ; Rabbi, he that was with*  
*thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest*  
*Witness. And again, by our Saviour him-*  
*self, ch. v. 33, 37. Ye sent unto John, and*  
*he bare Witness unto the Truth : But I*  
*receive not Testimony from Man ; ---- the*  
*Father himself which has sent me, hath*  
*born Witness of me. This therefore was*  
*the First great Evidence of the Truth of*  
*our Lord's mission ; the Testimony given*  
*him at his ascending out of the Water,*  
*when the Spirit descended visibly upon*  
*him, and there came a Voice from Hea-*  
*ven, saying, This is my beloved Son in*  
*whom I am well-pleased.*

*Secondly ;*

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Secondly; THE next that bears Witness, is what the Apostle here stiles *The Blood*: That is; our Lord's *laying down his Life* for a Testimony to the Truth of his Doctrine, joined with the *Circumstances preceeding and attending his Death*. He did not only *preach* that he was the Son of God, and by his Holy and Exemplary *Life* justified his integrity in what he said: But he *died* also, to make good his Doctrine; and, in his Death, was attended with many the strongest circumstantial Evidences of Truth. To his *Disciples*, he frequently declared before-hand, that he should be crucified and slain, and should rise again the third day. To the *Jews*, he prophesied long before his suffering, *Job. viii. 28. When ye have lift up the Son of Man, then ye shall know that I am He; and that I do nothing of myself, but as my Father has taught me, I speak these things.* To *Pilate*, he professed, *Job. xviii. 37. To This end was I born, and for This cause came I into the World; that I should bear Witness unto the Truth.* This is what St Paul calls, his *Witnessing before Pontius Pilate a good confession,*

I Tim.

1 Tim. vi. 13 : And his stedfastness in it, S E R M. VII. 

caused even *Pilate himself* to testify, that the putting him to death, would be a shedding the *Blood of a just person*, Matt. xxvii. 24. The *particular circumstances* of his Death, were all of them the fulfilling of so many distinct Prophecies; In which it had been predicted, that he should be *sold for thirty pieces of Silver*; Zech. ix 9. that he should be *scourged, buffeted and spit upon*; that he should have *Gall and Vinegar* offered him to drink; that they who saw him crucified, should *mock at his trusting in God*; that the Soldiers should *cast lots for his garments*; that not *a Bone of him should be broken*; and that *they should look on Him whom they had pierced*. Concerning all which Circumstances, and particularly this Last, of the Soldiers *piercing him with a Spear*, and his being really dead without having any Bone broken; St *John* thus declares, ch. xix. 35. *He that saw it, bare Record; and his Record is true*. Upon Other Signs following his Death, the *Centurion that watched him*, bore Witness, saying, *Truly This was the Son of God*, Matt. xxvii.

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54. *After his Resurrection, (which was itself the Great Evidence of All;) his Disciples sealed likewise the same Testimony with Their Blood: Which is therefore stiled, Rev. xvii. 6. the Blood of the Martyrs of Jesus; That is, of those who were beheaded, ch. xx. 4. for the Witness of Jesus, and for the Word of God; Or, as 'tis ch. vi. 9. who were slain for the Word of God, and for the Testimony which they held. To which may be added, that even his Enemies also, who wished that his Blood might be on Them and on their children; even Their blood also was made a Witness to the same Truth, by the Vengeance that came upon them at the destruction of Jerusalem.*

*Thirdly, THE Third and Last Evidence or Witness to the Truth of our Lord's Doctrine, is the Spirit. And under This Head, are included Many particulars.*

*1st, THE Whole Body of Prophecies under the Old Testament: To Him give All the Prophets witness, Acts x. 43: And Rev. xix. 10. The Testimony of Jesus, is the Spirit of Prophecy: So we render the*

Words: But the True Rendring is; *The Spirit of Prophecy, is [only] the Testimony, or the Witness, of Jesus.* For which reason, 'tis expressly stiled by St Peter, *The Spirit of Christ which was in the Prophets.*

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2dly, THE Purity and Spiritual nature of the *Doctrine itself* which he taught, and the *Innocency and Holiness* of his *Life*; by means of which, he, as a *Lamb without blemish*, offered himself, through the *eternal Spirit, without Spot, unto God.*

1 Pet. i 19.  
Heb. ix.

3dly, THE Miracles which he worked in his own life-time by the Spirit of God: *Matt. xii. 28. If I cast out Devils by the Spirit of God, then the Kingdom of God is come unto you: And Job. v. 36. I have greater Witness than That of John; For the Works which my Father hath given me to finish, the same Works that I do, bear Witness of me, that the Father has sent me.*

4thly, HIS Resurrection from the Dead: Concerning which, St Peter tells us, that he was *quicken'd by the Spirit*; And St Paul, *Rom. i. 4. that he was declared to be the Son of God with Power, according to the*

1 Pet. iii.  
18.

the

SERM. *the Spirit of Holiness, by the Resurrection*  
 VII. *from the Dead.*



Lastly, THE Gift of the Holy Ghost; which, according to his Promise, he sent down upon the *Apostles* after his Ascension. The Promise was, *Job. xv. 26. I will send unto you from the Father, the Spirit of Truth, which proceedeth from the Father; he shall testify of Me: And the Accomplishment is, Heb. ii. 4. God bore them Witness, both with Signs and Wonders, and with divers Miracles and Gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own Will. So that, with great Power gave the Apostles Witness of the Resurrection of the Lord, Acts iv. 33. Him, saith St Peter, hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour;--- and We are his Witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him, Acts v. 31.*

THIS therefore is the *Third* and Last Great Witness to the Truth of our Lord's Doctrine; *It is the Spirit that beareth Witness, because the Spirit is Truth. 'Tis this great Variety, this manifold Evidence, of the Works of the Spirit; which gives the*

the



the most *undeniable* Attestation to the S E R M. *Truth* of Christianity. This is what St VII. Paul calls, *the Demonstration of the Spirit, and of Power*, 1 Cor. ii. 4. *For our Gospel*, saith he, *came not unto you in Word only, but also in Power, and in the Holy Ghost*, 1 Thess. i. 5. *Through mighty Signs and Wonders, by the Power of the Spirit of God*, Rom. xv. 19.

THE Inferences I shall draw from what has been said, are :

1<sup>st</sup>, IF God has given us such abundant Evidence of the Truth of Christianity, as has been above shown; then from hence it appears, how inexcusable those are, who neglect to embrace it, when proposed to them in its true and original Simplicity. In the manner *some* have mixt it up with humane inventions; with their own unintelligible doctrines, and corrupt Practices; 'tis no wonder indeed, that it has become a stumbling-block and an Offence. But as it was taught by Christ and his Apostles, in the native Purity of the Word of God; *no* heart of Man, that is willing to act the part of a *rational* Creature, can possibly

S E R M. sibly withstand its Evidence and Excel-  
 VII. lency. Only they who pretend to *im-*  
 brace it, and yet *disobey* it; are, of the  
 two, still *more* inexcusable. If we *re-*  
 ceive the Witness of God, which he has  
 given us concerning his Son; we must  
 make Evidence of the Truth and Sincerity  
 of our *Faith*, by the Testimony of  
 a suitable *Practice*. We must verify  
 and make good our *Baptism with Water*,  
 by the *Purity and Holiness* of a virtu-  
 ous and Christian Life. We must be  
 content to be *ill-used* (if at any time  
 the Will of God be *so*,) and to *suffer*  
*many indignities*, for adhering to and  
 preferring before humane inventions, the  
 Simplicity of That Doctrine which our  
 Lord and his Apostles attested with their  
*Blood*. We must take care to bring forth  
 the *Fruits of the Spirit*, in all meekness,  
 righteousness, sobriety and virtuous beha-  
 viour; Otherwise the *Works of the Spi-*  
*rit*, the several Manifestations of the Di-  
 vine Power, will be of No Benefit to  
 us.

2dly, IF the Witnesses to the Truth  
 of Christianity recited in the Text, were  
 a *suf-*

a *sufficient* and *complete* Evidence and At-  
 testation of That Doctrine which our  
*Saviour himself* taught; then from hence  
 we may learn what to think of those Evi-  
 dences, which corrupt men in after-  
 Ages have alledged in Proof of *their own*  
*additional Doctrines*. The two principal  
 Pretences of This kind, are That of the  
*internal guidance of the Spirit*, and That  
 of the *external Evidence of Miracles*. The  
*former* has been occasionally claimed, by  
*Enthusiasts* of all Sorts: The *latter*, is  
 the great and standing Imposture of the  
*Church of Rome*. Concerning the *former*,  
 'tis sufficient to observe, that *Other Foun-*  
*dation can no man lay, than that which is*  
*laid, even Jesus Christ*: And that there-  
 fore the following of the *Guidance and Di-*  
*rection of the Spirit of God*, is not follow-  
 ing *vain and enthusiastick imaginations*, but  
 adhering to That Doctrine which God at  
 first revealed by the *inspiration of his Spi-*  
*rit*, and is now recorded in the *Holy*  
*Scriptures* written for our Use. Concern-  
 ing the *latter*, namely the *Miracles* pre-  
 tended to be worked in these latter Ages  
 in the Church of *Rome*; That which the

S E R M,  
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S E R M. Scripture says of them, is This: *Matt. xxiv. 24. There shall arise false Christs, and false Prophets, and shall show great Signs and Wonders; --- Behold, I have told you before. 2 Theff. ii. 9. Whose Coming is after the working of Satan, with all power and Signs and Lying Wonders; and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish, because they received not the Love of the Truth, (i. e. the purity and simplicity of the Gospel;) and for This cause God shall send them strong Delusion, that they should believe a Lie. And, to mention but one place more, with which I shall conclude; Rev. xiii. 13. He doth great Wonders, and --- deceiveth them that dwell on the Earth, by the means of those Miracles which he had Power to do. From which, and all Other Impostures and Deceits, &c.*



# SERMON VIII.

Of our SAVIOUR'S Temptation.

[*A Sermon preached in Lent.*]



MATT. iv. 1.

*Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the Wilderness, to be tempted of the Devil.*




THE History of our Saviour's <sup>SERM.</sup> Temptation, is a portion of <sup>VIII.</sup> Scripture, in which there are several *Difficulties*, that deserve particular Explication; and upon which may be made several useful *Observations*, to direct us in our Own Practice.

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I. IN the *first* place, it may be inquired, *why* our Saviour, whom the Scripture elsewhere declares to have been *tempted in all points like as we are*, only *without Sin*; is yet by the Evangelists recorded, as having been tempted *only at This particular Time*: Then *was Jesus led up to be tempted. Then*: That is, as soon as he had been baptized. So St Mark explains it, ch. i. 11, 12. At his Baptism *there came a Voice from Heaven, saying, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: And immediately the Spirit driveth him into the Wilderness.* The Reason is, because he *Then* began to enter upon his Office, of preaching the Doctrine of Salvation; *That Doctrine*, by which the Works and Kingdom of the Devil, the Power and Dominion of Sin over Mankind, was to be destroyed. *Before This*, we do not read of his being Tempted; because his Life being private like that of other men, his Temptations were so likewise, Sin only always excepted. Neither, *After This*, is there any mention of his being Tempted any *more*; because the Tempter being at *This Time* thoroughly

thoroughly vanquished, did not hereafter <sup>S E R M.</sup> hope to prevail so much by *Tempting*, as <sup>VIII.</sup> by *Opposing and Persecuting* him. The  *proper Time of Tryal*, was just after his Baptism, at the first entring into his Office. And as the Tempter might reasonably think *This* the likeliest Season, to assault him with Success; so the Wisdom of God knew on the contrary, that it was the fittest Time for his repulsing and triumphing over the Tempter. For This reason the Text takes notice, that *Jesus was led up* of the Spirit; that is, not by the Evil Spirit, but by the Good Spirit of God, was he led up to his Temptation. So St *Luke* expressly, ch. iv. 1. *Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost, returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the Wilderness.* And indeed 'tis observable, that our Saviour, who before his Incarnation appeared to *Moses and the Patriarchs* in the Form of God, that is, invested with the immediate Glory and Power of his Father; on the contrary, *all the time of his residing here upon Earth*, appeared [*κενωθεις*] divested of That Glory, being made in the Likeness of Man; and

S E R M. and is accordingly represented through the  
 VIII. whole Gospel, as acting and working under the Conduct of the *Holy Spirit*; God having (as our Lord speaks concerning Himself, *Job. iii. 34.*) *given the Spirit unto him, not by Measure.*

2. IT may be inquired, *why* our Saviour continued so long in the solitary Retirement of a *Desert place*, and why he *Fasted* through all that Space of Forty Days. As to his *Retirement* in general, and his *Fasting* or *Humiliation* during that Retirement; the Reason of it seems to have been, that he might prepare himself beforehand by *Meditation* and *Prayer*, for the executing of that Great Office which he was about to undertake. Thus *Moses*, the Giver of the *Law*. Thus *Elijah*, the Head of the Antient *Prophets*. Thus *John Baptist*, the *Fore-runner* of our Lord, *before the day of his showing unto Israel*, Luke i. 80. Thus the *Apostles* of our Lord, at the Time of their sending forth *Paul and Barnabas* to preach, *fasted and prayed*, Acts xiii. 3. And, when they first *ordained Elders in every Church*, they *prayed with Fasting*, ch. xiv. 23. And  
 our



our Saviour, admonishing his Disciples concerning some extraordinary miraculous Gifts, with which they were to be induced; *This kind, saith he, goeth not out, but by Prayer and Fasting*, Matt. xvii. 21. In ordinary cases, 'tis to be understood by Us as a *Rule and Example* in proportion, that in undertaking any *Office*, and especially any *Sacred Function*, we be not rash and precipitate, careless, and full of *worldly Thoughts and Designs*; but that, withdrawing our Minds from the World, and attending seriously to the promoting of God's Glory, or the Interest of Truth and Virtue among Men, we beg the Divine Assistance to enable us, and by Meditation and Study strengthen our own Resolutions of being Diligent, and improve our Qualifications towards being more Successful, in the Performance of our Duty.

As to the *particular Space of Time* wherein our Saviour fasted, which was *forty days*; This was an Accomplishment of those Antient Types, when Moses *was with the Lord* in the Mount *forty days and forty nights, and did neither eat bread, nor drink water*, (Exod. xxxiv. 28.) and *Elijab*, (1 Kings xix. 8.) *went in the*  
N 4
*strength*

SERM. strength of the meat that he had eaten,  
 VIII. forty days and forty nights, unto Horeb the  
 Mount of God. Moses's Fast, was for the  
 Sins of Israel in the Wilderness, Deut.  
 ix. 18. I fell down before the Lord forty  
 days and forty nights, I did neither eat  
 bread, nor drink water, because of all  
 your Sins which ye sinned, in doing wickedly  
 in the sight of the Lord, to provoke  
 him to Anger. Elijah's Fast, was for the  
 Idolatry of Israel in the days of the Kings,  
 1 Kings xix. 13. There came a voice to  
 him, saying, What dost thou here, Elijah?  
 And he said, I have been very jealous for  
 the Lord God of Hosts; because the children  
 of Israel have forsaken thy Covenant,  
 thrown down thine Altars, and slain thy  
 Prophets with the Sword. These Types  
 therefore of the Giver of the Law, and  
 of the Chief of the Prophets, our Saviour  
 who came to fulfil the Law and the Pro-  
 phets, to fulfil all Legal, as well as Moral  
 Righteousness, and to be an Expiation for  
 the Sins of the whole World; thought fit  
 to accomplish. And possibly even in his  
 Own Fast also of forty days, there might  
 still be something typical, and propheti-  
 cal.

cal. For, as it was told to *Ezekiel* in his S E R M. Vision, ch. iv. 6. *Thou shalt bear the ini-* VIII.  
*quity of the House of Judah forty days, I*  
*have appointed thee each day for a year:*  
 And as the Prophet *Jonah* prophesied of *Nineveh*, *yet forty days and Nineveh shall*  
*be overthrowen;* (which, though in the li-  
 teral sense it was deferred upon their Re-  
 pentance, yet in the accounts of prophe-  
 tical computation it was really fulfilled,  
 as is intimated at the conclusion of the  
 book of *Tobit*;) So 'tis very observable,  
 that God *suffered the Manners* of the *Jews*  
*in the Wilderness* (upon whose Account  
*Moses's Fast* was kept; God bore with  
 them, I say, in the *Wilderness*) *forty*  
*years*, in the time of that Great *Provoca-*  
*tion*, Acts xiii. 18. and Ps. xcv. 8, 9, 10.  
 And from the time of our Saviour's Death  
 to the final destruction of *Jerusalem*, the  
 same impenitent Nation had again the  
 same Space allowed them of forty years.

THE Use of such Observations as these,  
 is, to show the exact *Connexion* there is,  
 between the several prophetic *Types* made  
 use of in Scripture, and the *Events* to  
 which those *Types* have relation. The

S E R M. comparing of which one with another, is  
 VIII. a confirmation of the Truth of the in-  
 spired Writings, and consequently of the  
 Truth of the Revelation itself.

THE Churches in *following* Ages, long after the Apostles times, instituted the Forty-days Fast of *Lent*, for some *sort* of a Resemblance or Imitation of our Saviour's Fast: But This, being not of Apostolical institution, is to be looked upon only as all Other Appointments of merely humane Authority.

3. IT may be inquired *why* our Saviour, who had Power over unclean Spirits, and could cast out Devils at his Pleasure; was yet pleased to submit himself and condescend so far, as to be *Tempted* at all by the Enemy. To this question, the Apostle gives an Answer, *Heb. ii. 14.* that our Lord being through Death *to destroy him that had the Power of Death, that is, the Devil;---* took therefore upon him, *not the Nature of Angels*, wherein he could not have died; *but the Nature of Men.* *Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his Brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful*


*faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the Sins of the people. For in that He himself hath suffered, being Tempted; he is able to succour Them that Are Tempted. And ch. iv. 15. We have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the Feeling of our Infirmities; but one who was in all points Tempted like as we are, yet without Sin. Tempted, not only by the Great Adversary, as in the present History, whereof my Text is a part; but Tempted also by all the usual Difficulties of humane Life. For so he expresses himself to his Disciples, Luk. xxii. 28. Ye are they which have continued with me in my Temptations. And indeed the Design of his coming into the World, was not barely to Die; but in the whole Course of his Life also, to set an Example of Humility and of perfect Obedience, as well as to give himself a Propitiation for our Sins by his Death. For This reason he was circumcised, and became obedient in all things to the Law of Moses. And when he came to John's Baptism; though he had No Sin to wash away by Repentance; and John, knowing him,*

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S E R M. him, would have forbidden him, saying,  
 VIII. *I have need to be baptized of Thee, and  
 comest Thou to Me?* Matt. iii. 14. yet Je-  
 sus insisted upon it, saying, *Suffer it to be  
 so Now; For thus it becometh us to fulfil  
 All Righteousness.* All Righteousness; that  
 is, every thing which is, not only proper-  
 ly and strictly *needful in itself*; but every  
 thing that is *meet*, every thing that is *de-  
 cent*, every thing that is *regular, exem-  
 plary, or of good report.*

4. IT may be inquired, (and This  
 is one of the greatest Difficulties of  
 all,) *why* the Tempter *would* at all assault  
 our Lord, or what Advantage he could  
 possibly hope to gain over him. Was it  
 possible that he could think to defeat the  
 Counsel of God, or disappoint the Design  
 of his sending the Messiah into the World?  
 To This, it may be replied, *1st*, That as  
 wicked *men* perpetually attempt *vain, un-  
 reasonable, and absurd* things; so wicked  
*Spirits* likewise, deserted of God, and for-  
 faken of all Goodness and True Under-  
 standing, may well be supposed to attempt  
 things no less *unreasonable and absurd.*  
 That Evil Spirits should *at any time* have  
 hoped

hoped to prevail against the Almighty by S E R M.  
*Power and Force*, as Some have supposed; VIII.  
is indeed too absurd to be imagined. But   
that they should rebel against the *Counsel*  
*and Will* of God, and endeavour malici-  
ously to overthrow *his Kingdom of Righ-*  
*teousness*; this is no more than what wick-  
ed *men*, in a lower degree, are perpetual-  
ly doing. But *2dly*, It may be considered  
further, that possibly the Tempter was  
not yet *sure*, whether our Lord was in-  
deed the *Messiah* or no. His words, *If*  
*thou be the Son of God*, seem to express his  
*uncertainty* concerning that matter. And  
there are several other things taken notice  
of in Scripture, the observing of which  
will make This seem less improbable.  
The Evangelists tell us, that the Devil  
*entred into Judas*, and put it in his Heart  
to betray his Master. By This it appears,  
that the Tempter did not even Then  
know, that the Salvation of Men was to  
be accomplished by the shedding of the  
Blood of Christ; seeing he hoped to put  
an End to the Doctrine of Christ, by de-  
stroying his Life. And This will be the  
less to be wondred at, if we consider what

S E R M. is declared in Scripture even concerning  
 VIII. good *Angels themselves*, who *always behold the Face of our Father which is in Heaven.*  
 1 Pet. i. 11. *The Antient Prophets, says the Apostle, 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. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto Us they did minister the things which are now reported unto you by Them that have preached the Gospel unto you, with the Holy Ghost sent down from Heaven. Which things, the Angels desire to look into. Not only Evil Spirits understood not, what the Prophets had foretold concerning the Sufferings of Christ, and the Glory that should follow; but even Good Angels themselves, St Peter tells us, were desirous to look into Those things. And St Paul carries this matter still further, Eph. iii. 9. To preach, saith he, the unsearchable Riches of Christ; and to make all men see what is the Fellowship of the Mystery, which from the Beginning of the World, hath been hid in God, who*  
*created*



created all things by Jesus Christ; To the intent that Now unto the Principalities and Powers in heavenly places, might be known by the Church the manifold Wisdom of God. By the Church; that is, by the Dispensations of God's Providence towards his universal Church, by the Events accomplishing antient Types and Mysteries; and by the clear fulfilling of obscure Prophecies; by These is the Wisdom of God, and the manifold Beauty of the Divine Counsels, made known not to Men only, but to Angels also. And This perhaps is the true meaning of That obscure Text,

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1 Tim. iii. 16. The Mystery \* of Godliness, (or God,) \* manifest in the Flesh, was seen of Angels: Seen, not in the literal

\* This is  
the old and  
true Reading.

Sense; for That was no mystery; But understood, apprehended, made plain, to the Angels; who were before, in That sense, desirous to look into it. To mention but One place more: There is a very remarkable expression in the Book of Tobit, ch. vi. 17; where the Angel Raphael, one of the seven Spirits that are described as going in and out before the Throne of God, is introduced thus speaking: More-  
over,

S E R M. *over*, I suppose, says he, (he does not  
 VIII. speak as with *certain knowledge*, but, I  
 suppose, says he,) *that she shall bear thee children.* He who considers These, and the like expressions of Scripture; will not perhaps think *Evil Spirits* to be Creatures of such extensive Capacity, but that the Tempter might very well be *uncertain* whether our Saviour was the promised *Messiah* or no, at the Time of his presuming to tempt him as in the Text. But *3dly*, Supposing the Tempter *did* know our Lord to be the promised *Messiah*, at the Time of his tempting him; yet still it was by no means impossible for the Great Deceiver to suppose, that as, by seducing the *First Adam*, he had excluded Mankind out of That Paradise which God had planted for them; so by endeavouring to make *some* impression or other upon the *Second Adam*, he might prevent men from being restored to Paradise again; and so a *second time* defeat the *Counsel of God*. Defeat the *Counsel of God*; That is, *not* prevent any thing that the Almighty had *resolved absolutely* to accomplish: For, in That sense, nothing  
 can

can resist his *Will*, nothing can oppose his *Power*: But the Enemy may oppose such Counsels or Designs of God for the Salvation of Mankind, as are *conditional* only, and appointed to depend upon the Behaviour of *Others*: Such Counsels of God, as even *Men* are at liberty by their Perverseness and Obstinacy to disappoint. As when the Evangelist tells us, St *Luke* i. 30. that *the Pharisees and Lawyers* rejected *the Counsel of God* against themselves: That is; *Against* their own Interest, *against* their own both Temporal and Eternal Welfare, they *rejected* the gracious Offers of the divine Mercy. Such Counsels of God as these, 'tis no wonder that He whose Works and Kingdom our Lord came to destroy, should endeavour to oppose. Nor is it at all impossible, that the Design of God in sending the *Messiah* into the World, might seem to the Tempter to be of the *same* Nature; to be *conditional* likewise. For as *all the* Threatnings of God, even those which in the *manner of* Expression are most *peremptory and absolute*, yet in reality must always be understood to be *conditional*,

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S E R M. and to include a tacit *exception* upon the  
 VIII. case of Repentance and Reformation; (as  
 is evident in the Instance of *Jonah's* Pro-  
 phesy against *Nineveh*; and as is declared  
 in general by the Prophet *Jeremy*, ch.  
 xviii. 7. *At what instant I shall speak con-  
 cerning a Nation and concerning a King-  
 dom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to  
 destroy it; If That Nation against whom  
 I have pronounced, turn from their Evil,  
 I will repent of the Evil that I thought to  
 do unto them:*) As (I say) all the *Threat-  
 nings* of God are thus undoubtedly con-  
 ditional, so likewise all the *Promises* of  
 God to Mankind, *however peremptory and  
 absolute* they may seem in the prophetic  
 Expressions of Scripture, may yet possibly  
 be supposed to be in reality *conditional* al-  
 so. The Nation of the *Jews* at This day,  
 notwithstanding the most *express and de-  
 terminate Predictions* in the Old Testa-  
 ment, not only concerning the Coming  
*of the Messiah*, but even concerning the  
*precise Time and Manner of his Coming*,  
 in Terms the most *positive and absolute*  
 that can be; yet are universally of Opi-  
 nion, that for the Sins of That people,  
 his

his Coming has been put off beyond the Time limited by the Prophets above seventeen hundred years. Well therefore might the Tempter apprehend, by the same manner of Reasoning, even *after* the Messiah had begun to appear in the Flesh, that notwithstanding the plain Predictions concerning the Salvation of Mankind by him, yet possibly even in all *Those* Promises there might be included such *tacit Conditions*, as that either by Tempting Christ himself, or his Followers the Apostles, or by exciting Wicked men to oppose and withstand Him and his Doctrine, he might at least in *some measure* prevent the Effect of his Coming, and hinder (at least *in great part*) the Salvation of Men.

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THUS have I briefly endeavoured to give Some Answer to That difficult Inquiry, *why* the Tempter would at all assault our Lord; what Advantage he could possibly hope to gain over him; and how, and in what degree, he could think it possible to defeat the Counsel of God, and to disappoint the Design of his sending the Messiah into the World.

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5. *Fifthly* and *Lastly*; since we read no more in the Gospels, of Christ's being Tempted after This; it may be inquired in the Last place, *how* and in *what Sense* it is said by St *Luke*, at the Conclusion of This History of our Lord's Temptation, ch. iv. 13. that the Tempter *departed from him, only* for a Season. The words, *for a Season*, seem to imply, as if after some Interval he *returned to tempt him again*. Which since we no where read that he attempted any more, in any *such* way of Temptation as is recorded in the Text; 'tis therefore probable that the Evangelist's Meaning was This; that the Tempter having failed of Success in his *present* Method, departed from our Lord for a Time, intending *hereafter* to assault him after *Another* manner. That is to say: Finding there was *no possibility* of making any impression upon him by *Fraud*, he resolved for the future to *withstand* his Doctrine by *Opposition and Force*: And because there was *no room* for his Suggestions to take *any* place, upon *Christ himself*; the only remaining way, was to stir up against him the Hatred of *profane Men*;  
and

and try, by making *Others* his Instruments, to put a Stop by *Their* Malice to That Doctrinē, which *He himself* by his own Temptations could not prevent from being preached. *After a Season* therefore, according to the intimation St *Luke* gives us, he returned again: And having prevailed upon *Judas* to betray him, and upon the *Pharisees* to encourage the Baseness of the Betrayer, and upon *Pilate* to put him to Death upon their false Accusation; he might very well think, that by the Success of this *last* Attempt, he had made sufficient Amends for his Failure in the *first*. By which Means, not only wicked *Men*, by whose hands our Lord was crucified and slain; but even the *Great Deceiver Himself*, became an Instrument in the hand of Providence, to bring about, according to the determinate Counsel and Foreknowledge of God, the Salvation of the World. 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! The Particulars of this last and great Transaction, are thus recorded in the Gospel: Our Saviour, in

S E R M,  
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Acts ii. 23.

Rom. xi.  
33.

S E R M. his last Discourse with his Disciples, a little  
 VIII. before his Passion, gives them Notice of  
 ~~~~~ their great Temptation approaching; *Job.*  
*xiv. 30. The Prince of This World, saith*  
*he, cometh, and hath nothing in me. The*  
*first Effect of this his coming, is expressed,*  
*Job. xiii. 2. The Devil having now put it*  
*into the Heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's*  
*son, to betray him: And Luke xxii. 3.*  
*Then entred Satan into Judas surnamed Is-*  
*cariot, being of the number of the twelve.*  
 This Success of the Tempter, was upon  
 Judas only: But Attempts were made,  
 upon the rest of the Disciples likewise:  
*Luke xxii. 31. The Lord said, Simon, Si-*  
*mon; behold, Satan has desired to have you,*  
*that he may sift you as wheat; But I have*  
*prayed for thee, that thy Faith fail not:*  
 And unto all the Disciples, ver. 40. *Pray,*  
*saith he, that ye enter not into Tempta-*  
*tion; and again ver. 46. Rise, and pray,*  
*lest ye enter into Temptation.* Now at the  
 same time that one of his Disciples was  
 thus moved to betray him, and the rest  
 afraid to acknowledge him, and tempted  
 to deny him; the Malice and Cruelty of  
 his Enemies, his Enemies both visible and  
 invisible,



*invisible*, wicked Men and wicked Spirits, was stirred up against him to such a degree, that he Thus speaks concerning *Himself*, Joh. xii. 27. *Now is my Soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save me from this Hour: and concerning his Enemies, Luke xxii. 53. This is your Hour, and the Power of Darknefs. The Effect* was, that he was delivered into the Hands of Wicked men, to be crucified and slain. And when the *Enemy of man's Salvation*, and the *Enemies of their own Salvation*, thought they had thus entirely put an End to the Doctrine of Christ by his Death; the *Wisdom of God*, on the contrary, brought it to pass, (which was the Mystery hid from the Foundation of the World,) that by *this very means*, even through Death, he destroyed Him that had Heb. ii. 14 the Power of Death, that is, the Devil: According to That Prediction of his own, spoken just before his Passion, but not understood till after his Resurrection, Joh. xii. 31. *Now is the Judgment of this World, now shall the Prince of this World be cast out: And ch. xvi. 11. Of Judgment, because the Prince of this World is judged.*

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THE only Observation I shall add further upon This Head is, that whereas it is affirmed in This History, that Satan *entred into Judas, and put it in his Heart to betray his Master*; 'tis not to be understood, either in *Judas's*, or in any *other Wicked man's* case, that the *Devil's tempting them* is any manner of Excuse or Extenuation of their Sin. For the Devil can *but* suggest, even as *Wicked men* do one to another. And, *being Tempted*, or having Evil *suggested* to them, is no *Sin*. *Sin*, consists wholly in the *Consent of the Will*, approving and putting in practice the Evil suggested. Over which *Consent of the Will*, the *Devil* has no Power; but 'tis owing entirely to the *Wickedness of the man's own Heart*, *chusing* to do the Evil which it ought to have *refused*. And therefore the Question is put by *St Peter* to *Ananias*, (*Acts v. 3.*) by way of *aggravation* and severe *Reproof* of his Crime; *why hath Satan filled thine Heart?* that is, what *Excuse* can you have, for *complying with so vile a Temptation of the Devil*, which you ought to have *rejected with all Abhorrence?*

BUT concerning This, (which is a S E R M.  
practical Inference from the whole,) I VIII.  
shall have occasion to speak further, in  
the following Discourse.



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# S E R M O N IX.

Of our SAVIOUR'S Temptation.

[*A Sermon Preached in Lent.*]



MATT. IV. I.

*Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the Wilderness, to be Tempted of the Devil.*



IN discoursing upon the AC-SERM.  
count the Scripture gives us IX.  
of our Saviour's Temptation,  
I proposed 1<sup>st</sup> to consider the  
several *Difficulties*, which, in

That portion of the Gospel-History, may seem to want more particular Explication: and 2<sup>dly</sup>, to deduce from thence such

S E R M. such *Observations*, as may be useful to direct us in our *own* Practice.

IX.



I. IN the *First* place, the *Difficulties*, which, in the History of our Saviour's Temptation, seemed most necessary to be explained, I have already considered particularly in a fore-going Discourse ; And have shown distinctly, *1st*, why our Saviour, whom the Scripture elsewhere declares to have been *tempted in all points like as We are, only without Sin* ; is yet by the Evangelists recorded, as having been tempted *only at this particular Time*. *2dly*, why our Saviour continued so long in the solitary Retirement of a *Desert place*, and why he *Fasted thro' all that Space of Forty days*. *3dly*, why our Lord, who had Power over unclean Spirits, and could cast out Devils at his Pleasure ; was yet pleased to submit himself and condescend so far, as to be *Tempted* by the Enemy. *4thly*, why the Tempter would at all assault our Lord, or what Advantage he could possibly hope to gain over him. *5thly* and *Lastly*, how and in what Sense, since we read no more in the Gospels, of Christ's being Tempted after This ; it is yet

yet said by St *Luke*, at the Conclusion of S E R M.  
this History of our Lord's Temptation, IX.  
that the Tempter *departed from him*, only  
*for a Season.*

THESE several Questions, naturally arising in the mind of any one who carefully reads this portion of the Gospel-History; I have indeavoured to give particular and distinct Answers to them, in the fore-going Discourse. I am Now in the

II. *Second* place, to deduce from this History of our Lord's Temptation, such *Inferences* or *Observations*, as may be useful to direct us in our *own* Practice. And

*Ist*, WE have from hence an intimation given us, that the Devil is always ready to Tempt men to Sin. As the Good *Spirit* of God, is always willing to assist those who sincerely desire to be religious; and the *Angels* are with cheerfulness sent forth to minister, to those who shall be Heirs of Salvation: so the Scripture every where represents the *Evil One*, as delighting and watching to entice men into Sin. (*1 Pet. v. 8.*) Be sober, *be vigilant*;

S E R M. *lant; because your adversary the Devil, as a*  
 IX. *roaring Lion, walketh about, seeking whom*  
 he may devour. Again, Eph. vi. 11, 12. Put  
 on the whole Armour of God, that ye may be  
 able to stand against the Wiles of the Devil.  
 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood,  
 but against Principalities, against Powers,  
 against the Rulers of the Darkness of This  
 World, against spiritual Wickedness in high  
 Places. And ch. ii. 2. According to the  
 Course of this World, according to the  
 Prince of the Power of the Air, the Spi-  
 rit that Now worketh in the children of  
 Disobedience. If it be here inquired, for  
 what reason wicked Spirits tempt men to  
 Sin, and what End they can propose in so  
 doing; the most probable Answer is, that  
 they do it for the very same reasons, as  
 wicked men tempt and seduce one an-  
 other. Partly, as esteeming it a sort of  
 Apology or Excuse for Themselves, if they  
 can draw Others into the like Condemna-  
 tion; and partly as being moved with En-  
 vy, that Others should enjoy That Hap-  
 piness which they themselves have lost;  
 and bating those, whose manners and  
 dispositions are contrary to their own.

Concerning



Concerning wicked Men, the Author of S E R M. the Book of *Wisdom* Thus describes the IX.


Temper I am speaking of; ch. ii. 12. *Let us lie in wait for the righteous; because he is not for our Turn, and he is clean contrary to our Doings;----- He is grievous unto us, even to behold; for his Life is not like other mens, his ways are of another Fashion.* And concerning evil Spirits, ver. 24; *Through Envy of the Devil, came Death into the World; and they that hold of his side, do find it.* Nevertheless; though the Scriptures do indeed thus teach us, that the Devil is always ready to *Tempt* men to Sin; yet 'tis Always carefully to be observed, that he *can do nothing more but Tempt* us. He has *no Power* over our *Persons*, or our *Wills*. He can *only* set before us *Baits* and *Allurements*; but we *cannot* be hurt by them, except we *yield* to them and *choose* them. The *Treachery* and *Corruptness* of our *own Hearts within*, is *much more dangerous*, than all the *Affaults* of the *Enemy* from *without*. *Let no man say, when he is tempted, I am tempted of God, St Jam. i. 13*; that is, let no man plead as an *Excuse*

S E R M. *cuse* for his Sin, that *God* permitted the

IX. *Devil* to tempt him into it. (For that

~ This is the meaning of the Phrase, *tempted of God*; appears plainly from 2 *Sam.* xxiv. 1. compared with 1 *Chron.* xxi. 1; In one of which places, 'tis said, *the Lord moved David to number Israel and Judah*; and in the other, that *Satan provoked David to number Israel.*) Let no man, (says the Apostle,) plead as an *Excuse* for his Sin, that *God* permitted the Evil One to tempt him into it. For *God*, as he cannot himself be tempted with evil, so neither tempteth he any man; neither doth he permit the *Devil* to tempt any one further, than by laying before him such Allurements, as 'tis in the person's Power, and 'tis his *Duty*, and 'tis the proper *Trial* and *Exercise* of his *Virtue*, to resist. But every man is then, and then only, tempted; then only, effectually and finfully, tempted; when he is drawn away of his own *Lust*, and enticed. The *Enemy* of mens *Salvation* can do nothing more, but only entice the *Covetous* with *Hopes* of *Gain*, puff up the *Ambitious* with *Expectation* of *Honour*, allure the *voluptuous* with

with Prospects of *Pleasure*. Where the Mind is not under the Power of any of these corrupt Affections, the Tempter finding *nothing in it*, (as the Scripture-expression is, *Job. xiv. 30.*) his Temptations can take no hold, and his Power is at an End. *Resist the Devil*, says the Apostle, *and he will flee from you*. Take heed only that your own *Heart* be sincere, sincere in the Pursuit of Truth and Virtue; and all the *fiery darts of the wicked One* will in course be quenched. If we do not, by our own Perverseness, grieve and drive from us *the good Spirit of God*; Ecclus xv. 17. *greater is He that is in Us, than He that is in the World*. God, saith the Son of *Sirach*, *has set before man Life and Death; and whether him liketh, shall be given him*. The good *Spirit* is equally willing, and more able to help us, than the Evil one can be to hurt us. In vain therefore do wicked men hope to extenuate their own Crimes, by alledging that they were tempted by the Devil. For the Scripture never mentions it as an *Excuse*, but on the contrary as an *Aggravation* of a Fault,

S E R M. when 'tis of *such* a nature as may well  
 IX. be supposed to have been suggested by the  
 *Evil One*, and for *That reason* ought above  
 all things to have been carefully avoided. Why *has Satan filled thine Heart*, said St Peter to *Ananias*, Acts v. 3? by way of more *severe* Reproof, for his presumption in attempting to deceive the Holy Spirit, wherewith God had inspired the Apostles. Nor indeed is it at all impossible, but that mens wicked deeds may sometimes rightly be ascribed to the Devil, even when perhaps they proceed *only* from the corruption of their *own* Hearts, and not from any immediate suggestion of *evil Spirits*. For, as it is agreeable to the Style of Scripture, and to the Reason of Things, to ascribe every thing that is *Good* to *God*; because *he* is the original *Author* of the *Powers* by which all Good is done; and whatever Good is done, is in obedience to His *Commands*, and agreeable to his *Nature and Will*: So every *Wicked* thing that is done, may in a proportionate sense be ascribed to the *Devil*; because He is the *Head*, and the *Beginner*  
 and

and *Encourager* of Evil; and whatever Evil is done, is in *imitation* of him, and agreeable to him.

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IX.  


2dly, THE 2d Observation I would draw from the History of our Lord's Temptation, is, that we are hereby taught, that no Person whatsoever is so *Great* or *Good*, as to be exempt from Temptation. If the *Captain of our Salvation* was himself *made perfect by Suffering*, let no man think himself so Good, as not to deserve Chastisement at the hand of God. If *Christ himself* was in all points tempted like as *We are*, let no man think himself so perfect, as to be above the Danger and the Fear of Temptation. We have great reason, as the Apostle admonishes, *Heb. ii.*

1. *to give earnest heed to the things that we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.* For the *Deceitfulness of Sin* is Great, and the *Tempter* is always watchful to seduce us, and the *Heart of man* is apt to grow negligent. So that even the *Best Christians* are by *St Paul* admonished, *to work out their Salvation with Fear and Trembling. Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall,* 1 Cor. x. 12;

S E R M. and Rom. xi. 20. *Thou standest by Faith ;*  
 IX. *be not high-minded, but fear.*

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3dly, FROM the consideration of the *Time* of our Saviour's being tempted, which was *immediately after his Baptism* ; we are instructed, that when men *first* set about the Practice of Religion, they are *then* reasonably to expect the greatest Difficulties in their Duty. *Ecclus. ii. 1. My Son, if thou come to serve the Lord, prepare thy Soul for Temptation.* The Life of a Christian, is in Scripture compared to a State of *Warfare* ; wherein he that goeth out to Battel, ought well to consider, before his setting out, what is the Strength of the Enemy that cometh against him. Whoever will lead a religious life ; must begin with expecting, to find difficulty in subduing *his own* vitious Passions, and to find opposition from the *course* of a corrupt and debauched *World*. *No man*, saith

<sup>1</sup> *Theſs. iii.* St Paul, *should be moved by these Afflictions ; for, yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto : Yea, and All that will*

<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> *Tim. iii.* *live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer Persecution.* For This reason, the Scripture frequently uses the Phrase of *Overcoming*,

to express a Christian's Perseverance in the Love of Truth and Virtue. He must be *Tempted with Allurements*, and *terrified with Dangers*; and then, if he *Overcometh*, saith our Saviour, he *shall inherit all things*. The sooner a man *begins* the Practice of true religion, the *fewer* evil Habits and the *less strong* vitious inclinations will he have to struggle with from *within*. And when he has once got above the *Allurements of inward Temptation*, he will with much greater Advantage be able to withstand the *Force of Persecution from abroad*. When our Saviour had entirely repulsed the first Assaults of sensual Pleasure and Ambition; the Tempter, says the Text, *departed from him, and Angels came and ministred unto him*. Thus, who-soever in the practice of religion, steddily resists the *first* temptations to Vice, and suffers not himself to be corrupted with any Evil Habits; shall, after That, more easily *keep himself*, and *That wicked One toucheth him not*. *Wisdom*, that is, Virtue, *is glorious*, saith the Author of the book of *Wisdom*, ch. vi. 12; *and never fadeth away*:----- *Whoso seeketh her early, shall*

S E R M. have no great Trouble, for he shall find her  
IX. sitting at his Doors.

Mar. iv. 1. Luke iv. 1. 4thly, FROM the following Expression in the Text, that *Jesus being led by the Spirit, or being full of the Holy Ghost, went up into the Wilderness to be Tempted of the Devil*; we may learn, that *Temptation to Sin* is not at all an *Argument of God's Displeasure*, but only a *Trial of us appointed by his wise Providence*. 'Tis, in the Nature of things, a *necessary and essential condition of a Probation-state*, that there should be some *Trial of mens Virtue*. And, in *This* sense, the Scripture scruples not to affirm, that *God himself tempts men*. Gen. xxii. 1. *After these things God did tempt, that is, did try, Abraham*. And, Deut. viii. 2. *God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldst keep his Commandments or no*; and suffered false Prophets, ch. xiii. 3. that he might know *whether you love the Lord your God with all your Heart, and with all your Soul*. The meaning is; not, that in *These* cases God does not know before, how men will behave them-



themselves; but that They who have in them a true Root of Virtue, may actually bring forth the Fruit of it; may be exercised, may be approved, may be made manifest, to the World here, and to men and angels hereafter; and may be, in themselves, improved, established, and fitted for the State of Heaven. *The Trial of our Faith*, (saith the Apostle,) *worketh Patience, and Patience Experience, and Experience Hope*. For *This* reason, we are exhorted, *not to faint, nor to be cast down under Temptations; nor to think it strange concerning the fiery trials that are to try us*. Nay, on the contrary, we are encouraged even to *rejoice under manifold temptations; to call the man Blessed, that endureth temptation*, (Jam. i. 12;) to *glory in tribulations*, (Rom. v. 3.) to *count it all joy, when we fall into divers temptations*, (Jam. i. 2:) Considering, that *when we are tried, we shall receive the Crown of Life*, (ver. 12;) and that *the Tryal of our Faith, is much more pretious than of Gold that perisheth*, (1 Pet. i. 7:) For, *when he has tried us, (as Holy Job expresses it,) we shall come forth as Gold*, ch. xxiii. 10;

S E R M.  
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Jam. i. 3.  
Rom. v. 4.


1 Pet. i. 5.

S E R M. And the Author of the Book of *Wisdom*,  
 IX. ch. iii. 5. God, saith he, proved *the Souls*  
 of the righteous, and found them worthy for  
 himself; As Gold in the furnace hath he  
 tried them, and received them as a burnt-  
 offering: And in the Time of their visita-  
 tion (that is, at the day of judgment;) they shall shine, and run to and fro like Sparks among the Stubble; They shall judge the Nations, and have Dominion over the people, and their Lord shall reign for ever.

NEVERTHELESS, 'tis here carefully to be observed, that all the things which the Scripture speaks in *This manner* concerning Temptations and our rejoicing under them, are to be understood *only* of Temptations either *already past and overcome*; or else of such, as we have *very good ground of assurance*, that, by the grace of God, they shall be overcome. For otherwise, as to *Temptations in general*, Temptations *unexperienced*, and of which we know the *Danger* but *not the Success*; concerning *These*, the Direction the Scripture gives us, is, on the contrary, that we may *lawfully*, nay, that 'tis *our Duty* to pray *against them*, and endeavour to *avoid*

void them. Our Saviour, who *knew what* S E R M.  
*was in Man*, thus exhorts his Disciples, IX.  
*Mar. xiv. 38. Watch and pray, lest ye en-*  
*ter into Temptation:* and *himself* prays, not  
 for his *own* Sake, but as an *Example* to  
 Us; *Father, if it be possible, let this Cup*  
*pass from me.* Our Nature is *Frail*, our  
*Passions strong*, our *Wills biassed*; and our  
 security, generally speaking, consists much  
 more certainly in *escaping* great Tempta-  
 tions, than in *conquering* them. For This  
 reason, our Lord directed his Followers,  
 when they were *Persecuted in One City, to*  
*flee unto another.* Which they who refu-  
 sed to do, led *themselves* into Temptation,  
 and tempted *God*: Putting themselves up-  
 on an Expectation of an extraordinary As-  
 sistance, where God had not given any  
 Promise of affording it. For where God  
*calls* us to a Trial, he *will* enable us to go  
 thro' it; but there is *no Assurance* of such  
 Assistance to the Presumptuous. 'Tis not  
 lawful therefore, for Men to *go* of them-  
 selves, and *throw themselves* into Tempta-  
 tion; and we are taught to *pray* more-  
 over, that God also, in his good Provi-  
 dence, would *not lead us into it.* This  
 Phrase,

S E R M. Phraſe, of God's leading *men into Temptation*, 'tis evident, muſt be underſtood according to the *Analogy* of Scripture-language: which, becauſe Nothing can come to paſs without God's permiſſion, does therefore uſually, in acknowledgement of the Supreme ſuperintendency of Divine Providence over all Events, aſcribe *every thing* figuratively to God. As when *God* is ſaid to have *delivered* a man, who is ſlain by chance, into the hand of his Neighbour; to have *moved* David, by means of Satan's Temptations, to number *Iſrael* and *Judah*; to have *hardened Pharaoh's* heart; to have *blinded the Eyes*, and *made fat*, or *ſtupid*, the heart of the people; to have *ſent forth* a lying Spirit among *Abab's* Prophets; to have *hardned the Spirit* of *Sibon* King of *Heſhbon*, and *made his heart obſtinate*; to have *hardened the Nations*, to *come againſt Iſrael to battel*, that he might *deſtroy them utterly*; to have *put* it in the Hearts of Evil Princes, to give their Kingdom unto the *Beaſt* or *Faſe Prophet*; to *ſend* upon men a *ſtrong Deluſion*; and, in the phraſe we are now ſpeaking of, to lead *men into*

*Temptation.* 'Tis plain, in all these EX-  
 pressions, the intention is not to affirm, S E R M.  
IX.  
 (except perhaps in some *judicial* cases,)   
 that God, *actually* and *efficiently*, does these  
 things; but only, that in the course of his  
 All-wise Providence, he justly *permits*  
 them to come to pass. Wherefore, when  
 our Saviour teaches us to pray, that God  
 would not lead *us into Temptation*; the  
 meaning is, that he would be pleased so  
 to order and direct things by his All-wise  
 Providence in This Probation-state, as not  
 to *suffer us to be tempted above what we*  
*are able*, but that he would *with the Temp-*  
*tation also make a way to escape, that we*  
*may be able to bear it*. And particularly,  
 that he would not *judicially*, and *in an-*  
*ger*, give us up and leave us to the Power  
 of Temptation, and to the Seducements  
 of the Evil One; as he did *Pharaoh* and  
*Abab*, and *Judas*, and the *Israelites in the*  
*Wilderness*, when (as the Psalmist expresses  
 it) *he gave them up unto their own Hearts*  
*Lusts, and let them follow their own Imagi-*  
*nations*. But that, on the contrary, he  
 would either, by his *preventing Mercy*,  
 keep us from *the Hour of Temptation*, Rev.

S E R M. iii. 10 ; or, by his gracious Support, *deliver us out of it*, 2 Pet. ii. 9.

IX.

5<sup>thly</sup>. FROM what St *Luke* records, at the Conclusion of this History of our Lord's Temptation, that the Tempter departed from him *only for a Season* ; we may observe, that though at the first Entrance into the course of a religious Life, the greatest Difficulties and Temptations are generally to be expected ; and when Once those are clearly overcome, the *ways* of Virtue usually become *Pleasantness*, and her *Paths Peace* ; yet men ought *never* to look upon themselves as *secure*, from the Returns of Temptation ; but that the Evil One may again assault them under different Forms and Shapes, to seduce them into different kinds of Sins ; grounding Temptations, *perhaps*, even upon their *Security itself*. Wherefore, *we ought* (says the Apostle) *to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip*, Heb. ii. 1. For, Many Wise and Good Resolutions, made with great Sincerity and right Intention, have through Negligence after some time, and want of serious recollection,

lection, failed of their Effect. *Watch ye* S E R M,  
*therefore, and be ready* Always; *for ye* IX.  
*know not what hour your Lord doth come:*  
*Blessed* (says our Saviour) *is that Ser-*  
*vant, whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall*  
*find so doing,* Matt. xxiv. 46.

*Lastly*; FROM the *Particulars* of our Saviour's Temptation, we may observe the *several principal Ways* by which the Tempter assaults men, and what are the most *proper Means of resisting* each Temptation.

HIS *first* Temptation, was founded upon *bodily and temporal Wants*: When he *was an hungred*, the Tempter said; *If thou be the Son of God, command that these Stones be made Bread.* His meaning was; *If you are the Beloved of God, do not submit to undergo any Hardships; but insist with God, that he show his Love to you, by supporting you even miraculously.* Want, is the great Temptation to *murmuring* against God: And therefore *Satan* is represented, *Job i. 11.* as thus pleading with God against *Job*; *Put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face.* And the Prayer  
of

S E R M. of *Agur* is for this reason given us as an  
 IX. example, *Prov. xxx. 8. Give me not poverty,----lest I take the Name of my God in vain.* The proper Preservative against *This* Temptation, our Saviour teaches us in his Reply; *Man shall not live by Bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the Mouth of God.* We must at all times depend upon the Protection of Providence; and consider, that as in the time of *Plenty*, we are supported *not* by the *things themselves* which we enjoy, but by the *Blessing of God* which alone enables them to support us; so, in the Time of *Want*, the same Providence, if he thinks fit, and sees that it will promote our eternal Interest, can still always find proper Means of preserving us.

T H E *Second* Temptation offered to our Lord, was; *If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down; down from a pinnacle of the Temple; For it is written, He shall give his Angels Charge concerning thee,----lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a Stone.* To *This* Temptation, our Lord replies, that there being a Commandment given in the Law, *Thou shalt*  
*not*



*not tempt the Lord thy God*; 'tis therefore S E R M.  
*not lawful* for any man to throw himself IX.  
 needlessly into danger, merely to *try* whether Providence will therein protect him or no. We may *rely* upon God, that he will *give his Angels Charge over us*, in all Dangers into which his Providence leads us; but no man ought to *tempt* God, by running *wilfully* any presumptuous hazards.

THE Use therefore of *This* part of the History of our Lord's Temptation, may be to warn us against *Two* or *Three* very dangerous Seducements of *This* kind. *One* is, a presumptuous *confidence* or *vain security*, relying upon groundless Notions of *Predestination*, and of God's *particular Favour* to us; or founded upon a *False Application* of *conditional Promises*, as if they were *absolute*: *Cast thy self down*, For, *it is written*, *he shall give his Angels Charge concerning thee*

ANOTHER dangerous Temptation which we are *here* likewise warned of; a Temptation, *contrary* at first Sight to That now-mentioned, and yet in reality leading into the *same Snare*; is *Distrust* of God. Such a *Distrust*, as the *Israelites*

S E R M. *raelites* in the Wilderness were guilty of, IX. when they said; *He smote the stony rock indeed, that the Waters* --- flowed withal; but can he give Bread also, or provide Flesh for his People, Pf. lxxviii. 21? He hath preserved thee indeed in *Other Dangers*; but *Cast thyself down from Hence*, and, if he has a *Favour* to thee, will he preserve thee *Then*? When God has given men *sufficient* evidence of any Truth; to be still dissatisfied, and continually requiring *Other Signs*, is *Tempting of God*. Thus the Pf. xcvi. 9, *Jews in the Wilderness*, tho' they saw God's works with their own eyes, yet continued to tempt him *ten times*, Num. xiv. 22. Thus the Pharisees, after the *Voice from Heaven* at our Saviour's Baptism, and after many other miraculous works, yet still desired of him a *Sign from Heaven*, Matt. xvi. 1. Thus, after the Proof given to *St Peter*, of God's receiving the *Gentiles* into the Gospel-covenant; he calls it *tempting of God*, Acts xv. 10. to endeavour to put upon the necks of the *Disciples* the yoke of the Ceremonial Law. Thus, after the Proofs God has given of his *existence*, by the works of Nature; and of his

his *Will*, by the Revelation of the Gospel; S E R M.  
to call for *more* proofs, is a *tempting* of IX.  
God.

THE *Third* and *Last* Temptation offered to our Lord, was *Worldly Power, Glory, and Interest*: *All these Kingdoms will I give thee, and the Glory of them, if thou wilt fall down and worship Me.* The Greatest of all Temptations, is *Riches, Honour, and Power*. These are the great Incentives, to *Luxury, Pride, and Tyranny*. The Prosperity of *Fools, destroys them*, Prov. i. 32: And, *Man being in Honour, saith the Psalmist, has no Understanding*; Pf. xlix 20. that is, is very apt to forget Himself, and his Duty. *They that will be rich, fall into Temptation and a Snare, and into many foolish and hurtful Lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition,* 1 Tim. vi. 9. Inasmuch that our Saviour declares, *Matt. xix. 23. that a Rich man shall hardly enter into the Kingdom of Heaven: Hardly*; that is, not that Riches themselves are any Fault, but because of the numerous Temptations they accidentally lead men into, in a vicious and corrupt World.

SERM.

IX.



THE *Answer* our Lord makes the Tempter upon this Last Trial; *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him Only shalt thou serve*; teaches us, that we must prefer before all things, the Service of God, and the Practice of true Religion: being always ready to reject, whatever shall come in competition with our Duty; even the *whole World*, if offered to us at the purchase of *Sin*. If we be found of *This* disposition; Lovers of Truth, and Doers of Righteousness; the *Tempter* will *depart from us*, as he did from our Lord; and *Angels will come, and minister unto us*; and the *Spirit of God* will preserve and guide us unto eternal Life.





# S E R M O N X.

The Shortness and Vanity of Hu-  
mane Life.


[*Preached in Lent.*]



J O B v. 6, 7.

*Although Affliction cometh not forth of the  
Dust, neither doth Trouble spring out of  
the Ground; yet Man is born unto Trou-  
ble as the Sparks fly upward.*



HERE is no Book in the Old S E R M.  
Testament, that has in it great- X.  
er and fuller Acknowledgments,   
of the Glory and Power of  
God; nobler and more lively descriptions,  
of the Works of Creation and Providence;  
more moving and affectionate Declarations,

S E R M. of the Shortness and Vanity of Humane  
 X. Life, and the Transitoriness of all worldly  
 Injoyments; frequenter and more explicit Expressions of all the moral obligations of Religion, in their highest Improvement, in their most refined and exalted Sense; clearer and plainer Significations, of the Hope of the best and wisest men, in antient Ages, concerning a Resurrection to a future Life; and of their trust and reliance upon God, even after he had given them over unto Death; than are to be met with, in this eloquent Book of *Job*.

BUT that which is *more particularly* the Design and Subject of the whole Book, is to represent to us the Character and Example, of a Man perfect in his generation, and of unspotted Integrity, a Man that feared God and eschewed Evil; whose Strength God was pleased to try with one of the greatest Calamities that is ever recorded to have fallen on any of the Sons of men; Under which, his behaviour was such, that in all that severe tryal *he sinned not, nor charged God foolishly*; nor suffered his Integrity to depart from him till he  
 died:

died: But he perpetually appealed from the false Opinion of *men*, to the unerring Judgment of *God*; and vindicated, in the whole course of his affliction, the Sovereignty and Dominion of God, his Supreme Authority and Right over his creatures, to *Try them* in what manner he thought fit: Maintaining to the last, (*against* the Opinion of all his Friends,) that even that great and unparalleled affliction, which God was pleased to lay upon him in so singular and unexampled a manner, was by no means an Evidence of his being wicked and forsaken of God; but an Effect of the Divine Power and Providence which governs the World, and brings about his own Designs, by Wise, though oft-times (for the present) secret and inscrutable Methods: And declaring his resolution to preserve his Confidence and Reliance upon God, even beyond the Grave itself; *Even though he slay me, saith he, yet will I trust in him: For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that my Eyes shall behold him; whom I shall see for myself, and not another.*

S E R M.  
X.  



SERM.

X.



THE chapter, out of which the words of my Text are taken, is part of the Reply of *Eliphaz* to that mournful Lamentation of *Job*, wherein he curses the day of his Birth, and wishes to have had his Affliction prevented by Death. In which Reply of his to *Job*, he erroneously supposes, that, because God frequently punishes the Wicked with severe Judgments in this World, therefore great Afflictions are a certain Evidence of mens having been very wicked: ver. 3. *I have seen the foolish taking root, but suddenly I cursed his habitation; His children are far from safety, and they are crushed in the gate, neither is there any to deliver them; Whose harvest the hungry eateth up, and taketh it even out of the thorns, and the robber swalloweth up the substance.* From which true Observation, he wrongfully intends to conclude, that, because *Job* was afflicted with the like Misfortunes, therefore he might justly be charged with having been guilty of the like Impieties; An Inference very derogatory to the Sovereignty and Wisdom of Providence, and very unjust to the Character of the pious Sufferer.

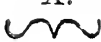


Sufferer. However, upon the whole, he S E R M.  
 adds this just and true *general* Observa- X.  
 tion, the consideration of which is of per-   
 petual Usefulness, ver. 6. *Although affli-*  
*ction cometh not forth of the dust, neither*  
*doth trouble spring out of the ground; yet*  
*man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly*  
*upward.*

THE words contain, 1<sup>st</sup>, A *pathetical*  
*description of the Shortness and Vanity,*  
*the Sorrows and Calamities of Humane*  
*Life: Man is born unto trouble, as the*  
*sparks fly upward.*

2<sup>dly</sup>, A *Declaration, that these Miseries*  
*of Humane Life, do not arise from Chance*  
*or from Necessity, from blind Fate or un-*  
*accountable Accidents; but from the wise*  
*Disposition of the Providence of God, go-*  
*verning the World: Affliction cometh not*  
*forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring*  
*out of the ground.* Wherein,

3<sup>dly</sup>, IT is implied, and intended to be  
 inferred, that *there are many just and good,*  
*wise and useful Ends; upon account of*  
*which, God permits so many Afflictions to*  
*fall upon Mankind; and the consideration*  
*therefore of which, (so far as we can dis-*


S E R M. cover them in this present dark and im-  
 X. perfect state,) *ought to teach us Patience, and*  
 *cheerful Resignation to the Divine Will.*

Ist, HERE is a pathetic description of the Shortness and Vanity, the Sorrows and Calamities of Humane Life : *Man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upwards.* Afflictions and Calamities of innumerable kinds, seem, in the course of things, as necessarily and constantly to attend the Life of Man ; as 'tis the nature of *light* things to ascend upwards, or of things *heavy* to descend. And of this, Experience is so continual an Evidence, that there needs no arguments of Reason to prove it, nor ornaments of Expression to describe it. We are *born* into the world, weak and defenceless ; we *grow up*, subject to numberless Casualties ; and in the *whole course* of our lives, are perpetually exposed to Dangers which cannot be foreseen, and to Troubles which are not possible to be prevented. The Weakness and Imperfections of *Childhood*, the Vanity and Follies of *Youth*, the Cares and Sollicitudes of *Manhood*, the Uneasiness and Infirmities of *Age* ; follow each other in a close and speedy succession. And,  
 in

in Each of these states, we are continu- S E R M.  
ally obnoxious to Pains and Diseases of X.  
*Body*; and in most of them, to the acuter  
Torment of Anxiety and Vexations of  
*Mind*. All which Evils are increased, by  
the Accidents and Misfortunes of the  
World, by our own Negligences and Vi-  
ces, by the Wickedness and Unreasonable-  
ness of other men, by the Judgments of  
God upon ourselves, and by the conse-  
quences of the Judgments he inflicts for  
the Unrighteousness of others. All which  
several calamities are emphatically de-  
scribed by pious men, in different places  
of Scripture. With respect to our being  
liable to *Pains and Diseases*, Man is *chast-*  
*ened*, saith *Elibu* in the book of *Job*, *with*  
*pain upon his bed, and the multitude of his*  
*bones with strong pain*; (*Job xxxiii. 19.*)  
and good *Hezekiah* complains; *Mine age*  
*is departed, and is removed from me as a*  
*shepherd's tent*; *I have cut off like a weav-*  
*er my life*; *he will cut me off with pining*  
*sickness*; *from day even to night wilt thou*  
*make an end of me:----- like a crane or*  
*a swallow, so did I chatter*; *I did mourn*  
*as a dove*, *Isai. xxxviii. 12.* With respect

S E R M. to the vain *Labours and Anxiety* of life;  
 X. *Surely every man, saith the Psalmist, walketh in a vain shadow, and disquieteth himself in vain; he heapeth up riches, and cannot tell who shall gather them; (Psal. xxxix. 6.) And Solomon, who had still greater experience of all the Labours of men under the Sun, thus expresseth it, (Eccl. ii. 23.) For all his days are sorrows, and his travel grief; yea, his heart taketh not rest in the night: This also is vanity.*  
 With respect to the *Oppressions and Troubles*, that good men suffer from the *Wickedness of others*; *I considered, saith the same Wise Observer, (Eccl. ix. 2.) that all things come alike to all, that there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked, to the clean and to the unclean, to him that sacrificeth and to him that sacrificeth not, to the Good and to the Sinner, to him that sweareth and to him that feareth an Oath: Moreover, I saw under the Sun the place of judgment, that wickedness was there; and the place of righteousness, that iniquity was there; (iii. 16.) I beheld the tears of the oppressed, and they had no comforter; and on the side of their oppressors*

there was power, but they had no comfort- S E R M.  
 er, (iv. 1.) But if there were none of X.  
 those *external* and *superinduced* calamities  
 which men bring upon themselves and  
 others, to augment the necessary and un-  
 avoidable Troubles which Humane Na-  
 ture is *born to*; yet even by *these inberent*  
 ones alone, would the Complaint in the  
 Text sufficiently be verified; and *Eliphaz*  
 might have justified his Observation, from  
 the consideration only, of the mere *natu-  
 ral* Vanity, and Shortness of Humane Life:  
 Which the Scripture compares, to a *va-  
 pour that appeareth for a little time, and  
 then vanishes away*; (Jam. iv. 14.) to a  
*tale that is told, and then remembered no  
 more, (Pſ. xc. 9.) to a wind that passeth  
 away, and cometh not again, (Pſ. lxxviii.  
 39.) Admonishing us upon all occasions,  
 that our days are swifter than a weavers  
 shuttle, and are spent without hope, (Job  
 vii. 6.) that they are swifter than a post;  
 they flee away, and see no good; they are  
 passed away as the swift ships, as the eagle  
 that hasteth to the prey, (ix. 25, 26.) that  
 Man who is born of a woman, is of few  
 days, and full of trouble; he cometh forth  
 like*


S E R M. *like a flower, and is cut down; he fleeth*  
 X. *also as a shadow, and continueth not, (xiv.*  
 *1, 2.) that as for man, his days are as*  
*grass; as a flower of the field, so he flou-*  
*rishes; For the wind passes over it, and*  
*it is gone, and the place thereof shall know*  
*it no more, (Ps. ciii. 15, 16.) that our days*  
*on the earth are as a shadow, and there is*  
*none abiding, (1 Chr. xxix. 15.) that all*  
*these things pass away like a shadow, and*  
*as a post that hasteth by; And as a ship*  
*that passeth over the waves of the water,*  
*which, when it is gone by, the trace thereof*  
*cannot be found, neither the path-way of*  
*the keel in the waves; or as when a bird*  
*has flown 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 have no sign of vir-*  
*tue to show, (Wisd. v. 8.) Upon all which*  
*accounts the Patriarch Jacob, when he*  
*was introduced to the King of Egypt, com-*  
*plains, notwithstanding he far exceeded*  
*the usual measure of mens present Age,*  
*and enjoyed much larger Possessions than*  
*the generality of Mankind, that yet few*  
*and evil had the days of the years of his*  
*pilgrimage*

*pilgrimage been*; (Gen. xlvii. 9.) This S E R M.  
X. Shortness and Vanity of Humane Life, is so obvious to every man's daily Experience and Observation, that it may seem in a manner needless to put men in mind of That, which 'tis not possible for them not to know. And yet so it comes to pass, that even the obviousness itself of the Observation, and the evident certainty of it; is the cause that it has no more effect upon the generality of Men, than if it were very difficult to be observed at all; And for this very reason, because men are already satisfied that they know it sufficiently, they never attend to it; but live as if they knew it not. It requires no reasoning, no arguing, no meditation, for men to discover to themselves that they must shortly die; and therefore, putting away the thoughts of it, as too trivial and obvious, they live as if it would never happen. But

2dly, T O G E T H E R with this pathetic description of the Shortness and Vanity, the Sorrows and Calamities of Humane Life, that *Man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward*; the Text contains likewise

S E R M. wise a Declaration, that these Miseries  
 X. and Troubles do not arise from *Chance* or  
 from *Necessity*, from blind Fate or unaccountable Accidents; but from the wise Disposition of the Providence of *God*, governing the World: *Affliction cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground.* And this indeed is the only true and solid comfort, that can possibly be afforded to a rational and considerate mind; in order to support him both under the troubles of *Life*, and against the Fears of *Death*. The Only possible thing that can effectually enable a man, either to *bear patiently* the Afflictions and Troubles that will necessarily attend him here, or to be *willing and contented to depart from them*, with any hopes of entering into another and better State hereafter; is, to be able to consider that there is a God, a Powerful and Just, a Wise and Good Being, that governs the World: By whose Wisdom and Goodness all things are designed, by whose Providence all things are conducted, to bring about the greatest and best Ends:  
 by




by whose Power we were created, under S E R M.  
 whose Care and Government we are pre- X.  
 served and supported; in whose presence   
 we walk perpetually, whose eyes are upon  
 all our Actions, and *in whom we live and  
 move and have our Being*; without whom,  
 not a *sparrow falls to the ground*, or so  
 much as a *hair of our head* perishes; with-  
 out whose direction no Evil can befall us,  
 without whose Permission no Power can  
 hurt us, and who is able finally to make  
*all things work together for good, to them  
 that love and fear Him*. This, and This  
 only, if men would take care to live *vir-  
 tuously*; (For to a *vitious* man there is  
 No Comfort, neither in This life nor  
 Another,) if men would take care to live  
*virtuously*, I say, the Thought of God's  
 governing the World is *such* a Considera-  
 tion, as is sufficient to cause to vanish all  
 the tragical complaints of the Miseries  
 and Vanity of Humane Life. For, tho'  
 we could not conjecture at any Reason  
 why he has made us thus; though we  
 were not able to discern any kind and  
 gracious designs, in the Afflictions that  
 he lays upon us; though the ways of  
 Providence

S E R M. Providence had been still more inextricable than they are, and his Judgments far more unsearchable than we now apprehend them to be; yet certainly infinite Wisdom and infinite Goodness, might well be trusted and relied upon, by any reasonable and considerate mind. *That* Power, which in the frame and construction of the *natural* World, has adjusted all things by Weight and Measure: *That* Power, which with exquisite artifice has made every thing in the exactest harmony and proportion, to conspire regularly and uniformly towards accomplishing the best and wisest Ends, in compleating the beautiful Order and Fabrick of the *Material* Universe: *That* Power, might surely in his government of the *moral* World likewise, in his disposing of intelligent and rational creatures, even though *we* could give *no account at all* of his ways, yet with the justest reason be *believed* to direct all things for the best, and in order to bring about the noblest and most excellent Ends. How much more, when, even in this short and dark State, our finite and narrow Understanding *is* able to discern  
*many*

*many* wise and useful designs in the severest and most difficult dispensations of his Providence, (as in the sequel of this discourse shall be particularly shown;) how much more, I say, in *This case*, have we reason to submit, not only with patience and resignation, but even with joy and satisfaction, to his *good pleasure* in all things; Firmly believing, that, as in the frame of nature, those things which by Atheistical Philosophers were anciently looked upon as arguments of Error and Defect, of want either of Knowledge or Goodness in the formation of the *material* World, are since discovered to be most useful Contrivances, and Evidences of the most perfect and consummate Wisdom; so in the government of the *rational and intelligent* World, in the dispensations of *Providence* towards Mankind, those very things, which by some Philosophers of old were urged as Arguments of an Evil Principle, of a Mischievous Supreme Cause, co-ordinate and repugnant to God the Author of all Good; will, at the Great Day, (when the Reasons of things and the whole Counsel of God shall be more perfectly


S E R M. fectionly disclosed,) appear all to be most  
 X. *Wise, and Gracious, and Good.*


 DID our *Afflictions* come forth of the dust, and our troubles spring out of the ground; Were there no other cause to produce them, no other Hand to direct them, no other Counsel to design them, no other Power to over-rule and remove them; than the accidental concurrence of Senseless Atoms, than the fortuitous results of unguided Matter and Motion, than the blind Effects of inevitable Fate, or the mere jumbles of unintelligible Chance; 'tis plain there could be no rational Comfort and Support to a considerate Mind, under the various Misfortunes and Calamities of Life. For what is the Hope of the Unbeliever, when God taketh away his Soul; I should say, when *Fate* or *Chance* taketh away his Soul? And on what ground can the Confidence of the Atheist rely? His Expectations at best are thin as a Spider's web; and his Hopes as the light Chaff, which the Wind scattereth away from the Face of the Earth. His Prosperity and Mirth can be but for a moment, and his Adversity must of necessity

cessity terminate in Despair. For what Relief is to be expected from Fate or Chance, which has no Understanding? and what Support is *that* Man capable of in the days of Affliction, who does not believe things are guided by a wise hand, which can turn every thing finally to our Advantage? How weak, how empty a Satisfaction is it, to be told that our Miseries arise from the *Necessity of Fate*, and therefore that 'tis to no purpose not to be willing to submit to them! How small a Comfort is it, to consider that *Others* perhaps are miserable as well as we; and that therefore we have no greater reason to complain, than they! How poor, how insipid a relief is it, to understand that it cannot be long before all the Miseries and Calamities of Life will have an End put to them by *Death*; if at the same time our View be wholly bounded by that dark Prospect, and there be no Expectation beyond the Grave? And yet these are *all* the Comforts that Infidelity can afford, and *all* the Hopes of him that is *without God in the world*. In the moment of his *Prosperity*, he may say with the Fool in

S E R M.  
X.  


S E R M. the Book of *Wisdom*, (ch. ii. ver. 6, 3.)

X.  Come on, let us enjoy the good things that are present, and let us speedily use the creatures like as in youth; For our Life being extinguished, our body shall be turned into ashes, and our spirit shall vanish as the soft air. But in the days of Sorrow, he will be convinced of his Folly; and repent and groan for Anguish of Spirit, when it be too late; and his Rejoicing will be turned into Despair. His past Pleasures will be remembered but as a Dream, and seem to him as a Shadow that departeth; his *present Trouble* will be insupportable; and his Fears of what may possibly be *to come*, will be unmixed and without Hope. The pretences of Philosophy, of Fortitude and Firmness of Spirit, of despising Pain, and looking upon Death as Nothing, and as merely putting an end to our Being; will appear to be vain Words, and mere empty Delusion; and *He only* is capable of any true Comfort and Support, who is convinced that all things are directed *well* and to *good Ends*, by the All-wise Government of the Providence of God; and who, by a  
**life**


life of Piety and true Holiness, has secured to himself finally, the Favour of that Supreme Disposer of all things.

S E R M.  
X.  


THE same *Appearances of Nature*, the same *Arguments of Reason*, which prove to us the Being or Existence of God; prove also his Providence in governing the World, and his inspection and directing of all Events: So that even from the *Light of Nature* itself, which to impartial and well-disposed Persons gives sufficient Evidences of the Being and Providence of God, 'tis manifest that no Affliction, no Trouble of any kind, can possibly come upon us without his Appointment or Permission. And *the Scripture*, to confirm and strengthen our Faith and Dependence upon God at all times and under all circumstances, is very large and express in this particular. *I am the Lord, and there is none else;---I form the Light, and create Darkness; I make Peace, and create Evil, (not moral, but natural Evil;) I the Lord do all these things, Is. xlv. 7. The Lord killeth, and maketh alive; he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up, 1 Sam. ii. 6. He maketh sore, and*

S E R M. *bindeth up; he woundeth, and his hands*  
 X. *make whole, Job v. 18. Out of the mouth*  
 of the most High, *proceedeth not Evil and*  
*Good?* Lam. iii. 38. And 'tis a very remarkable Expression in the Law of *Moses*, that when a man was smitten and killed by Accident, without any ill Intention at all in him that did it, his Misfortune is thus described, *Exod. xxi. 13. If a man lie not in wait, but God deliver him into his hand; To signify, that even those things, which to Us seem the most casual and merely accidental, yet in respect of God are really Providential, and could not happen but by his suffering them and (for wise reasons) permitting them to be done. That is; they are not indeed done always by his Direction and Appointment; but, because they could not come to pass at all without his Knowledge and Permission, therefore we may be assured that he intends them for good, and to make use of them to serve some wise and good Ends of Providence, in that it was not his pleasure, and he did not think fit to over-rule and prevent them. And accordingly the Prophet Amos puts the*  
 Question



Question universally, not only concerning S E R M. Judgments sent immediately by God's X. Command and Appointment, but concerning  *all*, even *those* also which we call *natural* and *accidental* Evils; *Shall there be Evil in a City, and the Lord hath not done it?* ch. iii. ver. 6. Which Words some have been so very unreasonable as to interpret even of *Sin* itself or *moral Evil*; (which is the highest Absurdity and Blasphemy :) But with respect to all *natural* Evils, (since second causes have no Powers but from and in subordination to the first,) 'tis strictly true: And therefore, even though we could not at all understand the reasons why God is pleased to permit them, yet since we are sure they cannot but be of his permission, we have more reason with all Patience and Resignation to depend upon *him* that he intends and will direct them for good, than Pf. cxix. a Child can have, in things above its apprehension, to rely upon the Kindness of 75. a most affectionate Parent.

BUT *3dly*, Though This might be a sufficient Satisfaction in *general*; yet further, We *are* able to instance in *many*

S E R M. *particular* wise and good Ends, for which  
X. Providence permits so many Afflictions to  
befal Mankind. The Consideration of  
which must be referred to another Op-  
portunity.





# S E R M O N XI.

Of Resignation to the Divine Will  
in Affliction.


[*A Sermon preached in Lent.*]



JOB v. 6, 7.

*Altho' Affliction cometh not forth of the  
Dust, neither doth Trouble spring out of  
the ground, yet Man is born unto Trouble,  
as the Sparks fly upwards.*



IN a fore-going Discourse, I S E R M.  
have observed that these XI.  
Words contain in them, 

I. A pathetic description  
of the Weakness and Vanity,  
the Sorrows and Calamities of human  
Life:

SERM. Life: *Man is born unto Trouble, as the*  
 XI. *Sparks fly upwards.*



2. A Declaration, that these Miseries of humane life, do not arise from Chance or from Necessity, from blind Fate or unaccountable Accidents; but from the wise Disposition of the Providence of God, governing the World. *Affliction cometh not forth of the Dust, neither doth Trouble spring out of the Ground.* Wherein

3. IT is implied, and intended to be inferred, that there are many just and good, wise and useful Ends; upon account of which, God permits so many Afflictions to fall upon Mankind; and the consideration therefore of which, (so far as we can discover them in this present dark and imperfect State,) ought to teach us Patience and cheerful Resignation to the Divine Will.

THE two former of these I have already discoursed on; and shown, that, since *Afflictions do not come forth of the Dust*, do not arise from Chance or from Necessity; but are all under the Disposal of the All-Wise Providence of God, governing the World; this one *general* consideration


consideration alone, ought sufficiently to secure our entire Trust and Dependence upon God, our Hope and Confidence in Him; so as to be an abundant Support and Comfort to us, under all the possible Accidents and Calamities of Life; even tho' we could not *at all* understand any of the *grounds* of his Acting, and the *Reasons* of his so dealing with us.

BUT seeing *this* is not wholly the Case; and that in this *general* Observation it seems moreover to be implied, and intended to be inferred, that there are also discoverable *in particular*, many just and good, wise and useful Ends; upon account of which, God permits so many Afflictions to fall upon Mankind; and the consideration of which, ought to teach us Patience, and cheerful Resignation to the Divine Will: It remains therefore, that we proceed now, in the


3<sup>d</sup> and *last* place, To consider *what* are (some of the plainest and most satisfactory of) those reasons, that *we are* capable of discovering; upon account of which, it was best and fittest that things should be so ordered as they are; and in  
consideration

S E R M. consideration whereof, we ought more  
 XI. *fully and readily* to acquiesce in the divine  
 good pleasure in all things.

AND *first*, We are to consider, that some of those things which we usually esteem among the Troubles and Afflictions of life, are such as may *justly* and must *necessarily* be resolved into the *absolute Sovereignty and Dominion* of God. Of this kind, are Mortality in general, and the Shortness of humane Life; the unequal Distribution of Riches and Honour, and the good things of this present Life; the different capacities, and abilities of Mind; the different tempers, and constitutions of Body; the different states and conditions, wherein God has originally placed men in the World. Of these things there *can*, there *needs* no other account to be given, than the absolute Sovereignty and Dominion of God. For infinite Power, Wisdom and Goodness, may display itself in producing what Variety of Creatures he pleases; and in communicating to them his free Bounties, in what measure and proportion he thinks fit. He that had no Obligation, no Want or Necessity upon  
 him,


him, to give Being to any thing at all; S E R M.  
may give Being to his Creatures for what XI.  
Duration he pleases; and distribute his   
absolute and unconditionate Favours,  
Without giving *any* account of his Ways.  
'Tis no just ground of complaint in *Men*,  
that they were not created in the condition  
of *Angels*; any more than 'tis an injury  
to *inferior Creatures*, that they are not  
indued with the Capacities of *Men*. Nei-  
ther is it a wrong to those who are born  
with lower capacities and to meaner cir-  
cumstances, that they are made inferior  
to others; But they have *much more rea-  
son* to be thankful for what they *have*,  
than to be displeas'd for want of what  
they *have not*. 'Tis sufficient if, in mat-  
ters of *Reward and Punishment*, God in  
the End deals equitably with all his ra-  
tional Creatures; and disposes of them  
according to the proportion of the sever-  
al deserts, of each of them, in their re-  
spective States. But in the *original ap-  
pointment* of the *State and Condition* of  
their Nature, there is no room for any  
other consideration, than that of the ab-  
solute Sovereignty of infinite Power, and  
the

S E R M. the various Exercise of infinite Wisdom.

XI.  The Servant who gained four Talents by the improvement of two, 'twas *just* that he should be rewarded with four Cities; and that the reward of ten Cities should be allotted to *him*, who by a right use of five Talents had improved them to Ten. But why *originally* the one should be intrusted with five Talents, and the other but with two; of this there needs and *can* no other account be given, but this; *Is it not lawful for God, to do what he pleases with his own?* and *Shall the thing formed say unto him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus?* Hath not the Potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one Vessel to Honour and another to Dishonour? Not, one person unconditionally to *final Happiness*, and another to *Misery*; But (as the same Apostle expressly explains himself, 2 *Tim.* ii. 20.) *In a great house there are not only vessels of Gold, and of Silver, but also of Wood and of Earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour.* That is: Hath not the Master a Right, to imploy his Servants in what several Stations he pleases, more or less honourable;

pro-



provided, in his final distribution, he deals S E R M.  
equitably with each of them, in their fe- XI.  
veral and respective degrees? As the Glo-   
ry of the *natural* World consists in that  
beautiful *Variety* of things, whereof the  
Whole is composed; So in the *Moral*  
World, God has made rational Creatures  
of *various* Capacities, and placed them in  
*different* Stations: And it imports not to  
each one's final State, *what* his present  
Station is, but *how well* he behaves him-  
self in That Station. The Scripture, as  
well as the Reason of the Thing itself, fre-  
quently refers us to this Sovereign Power  
of God, in accounting for the unequal  
distribution of both temporal and spiri-  
tual advantages. *He plucketh down one,  
and setteth up another; He maketh poor,  
and maketh rich; he bringeth low, and  
lifteth up:* He causeth one Nation or Per-  
son to be rich and powerful, and another  
to be poor and weak. He reveals himself  
to one People in one manner, and to an-  
other in a different manner; and in all  
this, there is neither Reward nor Punish-  
ment, but the various exercise of his Wis-  
dom and Power over his Creatures, with-  
out

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out wrong or injury to any of them. He chose the Nation of the *Jews* to be his peculiar People, to reveal his Law to them in a particular manner, and to make them the Standard of true Religion to the World ; *He did not deal so with any other nation, neither had the Heathen knowledge of his Laws.* And this *St Paul* ascribes to the absolute Will and Pleasure of God, who may dispose of his unconditionate Favours in what manner and proportion he thinks fit : *Rom. ix. 10, 11. When Rebeckah had conceived by one, even by our Father Isaac ; the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil ; that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth ; it was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger ; As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.* Which Text, has *therefore only* seemed difficult, because men have not usually attended *what* that purpose of God according to Election was, which the Apostle There declares should stand ? For, was it a Purpose of electing one to eternal Happiness, and the other to eternal Misery ? No ; but  
of

of causing the *elder to serve the younger.* S E R M.  
 The Words themselves are exprefs: *That XI.*  
*the purpose of God, faith he, according to*  
*election might stand, not of works, but of*  
*him that calleth.* God might appoint  
 whom he pleased, to be the Father of the  
 more powerful Nation, the progenitor of  
 his peculiar people; and yet there was  
 plainly no unrighteousness with God; no  
 wrong or injury done to *him*, upon whom  
 that Favour was not conferred, which  
 could of right be claimed by Neither. To  
 apply this, or any other Texts of like im-  
 portance, to mens *final and eternal* estate  
 of Rewards and Punishments in another  
 World; is indeed charging God wrong-  
 fully, and putting the greatest abuse that  
 can be upon Holy Scripture, wherein God  
 so constantly declares that he is *no Re-*  
*specter of Persons*, and that every man  
*shall be judged finally according to his works.*  
 But *which* shall be *here* superior, and *which*  
*shall serve; who* shall in *this Sense* be ha-  
 ted, and *who* be loved; (all which is com-  
 parative only, and not absolute; and in  
 which there is nothing of Reward or Pu-  
 nishment, but merely a variety of distri-  
 bution

S E R M. distribution of undeserved Favours; ) in this,  
 XI. God has an absolute Right of acting by  
 his Sovereign Power and Supreme Authority, and of doing what he pleases with his own. And since every thing that we All enjoy, proceeds wholly from God's *free* goodness and bounty; no man, whether he has received less or more, many advantages or fewer, has *any* just reason of complaint, *any* ground to say unto his Maker, *Why hast thou made me thus?* This is the account St Paul gives, of God's first *calling* the people of the *Jews*; and the same he gives, of his afterwards *rejecting* them again, and taking in the *Gentiles*. *I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion*: That is; God only, and not short-sighted Man, is the proper Judge, upon *whom*, upon *what* persons or Nations, 'tis fittest and wisest for him to bestow his Favours. *Hath not the Potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour and another unto dishonour? What, if God, willing to show his Wrath, and to make his Power known, endured with much long-suffering*

*suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to Destruction; And that he might make known the Riches of his Glory, on the vessels of mercy which he had afore prepared unto glory? Even Us, whom he has called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles,* Rom. ix. 15, 21, 22. In all which, there is no declaration of any arbitrary proceeding in God, with respect to the *last and great judgment*; as some have very unreasonably apprehended: (For, the *long-suffering* here-mentioned towards the *vessels of wrath*, i. e. the unbelieving Jews, was in expectation even of *Their Repentance and Amendment*; and the *vessels of mercy* here described, are not particular persons singly considered, but the *whole body of Christians* as opposed to the *whole Nation of the Jews*, and as including both *Gentile* as well as *Jewish Believers*; *Even Us*, saith the Apostle, *whom he has called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles* : ) But the plain and whole intention of the words, is to justify God's dealing with the Nation of the *Jews*, in rejecting *them* and receiving in the *Gentiles*; and to show, that men have no just reason

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S E R M. to complain against God, for manifesting  
 XI. his Power and Glory in different dispensations to different Persons at different times, and for distributing differently his undeserved Bounty, and allowing men various and different advantages, after such manner as he himself thinks fit: Inasmuch as they who enjoy the fewest advantages, receive always more than they deserve or can claim; and have no wrong or injury done to them, by the abounding of God's free Goodness to others. It was no injustice at the first to other Nations, that God, out of his free Bounty, was pleased to bless in a singular manner the Posterity of faithful *Abraham* for many generations; nor was it afterwards any injury to the *Jews*, that God was pleased to receive the *Gentiles* likewise, into a participation of the same Favour and Blessings with themselves. So far as the Advantages of God's peculiar people were *temporal*, the consideration of his *Sovereign Power and Authority* is a sufficient and satisfactory account of the Difference; But as to mens *spiritual and eternal* concern, the *Judge of all the Earth*  
 knows

knows how to do what is right; *With* S E R M.  
*Equity will he judge the Nations,* and will XI.  
make an equitable and proportionable allowance, for the unequal circumstances of every man's case. Yet, even *here* also, there is no injustice, in giving men different opportunities and different advantages; in entrusting them with different talents; and putting into the hands of Some, according to his own good pleasure, a greater possibility of obtaining larger Rewards. Neither further in *this* likewise can there be any ground of complaint, if he shall still think fit to make use of his Supreme Right, in giving freely as great a recompence to Some of whom he has not exacted so severe a Service, as to Others who may imagine themselves, by the performance of a stricter Duty, to have acquired for themselves a title to a more ample Reward. Our Saviour represents this to us in the Parable of the Labourers in the vineyard, who having been hired at different times of the day, and receiving each of them in the Evening the same reward; those which had been hired in the morning, tho' they

S E R M. received their full payment, yet were displeas'd at their Lord's free bounty, in giving the Same to those who had been hired last; and *murmured against him, saying; These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto Us, which have born the burden and heat of the Day: But he answered one of them, and said; Friend, I do thee no wrong; didst not thou agree with me for a penny? Take that thine is, and go thy way; I will give unto this last, even as unto thee: Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine Eye evil, because I am good?* St Matt. xx. 12. The Parable may be understood, to respect God's dealings either with the *Jews* and *Gentiles* in different Ages of the World, or with Persons converted to the belief of the Gospel in different Periods of their lives. God's various distribution of his free gifts and undeserved mercies, affords no just reason of complaint to those, who only want what no man has a right to claim, and what those who have, must acknowledge to be of mere bounty. And this is plainly the case in most of those things, which



which we are apt to look upon as some of the greatest Afflictions and Calamities of Life. They often are not any real and positive infliction of Judgments from the hand of God, but merely the original differences of mens state and circumstances, the variety of God's Creation, the different Talents committed to mens charge, the different Stations God has placed men in, for their various trials, and in order to the exercise of a diversity of Duties. *Poverty* has not always the nature of an affliction or judgment, but is rather merely a state of life, appointed by God, for the proper tryal and exercise of the virtues, of *Contentment*, *Patience*, and *Resignation*: And for *one* man to murmur against God, because he possesses not those Riches which he sees given to another; is the *wrath* that *killeth the foolish man*, and the *envy* that *slayeth the silly one*, Job v. 2. The like may be said of *want of Honour and Power*, *want of Children* to succeed in our Estates and Families, *Weakness of Body*, *Shortness of Life*, and the like; nay, and even of *Spiritual* disadvantages themselves likewise; *want of capacity* and

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S E R M. good understanding, want of *knowledge*  
 XI. and instruction, want of many *opportunities*  
 and means of improvement which others enjoy. None of all which, are any just ground of complaint against God, or any reason why we should not with all satisfaction acquiesce in his divine good pleasure; since all these things are only different distributions of such free gifts, as he, not being obliged to bestow on *any* man, may therefore without controversy divide to *every* man in what measure and proportion he himself thinks fit: Only *This* we may depend upon, that in such measure only will he *exact* our duty, as he enables us to *perform* it; and that to whom little is given, of him shall not be much required: And *This* brings all the *seeming inequalities* in the World, to a *real equality* at last; so that *he which gathers much, has nothing over; and he that gathers little, has no lack.* And we may justly apply to God's *general* dealings with all Mankind, the exclamation St *Paul* uses upon occasion of his wonderful *particular* dispensations to the people of the *Jews* and *Gentiles*; *O the depth of the riches*

*riches both of the Wisdom and Knowledge of God; How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!* In all circumstances of Life therefore, we are not to be uneasy that God has made us inferior to others; or that he has set before us, greater hardships and difficulties to go through; or that he has given us less abilities, and fewer opportunities than others: But we are to apply ourselves wholly, (with all acquiescence and resignation,) to the proper duties of *that* station, or of *those* circumstances, wherein God has been pleased to place us. *Poverty* is not an Argument, to envy the Rich; but a strong Obligation to study the duties of Humility, Contentment and Resignation. *Ignorance* and want of capacity, meanness of Parts and want of Instruction, is not a reason to murmur that God has not entrusted us with *more* talents; but an admonition to take care that we make a right improvement of those *few* that are given us. *Weakness of Body*, is not a just occasion to repine against God, for not giving us the Strength and Health wherewith he has blessed some others; but

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S E R M. a continual Argument to us, to exercise  
 XI. and improve such Virtues as are more peculiar to the *Mind*. The consideration of the *Uncertainty* and *Shortness of Life* itself, ought not to make us spend our Time in fruitless complaints of the *Vanity* and *Meanness* of our State; but to cause us perpetually to consider, that it is not of so great importance how *long* we live, as how *well*: For (as it is excellently expressed in the Book of *Wisdom*,) *honourable age is not that which standeth in length of time, nor that is measured by numbers of years; but Wisdom is the gray hair unto men, and an unspotted Life is old age.*

*Secondly*; I T is to be considered, that a great part of the troubles of Life, and the Afflictions we are apt to complain of, are not the immediate and original appointment of *God at all*; but the mere *natural Effects* and consequences, of our own Sins. 'Tis true, it is indeed the wise constitution of *Providence*, which thus ordered and disposed the nature of things at first, that most Sins should even in the *natural* consequences of things, be some time

time or other attended with their proper Punishment. But I consider it not Now in *That respect*, as being, *upon the whole*, the wise Appointment of God, to convince us of the Folly of Sin, and to lead us to Repentance; but as being *in particular*, in the present state and order of things, the mere *natural* Effect and Consequence of our own foolish and sinful choice. Which consideration alone, ought to make us acquiesce with all Humility and Patience, under that Burden which not God but our *own hands* have laid upon us: For, *why should a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his Sins? Why should he murmur against God, when he eateth but the Fruit of his own Ways, and is filled only with the natural consequences of his own devices? The Foolishness of Man* (as Solomon excellently expresses it, *Prov. xix. 3.*) *perverteth his own way, and then his heart fretteth against the Lord.* Very unreasonably and unjustly. For, if Poverty be the Effect of extravagance and profuseness, and a man's substance be consumed by riotous living: If Pain and Diseases of Body, be the Effect of Debauchery

S E R M. Debauchery and intemperate Courses; and  
 XI. the Comforts of Age, be prevented by  
 the Follies of Youth: If Anxiety and continual Vexation of Mind, be the Vanity of Covetousness; and the *fore travel*, of him that *has neither Child nor Brother*; of whom the Scripture says, that *there is no End of all his labour, neither is his Eye satisfied with riches; neither saith he, For whom do I labour, and bereave my Soul of good*; These troubles, are such as neither come forth of the dust, neither do they spring out of the ground, neither can they be complained of as proceeding from the hand of God; but they are only the natural Effects of mens own Follies, and the fulfilling the prophecies so often repeated in Scripture, that they who *plow wickedness*, shall *reap iniquity*, (Hos. x. 13.) and they who *sow iniquity*, shall *reap vanity*, (Prov. xxii. 8.) And yet, even *These* also, the Afflictions which are the consequences of our own Folly, may by a wise improvement, by bearing them as becomes us, and by exercising ourselves to Wisdom under them; even *These* also, may become the matter of an excellent Virtue,  
 and

and may turn into the occasion of much religious advantage. S E R M.  
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*Thirdly*, IT is to be considered, that some of the greatest afflictions and calamities of life, are the effects of God's publick judgments upon the World, for the wickedness and impiety of *others*. Wherein if virtuous and good men be sometimes involved, it ought to be a sufficient satisfaction to them to consider, that *this* is not the proper time for Rewards and Punishments to take place upon particular persons. And, since they know God has reserved to *another state* the final and equitable distribution of justice according to every man's desert; wherein he will give a perfect *Account of all his Matters*; wherein every inequality shall be exactly set right, and every circumstance of each person's case be considered and adjusted; when God will perfectly justify himself in all his Proceedings, and *every mouth shall be stopped before him*; why should they be uneasy, that God *for the present* suffers second causes to take their regular course, and does not work perpetual miracles to deliver them from the common  
inci-

S E R M. incidents of human nature, and from the  
 XI. publick misfortunes of the World? 'Tis  
 recorded of *Josiah* King of *Judah*, (2  
 Kings xxiii. 25.) that *like him was there no  
 King before him, that turned to the Lord  
 with all his heart, and with all his Soul,  
 and with all his might, neither after him  
 arose there any like him: Yet the Lord suf-  
 fered him to fall by the sword, and turned  
 not from the fierceness of his great Wrath  
 wherewith his anger was kindled against  
 Judah, because of all the Provocations that  
 Manasseh his Predecessor had provoked him  
 withal; and also for the innocent blood that  
 he had shed, which the Lord would not par-  
 don; 2 Kings xxiv. 4. And in a general de-  
 nunciation of the severest wrath of God  
 against Jerusalem, he threatens by the  
 Prophet Ezekiel, ch. xxi. ver. 3. that he  
 would cut off from it the righteous and the  
 wicked. In which case, it ought to be a  
 sufficient satisfaction to truly pious and re-  
 ligious persons, that God has reserved for  
 them their portion in another life.*

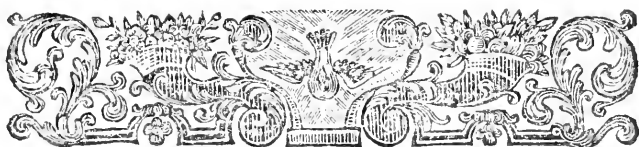
THESE are Some of the Many confi-  
 derations, which ought to oblige us, in  
 all Circumstances of life whatsoever, fully  
 and



*and readily* to acquiesce in the divine good S E R M. pleasure. There are others yet behind, XI. which are grounds not only of *acquiescence and Submission*, but even of *Thankfulness* also to God for sending upon us Afflictions greatly to our Advantage: Such as are those which, by the more immediate appointment of God, are intended and fitted to teach us *Humility*, to lead us to *Repentance*, to *wean* us from an *overfond love of the World*, to make *Tryal and Improvement of our Faith*, and to make eminent *Examples* of *Patience and Resignation*, *Fortitude and Contempt of the World*. But these I must refer to another Opportunity.







# S E R M O N XII.

The End of GOD's afflicting Men.

[*A Sermon Preached in Lent.*]




J O B V. 6, 7.

*Although Affliction cometh not forth of the  
Dust, neither doth Trouble spring out of  
the Ground; yet Man is born unto Trou-  
ble as the Sparks fly upward.*



**T**HAT none of the Afflictions S E R M.  
which befall Mankind, are the XII.  
Effects either of blind Chance  
or of fatal Necessity; but that  
they are all under the direc-  
tion of infinite Wisdom and Goodness  
governing the World, and *in the general*  
V O L. VI. **T** intended

S E R M. intended by Providence some way or other  
 XII. for our advantage; I have already shown  
 in a foregoing Discourse. I have also proposed *in particular* some of the many Considerations, which ought to teach us Acquiescence and cheerful Submission to the divine Good-pleasure, under the several kinds and sorts of Afflictions, which we are perpetually subject to in the present Life; Namely, that *some* of those things which we usually reckon among the Troubles of life, are not properly *Judgments inflicted* upon us, but merely the Effects of God's variously exercising his Infinite Power and Wisdom, his absolute Sovereignty and Dominion over his Creatures, in placing men originally in such different States and Conditions as he himself thought fit; whereof *no man* has reason to complain; because what *every man* enjoys, in whatever proportion it be, is still *all* only of free Goodness and mere Bounty: That some *others* of the Troubles we are apt to complain of are nothing but the *natural* Consequences of our own Sins; and therefore not at all chargeable upon God: That *others* of them, are the effects

effects of God's *publick* Judgments upon a S E R M.  
sinful World; from partaking of which XII.

Calamities if *particular* good and pious persons are not exempted *at present*, is it not abundantly sufficient that God has *hereafter* appointed for them a day of exacter retribution? These are sufficient grounds of *Contentment and Acquiescence*, of willing *Submission and Resignation* to the Divine Will. But there are *other considerations* still behind, (which I am *now* to proceed to speak to,) which will appear to be Arguments, not of *Contentment* only and *patient Resignation*, but even of *Thankfulness* also; Considerations, which will show, that most of the Afflictions we are apt to be uneasy under, *far* from being Arguments of God's neglecting and disregarding us, are some of the greatest instances of his paternal Care and Affection towards us, and designed to tend very much to our particular benefit and advantage. The *Ends* of *this* kind, which we have reason to believe God generally intends in the Afflictions he is pleased to send upon us, may be reduced to these four.

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1. TO teach us *Humility*, and a just Sense of our own *Unworthiness*.
2. TO lead us to *Repentance* for our past Errors.
3. TO *wean* us from an over-fond Love of the present *World*. And
4. TO *try*, *improve* and *perfect* our Virtues; and make some particular persons eminent Examples of Faith and Patience to the World.

1. TO teach us *Humility* and a just sense of our own *Unworthiness*. Though *Pride* evidently *was not made for man*, nor a haughty Spirit *for him that is born of a Woman*; Though nothing is more absurd and unnatural, than for *Dust and Ashes* to be lift up against its Maker; and for the thing formed, to exalt itself against him that formed it; Though nothing can be more unreasonable and ridiculous, than for *Man*, whose breath is in his nostrils, to despise his *Brother*, and to behave himself insolently towards *him* who is of the *same Nature and Dignity*, as well as of *like Passions*, with himself; Yet in Fact so it is, that often *Man being in Honour*, hath

*no Understanding*, Pf. xlix. 20. and, being puffed up with Prosperity, *considereth not whereof he is made, and remembreth not that he is but dust.* Such is the Weakness of our Nature, that *when one is made rich, and when the glory of his house is increased,* he is very apt to forget, that *when he dieth, he shall carry nothing away with him, and that his glory shall not descend after him.* When *Power* is put into our hands, and a great Superiority of worldly Advantages gives us opportunity to judge in our own cases; we are extremely apt, to make *Will* succeed in the place of *Reason*, and *Humour or Passion* instead of *Right*. And this, not only in Persons openly profane, and despisers of Religion; But such is the deceitfulness of mens Hearts, that in a long course of uninterrupted Prosperity, this secret Pride is apt to grow insensibly, even upon those who do not affect to practise Iniquity. The almost only certain and effectual remedy of which Evil, and the proper Preservative against it, is that mixture of *Afflictions* and Disappointments in the World, which, by the wise order and appointment of Providence, puts men in mind of their own

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Weakness and Infirmity, brings them to a right Sense of themselves and of their dependence upon God, puts them upon serious consideration of the true State and Circumstances of things, and is therefore in Scripture called the *Discipline and Instruction* of the Lord; *Job xxxiii. 16. Then he openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction; That he may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man; -----He is chastened also with pain upon his bed, and the multitude of his bones with strong pain: &c.* St Paul himself, tho' so eminent an Example of Piety, though so constant and indefatigable a Labourer in the work of his Ministry, though so singular an instance of Mortification and Contempt of the World; yet declares concerning himself, *2 Cor. xii. 7. that lest he should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the Revelations, there was sent upon him an Affliction, which he calls the messenger of Satan to buffet him, lest he should be exalted above measure.* Which if so great a Man as St Paul, thought to be his own case; Who is there in these later and corrupter Ages, that, in  
*Prosperity,*



*Prosperity*, can be sure of possessing his S E R M. Soul with that Humility and Meekness, XII. which Adversity would teach him? or that, in *Adversity*, can be sure he should not be puffed up by a course of Prosperity; so as to make it to himself a much greater Evil, than the Affliction he is now so uneasy under, and the Usefulness of which he is so loath to be sensible of?

2. ANOTHER *End* of God's sending Afflictions and Troubles upon Men, is to lead us to *Repentance* for our past Errors. This is excellently expressed by *Elibu*, (Job xxxvi. 8.) *If they be bound in fetters, and be holden in cords of affliction; then he sheweth them their work, and their transgressions that they have exceeded; he openeth also their ear to discipline, and commandeth that they return from iniquity.* When a wicked man prospers in all his worldly affairs, and his designs are crowned with perpetual Success; when he is surrounded on all sides with undisturbed Plenty, and all his appetites are gratified with the constant enjoyment of Ease and Pleasure; 'tis no wonder that he forgets the God that is above, and considers not that *for all*

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S E R M. *these things God will call him into judgment* : Good Admonition and Advice  
 XII.  makes no impression upon his Mind, and the serious exhortations of Religion find no room to enter: He is apt to put far from him the Evil day; and to say to his Soul, *Take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry; we will fill ourselves now with new wine, and to-morrow shall be as this day and much more abundant,* (Is. lvi. 12.) Persons in *this* State, the Scripture every where represents as in the most dangerous condition: *Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, saith St James, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts as in a day of slaughter,* Jam. v. 5. *Wo to them that are at ease in Zion,* Amos vi. 1. *I am very sore displeas'd with the Heathen that are at ease,* Zech. i. 15. *Moab hath been at ease from his Youth, and he has settled on his lees,* Jer. xlvi. 11. *i. e.* has gone on carelessly, in a long and uninterrupted course of Wickedness. The *greatest* Blessing and Happiness, that *can* befall such persons as these; the *greatest* instance, of the *mercy* of God towards them; is, the sending upon them some great Affliction; which,

which, like a severe medicine in a very dangerous distemper, may awaken them out of their Lethargy and Stupidity; may cause them to *consider*, and entertain sober Thoughts; may bring them to a right understanding, of themselves and of their own Danger. The *silent* instruction, of Reason and true Wisdom; the soft voice of God, in the gentle admonitions of Conscience not yet terrified with any *great* Fear; is not attended to, by inconsiderate persons; is not heard in the Hurry of Passions, that have been long used to prevail; and among a multitude of Appetites, which have been constantly accustomed to be gratified without denial. But when the *Judgments* of God are abroad in the Earth, then the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness, II. xxvi. 9. Then men begin to *consider* with themselves, what their State and Condition is; and *Consideration*, is the foundation of Repentance, the first motive and beginning of Religion. Of This, an eminent instance is recorded in the History of *Mannasseh*; who, in his Prosperity made *Judah* and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to err,

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*err, and to do worse than the Heathen whom the Lord had destroyed before the children of Israel: But in his captivity, when he was in affliction, he besought the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his Fathers, 2 Chr. xxxiii. 9, 12. And the example of his Repentance was afterwards as eminent, as that of his Impiety before had been pernicious. This is the proper effect of God's Judgments in the World; And if these last and severest Exhortations to Repentance, have not that due effect upon Sinners; their case then becomes desperate and without hope. Nothing then remains, but that God leave them to themselves; For, why should they be stricken any more? they will revolt more and more, If. i. 5. This is the greatest and most extreme, of all the Temporal Curses of God; I will not punish your daughters when they commit whoredom, nor your spouses when they commit adultery, Hof. iv. 14. And 'tis the proper consequence of not being brought to Repentance by this last Admonition, even by Afflictions themselves. Thus God complains of the impenitency of the Jews,*

Am.

Am. iv. 6, &c. *I have given you want of bread in all your places, and have withholden the rain from you, and have smitten you with blasting and mildew; yet have ye not returned unto Me, saith the Lord. I have sent among you the pestilence after the manner of Egypt; your young men have I slain with the sword; I have overthrown some of you, as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrhah; yet have ye not returned unto Me, saith the Lord.* And 'tis set down as part of the character of the *Kingdom of the Beast*, the *Kingdom of Antichristian Tyranny*, the corruptest State of men that ever was in the world, *Rev. xvi. 9, 11.* that they *blasphemed the name of God, because of their pains and their plagues, but repented not of their deeds, to give glory to the God of Heaven:* That is, to return from their *Idolatries, Superstitions and Follies*, to the rational *Worship of the True God*, in *Righteousness, Charity and Truth*. This *Incorrigibleness*, is the worst and most desperate state, that wicked men can possibly arrive at in the present World: But the *proper and natural Effect* of God's *Judgments*, if they would hearken to them,

S E R M. them, is to lead them to Repentance :

XII. *Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins? Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord, Lam. iii. 39, 40.*

NOW if Afflictions be thus fitted, in their proper Tendency, to convert the *wickedest* of men that are not utterly incorrigible; much *more* are they suited to convince *good* men of their failings, to make them sensible of their Errors, to bring them to more frequent and serious Consideration, and to a more perfect Repentance and Amendment. The very *best* of men, are far from being perfect; and *too many* good men, have even *great* imperfections; which they are not duly sensible of, but in a day of Affliction; and there are many Duties, and many Doctrines in Scripture, which men are not apt to understand rightly, but in a time of Sorrow, and more serious Consideration. *David* himself confesses, *Pf. cxix. 71, 67. It is good for me, that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes; For, before I was afflicted, I went astray, but now have I kept thy word.* And That  
great

great man *Job*, after his severe trial, acknowledges before God, (*Job* xlii. 5, 6.)

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*I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee; wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.* The Sons of *Jacob* were never truly sensible of the greatness of their Crime in selling their Brother, till they found themselves in great distress in *Egypt*; And Then They said one to another, (*Gen.* xlii. 21.) *We are verily guilty concerning our Brother, in that we saw the anguish of his Soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us.* And of the whole Nation of the *Jews*, 'tis remarked by the Psalmist, (*Pf.* lxxviii. 34.) that *when he slew them, then they sought him, and returned, and inquired early after God; and remembered that God was their Rock, and the High God their Redeemer.*

UPON this account, the Afflictions that God sends upon his people and servants, are so frequently declared in Scripture to be Evidences of his Love and Care towards them. *When we are judged, (saith St Paul,) we are chastened of the Lord, that*

S E R M. *that we should not be condemned with the*  
 XII. *world, 1 Cor. xi. 32. And our Lord him-*  
 self declares, *Rev. iii. 19. As many as I*  
*love, I rebuke and chasten; be zealous*  
*therefore and repent.* Which Exhortation  
 the Author of the Epistle to the *Hebrews*  
 thus excellently paraphrases: *My Son, de-*  
*spise not thou the chastening of the Lord,*  
*nor faint when thou art rebuked of him;*  
*For whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth,*  
*and scourgeth every Son whom he receiveth:*  
*If we have had fathers of our flesh, which*  
*corrected us, and we gave them reverence;*  
*shall we not much rather be in subjection*  
*unto the Father of spirits, and live? For*  
*They verily for a few days chastened us*  
*after their own pleasure; but He for our*  
*profit, that we might be partakers of his*  
*Holiness. Now no chastening for the pre-*  
*sent seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; ne-*  
*vertheless afterwards it yieldeth the peace-*  
*able fruit of righteousness, unto them which*  
*are exercised thereby, Heb. xii. 5, &c.*  
 The Apostle allows, that Afflictions can-  
 not indeed but be grievous to humane  
 Nature, when they are actually upon us:  
 But the Consideration of the great ad-  
 vantage



vantage they *may* and are *intended* to turn S E R M.  
to, by religious improvement; is abundantly sufficient to make *any* ingenuous XII.  
and considerate temper, (which suffers not  
passion and present uneasiness to prevail  
*wholly* over Reason,) to say with *Eli*, *It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good*; and with pious *Job*, *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away*; *Blessed be the Name of the Lord*: For, *Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not (patiently) receive evil?*

THERE is one way, by which Afflictions of *this* kind, namely, such as are sent upon us by way of *correction*, may in great measure be prevented; and That is, if we would take care *so* to behave ourselves, as not to stand in *need* of them; *so* to judge ourselves, as *not to be judged* of the Lord. *Job xxxiii. 27.* *God looketh upon men; and if any say, I have sinned, and perverted that which was right, and it profiteth me not; he will deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the light.* But This must be understood *only* of *this one* particular kind of Afflictions; such as are intended for our *correction*,  
and

SERM. and to lead us to *Repentance* for some  
 XII. particular Sins.


3. ANOTHER *End* of God's sending Afflictions and Troubles upon men, is to wean us from an over-fond love of the present world. There is nothing that more hinders mens progress in Religion, nothing that more softens the minds, and cools the Zeal even of good and well-disposed persons, than a constant, careless, habitual enjoyment of, and affection to, even those pleasures of Life, which cannot perhaps be charged with being directly sinful: O *Death*, says the wise Son of *Sirach*, *Ecclus. xli. 1. How bitter is the remembrance of thee to a man that liveth at rest in his possessions, unto the man that has nothing to vex him, and that hath prosperity in all things!* As a continual Calm corrupteth the Waters; so a long and uninterrupted Prosperity, is a perpetual Danger and Temptation. Of the people of the *Jews* 'tis observed, *Deut. xxxii. 15.* that when *Jeshurun* waxed fat, he kicked, and forsook the God that made him, and lightly esteemed the rock of his salvation. And 'tis no less true of the *Christian Church*,  
 that

that when, upon the Emperor's first becoming Christian, it began to receive worldly Incouragement; the Contentions among Christians multiplied, and the Purity of their Manners decreased. And in our *own* Nation it has been justly observed, that true Religion never had so remarkable an influence upon mens Lives and Manners, as at such times when we were most apprehensive of its being in danger to be removed from us. For this reason God has seldom chosen to make his best Servants the most prosperous in the world. The Patriarchs did but *sojourn in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles, and confessing that they were strangers and pilgrims in the earth; For they looked for a city which had foundations, whose builder and maker is God, Heb. xi. 9, 10.* And our Saviour inculcates no one thing so often upon his Disciples, as the danger of worldly Ease and Plenty, and the *Blessedness of them that mourn.*

YET, on the other side, *Afflictions* have also their proper Temptations, to Impatience, and Discontent, and Complaining

S E R M. against God; and *Prosperity*, if well employed, may become the Matter of an excellent Virtue: For, *Blessed is the rich, that is found without blemish, and hath not gone after gold; that hath been tried thereby, and found perfect; that might offend, and hath not offended; or might do evil, and hath not done it*, Ecclus. xxxi. 8, 10. Wherefore it is best for us, not to be solicitous after either State; but, with all Submission, to leave that wholly to God; who knows, much better than we, what is most convenient for us.

4thly, and *Lastly*; ANOTHER End of God's sending Afflictions upon men, is to try, improve, and perfect their Virtues, and make eminent *Examples* of their *Faith* and *Patience*. This was the case of *Job*, who was afflicted by the immediate hand of *God*; and this was the case of the *Apostles*, who were permitted to be persecuted by *wicked men*; and *St Paul* tells us concerning our Saviour himself, (*Heb.* ii. 10.) that he was *made perfect through sufferings*. Of such Afflictions as these, the Scripture declares that they are to be *gloried in*, because they *work patience*,  
(*Rom.*

(Rom. v. 3. and Jam. i. 3.) that they fall S E R M.  
out unto the furtherance of the Gospel, XII.  
(Phil. i. 12.) that they are a trial of Faith,   
much more precious than of gold that per-  
isheth, though it be tried with fire, (1 Pet.  
i. 7.) That, by these, many are purified  
and made white and tried, (Dan. xii. 10.  
and xi. 35.) And having been a little cha-  
stised, they shall be greatly rewarded; for  
God proved them, and found them worthy  
for himself; As gold in the furnace has he  
tried them, and received them as a burnt-  
offering; And in the time of their visita-  
tion they shall shine, and run to and fro  
like sparks among the stubble; They shall  
judge the nations, and have dominion over  
the people; and their Lord shall reign for  
ever, (Wisd. iii. 5, &c.)

I SHALL but just mention two infe-  
rences, from what has been said, and so  
conclude.

AND Iſt, From what has been said it  
appears, that 'tis a very wrong and unjust  
Conclusion, to imagine with Job's friends,  
that whoever is much afflicted, must con-  
sequently, have been very wicked, and  
that God is very angry with him. When

S E R M. a man's own conscience can apply his own  
 XII. Affliction to his past Sins, 'tis indeed very  
 just and reasonable, that he should accept  
 it as the Punishment of Sin, and as an  
 Argument to Repentance; But he must  
 by no means make *another* man's Affliction,  
 an occasion of censuring his Neighbour;  
 For, on the contrary, the Scripture declares,  
 that *happy is the man whom God correcteth; therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty; for he maketh sore, and bindeth up; he woundeth, and his hands make whole, Job v. 17. Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest him out of thy law, Ps. xciv. 12. And St James, ch. i. ver. 12. Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life.*

2dly, FROM what has been said, there appears great reason, for men to resign themselves with all patience to the Will of God; and to rely upon him with full Trust and Assurance, (in *all possible* circumstances of life,) that he will direct things finally to our best advantage. *Ecclus. ii. 4. Whatsoever is brought upon thee, take*

take cheerfully; and be patient when thou S E R M.  
art changed to a low estate; For gold is XII.  
tried in the fire, and acceptable men in the  
furnace of adversity. This was the prac-  
tice of David; who, when he was great-  
ly distressed, encouraged himself in the Lord  
his God, 1 Sam. xxx. 6. And This was  
the Resolution of the Prophet, wherewith  
I shall conclude, *Habbak. iii. 17.* Though  
the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall  
fruit be in the vines; though the labour of  
the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield  
no meat; though the flock shall be cut off  
from the fold, and there shall be no herd  
in the stalls; Yet will I rejoice in the Lord;  
I will joy in the God of my Salvation.









## SERMON XIII.

The Event of Things not always  
answerable to Second Causes.

[*A Fast Sermon.*]



ECCLES. ix. II.

*I returned, and saw under the Sun, that  
the Race is not to the Swift, nor the  
Battle to the Strong, neither yet bread to  
the Wise, nor yet Riches to men of Under-  
standing, nor yet Favour to men of  
Skill; but Time and Chance happeneth to  
them All.*



HERE are some sort of per-  
sons in the World so sloth-  
ful and negligent in their  
own Affairs, so hardly pre-  
vailed upon to undertake any  
thing that requires labour and diligence,

SERM.  
XIII.  
~~~~~

S E R M.  
XIII.

so easily discouraged by any appearance of ill success, or so heedless and unactive in the prosecution of whatever they are about; as if they were of opinion even in *temporal* matters, what in some Systems of religion has been absurdly affirmed concerning *Spirituals*, that *God* does every thing *in* men and for men, leaving nothing for them to do for *themselves*; or as if they thought That Precept to be *literal* and *universal*, which our Saviour spake with the *Latitude* of a moral admonition, to the *Apostles* only, and upon an *extraordinary* Occasion; *Take no Thought for the morrow, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, or wherewithal ye shall be clothed.* Such persons as these, the wise Man elegantly describes in his Book of *Proverbs*: *The Sluggard*, saith he, *will not plow by reason of the Cold; therefore shall he beg in Harvest, and have nothing: The slothful man saith, There is a Lion without; I shall be slain in the Streets,* Prov. xxii. 13: And ch. xxiv. 30. *I went by the Field of the slothful, and by the Vineyard of the man void of understanding; And lo, it was all grown over with*

Thorns, and Nettles had covered the Face thereof, and the Stone-Wall thereof was broken down; ----- So shall thy Poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy Want as an armed man. Nor is his *Reproof* and *Admonition* to those who are guilty of this Folly, less elegant than his *Description* of them; ch. vi. 6. *Go to the Ant, thou slug-gard; consider her ways, and be wise; Which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, yet provideth her meat in the Summer, and gathereth her Food in the Harvest.* And in the words immediately before my Text, *Eccles. ix. 10. Whatsoever thine hand findeth to do, do it with all thy Might; do it with Diligence; do it with Attention, Industry, and Care.*

THERE are *Others*, in a contrary Extreme; who rely with such confidence on the Effects of their own Wisdom and Industry, and so presumptuously depend upon the natural and regular Tendencies of second Causes; as if they thought, either there was no Superior Cause at all, on which the Frame of Nature depended; or at least, that the Providence of God did not condescend to direct the E-

S E R M. vents of Things, in this lower and uncertain World. And These, are elegantly re-  
 XIII. *W* improved in the words of my Text; *I returned and saw under the Sun, that the Race is not to the Swift, nor the Battle to the Strong, neither yet Bread to the Wise, nor yet Riches to men of Understanding, nor yet Favour to men of Skill; but Time and Chance happeneth to them All.*

I RETURNED: That is; In that vast Compass of Knowledge which *Solomon* had, in being able to survey the whole Extent of Nature, and to observe the Tempers and Dispositions of men, and the different Events of Things in all variety of Times and Circumstances; he *turned* his Thoughts and Observations from *one Subject* to *another*. In the verse before the Text, he views the *careless* or *negligent* part of mankind, and exhorts *them* to *diligence*: And then *I returned*, saith he, in the Words of the Text; that is, he turned his View the *other* way, towards the *confident* or *presumptuous*; And *them* he bids to take notice, that the *Race* is not always to the *Swift*, nor the *Battle* to the *Strong*; (that is,) that the *Events*

of Things do not always answer to the S E R M.  
*Probabilities* of second Causes, unless the XIII.  
Wisdom of God thinks fit by the direc-  
tion of his good Providence to make those  
Causes successful. *I returned, and saw*  
under the Sun; that is, in the *whole Course*  
of this lower and uncertain world, in the  
whole compass of Human Affairs, in the  
Histories of all Times or Ages, and in the  
Events that have happened to all Nati-  
ons or People; I observed, saith he, up-  
on the largest View and most extensive  
Experience, that the *Race* is often *not* to  
the *Swift*, nor the *Battle* to the *Strong*.  
The *Reason why* the Events of Things do  
frequently fail in this manner, of answer-  
ing to the natural Probabilities of second  
Causes; is because many little and unfore-  
seen Accidents unavoidably interposing, do  
very often change the whole Course of  
things, and produce an Event quite con-  
trary to what in all reasonable probability  
was to have been expected. The *swiftest*  
*Racer*, upon the least accidental Slip,  
loses the Prize to an Adversary much  
slower than himself; and the *Potentest* Ar-  
mies, upon the least Disorder befalling  
them

S E R M. XIII. them in a day of Battle, have been forced to leave the Victory to an Enemy whom they before despised for his inferiour Force. *Accidents* these things appear to *men*, because not possible to be foreseen or prevented by *our* short and imperfect Understandings: But, in the hands of *Providence*, the Causes and Reasons of these even the *minutest* Accidents are all as clearly and distinctly known and determinate, as the *grossiest* and most *obvious* Causes are apparently discerned by *Us*. And by means of these unforeseen Causes, does God in his Great Government of the Universe, constantly bring about his own Designs, in Blessing or Punishing Nations according to his own good pleasure. *Amos* ii. 14. *The Flight shall perish from the Swift, and the strong shall not strengthen his Force, neither shall the mighty deliver himself; Neither shall He stand, that handleth the bow; and he that is swift of Foot, shall not deliver himself; neither shall he that rideth the horse, deliver himself.* Again: *Pf. xxxiii.* 15. *There is no King that can be saved by the multitude of an Host, neither is any mighty man delivered by much strength:*

*strength: A Horse is counted but a vain thing to save a man, neither shall he deliver any man by his great Strength: Behold, the Eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him, and upon them that put their Trust in his Mercy. Solomon expresses the same Notion thus, Prov. xxi. 30. There is no Wisdom, nor understanding, nor Counsel against the Lord; The Horse is prepared against the day of Battle, but Safety is of the Lord. And Hannah, in her prayer recorded, 1 Sam. ii. 4, 9. The Bows of the mighty men are broken, and they that stumbled are girt with Strength: ----- The Lord will keep the Feet of his Saints, and the Wicked shall be silent in Darkness; for by Strength shall no man prevail. These are all, as it were, Paraphrases upon the words of the Text; the Race is not to the Swift, nor the Battle to the Strong.*

IT follows: *neither yet Bread to the Wise, nor yet Riches to men of Understanding, nor yet Favour to men of Skill. That is: As Strength and Agility of Body, are not always successful in proportion to the Degree of those Faculties; nor Powerful Armies Victorious, in proportion to the*

Num-

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

SER M. Numbers they consist of: So the Faculties and Abilities of the *Mind* likewise, XIII. Wisdom and Understanding, Dexterity and Skill; are not always successful, as might regularly be expected, in obtaining Riches and Honour, Favour and Dignity in the World; But unseen Accidents, (*Accidents* with regard to *Men*, but with *God* wise Dispensations of *Providence*;) invisibly and inexplicably turn the Course even of *these* things also: For *Time and Chance happeneth to them All*. *Isai. xlv. 25. God turneth wise men backward, and maketh their Knowledge Foolish.*

HAVING, thus, briefly explained the *Meaning* of the several Phrases contained in the Text; the *Doctrinal Observations* I shall now draw from thence, are as follows.

1<sup>st</sup>; WE may observe, that what men vulgarly call *Chance* or unforeseen *Accident*, is in Scripture always declared to be the *determinate Counsel and Providence of God*. What careless and inconsiderate men ascribe in common Speech to *Chance* or *Fortune*; that is, to *nothing at all*, but a mere empty word, signifying only their  
*Ignorance*



Ignorance of the true Causes of things; S E R M.  
 this the Scripture teaches Us to ascribe XIII.  
 to the all-seeing and all-directing Provi-  
 dence of God; that we may *acknowledge*  
 Him *in all our Ways*; and be sensible of  
 the True Author, from whom all the  
*Good* and all the *Evil* that befalls us, does  
 either *mercifully* or *justly* proceed. *Dan.*  
*iv. 35. He doth according to his Will in*  
*the Army of Heaven, and among the In-*  
*habitants of the Earth; and none can stay*  
*his hand, or say unto him, What dost thou?*  
 When a person is slain by *Chance* or *Ac-*  
*cident*, as men vulgarly speak; the Scrip-  
 ture more accurately expresses it, saying,  
 that God *delivered* such a one, *into the*  
*hand* of him that slew him without De-  
 sign, *Exod. xxi. 13.* And in *all other* In-  
 stances, the same Notion is every where  
 kept up in Scripture. *Prov. xvi. 33. The*  
*Lot is cast into the Lap, but the whole*  
*disposing thereof is of the Lord.* And  
 when the Apostles chose by *Lot* a Successor  
 to *Judas*, they expressed their Sense of the  
 divine Providence in the following words,  
*Acts i. 24. Thou, Lord, which knowest*  
*the Hearts of all men, show whether of*  
 these

S E R M. *these Two thou hast chosen.* And Thus likewise in the words in the Text; 'tis the supreme Superintendency of *Providence* over all Events, which *Solomon* meant to establish, when he saith, *Time and Chance happeneth to them All.*

N E I T H E R is it, (as Some, with very weak Pretences to Reason, have in this case been apt to Imagine; ) it is not, I say, merely in a *pious manner of Expression*, that the Scripture thus ascribes every Event to the Providence of God; but 'tis *strictly* and *philosophically true* in Nature and Reason, that there is *no such thing* as *Chance* or *Accident*; it being evident that those words do not signify any thing *really existing*, any thing that is truly an *Agent* or the *Cause* of any Event; but they signify, *merely* mens *Ignorance* of the real and immediate Cause. And This is so True, that very many even of Those who have no Religion, nor any Sense at all of the Providence of God; yet know very well, by the Light of their own natural *Reason*, that there neither is nor can be any such thing as *Chance*, that is, any such thing as an Effect without a Cause; And there-

therefore what *Others* ascribe to *Chance*, S E R M.  
*They* ascribe to the operation of *Necessity* XIII.  
or *Fate*. But *Fate* also is itself in reality  
as *truly Nothing*, as *Chance* is. Nor is  
there *in Nature* Any *Other Efficient* or  
proper *Cause* of any *Event*; (of any *E-*  
*vent*, I say: For concerning *Truths* in  
Themselves essentially, eternally and in-  
variably necessary, I am not speaking:  
But of all the variable *Events* that hap-  
pen in the Universe, there is and can be  
in Nature no other proper and *efficient*  
*Cause*; ) but only the *Free Will* of *ratio-*  
*nal and intelligent* Creatures, acting with-  
in the Sphere of their limited *Faculties*;  
and the *Supreme Power of God*, directing,  
by his omnipresent *Providence*, (accord-  
ing to certain *Wise Laws or Rules*, estab-  
lished by, and entirely depending upon  
his own good pleasure,) the inanimate  
*Motions* of the whole material and unin-  
telligent World.

2dly, FROM the words of the Text I  
observe, that the all-directing *Providence*  
of God, which governs the Universe;  
does not superintend only the *Great Events*  
in the World, the *Fates of Nations* and

S E R M. XIII. Kingdoms ; so that, without the direction of Providence, the *strongest* and most numerous Armies are not victorious in *Battle* ; but its Care extends, even to the Concerns of *single* Persons ; so that, without the Blessing of *God*, neither *Riches*, nor *Favour*, nor *any temporal Advantage*, can certainly be obtained by any thing that *Man* can do : Nay, that even in matters of still *smaller* moment, not so much as a *Race* is gained by the *Swift*, without the hand of Providence directing the Event. When men observe how *Our* Attention is distracted with a multiplicity of Objects, and can very hardly be fixed on more than one thing at once ; they are too carelessly apt to imagine, that Providence itself either cannot, or that 'tis beneath its Dignity to condescend, to interpose in the numberless small events of Nature or Chance. But the *Scripture* tells us otherwise, and *right Reason* also joins with it herein. For as *Chance* is nothing, so *Nature* also is nothing but an empty word. Every *Effect*, every *Event*, must have a *real Cause* ; must proceed, immediately or mediately, from That  
which

which has a *True existence* and *Active Power*. And to an Omnipresent Mind, there is no more difficulty in attending to *every thing* at one and the same Time, than to *any one thing*. Not only *piously* therefore, but even with the *strictest and most philosophical Truth of expression*, does the Scripture tell us, that God *commandeth the Ravens*, 1 Kings xvii. 4; that they are *His directions*, which *even the Winds and the Seas obey*; that he causes His *Sun to rise on the Evil and on the Good*; that God *prepared a Gourd, and a Worm to smite it that it withered*, Jonah iv. 7; that God *feedeth the Fowls of the Air*, Matt. vi. 26; and, *without Him, not a sparrow falls to the ground*, ch. x. 29; Nay, that He *clothes even the Lilies, and the grass of the field*, Matt. vi. 30; and, with Him, *the very Hairs of our Head are All numbred*.

'TIS true; All these things are plainly owing to *Second Causes*. And so likewise are all the *greater Instances* mentioned by *Solomon* in the Text. 'Tis as much according to the Course of *Nature*, that the *Strong* should *sometimes* lose a *Battle* by *Accident*, as that they should *generally* gain

S E R M. it by *Strength*; and that *unforeseen Hin-*  
 XIII. *drances* should *sometimes* cause the *swiftest*  
 ~~~~~ *Runner* to lose the *Race*, as that *Agility*  
*and Nimbleness of Body* should make him  
*generally* win it. My

3<sup>d</sup> OBSERVATION therefore is; that things being brought about according to the course of *Nature* by *Second Causes*, is not at all inconsistent with their being nevertheless *justly and truly* ascribed to the *Providence of God*. 'Tis *Time and Chance* says the Text, that *happens to them All*; that happens frequently to prevent *all* the *Probabilities* there mentioned. The wise man does not hereby mean, that they are prevented by *Miracle*: For then he would not have used the vulgar words, of *Time and Chance*. Nor does he mean on the contrary, that they are prevented by *Blind and unintelligent Fate*: For This would have been contrary to the whole *Design* of his *Book*, and of all the rest of the *Scripture*, as well as to common *Reason*: But his *Meaning* is; that the *Providence of God*, by means of *natural Causes*, which are all entirely of *His* appointment, and *Instruments only* in *His* hand; does often,  
 for

for wise reasons in his government of the World, disappoint the most probable expectations. Ridiculous therefore is the Arguing of the Infidel and Irreligious; who presently thinks himself secure of excluding the *Providence of God*, if he can but show a thing to be brought about by *Natural Causes*. Most *ridiculous*, I say, and *ignorant*, is this manner of reasoning: For, *what* are *Natural Causes*? Nothing but those *Laws* and *Powers*, which God merely of his *own good pleasure* has implanted in the several parts of Matter, in order to make them Instruments of fulfilling his supreme Will. Which *Laws* and *Powers*, as he at *first appointed* them, so nothing but the same good pleasure of God *continually preserves them*. And they neither *exist* nor *operate* in any moment of Time, but by Influence and Action derived to them (mediately or immediately) from his all-governing Will. So that he foresees perpetually, what Effect every Power and Operation of Nature tends to produce; and could (if he thought fit,) exactly with the same Cause, cause it to produce a *different* Effect, as

S E R M. that which it Now does. From whence  
 XIII. it follows inevitably, to the entire Con-  
 fusion of Atheists, that all those things  
 which they call *natural* Effects, are in  
 very Truth as much the operation of God,  
 (though perhaps not so immediately,) as  
 even Miracles themselves. And to argue  
 against *Providence* from the observation of  
 the regular *course of natural Causes*; is as  
 if a man should conclude from the *uni-*  
*formity* of a large and beautiful Building,  
 that it was not the work of mens hands,  
 nor contrived by any Free Agent, because  
 the Stones and the Timber were laid *uni-*  
*formly and regularly*, in the most constant,  
 natural, and proper Order.

4thly, THE *Last* doctrinal Observati-  
 on I shall draw from the Text, is; that  
 since the whole Course of nature in the  
 ordinary method of Causes and Effects,  
 and all those unexpected Turns of things  
 which men vulgarly call Chance and Ac-  
 cident, are entirely in the Hand of God,  
 and under the continual direction of His  
 Providence; it follows evidently, (and 'tis  
 a Doctrine worthy the most serious confi-  
 deration of all wicked Men,) that God  
 can,



can, whenever he pleases, even *without* a Miracle, punish the disobedient; And no Swiftnefs, no Strength, no Wisdom, no Artifice, shall in any manner avail, or in-able them to escape the Vengeance, which even *Natural Causes* only, by the direction of Him from whom they receive their Nature, bring upon Offenders. He can punish by Fires and Famine, by Plagues and Pestilences, by Storms and Earthquakes, by domestick Commotions or by foreign Enemies. He can, as *Moses* elegantly expresses it, make the *Heavens over mens Heads Brass*, and *the Earth under their Feet Iron*, or the very *Beasts of the Field to rise up against them*: Or, as 'tis in the Book of *Wisdom*, ch. v. 22, 23, 20. he can cause that *a mighty Wind shall stand up against them*, or *the Waters of the Sea shall rage against them*, and *the World shall fight for him against the unwise*. He can, by means of the least *Accident*, as we ignorantly stile it, discomfit the greatest Armies before a Few of their Enemies: As 2 *Chr.* xxiv. 24. *The Syrians came with a small company of men, and the Lord delivered a very great Host* (of the Israel-

S E R M. ites) into their hand; because they had forsaken the Lord God of their Fathers. Neither shall Any Swiftnes deliver them from the Pursuer: *Is. xxx. 16. Ye said, We will flee upon Horses; therefore shall ye flee: And we will ride upon the Swift; therefore shall they that pursue you, be swift: One thousand shall flee at the rebuke of One; at the rebuke of five shall ye flee; 'till ye be left as a Beacon upon the top of a Mountain, and as an Ensign on a Hill.* Nay, without any visible external cause at all, to which such an Effect can be ascribed; Providence can secretly blast, and insensibly cause to moulder away, the Greatest Power, Riches, or other worldly Advantages whatsoever: *Pf. xxxix. 11. When thou with Rebukes dost chasten Man for Sin, thou makest his Beauty to consume away, like as a Moth fretting a garment; every man therefore is but Vanity.* And 'tis the exceeding Stupidity of profane Men, not to be moved hereby to repent, and give glory to the God of Heaven, who hath Power over these Plagues, *Rev. xvi. 9.* The Meaning of this whole Observation is, not that these Judgments

are


are always certain Signs of God's displea-  
S E R M.  
sure against all the particular persons up-  
XIII.  
on whom they at any time fall; (for This  
our Saviour has expressly warned us against,  
as a most uncharitable Conclusion :) But  
whether they be Punishments for Sin,  
(as they generally, though not always,  
are;) or whether they be only Trials of  
Mens Virtue, (as they sometimes are de-  
signed to be;) or whether they be Means  
of weaning them from this transitory and  
uncertain World; or whatever other Ends  
Providence brings about thereby; still they  
are always Effects of the same All-wise di-  
vine Providence; which ought to be ac-  
knowledged and submitted to as such, and  
whose Designs no Power or Wisdom of frail  
and vain men can oppose or prevent.

THE *Practical Inferences*, arising na-  
turally from what has been said, are as  
follows.

1<sup>st</sup>, IF these things be so; then let the  
greatest and most powerful of wicked  
men consider, that they have nothing in  
This World either to boast of, or to rely  
upon. *Jer. ix. 23. Let not the wise man  
glory in his Wisdom, let not the rich man  
glory in his Riches, neither let the mighty  
man*

S E R M. *man glory in his Might: For all these Advantages are frequently defeated, and*  
 XIII. *Time and Chance happeneth to them All. I will not trust in my Bow, saith the Psalmist, neither shall my Sword save me; But it is Thou that savest us from our Enemies, Pf. xlv. 6. Wise therefore was the Answer of the King of Israel, to an insulting message from the King of Syria, 1 Kings xx. 11. Tell him, Let not him that girdeth on his harness, boast himself, as he that putteth it off. The Event showed, that his Admonition was reasonable; And the Syrian's Pride, was but the immediate fore-runner of his Destruction. For the same purpose, it is recorded of Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon, that when his Greatness was grown and reached unto Heaven, and his Dominion to the End of the Earth, Dan. iv. 22; it was said unto him, ver. 25. They shall drive thee from Men, and thy dwelling shall be with the Beasts of the Field, and they shall make thee to eat grass as Oxen, and they shall wet thee with the Dew of Heaven,----- ('tis the description of a very severe and mortifying Distemper of Mind;) 'till thou know that the most High ruleth in the Kingdom of men, and giveth*

giveth it to whomsoever he will. This is S E R M. the plain Design of Providence, in such XIII. extraordinary Events; to bring men to an Acknowledgment, of *Him* on whom they depend; to bring them to a right Knowledge, of *God* and of *themselves*: *That he may with-draw Man from his Purpose, Job xxxiii. 17. and hide Pride from Man.* Well (indeed) may *Pride* be said to be hid from Men; when not only the Success of their greatest Advantages, but even their very *Life* itself, is uncertain every moment. *Boast not thyself of to morrow, Prov. xxvii. 1; for thou knowest not what a day, what an Hour, may bring forth.* For as the *Fishes* that are taken in an evil Net, and as the *Birds* that are caught in the Snare; so are the *Sons of Men* snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them, Eccles. ix. 12. The rich man in the Gospel, resolved to pull down his barns, and build bigger; and then it was said unto him, *Thou Fool, this night shall thy Soul be required of Thee.* In the Days of *Noah*; Men eat and drank, they married and were given in marriage, until the day that *Noah* entered

S E R M. *tered into the Ark : And then the Flood*  
 XIII. *came and destroyed them All. Likewise*  
 *in the days of Lot ; they did eat, they*  
*drank, they bought, they sold, they plant-*  
*ed, they builded : But the same day that*  
*Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and*  
*brimstone from Heaven, and destroyed them*  
*All. And so also shall it finally be in*  
*the Great Day, when the Son of Man is*  
*revealed, Luke xvii. 30.*

2dly, IF nothing happens in the World, without the divine Providence ; then good Men have a sufficient Ground of Trust and Reliance upon God, at all times and under All Dangers. Not, that God will *always* deliver them, or cause them to prosper in the present World ; For he often sees it better, to determine otherwise : But they may rely with assurance, that nothing can befall them but what *He* judges fit ; seeing all the Powers of Nature and of second Causes, are nothing but Instruments in *His* hand, and under *His* direction. *Trust* therefore *in the Lord, with all thine heart,----- and in all thy ways acknowledge Him, Prov. iii. 5.* He can *save*, whenever he pleases,  
 2 Chr.

2 *Cbr.* xiv. 9, 11: and xvi. 8, 9. 1 *Sam.* S E R M.  
 xiv. 6. with *many*, or with *Few*; cau- XIII.  
 sing all the Accidents, which we call  
*Time and Chance*, to fulfil his Word, Pf.  
 cxlviii. 8. and execute his Pleasure: So  
 that, if *He* thinks fit, even *five* shall be  
 able to chase an hundred, and an hun-  
 dred shall put ten thousand to flight, *Le-*  
*vit.* xxvi. 8. and *Deut.* xxxii. 30.

3dly and Lastly; FROM This Notion  
 of Providence, may be given a plain  
 and direct Answer to that Question of  
 the profane Fatalist, *Job* xxi. 15. *What*  
*is the Almighty, that we should serve*  
*him? and what Profit should we have,*  
*if we pray unto him?* Indeed, if the  
 Course of Nature, and those things which  
 we call *second Causes*, were independent  
 upon Providence; there would be good  
 Reason to ask, what Benefit could there  
 be either in *Prayer* or *Thanksgiving*.  
 But if, as has been shown, Nature is no-  
 thing, and second causes are nothing, but  
 mere Instruments; then it is very plain,  
 that *Prayer* and *Thanksgivings* are as  
 much due to God for whatever is brought  
 about by *Natural* causes, as if he had  
 done

SERM. done the Thing by any *Other instruments*  
XIII. instead of *These*, even by the most miracu-  
lous ones; Which, in That case, being no less constant, would have been no more miraculous than *These*.







# SERMON XIV.

The Practice of Wickedness generally attended with great Evil.

[*An Inauguration-Sermon.*]



PROV. xiii. 21.

*Evil pursueth Sinners; but to the Righteous, Good shall be repaid.*



THE Parable which our Savi-  
 our spake concerning the Per-  
 verseness of the *Jews*, in find-  
 ing fault equally on *Both* sides;  
 both with *John Baptist's* more  
*severe*, and with our Lord's own more  
*free* manner of Conversation in the world;  
 may be applied generally to almost *all* the  
 Objections,

S E R M.  
 XIV.

S E R M. Objections, which wicked and profane men *at any time* make against Religion.

XIV.

No Reason, No Argument, No Method of Proceeding whatsoever, will satisfy prejudiced and corrupt Minds. *John the Baptist* came, *neither eating nor drinking*, Matt. xi. 18. That is, *He*, when he was sent to preach, came solitary in the Wilderness, with great Austerity and Severity of Life, with Fasting and Abstinence, with Mortification and Self-denial; and they said, he is Mad, and hath a Devil. On the contrary, *Christ* came to preach *without* this Austerity, in a more free way of Conversation; and they called him a Loose Person, a Glutton, and a Wine-Drinker, and a Companion of the worst of men. Upon This their Perverseness, our Lord compares those *Jews* to *froward and peevish children*, who do every thing contrary to what their Companions desire and expect: Ver. 17. *We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented: When others play and are cheerful, they will be fullen and ill-humoured; when others be sorrowful, they will laugh and*

and

and mock. But, after the Perverseness of S E R M.  
Men has said and done all that it can; XIV.  
*Wisdom*, says our Lord, *is justified of all*  
*her children*; Wisdom will still vindicate  
itself, and appear to be Wisdom, in whom-  
soever it be found, and in what manner  
soever it be exercised.

THE Case is the *Same* in almost *all*  
*other* Instances, wherein prejudiced and  
corrupt minds are continually seeking Ob-  
jections against Religion; Objections, *con-*  
*trary to and inconsistent with* each other.  
Does Providence at any time bestow re-  
*markable Blessings*, upon virtuous and good  
men? Immediately from hence an Argu-  
ment is drawn against Virtue, as if it lost  
the Nature of Virtue, and became *merce-*  
*nary*, by having *respect unto the recompence*  
*of Reward*. Most elegantly is *This Objec-*  
*tion* set forth, in the *first chapter* of the  
book of *Job*; where *Satan* is represented  
as arguing before the Lord, ver. 9. *Doth*  
*Job fear God for nought? Hast not thou*  
*made an hedge about him, and about his*  
*house, and about all that he hath on every*  
*side? Thou hast blessed the work of his*  
*hands, and his substance is increased in the*

S E R M. *land. But put forth thine hand now, and*  
 XIV. *touch all that he bath, and he will curse*  
 thee to thy face.

ON the *contrary*; Does Providence *forbear to interpose* in the present time, and reserve Judgment to the day of Retribution? Then the Argument is *turned*; and the Speech of the Scoffers is, *Where is the Promise of his Coming? For since the Fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the Beginning of the Creation, 2 Pet. iii. 4. Then they say, It is vain to serve God; and what Profit is it, that we have kept his Ordinance? Mal. iii. 14. Then they ask, What is the Almighty, that we should serve him? and what Profit should we have, if we pray unto him? Job xxi. 15.*

THE *Answer to Both*, is easy and obvious. God's *Forbearance* at any time to interpose in the *present State* on the behalf of Virtue, is no Argument at all against the *Benefit and Advantage* of Serving him; because he is able to make abundant Recompence in the *Life to come*: Upon which account, excellent is the Advice of Solomon, Prov. xxiii. 17. *Let not*


*not thine heart envy Sinners, but be thou in the Fear of the Lord all the day long: For surely there is an end,* (or, as we render it in the margin, *surely there is a Reward,*) *and thine expectation shall not be cut off.* And on the other hand, the Rewards and Punishments which God distributes either in the present or in a future state, do not at all alter the Nature of Virtue, or make it in Any degree become mercenary: Because a man's Regard to his own Interest and Advantage is *Then* only Faulty, when 'tis a Temptation to him to do any thing that is in its own nature Evil; not when 'tis in conjunction with the universal Right and Reason of things, and the Happiness of God's whole Creation.

MY Design at This Time from the words of the Text, is to represent and inculcate this great Truth, that the *Practice of Righteousness* is mens true Interest, even in the present Life; and that *Wickedness* is generally attended with Great Misery, even Here as well as Hereafter. *Evil pursueth Sinners; but to the Righteous, Good shall be repayed.*


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BEFORE I enter upon the particular explication of which Doctrine, there is One thing needful to be premised; that the whole of what is to be said upon This Subject, must always be understood with an *exception* to the case of *Persecution* for Truth and Righteousness sake. For *all moral and universal Propositions* of this kind, expressing the *general Tendency* of things in their natural course, and the ordinary established Dispositions of Divine Providence; are sufficiently verified, if they take place in all Cases where the *natural Order* of things is permitted to produce its *proper Effect*. When the Nature of things is perverted or overruled by any extraordinary Violence, an Exception must be made; without any detriment to the Truth of the general Proposition. And of This sort is the case of *Persecution* for Religion. *Virtue*, in the *Nature of things*, and according to the *general Promise and Appointment of God*, is the Foundation and Cause of true Happiness among men. Yet the Perverseness of a wicked and corrupt World, *may possibly* load it, upon some particular Occasions,

Occasions, with the greatest Temporal S E R M.  
Calamities; and inflict the severest Pun- XIV.  
ishments in their power, upon that   
which really deserves the Highest Com-  
mendation and Reward. In *This* case, the  
Best of men, *if in This life only they had*  
*hope, might of All men become the most*  
*miserable.* But Then, for *this very Rea-*  
*son,* God has promised them a Recom-  
pence in a *Future State*; and herein they  
may rejoice, even *not accepting Deliver-*  
*ance, that they may obtain a better Resur-*  
*rection.* Setting aside *This case* therefore,  
which is of *peculiar* consideration; the  
Proposition I laid down, may evidently  
be shown to be a *General Truth*, that the  
*Practice of Righteousness* is mens True In-  
terest, even in the *present* Life; and that  
*Wickedness* is generally attended with *Great*  
*Misery*, even *Here* as well as *Hereafter.*  
*Evil pursueth Sinners; but to the Righte-*  
*ous, Good shall be repaid.*

I. IN the *First* place: If we consider  
Mankind *in general*, in the largest and  
most extensive View, under the notion of  
that One universal Community, wherein  
St Paul considered them, when he told

S E R M. the *Athenians*, Acts xvii. 26. *God has made*  
 XIV. *of one blood all nations of men, for to dwell*  
 *on all the Face of the Earth: Under This*  
 View, I say, 'tis very evident, that the  
*Only thing* which distinguishes *Men* from  
 the *Wild Beasts of the Forest*, that devour  
 each other according to their Strength,  
 and have no Rights nor Property in any  
 thing; The *only thing* which distinguishes  
*Men* from these *Wild Beasts*, with regard  
 to any *True Happiness of Life*; is *Reli-*  
*gion*, or a *Sense of Just and Right*, and of  
 the Difference of *Moral Good and Evil*.  
 For Reason, as to *That* part of it which  
 denotes *Sagacity* only, or *Understanding*,  
 separate from all *Regard to Moral Obligation*;  
 does only enable men, if they be  
 wicked, *more effectually*, and with *greater*  
*Skill*, to *torment and destroy* each other;  
 and to have a *deeper and more affecting*  
 and *more lasting* *Sense of the Miseries*  
 they endure, than *irrational* *Creatures* are  
 by their Nature capable of. 'Tis *Reason*, in  
 that *Other* respect alone, as it implies a  
 sense of *Moral Obligation*, (on which *Re-*  
*ligion* is founded;) 'tis *This alone*, on  
 which depends all *possibility of Happiness*  
 in



in Humane Life; And to the *degree of* S E R M.  
*Influence* which *This* has in the world, XIV.  
the Happiness Mankind enjoys above the   
*Wild Beasts of the Field*, is always exactly  
*proportionate*. Did not therefore the Pas-  
sions, the Ambition, the Covetousness, and  
other the like unnatural Vices of corrupt  
Minds, hinder this *Reason* and *Moral Un-*  
*derstanding*, which is the peculiar Excel-  
lency and Glory of Mankind, from pro-  
ducing its natural and proper Effect in  
the world; the Earth would even in this  
*present* time, bating *Mortality* only, be  
that Scene of universal Happiness, which  
God hath promised shall take place *here-*  
*after* in the *New Heavens and New Earth*,  
*wherein dwelleth Righteousness*. In the  
mean time, from this *abstract* View of  
the *general* Nature of Things and of the  
Consequences which *would be* the natural  
Result of *universal Righteousness*; 'tis ap-  
parent enough, to *what* Originals, to *what*  
Causes and Principles, the *various degrees*  
and *proportions* of *Happiness and Misery*,  
which are found in the present mixt and  
confused state of things, are justly to be  
ascribed.

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II. *Secondly*, IF we consider Mankind in a somewhat *less general* View; not in the universal abstract Notion, but in their more restrained political Capacity, as formed into particular distinct *Nations* and *Governments*: Under *This View* also 'tis no less evident, that the only possible Foundation of true and lasting Happiness to any *Nation* or *People*, as such; is the Practice of *Righteousness* and *True Virtue*. I insist not at present, in *This* Argument, upon the extraordinary *Blessings* which the *Providence of God* thinks fit at any time to pour down in a peculiar manner upon a Religious Nation; or the *Judgments* wherewith he sometimes punishes a degenerate people, *turning a fruitful Land into Barrenness, for the Wickedness of them that dwell therein*: But what I observe, is, that in the *natural Tendency*, in the *regular and proper Consequence of mens own Behaviour*; *Righteousness* (as *Solomon* expresses it) *exalteth a Nation, but Sin is a Reproach to any people*. In proportion as *Justice*, and *Order*, and *Truth*, and *Fidelity* prevail; creating mutual Love and Good-will, mutual Trust and Confidence

among

among men; which are the great Bands S E R M.  
of Peace and Unity: In the *same* propor- XIV.  
tion is the *Happiness* of the Society, and  
the Welfare of the Publick evidently se-  
cured.

WHEN *Magistrates* rule in the Fear of God; looking upon themselves as *sent by Him for the Punishment of Evil doers, and for the Praise of them that do well*; making use of all the Influence and Authority they are invested with, to promote Virtue, Righteousness, and Good Manners among men: When *Laws* are *made* with one continued View to the Good of the Publick; and *executed* with Diligence, Equity, and Fidelity: When persons in *all the relative* stations of Life, perform faithfully and conscientiously the Duty of the respective Stations wherein they are placed: When *Bargains* are regularly *contracted* upon Terms of *equitable* consideration, and *executed* with *Justice* and punctual *Veracity*: When in *every Exigence* of *common life*, mutual *Trust* and *Confidence*, universal *Benevolence* and *Goodwill*, are both the *Spring* or *Motive*, and the *Rule* or *Measure* of *Action*: There  
is

S E R M. is no one so absurd as not to see, that there  
 XIV. hence arises, in *necessary*, in *evident*, in  
 immediate consequence, an *Image* of Publick Happiness, the most *Lovely* that the Mind of Man can possibly be presented with. An *Image* indeed *only*, which the *Imagination* may contemplate; but which, in this present corrupt world, can never possibly have a *Reality* to answer it. Yet it shows abundantly the *Truth* of the Proposition I was to prove: Because whatever is, in its *complete Idea*, of *perfect Excellency*; is by necessary consequence, in *every degree* of its *Reality*, of *proportionably good Effect*. *So far* therefore as Justice and Charity, and universal Virtue, prevails and is practised in Any Nation or Community; *so far* will That Community find those good Effects, which, were mens *Virtue perfect*, would be *perfect Felicity*. On the contrary: *So far* as Injustice, Tyranny, Fraud, Luxury, and other Vices, are encouraged in Any Society of men; *so far* will That Society feel certain degrees of those pernicious Effects, which, where Vice and Corruption arise universally to their highest Pitch, do unavoidably

avoidably end in Total Destruction. The S E R M.  
*only possible Delusion* therefore, by which XIV.  
men are continually tempted into unrighteous Practices, notwithstanding the *evident* perniciousness of such Practice in its most naturally consequent Effects; is their fondly and unreasonably imagining, that, what is undeniably *ruinous* to the *Whole*, may yet to *Themselves in particular* be *Advantageous*. And This I call a *Delusion*; not only upon account of the *Future Judgment*, which falls not within the compass of my present Argument; but 'tis a *mere Delusion*, generally speaking, with respect to the real and substantial Advantages even of this *present* Life. For, besides that whatever is in its natural consequence pernicious to the *Publick*, must probably *by that very means*, in the *course of things*, bring a due Punishment upon the *particular Offenders* themselves; 'Tis moreover still further true, without taking in *any* consideration of the *Publick at all*; 'tis, I say, still further true in the

III. *Third* place, That if we consider men *singly*, every one in his mere *private personal*


S E R M. *personal capacity*; still the only possible

XIV. Foundation of real and lasting Happiness  
 to a man even in *That View*, (always excepting, as I before said, the case of Persecution,) is the Practice of Righteousness, Charity, Temperance, and universal Virtue. *Evil pursueth Sinners; but to the Righteous, Good shall be repaid.* The Truth of the Proposition, will most clearly appear in the *Particulars*.

THE *First Ground* and most necessary Ingredient of every Enjoyment in Life, and *without which* there can be no Relish of any *other* Enjoyment whatsoever, is *Health*. Now though God *has* indeed made *all* men mortal; and the *Best* are subject to *Infirmities and Diseases*, and the most *vitious* seem *sometimes* almost *entirely* to *escape* the natural consequences of their Vices; yet *particular Instances*, alter not the *general Truth* of Things; and *Virtue*, upon the *whole*, has undeniably the *Advantage* in this *first foundation* of Temporal Happiness. For *Sobriety and Temperance* certainly cause *no* Distempers, and *Debauchery* is notoriously the Cause of *Many*. With all justness therefore,

fore, are those general Declarations of S E R M.  
Wisdom in Scripture: *My Son, forget not* XIV.  
*my Law, but let thy Heart keep my Com-* Prov. iii.  
*mandments; For Length of days and long* 1.  
*Life, shall they add to thee. Fear the Lord,* ver. 7.  
*and depart from Evil; it shall be Health*  
*to thy Navel, and Marrow to thy Bones.*  
*Length of days is in her right hand; she* 16.  
*is a Tree of Life, to them that lay hold* 18.  
*upon her. And on the contrary, concern-*  
*ing Debauchery, Prov. vii. 26. She has cast*  
*down many wounded, yea, many young men*  
*have been slain by her: Her house is the*  
*way to Hell, (that is, to the Grave un-*  
*timely,) going down to the chambers of*  
*Death.*

THE case is the very same likewise,  
with regard to the *External Advantages*  
of Life; such as are *Riches, Honour, Re-*  
*putation,* and the like. It cannot indeed  
be denied, but that by *Oppression and Vi-*  
*olence,* by *Unrighteousness and Corruption,*  
by *Deceit and Fraud,* immense *Riches* have  
been sometimes obtained, and seemingly  
a very great Superiority over the rest of  
Mankind. But if it be impartially con-  
sidered, *how small a number in proportion,*  
have

S E R M. have ever *succeeded* in This manner ; *how*  
 XIV. many have been *defeated* and *blasted* in  
 the *Attempt*, before they could at all gain  
 their Point ; *how little*, *how uncertain*,  
*how vexatious*, *how interrupted* the *En-*  
*joyment* has been, of those who have in  
 This method had the greatest and most  
 remarkable Success ; and, after all, *how*  
*frequently*, and in *how short* a time, the  
 highest Prosperity of This kind has ter-  
 minated in the heaviest Ruin ; it will  
 undeniably appear, that the *moderate pro-*  
*portion* of the good things of life, *gained*  
 usually by Frugality, Industry, Honesty,  
 and Integrity ; *enjoyed* with Temperance,  
 Contentment, and Security ; and, through  
 the Blessing of God, *generally*, (or at least  
*much more often* than the Wages of Un-  
 righteousness,) *continuing permanent* ; are  
 really and truly, in a right Computation  
 and Estimate, even according to this *pre-*  
*sent* World, the most Substantial Riches.  
 So that 'tis with great Truth, that *Solo-*  
*mon* affirms concerning *Virtue and Inte-*  
*grity* under the Name of *Wisdom*, Prov. iii.  
 14. *The Merchandise of it is better than*  
*the Merchandise of Silver, and the Gain*  
*thereof*



*thereof than fine Gold: She is more precious than Rubies; and all the things thou canst desire, are not to be compared to her:*

S E R M.

XIV.


*Length of days are in her right hand, and in her left hand Riches and Honour. Nor is it without particular reason, that he here mentions Honour distinctly, as well as Riches. For though, with regard to Honour also as well as Riches, it is indeed undeniably true, that by unrighteous, fraudulent, and corrupt Practices, the Highest Honours and Dignities in the World have Sometimes been attained to; yet whoever impartially considers upon the whole, the Precipices upon which unrighteous Grandure stands; and compares it with that valuable and Lasting Esteem in the Eyes of the Best and Wisest part of Mankind, which is built upon the solid Foundation of Real and True Worth; will find, that 'tis in most perfect agreement with the Nature and Reason of Things, that the Scripture declares that the Righteous is more excellent than his Neighbour; that the Righteous shall be had in everlasting Remembrance; that the Memory of the Just is Blessed, but the Name of the Wicked shall*

PROV. xii.

26.

Pf. cxlii. 6.

PROV. x. 7.

SERM. *shall rot; that the Wicked are exalted for*  
 XIV. *a little while, but are gone and brought*  
 *low; they are taken out of the way,-----*  
*and cut off as the Tops of the Ears of Corn,*  
 Job xxiv. 24. And therefore the Advice  
 of Solomon is entirely well-grounded, *Prov.*  
 iii. 3. *Let not Mercy and Truth forsake*  
*thee; bind them about thy Neck, write them*  
*upon the Table of thine Heart; So shalt*  
*thou find Favour and Good Understanding,*  
*in the sight of God and Man.*

THERE is *One Particular* still behind,  
 which contributes *more* to any man's Hap-  
 piness even in this *present* Life, than *all*  
 either *Bodily Enjoyments*, or *External Af-*  
*fluence of Wealth and Honours*; And That  
 is, *Inward Peace and Satisfaction in his*  
*Own Mind*. Now in *This Particular*, there  
 is *no Pretence* of Comparison, between the  
 Righteous and the Wicked. *Here*, Virtue  
 triumphs absolutely without Controul; and  
 has *no Competitor*, to share or to contest  
 with it the Enjoyment of the most valu-  
 able and most lasting Pleasures of Life.  
 The case of *Persecution* itself, needs not  
*here* to be excepted. Nay, even the *False*  
*Coin*, the very *Delusion*, the *imaginary*  
 Satisf-

Satisfaction of the *merest Enthusiasm*, has in S E R M.  
*This respect* the Advantage over the *greatest* XIV.  
*Pleasures of Unrighteousness*. How much  
*more*, when the *Peace and Satisfaction of*  
*Mind* is built upon the most *solid Founda-*  
*tion*, upon the most *Rational and Real*  
*Grounds!* when 'tis founded upon a Sense,  
of having done what, in *itself* absolutely,  
in the *Nature and Reason* of Things, is  
*just and fit and right!* what, by *proper and*  
*natural consequence*, tends to the *Benefit*  
*of Mankind*, to the *Happiness of the whole*  
*Creation!* what renders a man as certain-  
ly *acceptable and well-pleasing* unto God,  
as 'tis certain the World is at all governed  
by such a *Wise, Just, and Good Being!*  
and what, consequently, in the last place,  
gives a man a *reasonable and well-ground-*  
*ed Expectation* of being *happy hereafter*,  
when the *Enjoyments of This World* shall  
be no more! This is indeed, in the Sense  
of our Saviour's Parable, a *Pearl of great*  
*Price*; justly and highly magnified in nu-  
merous Expressions of Scripture. *Mark*  
*the perfect man, and behold the upright;*  
*for the end of that man, is peace, Ps. xxxvii.*

38. *Light is sown for the righteous, and*

S E R M. joyful gladness for them that are upright  
 XIV. in heart, xcvii. 11. Great Peace have  
 they that Love thy Law, and nothing shall  
 offend them, cxix. 165. Her ways are  
 ways of Pleasantness, and all her paths are  
 Peace, Prov. iii. 17. The work of Right-  
 teousness is Peace, and the effect of Right-  
 teousness, Quietness and Assurance for ever,  
 Is. xxxii. 17. The wicked is driven away  
 in his Wickedness, but the Righteous hath  
 Hope in his Death, Prov. xiv. 32. 'Tis  
 true; sometimes very pious and good persons,  
 have been extremely afflicted with Trou-  
 ble of Mind: But *This Trouble* has never  
 been the *Effect* of *Virtue*; and can with  
 no more Justice be put to the Account  
 of it, than Weeds which spring up among  
 the choicest Corn, can be said to proceed  
 from the good Seed which was sown.  
*This Trouble* is always owing, either to  
 some mistaken Notion of the Perfections  
 of God, to some ill-grounded Fear, to  
 some implanted Prejudice of Superstition,  
 or to a real Sense of some past Sins; and  
 therefore never *arises from*, but is only to  
 be *cured by*, a *right understanding* of the  
*Nature and Effects* of *True Virtue*. In  
 like

like manner abandoned and debauched persons, on the *other* side, seem indeed sometimes for a season, to have *full Ease* and Satisfaction in their Folly: But *This Ease*, never is the *Acquiescence of Reason*: 'Tis the *Stupidity* only, of a *Lethargy* or *Mortification*: Not at all a *Freedom* from the *Disease*, but merely a *Senseless*ness of the *present Destruction*. Sooner or later, *Reason* will be heard; and *Truth* will force itself upon them. For, *what is the Hope of the Hypocrite, when God taketh away his Soul?* Job xxvii. 8. I speak not here of the *Punishments* in a *future State*, but of the *Just Apprehensions* which attend *Wickedness* in the *present*. *The Spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity, but a wounded Spirit who can bear?* Prov. xviii. 14. And *Is. lvii. 20. The Wicked are like the troubled Sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt: There is no Peace, saith my God, to the Wicked.*





# SERMON XV.

The Character of oppressive Power  
in Religion.

[Preached on the 5th of November.]



DAN. vii. 23.

*Which shall be diverse from all Kingdoms,  
and shall devour the Whole Earth, and  
shall tread it down, and break it in  
pieces.*



Y Design in This Place, is not SERMON.  
to enter into a *particular* In- XV.  
terpretation of the Prophetick  
Language; much less to pro-

pose any uncertain Conjectures, concern-  
ing the *Times* and the *Seasons* which the  
Almighty has put in his own Power; but

S E R M. to consider only a *general Character*, which  
 XV. runs through a *long Series* of Prophecy  
 both in the Old Testament and in the  
 New, of a certain *great Power*, formi-  
 dable and lasting, of large *Extent* and of  
 long *Duration*, and, in its *Nature* and  
*Kind*, different from all *Other Powers* and  
 Kingdoms in the World. The *Character*  
 is such, as shows plainly one principal  
*End* and *Design* of the Prophecy to be  
 This; to give men repeated Warnings to  
 take great Heed, that they neither fall  
 (if possible) under the tyrannical Oppres-  
 sion of this dreadful Power, nor Them-  
 selves have any Share in exercising it over  
 Others.

THE *Character* or *Description* given  
 by the *Prophet*, of this *singular* and *ex-*  
*traordinary* Power, is in the following  
 ch vii. 21. Words. He shall *make War with the*  
 ver. 25. *Saints, and prevail against them: And he*  
*shall speak great Words against the most*  
*High, and shall wear out the Saints of the*  
*most High, and think to change Times and*  
*Laws; And they shall be given into his*  
 ver. 26, 27. *hand for a long Season, even 'till the*  
 ch. xi. 36,  
 &c. *Judgment shall sit. He shall exalt him-*  
*self,*



*self, and magnify himself above every God, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of Gods : ----- Neither shall he regard the God of his Fathers, ---- for he shall magnify himself above All ; ---- and shall divide the Land for Gain.*

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FROM this description given by the Prophet *Daniel*, is plainly taken the character St Paul sets forth, of a *Man of Sin* <sup>2 Thes. ii.</sup> to be revealed, the *Son of Perdition* : *Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped : So that He, as God, sitteth in the Temple of God, shewing himself that he is God : ---- Whose Coming is after the working of Satan, with all Power, and Signs, and Lying Wonders, and with all Deceivableness of Unrighteousness : Teaching men to give heed to seducing Spirits, and doctrines of \* Devils : ---- Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from Meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving, of them which believe, and know the truth.*

<sup>1 Tim. iv.</sup>  
<sup>1, 3.</sup>  
\* Διαπορίων, *Son's departed,*  
Saints.

THE same character is likewise evidently intended by St *John*, when he prophesies of a *wild Beast*, or *Tyrannical*

S E R M. *Power, to whom was given Great Au-*  
 XV. *thority, and a Mouth speaking Great things,*  
 Rev. xiii. *and Blasphemies: And he opened his Mouth*  
 2, 5, 6, 7, *in Blasphemy against God: And it was gi-*  
 8, 12, 13, *ven unto him to make War with the Saints,*  
 14, 16, 17. *and to overcome them: And Power was*  
*given him over all Kindreds and Tongues*  
*and Nations; And all that dwell upon the*  
*Earth shall worship him. ---- And he ----*  
*doth great Wonders, --- and Deceiveth them*  
*that dwell on the Earth, by the Means of*  
*those Miracles that he had Power to do.*  
 ch. xvii. *And the Kings of the Earth have one*  
 13, 15, 17. *Mind, and shall give their Power and*  
*Strength unto the Beast; ----- even Peoples*  
*and Multitudes and Nations and Tongues.--*  
*For God hath put in their Hearts [ in the*  
*Hearts of the Kings of the Earth ] to ful-*  
*fil his Will, and to agree, and give their*  
*Kingdom unto the Beast, until the Words*  
*of God shall be fulfilled. The Name of*  
 ver 3, 7. *the Person, in whose hands the Reins or*  
 ver. 5. *Principal Direction of the Exercise of this*  
 ver. 2. *Power is lodged, is Mystery, Babylon the*  
*Great, the Mother of Harlots, and Abo-*  
*minations of the Earth: With whom the*  
*Kings of the Earth have committed Formi-*  
*cation,*

*cation*, (that is, have been led into idolatrous Practices,) *and the Inhabiters of the Earth have been made drunk with the Wine of her Fornication: And She herself is drunken with the Blood of the Saints, and with the Blood of the Martyrs of Jesus: And by her Sorceries* (that is, artificial Methods of making men Religious without true Virtue,) *by her Sorceries are all Nations deceived: And in Her is found the Blood of Prophets, and of Saints, and of All that are slain upon the Earth. And This Person, (the political Person,) to whom these Titles and Characters belong, is That Great City, Rev. xvii. 18. standing upon seven Mountains, ver. 9. which Reigneth over the Kings of the Earth.*

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ver. 6.  
ch. xviii.  
23, 24.

'T IS hardly possible for any one carefully to read these Texts, as they lie in Scripture; but he must immediately apprehend, if he has any historical Knowledge of the State of the World for many past Ages, that This Description was either *intended* to be a prediction of That tyrannical Power, which *Popery* in its most flourishing times established in the World; or at least that it is as exact and


com-

SERM. complete a Picture of it, as could possibly have been drawn even *after* the Event. *Oppressive Powers* there have been *Many* in the World, by the righteous Judgment of God, both *Great* and *Lasting*: But *This* has been, after a most remarkable and wonderful manner, in its whole *Nature* and *Kind*, *different* from all *Other Powers* wherewith men ever were oppressed. According to the description given in my Text: *It shall be diverse from all Kingdoms, and shall devour the Whole Earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces.*

THE *Peculiarities*, wherein *This Great Oppressive Power* differs from all other Tyrannies which have been set up among men; and is *diverse from all Kingdoms*, which have at any time *devoured the whole Earth*; are principally *These* which follow.

I. 'TIS a *Religious Tyranny*; a Power, sitting in the *Seat and Temple of God*. *Other Tyrannies*, founded *originally* in *Force*, and in the *Power* of the *Sword*; have indeed frequently made use of *Pre- tences of Religion*, to support themselves

*occasionally*; and no less frequently *laid S* ERM.  
*aside* those Pretences again, when they had XV.  
 no further occasion for them. But *This*  
 is a Tyranny, founded *originally* upon  
*mere* matters of *Religion*; and carried on  
 through its *whole* Progress, to the utmost  
 length of an universal arbitrary Domi-  
 nion, under the Name and Title still of  
 a *merely Spiritual* Authority. The Church  
 of *Rome* claims to be itself the *whole*, the  
*universal* Church of God; and to be in-  
 vested with a *Power*, which indeed the  
*real universal* Church has *no* pretence to,  
 even a Plenitude of *Divine Power*. By  
 virtue of this Power, they have taken  
 upon themselves to *change Laws and Times*;  
 to establish what new *Doctrines* and *Prac-*  
*tices* they pleased, under the name of  
*Religion*; *forbidding to marry*, and *com-*  
*manding to abstain from Meats*, which God  
*hath created to be received with Thank-*  
*giving*. Destroying mens plain and na-  
 tural Notions of *God*, and of his *Worship*;  
 and thereby undermining and making un-  
 intelligible the very *Foundation* of all Re-  
 ligion. Introducing *new, superstitious,*  
 and *idolatrous Objects* of *Worship*; the  
*Ele-*

SERM. *Elements in the Sacrament; and the Mo-*  
 XV. *ther of Christ, whom (by a profane and*  
 *blasphemous ambiguity) they affect to stifle*  
*the Mother of God; and even Images, Pic-*  
*tures, and Statues representing her. Gi-*  
*ving heed to seducing Spirits, and Doc-*  
*trines of Dæmons; Doctrines, concerning*  
*the Spirits of Saints departed; and of*  
*Saints, who were no Saints, but very*  
*Wicked men; and of Saints, who never*  
*lived nor had any Being at all, but in the*  
*imaginations of deluded men: Invoking*  
*them, as Mediators and authoritative In-*  
*tercessors; as invested with miraculous*  
*Powers, to protect Men, Cities and Na-*  
*tions; and as having in the Court of Hea-*  
*ven a corrupt Interest, to skreen their De-*  
*votees, even the most abandoned Sinners,*  
*from the Wrath of him that sitteth upon*  
*the Throne, from the Sentence of the righ-*  
*teous Judge of the whole Earth: To the*  
*utter Subversion of all real religion and*  
*virtue, and turning into Ridicule the es-*  
*sential and unalterable Difference of Good*  
*and Evil, and the Eternal Laws of God*  
*and Nature; which are more immoveable,*  
*than the Foundations of Heaven and Earth.*

For,

For, to *dispense* with *Morality*, and to indulge men in certain stated *Equivalents* of *Ceremony*, in the stead of *real Virtue* and *Amendment of Manners*; is a Power, which even *God himself* has never claimed; and the doing of which, would be (as the Apostle expresses it) to *deny himself*: 'Twould be a *changing* of his *unchangeable* Nature, and making himself to be what he is not. Yet He who styles himself *The Vicar of Christ*, has often claimed to Himself *This* Power; and, in *some* Ages of the Church, has carried it so far, as even solemnly to *absolve* men from the Obligation of just and reasonable *Compacts*, and those too made and confirmed upon *Oath*; merely to set them at liberty to be guilty of the most unjust and violent *Oppressions*, consistently with being very pious and religious persons. What is *This*, but *opening his Mouth in Blasphemy against God*, and *speaking Great Words against the most High*? That is: Not in the way of *professing Atheism*, or openly *defying* the *Name of Religion*; but by turning *Religion itself* into *Superstition* and *Wickedness*.

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2 Tim. ii.  
13.

A N D

SERM. AND in order the more effectually to  
 XV. support this absurd and extravagant Power;  
 the Church of *Rome* has, by the Establishment of its New Doctrines and Practices, fenced itself in, and excluded absolutely out of Communion all Christians who are not willing to *make void the Commandments of God through these Traditions of Men*. By which means, they have formed a violent *Schism*; separating and dividing themselves totally from all Christians, who desire to hold fast That *Form of sound words*, that Doctrine which was once delivered unto the Saints by Christ and his Apostles, and which is now conveyed down to us in the Sacred Writings: And then they confidently reproach all those with the name of *Schismatics*, who dare not join with them in this their *Great Schism*. Which is exactly the same thing, as if, in a *Civil Government*, a private Corporation should make *By-laws* contrary to the Laws of the Country; and then confidently cast the reproachful name of Traitors upon all the rest of their Fellow-Subjects, who are not willing to involve themselves in the  
 guilt



guilt of real Rebellion by submitting to those illegal By-laws.

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IN consequence of this *Great Separation*, by which the Church of Rome has thus *bedged* itself in, and formed itself into a *Sett*, exclusive of and destructive to all such as desire to obey *God rather than Men*; they have in all places, where-ever they have had Power, openly set themselves to destroy and extirpate, by all the Methods of Violence and Cruelty, all who would not *fall down and worship this Image which they have set up*. They have *made War with the Saints*, and *prevailed against them*, and *worn them out*. They have, by Courts of *Inquisition*, made it unspeakably more penal, to differ from them in any point of doctrine of mere humane invention, than to have been guilty of the most enormous Vices and Immoralities, in breach of the Eternal Laws of God. And whereas in all *Civil Governments*, where-ever there are Any Remains of *Humanity*, all Laws concerning Capital Crimes are so framed, as that it may be more possible for a *guilty* person to *escape*, than that an *Innocent* one should  
*suffer*;

S E R M. *suffer*; in *This Kingdom*, on the contrary,  
 XV. *diverse from all Kingdoms*, the Principle  
 is; that *Millions*, not only of *Innocent* persons, but even of the *Best* and most *Virtuous* men, ought rather to be exposed to the extremest misery, and to Punishments cruel above the worst of Malefactors; than that any of *Their Doctrines*, however contrary to *All Sense* and *Reason*, should be permitted to be *examined* and *debated* whether they be true or no.

2. ANOTHER Instance, wherein This Great oppressive Power *differs* from other Tyrannies; is, that it has been raised and kept up, not by *Force* only, but by *Sorceries* and *Lying Wonders* peculiar to itself. By *Signs* and *Wonders* and *Lying Miracles*, which the Scripture calls the *deceivableness of unrighteousness*; by *These* have they imposed upon the *ignorant* and *credulous*. By numberless artificial Methods of making men very *Religious* without Any *Virtue*, which are what the Scripture calls *Sorceries*; by *These* have they drawn away the *Superstitious* and *Devout*. By establishing a political Kingdom of Religion, *diffused* over many Nations, *independent* upon

2 Th ii. 9.  
10.

Rev. xviii.  
23.

upon every Government, and yet at the same time closely and strongly united within itself, under the uniform direction of *One* foreign Power; by *This* have they gradually prevailed upon *the Kings of the Earth* to have one Mind, and to give up their Kingdom, their Power and Strength, unto the Beast,---- even Peoples and Multitudes and Nations and Tongues. Which last Circumstance, points out to us still further, a

3. THIRD Instance, wherein this Great Oppressive Power differs from other Tyrannies: And *That* is, that 'tis a Tyranny set up over even *Remote* Princes, over all Kindreds and Tongues and Nations; a Tyranny ruling over the Kings of the Earth, ruling in Places where it never had the least pretence of any Civil Power or Authority whatsoever. This is what the Scripture calls, *exalting himself above all that is called God*; above all Magistracy, Authority, or Dominion, that God ever instituted. Disposing arbitrarily of Kingdoms: Absolving Subjects from their Allegiance, from all obligation to obey the *Laws* of their Country: And causing

S E R M. Kings and People, even whole Nations to  
 XV. be maffacred, by fecret Plots or by open  
 ~~~~~ Violences.

T H I S is the Description and Character given in the *prophetick* parts of the inspired Writings, of a great and *potent* Apostacy, which was largely and very distinctly foretold should happen in the latter Ages of the Church. And the *Particularities*, wherein this Tyranny was to be *diverse from all Kingdoms* that ever devoured the whole Earth, are so *singular* and *remarkable*; that 'tis hardly possible for any man to mistake in judging, to *Whom* the Characters belong. What remains therefore, is to draw some *Observations* from what has been said, proper upon the *present* Occasion. And

*First*; W H E N St *John* saw this strange tyrannical Power represented to him in Prophecy, whilst as yet there was no such Power in being; When he saw it represented to him under the similitude of a *Woman* of fornications, that is, in Scripture-language, an idolatrous Church; riding upon *peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues*, and domineering over the

the Kings of the Earth; *When I saw her*, says he, *I wondred with great Admiration*, Rev. xvii. 6. And even after the Event, whosoever has *Any Notion* what *Virtue* or *Religion* is, must still of necessity wonder with great Admiration, how it was ever possible that the *Name of Religion* should be so prodigiously abused. *Religion* is not an arbitrary or imaginary thing, but founded upon eternal *Truth* and *Right*, or it never can have any Foundation at all. *Religion* is the Practice of *Virtue*, proceeding from a regard to *God the Judge of All*, the all-seeing and unerring Judge. *Good and Evil* are necessarily, essentially, and unalterably what they are: And *God* necessarily sees and judges them to be so. The *Worship of God*, and the universal *Love of our Neighbour*, are evidently the Perfection of *Moral Good*; and the contrary to these, the greatest *Moral Evil*. Whatever *Forms* or *Ceremonies* therefore have at any time been instituted either of *God* or *Good Men*, they have always been entirely subservient to these *Moral Duties*: For *Moral Duties*, are the *End* and last Aim of *All Religion*,

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S E R M. of all Religion both *natural and revealed.*

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What then must be thought of a Religion, filled with *Opinions* contrary to the necessary *Truth* and *Nature* of things; over-run with *idolatrous Practises*, in the Worship of *God*; and supported by *Wars, Persecutions, Massacres*; by open *Violences*, and secret *Plots*; opposite, in the most barbarous and cruel manner, to the whole Spirit of that great Duty of *Love and Charity* towards *Men*! *Ye shall know them by their Fruits*, said our Saviour; admonishing his Disciples, to guard themselves against *False Prophets*. And when he warned them to *beware of Men*; he did not mean only of *Heathen Persecutors*, but of *the Brother* also *delivering up the Brother to Death*.

*Secondly*; FROM what has been said, we may learn how sincerely Thankful we ought to be, for the happy Deliverance of the King and the Three Estates of this Realm, from the bloody intended Massacre by *Gun-Powder*, which was to have been effected as upon *This Day*.

*Thirdly*;


Thirdly; FROM hence also we may learn S E R M. XV.  
 to set a just Value upon the Greatness of that *Second Deliverance*, which God worked for us *again* as upon *This Day*, by the Happy Arrival of his late Majesty King *William*. They who rightly apprehend how *great* a Calamity it is, to be deprived of all Use of Reason and Conscience; to be obliged to profess in Belief the most absurd Impossibilities, and to comply in Practice with the grossest Idolatries; and this under the Penalty of the most barbarous and inhumane Cruelties: All men, I say, who have a just Sense of the Dreadfulness of this Calamity, which is what the Scripture calls *The great Tribulation*, and perpetually compares it to the ancient Captivity of God's people in *Babylon*; nay, files This, in comparison of the former, by the name of *Babylon the Great*; will not fail to be very sincerely Thankful, for the Deliverance of his Country from this severest of all Temporal Judgments; and very fearful of taking any even remote Step, that may tend towards bringing back so great a Destruction; and very solicitous to

Diff. between the  
 two  
 Rev. vii.  
 14.

S E R M. make the Government always easy in the  
 XV. Hands of such Princes, as are by Prin-  
 ciple and by Inclination desirous to pre-  
 serve all the Civil and Religious Rights of  
 the Community.

*Fourthly*; The *Last* Inference I shall draw from what has been said, is; that we who profess the Reformed Religion, and, upon stated Solemnities, pretend to return hearty Thanks to God for the wonderful preservations of it amongst us; ought above all things to avoid *those corrupt Practices*, for which we so justly condemn the Church of *Rome*. *Protestants* must not hate the persons of *Roman-Catholicks*; nor uncharitably judge every *private* person among them to have That Malignity of Spirit, on which the *publick* Dominion of their Church is founded. *Protestants*, I say, must not hate the Persons of *Roman Catholicks*, or of any Others who differ from them: Much less ought we to offer them any Injury, Violence, or Wrong: But, on the contrary, we ought to endeavour to convince them of their Errours, by *Strength* of Reason, and by *Gentleness* of Behaviour. If a man's Practice be *vi-*  
*tious*



tious and injurious to his Fellow-creatures; S E R M.  
 what Religion he professes, imports little XV.  
 more to his Moral character, than the   
 Shape or the Colour of his Cloaths. What  
 matters it in point of Religion, to detest  
 the Violences and Persecutions of Rome; if  
 men still continue Lovers of Violence and  
 Contention? What matters it in point of  
 Truth, to have rejected the unintelligible  
 Doctrines of Rome; if men still continue  
 fond of unintelligible Notions? What mat-  
 ters it in point of Virtue and real Good-  
 ness, to have departed from the Supersti-  
 tious Practices of Rome; if men will still  
 be fond of Superstitious Practices? The  
 Religion of Christ consists, in the Worship  
 and Love and Imitation of God, and in  
 universal Charity and Good Will towards  
 Men. The One of these, is the First and  
 Great Commandment; and the Other, says  
 our Lord, is like unto it: And on Both of  
 them, depend the Law and the Prophets,  
 and the Perfection of the Gospel of Christ.  
 If Protestants at any time depart from  
 This Principle, they depart from their  
 Profession: And whensoever they do so,  
 they justly provoke God to deliver them

S E R M. up again into That Darkneſs, from whence  
XV. they have eſcaped; and into the Power  
of That Tyranny, from which they have  
often been ſo marvellouſly delivered.





# SERMON XVI.

Providential Deliverances from  
Slavery.

[Preached on the 5th of November.]



PSAL. xxxiii. 10.

*The Lord bringeth the Counsel of the Hea-  
then to nought; he maketh the Devices  
of the People of none Effect.*



HIS Psalm, is a Psalm of SERMON praise and Thanksgiving, up- XVI.  
on the Subject of God's works  
of Creation and Providence;  
and the royal Author of it,  
seems in his enumeration of the Works of  
God, to equal the Wonders of *Provi-  
dence* with those of *Creation*. Ver. 6. By  
the

S E R M. *the word of the Lord were the heavens*  
 XVI. *made, and all the host of them by the breath*  
 of his mouth; he gathereth the waters of  
 the sea together as an heap, he layeth up  
 the depth in store-houses; Let all the earth  
 fear the Lord, let all the inhabitants of  
 the world stand in awe of him; for he  
 spake and it was done, he commanded  
 and it stood fast: The Lord bringeth  
 the counsel of the heathen to nought, he  
 maketh the devices of the people of none  
 effect.

THE *reason why* the Psalmist thus joins the works of Creation and Providence together, as equal Subjects of Praise and Thanksgiving, was the many wonderful *Deliverances* which God had worked for the Nation of the *Jews in general*, and (if this Psalm be *his*) for the person of *David* in particular; many of which Deliverances were so extraordinary and remarkable, that they could not possibly have been brought about, but by the peculiar influence of that divine Providence, which mightily over-rules all things; the Designs of the Enemies having sometimes been laid with such *Secrecy*, and sometimes carried

carried on with such *strength*, that all Hopes from natural causes ceasing, it seemed that no less Power, than that, which as it *created*, so it *governs* all things, could be able to disappoint them. Wherefore the Psalmist having declared the Weakness and Insufficiency of all other Causes, and the Uncertainty of all other Hopes which men usually depend upon, concludes, ver. 12. *Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance.*

Now, excepting some few cases, wherein God exerted his Almighty Power in plain and undisputed *miracles*; the Deliverances which Providence has worked at several times for *this our Nation* from the professed Enemies of its Religion and Liberty, have been in no wise inferior to the greatest Deliverances that God ever vouchsafed to the Nation of the *Jews*. We need not search for other instances, nor mention the many Examples, which cannot but offer themselves to every one's thoughts. The Two great Deliverances which we This Day commemorate, and are met together to return Thanks to God for,

S E R M. for, are alone abundantly sufficient to  
 XVI. make good the Observation. For whether we consider the difficulty and small probability there was, of preventing the Designs laid against our Religion and Liberty; or whether we consider the greatness of the Calamities that would have ensued, had those Designs took effect; or the greatness of those Blessings, which through the Mercy of God did follow upon their being disappointed; I believe we shall not meet with any Event in History, wherein the Providence of God can seem more visibly to have concerned itself, or to have given more evident Marks of its governing and over-ruling all things. Had that secret Treason, which was carried on in Darkness where no Eye saw it, been as successful as it was secretly contrived; and the Glory and Flower of the Nation been permitted to fall at once by the black malice of Implacable men; the Reformation of our Religion, and the wise Constitution of our Government had perished together; and what unspeakable Confusion would have succeeded that dreadful Blow, no mortal can tell. In

like

like manner, had the later Designs which S E R M. have since been carried on against this XVI. Nation, to subvert our Laws and extirpate our Religion, been permitted by the unsearchable Judgment of God to have prevailed and taken effect; we had once again exchanged Religion for Superstition, and well-constituted Government for Tyranny; and together with Us had perished the Liberties of all *Europe*. But though the First of these Attempts was managed with so much Caution and Secrecy, as seemed to secure it from being discovered by any humane Wisdom; and though later Designs were carried on with such advantages of Power, and such appearance of Authority, as made the Enemies of the Name of Protestant, think it impossible they should be disappointed; yet Providence did so discover the *one*, as to convince the world that there is no Darknes nor Shadow of Death where the Workers of Iniquity may hide themselves; and so prevented the *others*, by the seasonable Coming of his late Majesty of happy Memory; as to show that with God 'tis all one to save by Many or by Few; who

S E R M. who *breaketh the arm of the wicked, and*  
 XVI. *weakneth the strength of the mighty, and*  
 ~~~~~ *delivereth the poor from him that is too*  
*strong for him.*

BUT it will be proper to speak more *distinctly and particularly* of this matter, when we come to apply the *general* Observations which I shall raise from the Text, to the *Special* occasion of our assembling This Day; in some useful and practical Inferences from the whole Discourse.

THE Observations therefore, which may first be raised *in general* from the words, are these: 1<sup>st</sup>, That the Providence of God presides over and governs all things, and has a peculiar Influence upon all the great Events that happen unto Men. 2<sup>dly</sup>, That This, as it is observable in all the great periods of every particular man's Life, so it is more especially and remarkably true, in respect of such Events, wherein the Fates of whole Nations and Kingdoms are concerned: *The Lord bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought, he maketh the devices of the people to be of none effect.*

I. First;



I. *First*; THE Providence of God pre- S E R M.  
sides over and governs all things, and has XVI.  
a peculiar Influence upon all the *great E-*  
*vents* that happen unto Men. Upon all  
the *Great Events*, I say; not to exclude  
Providence from regarding even the *smal-*  
*lest* things as well as the *greatest*, but be-  
cause These are easiest and most useful  
for *Us* to observe; and in These the Foot-  
steps of Providence may with more cer-  
tainty be traced.

THERE was a certain Sect among  
the Ancient Philosophers, who though  
they pretended to believe the Being of  
God, yet they denied his particular Pro-  
vidence and Inspection over all Events;  
and the Actions and Contrivances of many  
who call themselves Christians, however  
contrary their Profession may be, give but  
too just occasion to place them in the same  
rank. These men thought that the Life  
of God consisted merely in Rest and do-  
ing nothing; and that he had no regard  
to the Events of Things, or the Actions  
of men on Earth; but left all to be ma-  
naged by the Chance or the Fate of Se-  
cond Causes: They thought, and so far  
indeed

S E R M. indeed very justly, that God could not but  
 XVI. be an infinitely happy Being, perfectly free  
 from all that Care and Labour, that Toil  
 and Anxiety, which makes a great part  
 of the Misery of humane Life : But must  
 he therefore be a mere *unactive* Being ?  
 Cannot he with the same Ease wherewith  
 he *made* the World, a work of infinite  
 Power, Wisdom, and Counsel, *govern* it  
 also and preside over it ? Cannot he who  
 at one View sees and observes all things  
 that are done in the world, concern him-  
 self for the Benefit and Well-government  
 of his Creatures, without diminishing from  
 his own infinite Happiness ? especially since  
 Happiness consists, not in doing nothing,  
 but in doing good ; and infinite Happiness  
 is nothing else, but the perfectest exercise,  
 of infinite Power, Wisdom, and Goodness.  
 To see and to know all things that are done  
 in the world, is a natural and necessary  
 Attribute of an Omnipresent Mind : To  
 rule and order all things which are pre-  
 sent before him, cannot but be infinitely  
 easy to Almighty Power ; and nothing can  
 be more absurd, than to suppose that God  
 being thus necessarily every-where-pre-  
 sent,

sent, and seeing all things, and being thus infinitely able to determine all Events according to his own Will, should yet be only a careless and unconcerned Beholder of them. 'Tis Evident therefore from Reason, that the Providence of God *can* and *must* govern and over-rule all things. And that it *actually* and *in fact* does so, the whole *History* and *Doctrin*e of the Scripture abundantly confirms to us. It shows us by numberless Instances, that God has not only upon *special* occasions made use of the Power of *Miracles* for the Preservation of the Righteous, or the Destruction of the Wicked, but that *generally* he governs the Moral World, by providentially directing Natural Causes and Influences, to effect what he determines should be done: That he rewards or punishes men by wholesome or pestilential Air, by fruitful or barren Seasons; that he promotes or disappoints their Designs by the uncertain Changes of Winds or Weather; that he employs and directs the Influences of Nature to overthrow the most powerful Armies, to defeat the wisest Counsels, to determine the Differences

S E R M.  
XVI.  
~

SERM. of Princes, and the Fates of Men and  
 XVI. Kingdoms: That the unfearchable Wif-  
 dom of Providence directs and ſteers the  
 moſt caſual and accidental Events, to  
 change the Fortunes of Men, and diſap-  
 point the moſt proper and natural means  
 of Succeſs; ſo that *the race is not to the  
 ſwift, nor the battle to the ſtrong, neither  
 yet bread to the wiſe, nor riches to men of  
 underſtanding, nor favour to men of ſkill;*  
*but that Time and Chance, directed by the  
 Providence of God, happens to them all.*  
 Nay further, the Scripture teaches us, that  
 God not only directs Natural Cauſes and  
 over-rules the Actions of men to fulfil his  
 own good pleaſure, but moreover influ-  
 ences mens minds by ſtrange Concurrences  
 of external cauſes, or by other more ſecret  
 and unknown ways, to bring about juſt  
 Events: That he comforts good men and  
 ſupports them in their Deſigns; that he  
 terrifies bad men with ſtrange Amaze-  
 ments, to diſcover their own Conſpiracies,  
 and to fall into the Snares which they had  
 ſecretly laid for others; that *he fruſtrat-  
 eth the tokens of liars, and maketh divi-  
 ners mad; turneth wiſe men backward,*  
 and

*and maketh their knowledge foolish: that a man's heart deviseth his ways, but the Lord directeth his steps: that there are many devices in the heart of man; but the counsel of the Lord, That shall stand: and that the heart of the Prince is in the hand of the Lord; as the rivers of waters, he turneth it whithersoever he willeth.*

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XVI.  


By these and numberless other passages, illustrated with many historical Examples, which no man can read the Bible without observing, the Scripture assures us that the Providence of God governs and directs the Events of all things. It remains only to consider, how this Doctrine agrees with our present Experience of things, and is consistent with that fixt course of Natural Causes, which God seems to have established in the world. And here indeed lies the great Difficulty of all; since men do and cannot but observe, that where Miracles are not wrought, God suffers the World to be governed by the natural Operations and Efficacy of Second Causes. Most things go on in a regular and settled course; and diligent men by studying the Nature of things,

S E R M. and the ordinary Series of Causes, have  
 XVI. been able in most Events to discover the  
 Connexion of the Cause with the Effect.  
 Hence men of Understanding and Industry, foresee very many Events; and by ordering their Affairs accordingly, secure to themselves in most of their Designs a great probability of Success. And even where Things do not succeed according to the Probabilities of known Causes, but are disappointed or changed by strange intervening Accidents, or sudden and unexpected Turns of things; yet even There it appears generally that the Alteration proceeds from some equally natural, tho' not timely foreseen Cause. When *the Race is not won by the Swift, nor the Battle by the Strong*, as it ought to be in the ordinary course of things; yet even in such a case men are generally able to discover, that the unforeseen Accidents which altered the course of things, and prevented the expected Success, were the Effects of some Natural Causes, which ought to have been taken into the Estimate, and would, if men could have attained a perfect knowledge of the whole Natures and

Powers of things, have entirely changed S E R M.  
their Expectations of the Success. Thus XVI.  
the Discovery of This Day's wicked Con-  
spiracy, was owing to a strange series of  
Accidents, which though utterly impossible  
to be foreseen by humane Wisdom, yet,  
after the Event, appeared not to have  
any thing in them absolutely above the  
power of Nature: And our Deliverances  
from later Attempts against our Religion  
and Laws, were not strictly Miracles, but  
plainly owing on one hand to the ill ma-  
nagement of our Adversaries, and on the  
other hand to the Wisdom and Conduct  
of his late Majesty.


IF then things be acknowledged to  
be Thus, the Difficulty is, how the  
Interposition of Providence is recon-  
cileable with this Regularity of the O-  
perations of Natural Causes; and why  
(as the Scripture plainly determines) we  
are bound with all Thankfulness to ac-  
knowledge the Goodness of the Divine  
Providence in working for us such Deli-  
verances, which yet we do not at the same  
time believe to be properly and strictly  
miraculous. Now tho' to This it might

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perhaps be answered (as some learned men have done) that the All-wise Creator of the World, when he fixt the present Laws and appointed the constant course of Nature, foresaw at the same time all the Dispositions and Exigencies of men, and therefore accordingly so ordered the series of Natural Causes, as to make the very same Provision for all these Occasions in the original Constitution of things, which he would otherwise have done by the miraculous Interposition of his Providence: Though, I say, it might perhaps silence this Objection, to say that the Constitution of the natural World was so settled upon God's foresight of the Dispositions of the Moral, as that the Justice and Goodness of Providence must equally be acknowledged in all the great Events of Nature, as in miraculous Operations; and this Observation might perhaps be of great use against the Asserters of Fate: For, as 'tis no objection against the Skill of the *Workman*, to say that every Wheel of a Watch is moved only naturally according to the frame of its parts; so 'tis no Objection against *Providence*, to say that things



things are brought about by Second Causes, S E R M.  
 since 'tis God who is the Author of those XVI.  
 Causes: Yet because the Scripture every   
 where plainly teaches that God *actually*  
 interposes in the Government of the  
 World; and because 'tis a more honour-  
 able Notion of God, to suppose him con-  
 stantly inspecting and ruling all things,  
 than that he should have fixt certain un-  
 changeable Laws of Nature, and then left  
 the World to be governed by them as  
 by Fate; therefore in answer to this Dif-  
 ficulty about the Workings of Providence,  
 it is more reasonable to say, that as God  
 must be acknowledged to have upon some  
 great occasions made *such* Alterations in the  
 visible course of Nature, as we call *Mira-*  
*cles*; so he does at other times, at least so  
 govern and manage the first Springs of  
 Natural Causes, as to bring about, though  
 without any visible Alterations of Nature,  
 whatever his infinite Wisdom sees fit.  
 And this is so far from being contrary  
 to true Philosophy, or inconsistent with  
 the State of Nature and the regular Ap-  
 pearances of Things, that the best Phi-  
 losophy that ever yet appeared in the

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XVI.

world, has not to this day determined, whether the first Springs of the commonest and most universal Operations of Nature, be moved by some general laws impressed by God on Matter, or whether even in These things he does not continually employ the Offices of intelligent Beings: Or rather, it *has* determined, that God is immediately the Author, even of all those we call *Natural*, as well as of Miraculous Events. For to cause either the Sun or the Earth to move, is plainly an Effect of the same Power, as to cause them to stand still; and the only reason why men usually look upon One as the immediate hand of God, and the Other they fancy is done without Him; is no other but 'This, that what God does Once, they cannot but acknowledge is done by *Him*; but what He does Always, they therefore childishly think 'tis not *He* does it at all. But However This be, yet to be sure nothing can be more reasonable than to say, that God, upon whose good pleasure all the Laws and Powers of Nature perpetually depend, does at least in some great Events determine the Influences

ences of Natural Causes to produce such S E R M.  
or such particular Effects. Thus much XVI.  
we see God has put even in the Power of   
*Men*, that by skilful and artificial Appli-  
cation of Causes, they can in many In-  
stances determine the natural Powers of  
things to produce such Effects, as they  
would not naturally have produced with-  
out that guidance and direction of Art:  
And nothing can be more absurd, than to  
imagine that God does less in the Govern-  
ment of the World, than even some of  
the meanest of his Creatures are able to  
do. When therefore we see Natural  
Causes conspire strangely and by a long  
series to produce some remarkable Event;  
we have all the reason in the world, to  
believe that thing brought about, by the  
peculiar direction of Providence; and to  
behave ourselves accordingly in our Pray-  
ers or Thanksgivings to God. Thus we  
have all possible reason to believe, that  
the Wisdom of Providence directed that  
train of Accidents, by which the Great  
Conspiracy of This Day was discovered:  
And that the same Wisdom and Power  
since worked for us those later Deliver-  
ances,

S E R M. ances, in consequence of which we still  
 XVI. enjoy our Religion and Liberties; and  
 governed the Springs of the first causes of  
 the Winds and Weather and of number-  
 less other Circumstances of things, on  
 which depended the Success of his late  
 Majesty's Enterprize; in consequence of  
 the Success of which, we still enjoy our  
 Religion and Liberty, the happy Effects  
 of that seasonable and necessary Revolu-  
 tion, which cannot without the greatest  
*Ingratitude*, but be acknowledged with all  
 Thankfulness, to have been the immedi-  
 ate Work and singular Blessing of Provi-  
 dence. For

II. *Secondly*; As this Direction of the  
 first Springs of Natural Causes by the Pro-  
 vidence of God, is to be observed and  
 acknowledged in all other considerable  
 Events; so does it more especially and  
 remarkably discover itself in the accom-  
 plishment of such Events, on which the  
 Fates of whole Nations and Kingdoms  
 depend. It must indeed be confessed, as  
 I have already observed, that the smallest  
 things of all, are no less truly Objects of  
 the Care of Providence, than the greatest;  
 that

that *without* our heavenly Father, not so much as a sparrow falls to the ground, or a hair of our head perishes: And 'twas a very unworthy Notion of God in some Philosophers to imagine, that whilst he governed Kingdoms, he could not at the same time attend to the guidance and direction of smaller things. But in respect to *Us*, the Effects of Providence are more *considerable*, and the Footsteps of it are more easily traced, and the Events which it produces require greater and more publick Acknowledgments, when the Fates of whole Nations are therein concerned. There is *one* reason also in the *Nature of things*, why Providence should more visibly concern itself with what whole Nations and People are interested in; and That is, that particular Persons are to have their exact and particular Retributions in a future State; but great Conspiracies, and overflowing Tyrannies, considered as such and in a Body, must have their defeat in this world; and National Blessings must of necessity be Temporal: Not indeed for any necessity on account of strict *Justice*; (because *That* may as well

S E R M. well be satisfied in the Life to come;)   
 XVI. but for the publick manifestation of Providence to the World, and of God's immediate Judgments in the present State.

BUT the Time will not permit me to enlarge farther on this head. I shall therefore only apply briefly what has been said, to our present Occasion, and so conclude.

AND here I need not detain you with a particular Narrative of the dark Conspiracy which was designed to have been executed as upon This Day: I need not aggravate the incredible Barbarousness of this Attempt, which is not to be paralleled in all the Histories of Time, and which a great many even of the Romish Communion, have themselves been ashamed of and desirous to disown: I need not represent the great Craft and Cunning wherewith this Design was laid; undiscoverable, as they thought, by any Wisdom or Chance: *They took crafty counsel against thy people, and consulted against thy hidden ones; they said Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation, that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance,*

brance, Pf. lxxxiii. 4. I need not repeat to S E R M. you with what *Secresy* this whole matter was X VI. carried on; so that the words of *David* are most fitly applicable to this Occasion, Pf. lxiv. 5. *They shoot in secret at the perfect, they encourage themselves in an evil matter, they commune of laying snares privily, they say Who shall see them?* and ver. 6. *They search out iniquities, they accomplish a diligent search; both the inward thought of every one of them, and the heart is deep.* It would also be superfluous to give a particular account how this Conspiracy was discovered; how *God shot at them suddenly with a swift arrow, and their own tongues made them to fall*; how (as the wise man expresses a like matter, *Ecclesj. x. 20.*) *a Bird of the air carried the voice, and that which has wings discovered the matter.* For all these transactions have been often fully and lively represented to you, and 'twould be but tedious to repeat them again.

I NEED not likewise enlarge upon the particulars of the *second* Deliverance, which we this Day commemorate. The thing itself is still fresh in all our Memories;

S E R M. memories; and every one that has *any* just  
 XVI. Sense of the inhumane Barbarity of the  
*Popish* religion, and of the extreme wickedness of that Great Apostacy so largely prophesied of in the New Testament, cannot but be sensible of the *Greatness* of every escape from it, being a Deliverance from the worst and most dreadful Slavery both of body and mind; together with the *Strangeness* of the means by which it was brought about, and the *Suddenness* and *Easiness* of its Accomplishment.

OMITTING therefore to repeat things already so well known, I shall choose rather to conclude my Discourse with some practical Inferences suitable to the Occasion. And

1<sup>st</sup>; IF the Providence of God has certainly a peculiar influence over all the great Events that happen to Mankind; and if the Blessings and Deliverances which we this day commemorate, carry upon them as visible characters of that divine Providence, as any that were ever bestowed upon any People; then ought the expressions of our Acknowledgments and Thanksgivings to God upon this occasion,



caſion, to be proportionably great and fervent. That in *the general* the Providence of God has a peculiar Influence over all the great Events that happen to Mankind, I have endeavoured to prove in the fore-going Diſcourſe; and that the Deliverances we this Day commemorate *in particular*, carry upon them as viſible characters of that divine Providence, as any thing leſs than a direct Miracle can poſſibly do; is evident from all the circumſtances of their accompliſhment. For if the Strangeneſs of events compared with the ordinary courſe of things; if the diſproportionateneneſs of means and cauſes to their effects; if weakneſs triumphing over formidable Strength, and Succeſſes unuſual like thoſe recorded in Scripture; if the diſappointment of the greateſt cunning, and infatuation of the profoundeſt Politicians; if the diſcovery of the ſecreteſt and moſt cautious Plots, by improbable means, and unaccountable accidents; if bringing to nought the greateſt and beſt laid enterprizes, at the very point of their being put in execution; if wicked mens inſnaring them-

S E R M. felves and blowing up their own designs,  
 XVI. involving themselves in the Calamities  
 which they designed for others; in a word, if *turning wise men backward, and making their knowledge foolishness*; if confounding *the devices of the crafty, so that their hands cannot perform their enterprise*; if taking *the wise in their own craftiness, and turning down the counsel of the froward headlong*; if all these things, I say, be tokens of Providence interposing in any great event; then are This day's Deliverances certainly of that kind. Thus was *Pharaoh* overwhelmed, when he had just overtaken the Children of *Israel*; Thus did *Haman* perish, when he had procured a royal decree, and had fix'd a time to destroy the *Jews*; And thus were numberless other designs, mentioned in Scripture, disappointed by strange, and to human Wisdom unaccountable Providences. Let us then acknowledge the hand that worked these things for us, and express our acknowledgments in suitable Thanksgivings: Let us *declare God's works*, that is, publicly glorify his special Providence, and celebrate his adorable

dorable perfections displayed in such extraordinary events; and provoke others to consider and do the same; that men may *praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men; that they may offer the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and declare his works with gladness; that they may speak the glorious honour of his might, and of his wondrous works; that they may declare the glory of his kingdom, and talk of his terrible acts.* Let us trust and place our Affiance in God, who hath done so great things for us already whereof we rejoice; and learn from the consideration of former mercies, to rely upon Providence for Deliverance in future Dangers. Thus the Psalmist, when he had praised God for past Deliverances, saying; *Blessed be the Lord, who hath not given us over for a prey into their teeth; Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowler, the snare is broken and we are escaped;* immediately he adds in the next words; *Our help, that is, our Trust and Dependence for the future, is on the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth.*

SERM.


XVI.



2dly, Since God hath already vouchsafed This Nation so many and great Deliverances from the Attempts of Popish Superstition and Cruelty, we ought to be greatly careful to prevent the spreading of that Superstition, that we again feel not the Effects of its Cruelty. That which was spoken by *Ezra* upon a like occasion, may most fitly be said by *Us*, at this time, *Ezra ix. 13.* *After all that is come upon us for our evil deeds, and for our great trespasses, seeing that thou our God hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve, and hast given us such deliverances as these; should we again break thy commandments, and join in affinity with the people of these abominations, wouldst thou not be angry with us till thou hadst consumed us, so that there should be no remnant nor escaping?* It highly behoves us therefore to be very vigilant in preventing the growth of that Superstition, which this Nation hath already so often felt the ill Effects of; and to be diligent in endeavouring to reclaim Those who have been seduced by it, or have been unhappily educated in the Prejudices of it. God has

has indeed by great Deliverances freed this Nation from the immediate and imminent Dangers of its prevailing Cruelty; but there are still great Remains of That Superstition in the Nation; and it has by great Industry even to This Day been so propagated amongst us, that our Superiors have almost every year been obliged to consider of new means to prevent it, and to recommend to all such as have any opportunity, to endeavour heartily the putting a stop to it. The *first* means that we should use to this purpose, is to endeavour to convince them, with all meekness of Temper, that the Doctrines of *Rome* are not the Doctrines of Christianity; and to demonstrate to them by the Influence it hath upon our Lives and Practice, that *our* Religion is better than *theirs*. Our very keeping up the Remembrance of This Day, is a sufficient Testimony, how contrary to the Spirit of Christianity and how utterly unjustifiable we account that Zeal, which under pretence of Religion subverts even common Humanity, and destroys Mens Lives which Christ came into the World to save: And no-

S E R M.  
XVI.  
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S E R M. thing can be more proper to convince  
 XVI. good and well-meaning persons of the Er-  
 ror of That way, than to show them vi-  
 sibly how much the Principles of the  
 Reformed Religion are more agreeable to  
 the common Design of Religion and to  
 the Spirit of Christ, than the Doctrines  
 of *Rome* are. But above all, the greatest  
 and most effectual means that we can pos-  
 sibly use to prevent the growth of Po-  
 pery and Superstition, is to be infinitely  
 careful not to run into that Atheism and  
 profane Libertinism, which is the con-  
 trary extreme to Superstition. For as un-  
 reasonable Superstition enslaves the Minds  
 of men, and makes them so uneasy under  
 the yoke, that they often fly off into the con-  
 trary extreme of Irreligion and Profaneness;  
 so the natural Effect of Profaneness, when  
 men see the intolerable Consequences and  
 Mischiefs of it, is to drive weak Minds  
 into the other extreme of Superstition. If  
 therefore while we fly from the Supersti-  
 tion of Popery, we run into the Contempt  
 of *all* Religion; that profane Libertinism  
 will probably terminate in Popery again.

WHEREFORE 3dly and to conclude, S E R M.  
If we desire to have the Blessings of those XVI.  
Deliverances, for which we This Day re-  
turn our publick Thanks to God, conti-  
nued amongst us; let us make ourselves  
capable and fit to enjoy them, by a ho-  
ly and worthy Conversation: Let us in  
Meekness and Peace live agreeably to the  
Laws and to the Spirit of that Reformed  
Religion, which God has mercifully re-  
stored and still continues to us: For it is  
no advantage to us to be delivered from  
the tyranny of Superstition, if we run in-  
to the madness of Atheism and Irreligion.  
There are not wanting Enemies, who are  
yet watchful against us; and the Judg-  
ments of God are still abroad in the Earth.  
And we have always just reason to fear,  
that if we repent not in time, and behave  
ourselves worthily under past Deliverances,  
God may yet be forced to try us with  
heavier Calamities, than any that have  
hitherto come upon us. But if we every  
one heartily set about a Reformation; he  
that would have spared *Sodom* for the sake  
of *ten* righteous persons, and *Jerusalem*

S E R M. for the sake of any *one* man that had but  
 XVI. executed Justice and Judgment in it, may  
 be prevailed upon still to avert the Judgments that threaten this our sinful Nation. But if we cannot be so happy as always to obtain Mercy in the Preservation of our *Country*, yet he that is truly religious shall be sure not to fail of it in the Safety of *himself*. Righteous men, such as *Noah*, *Job*, and *Daniel*, though possibly they may not be able to deliver a sinful City which God has doomed to Destruction, yet shall not fail to *deliver their own Souls*: And he that sincerely repents and reforms his Life, shall at least have the comfort of attaining *That Peace*, which the World cannot *give*, and which it cannot *take away*.

*Now unto him who hath from time to time delivered us from the merciless Designs of wicked and unreasonable men; who did as upon this day rescue us from that dreadful Destruction which was ready to have swallowed us up; and who still brings to light the hidden things of Darknes, and preserves*



*serves our Religion and Rights to us, in de-* SERM.  
*spite of all the malicious and restless At-* XVI.  
*tempts of our Adversaries; Unto him who*  
*hath delivered us, and doth deliver us,*  
*and we trust will still deliver us, be all*  
*Honour, &c.*







# SERMON XVII.

Of the Duty of Charity.


[*A Charity Sermon.*]



MAT. v. 48.

*Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect.*



SUPPOSE there is little need S E R M.  
of premising in this place, XVII.  
that by being perfect like   
God, is not here *meant* a per-  
fection of degrees, but only  
a similitude or imitation in kind. The  
highest attainable perfections of the most  
excellent creatures in the Universe, are infi-

S E R M. infinitely mean and imperfect in comparison of God, who *chargeth even his Angels with Folly, and the Heavens are not pure in his Sight.* How much more weak and of no value, must the best performances of frail, mortal, and sinful Men, of necessity be! But though all that we can possibly do, must needs fall infinitely short of our most perfect pattern, yet we are indispensably obliged to be like it in our proportion, and according to our capacity; and as a finite *can* resemble infinite, so we are to resemble God, by partaking of the same excellencies in *kind*, though they cannot but be infinitely inferior in *degree*. A Candle, though its Light bears no proportion at all to the Light of the Sun, yet it resembles it nevertheless in giving Light; whereas Darknes is directly contrary to Both: So the Virtues of Angels and of Men, though they bear no proportion at all to the adorable Perfections of God, yet they resemble them nevertheless in being of the same nature and kind; whereas wickedness is in its whole kind a State of contrariety, opposition and enmity. A perfect and most complete

complete example is set before us for our imitation, that aiming always at that which is most excellent, we may grow continually, and make a perpetual Progress in the ways of Virtue; and though we can never come up to our pattern itself; yet it is sufficient that we may justly be said to become *like* unto God, when, as the Apostle expresses it, we *are made partakers of the Divine Nature*; And such Imitation of God, as our frail and mortal nature is capable of, is truly and in a proper Sense the comparative Perfection of our *Human nature*, as absolute Perfection is the Perfection of the *Divine*.

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THIS may suffice for explication of the words in general. But then more particularly, *Perfection*, in the Scripture phrase, and as it is recommended to us as a Duty, to be pursued and attained to by us in imitation of God; signifies usually one or other of these four *special* Virtues or Excellencies.

1<sup>st</sup>; IT signifies sometimes *Purity* and *Holiness*; a being separated from, and raised above, worldly and sensual desires; the

S E R M. the keeping ourselves unspotted from the  
 XVII. World, as St James expreffes himself; and  
 fixing our affections upon divine and heavenly and spiritual things. Thus, 1 *Pet.* i. 15. *As he which has called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy.* Which words are taken out of the Book of *Leviticus*, where they are repeated three several times, to the children of *Israel*; and answer to that precept which God had before given to *Abraham*, *Gen.* xvii. 1. *I am the Almighty God, walk before me, and be thou perfect.*

2dly; IN some other places of Scripture, the word, *Perfection*, signifies our conforming ourselves to the example of our Saviour, in *suffering patiently*, when God calls us to it, and parting with all things willingly for *his* sake. Our Saviour himself is described to have been made *perfect* by *Sufferings*, *Heb.* ii. 10. In prophecying of which before-hand, he expreffes it in the same phrase, *Luke* xiii. 32. *I do cures to day and to morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected.* And warning his Disciples of the persecutions they

they must expect to meet with, he tells S E R M. them, *Luk. vi. 40. The Disciple is not a-* XVII.  
*bove his Master; but every one that is per-*  
*fect, shall be as his Master; that is, as 'tis*  
 explained in the parallel place, *Matt. x.*  
*24. must expect to be persecuted like him.*  
 And giving instruction to the young man,  
 who desired to know what he must do to  
 be perfect; *If thou wilt be perfect, saith*  
*he, go and sell that thou hast, and give to*  
*the poor, and come and follow me.*

3dly; IN other places of Scripture, be-  
 cause *universal Love* in the highest and  
 most exalted degree; forgiving of inju-  
 ries, and doing Good even to our bitter-  
 est Enemies; is one of the great improve-  
 ments and Excellencies of Duty, which  
 the Christian Religion has introduced, and  
 wherein it exceeds all other Institutions  
 of Religion that ever were in the World;  
 therefore This also is sometimes stiled  
*Perfection*; and the practice of this Duty  
 is called *being perfect*. Thus the words  
 of the Text seem in their first and most  
 literal Sense to be understood, by their  
 connexion with what goes before. For  
 when our Saviour had commanded his  
 Dif-

S E R M. Disciples, ver. 44. *Love your enemies, bless*  
 XVII. *them that curse you, do good to them that*  
 hate you, and pray for them which despite-  
 fully use you and persecute you: That ye  
 may be the children of your Father which  
 is in Heaven; for he maketh his Sun to  
 rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth  
 rain on the just and on the unjust: he adds  
 immediately in the words of the Text;  
*Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Fa-*  
*ther which is in Heaven is perfect;* that  
 is, Imitate ye therefore this excellent per-  
 fection of God; and as he does good even  
 to the unholy and unthankful, so do ye  
 forgive and do good even to your ene-  
 mies; For this is the *Perfection* of the  
 Christian State.

*Lastly;* PERFECTION in other places  
 signifies *Mercy and Goodness*, works of *Cha-*  
*rity and Beneficence*; which the Christian  
 Religion recommends to us with the great-  
 est Earnestness, with the most pressing  
 Arguments, and with the amplest Promises  
 of an exceeding great Reward. This In-  
 terpretation of the word, St *Luke* autho-  
 rises in the parallel place to the Text;  
 where, repeating the very same Discourse



of our Saviour; instead of these words S E R M.  
*Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father* XVII.  
*which is in Heaven is perfect*, he expresses  
it thus; *Be ye therefore merciful, as your*  
*Father also is merciful*, Luk. vi. 36. And  
St Paul, speaking of the same excellent  
Duty of Charity, calls it the *bond of Per-*  
*fection*, Col. iii. 14. *And above all these*  
*things put on Charity, which is the bond of*  
*perfectness.*

IN this latter Sense therefore, I shall  
take leave to understand the words at this  
time; and shall accordingly endeavour in  
the following Discourse, to recommend to  
you this excellent Duty of Charity, in the  
following Method.

- 1<sup>st</sup>. BY showing how many and great  
Obligations we are continually un-  
der, to practise this Duty.
- 2<sup>dly</sup>. WHAT great Benefits and Advan-  
tages accrue to *ourselves*, by the Prac-  
tice of it. And
- 3<sup>dly</sup>. IN what particular Methods and  
Instances, it may best and most use-  
fully be performed.

S E R M. I. H O W many and great *Obligations*  
 XVII. we are continually under, to practise this  
 Duty. And because they are great and  
 numerous, it may be useful to distinguish  
 them into their proper Heads, as they arise  
 from the consideration either of God,  
 our Neighbour, or our selves. And

1st. W I T H respect to *God*. *Is it not*  
 If. lviii. 6, the thing that he has chosen, *to loose*  
 7. *the bands of wickedness, to undo the*  
*heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go*  
*free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it*  
*not to deal thy bread to the hungry; and*  
*that thou bring the poor that are cast out*  
*to thy house? when thou seest the naked,*  
*that thou cover him, and that thou hide not*  
*thyself from thine own flesh? Nothing is*  
 more agreeable to the Nature of God, and  
 renders us more conformable to the Ex-  
 cellencies of that most perfect pattern;  
 than the exercise of Beneficence and Good-  
 ness. The Divine Nature is Goodness it-  
 self; and his bountiful Kindness extends  
 itself perpetually over all his works. This  
 is the Attribute which he principally de-  
 lights to exercise; and in which, of all  
 others, he most expects and requires we  
 should

should imitate him. Our Saviour in the S E R M.  
Text, and in all his Discourses, pro- XVII.  
poses this example to us to follow; and frequently repeats it, that hereby only we can truly become the children of our Father which is in Heaven. This imitation of God, is the Foundation of all Religion, and the true Spring, the inward and natural Principle and Ground of Happiness: Wherefore we are equally obliged both in Duty and Interest, as we hope to be made Partakers of that Happiness, which is the Perfection of our Nature, and for which God ultimately designed us; to prepare and fit ourselves for it, by acquiring that divine frame and temper of mind, that beneficent and good Disposition, which alone can qualify us and make us capable to enjoy it. This Argument would be equally strong, even though we had an absolute and supreme Right to the things we possess; as God has over the whole Creation. But we are further to consider, that this is not *our* Case. *We* are not absolute Lords of the things we possess, but enjoy them merely by the divine permission and good pleasure.

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sure. We are Stewards intrusted with our portion of good things, under the Supreme Householder the Governour of the Universe; and we are to give a strict account, in what manner we dispose of them. We *may* employ them to all the necessary uses, and all the reasonable conveniences, nay and even to the innocent *diversions* also of Life; but we must not consume them upon Lusts and Follies, and *withhold good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of our hand to do it*, Prov. iii. 27. Some *portions* at least of what we enjoy, are due to God, as an acknowledgement of our dependence upon him for the *whole*; and instead of costly Sacrifices and Burnt-offerings to *himself*, he requires only that we be willing to relieve the necessities of *Men like ourselves*; And he seems in the Wisdom of his Providence to have made a very unequal distribution of the Blessings of this Life *on purpose*, that we might have continual opportunities of paying this reasonable homage to him, according to our respective Abilities. Thus much were evidently due to him, even tho' we had been  
innocent

innocent and sinless Creatures; But now how greatly is this motive inforced, when we reflect how all the Blessings with which he daily crowns us, were not only *originally* undeserved, but in their *continuance* are perpetual instances of mercy and compassion towards us! When by Sin we had forfeited all title to his Love and Favour, yet still he *causes his Sun to rise on the Evil and on the Good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.* And not only continues to us these *temporal* Blessings; but moreover, when we by Sin had ruined ourselves and must have been miserable for ever, sent his Son into the World, to restore us to a capacity of recovering *that* Happiness, which is *eternal.* And now, What shall we render unto the Lord, for all these instances of his Mercy towards us? *Can our Goodness extend to Him?* or *can a Man be profitable to his Maker?* No; The only way we have of expressing our Gratitude towards him, is by exercising some little Similitude of that mercy and compassion towards our *Brethren*, in relieving their *temporal* wants; which he has extended

S E R M. to us in an infinitely greater degree, in our  
 · XVII. necessities *both temporal and eternal.* This  
 he has expressly commanded us by our  
 Saviour and his Apostles, and it fills almost every page both of the Old and New Testament, that it is the return he principally expects from us *for all the benefits that he has done unto us.* This he declares he will accept as the best expression of our Love towards him, and as if the benefit of it had accrued immediately to himself: *He that hath pity on the poor, lendeth unto the Lord; and look, what he layeth out, it shall be paid him again,* Prov. xix. 17. and *inasmuch as ye have done it to the least of these my Brethren, saith our Saviour, ye have done it unto me,* St Matt. xxv. 45. Concerning This, the great Enquiry will be made at the day of Judgment; and according to our behaviour in *this* particular, will the final Sentence, as our Saviour himself has described to us the Solemnity of that great day, be principally determined: *I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited*  
*me :*

me : I was in prison, and ye came unto me. SERM.

Not as if any other good or evil Action XVII.

should then be over-looked by the eye of the All-seeing Judge; but to intimate to us, that a charitable or uncharitable disposition, is a principal and *ruling* part of a man's character; the most considerable Test of the whole frame and temper of his Mind; with which all other Virtues or Vices respectively, will almost necessarily be connected. To the performance of *This* Duty, God has in Scripture annexed the promise of more and greater rewards, than are specified in the Exhortations to any other single Virtue; and to the Neglect of it are made proportionably, the greatest of Threatnings; that *He shall have judgment without mercy, who hath showed no mercy, and that whoſo ſtoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he alſo ſhall cry himſelf, but ſhall not be heard.* In the Characters given of good men in Scripture, their exercise of this Duty of Charity, always makes a principal part of their Commendation: *I delivered the poor that cried, ſays Job, and the fatherleſs, and him that had none to help*

SERMON. *him: The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me, and I caused the Widows heart to sing, ch. xxix. ver. 12. and in the New Testament, the Character of Cornelius; to whom God vouchsafed to send an Apostle on purpose, with a singular Commission; and on whom the Holy Ghost fell, even before his Baptism; was, that he was a devout man, and one that feared God, and gave much alms to the people. To conclude this Head: As in all sorts of things, the whole kind usually receives its denomination from that part which is most excellent; so the word Righteousness in general, is frequently used in Scripture to signify Mercy and Charity in particular; and Charity is affirmed by St Paul to be the End of the Commandment; and that he that loveth his Brother, hath fulfilled the whole Law.*

2dly; WITH respect to our Neighbour, the Obligations we are under to practise this excellent Duty, are likewise great and many. We are all partakers of the same common nature, and are therefore under the same ties of common humanity. God has made of one blood, as St Paul expresses it,



it, all nations of men, for to dwell on all the face of the Earth, Acts xvii. 26. and therefore the command in the Text is thus expressed, that we *hide not ourselves from our own Flesh*. We are All subject to the same Infirmities, All liable to fall under the same misfortunes, all obnoxious to the same Wants; and therefore have All of us reason to exercise that compassion, which no man knows but he may stand in need of himself. *The merciful man, saith Solomon, doth good to his own Soul; but he that is cruel, troubleth his own Flesh*, Prov. xi. 17. and the Prophet *Isaiab*, exhorting men to the exercise of Charity, expresses it by *not hiding themselves from their own Flesh*, Is. lviii. 7. God is equally the common Father of us all; and in his Government of the World, *accepteth not the persons of Princes, nor regardeth the rich more than the poor; for they are all the work of his hands. The rich and the poor, saith the wise man, do meet together; the Lord is the Maker of them all*, Prov. xxii. 2. So we in like manner, are to make no distinction of Persons; not by behaving ourselves alike towards

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S E R M. all; but by performing with like cheer-  
 XVII. fulness our respective duty towards all,  
 according to their several Circumstances; showing with equal readiness compassion to the poor, as we do respect to the Rich, and Honour to those in Power and Authority. God has in the whole an equal regard to all his Creatures; but in the present State has made an unequal distribution of temporal Blessings, *that one man's abundance should supply another man's want, that there may be an equality,* 2 Cor. viii. 14. By an *Equality* the Apostle does not mean, that Christians are obliged to bring themselves all to a Level; (though the *first* Converts indeed did so, for reasons particular to those times;) but He means that there ought to be among them such mutual assistance and relief, as that the wants and necessities of *all*, may be proportionably supplied.

THE Christian Religion has super-added particular Arguments to the general ones drawn from nature and reason, to enforce our Obligation to this Duty. We have *one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one Body, and one Spirit, even as we are called*

*in one hope of our calling: We are all* S E R M.  
Members of one body, and *members also* XVII.  
*one of another, Rom. xii. 6. We all pro-*  
fess to be Worshippers of that One Su-  
preme God, who *giveth to all men liberal-*  
*ly and upbraideth not.* We are all redeem-  
ed by the blood of that Saviour, and de-  
pend upon his merits, for the hope of Sal-  
vation; who voluntarily became poor,  
that *we* might be made rich; who *went*  
*about doing good*; who laid down his life  
for our sakes; and in all this, set us an  
*example that we should follow his steps*;  
leaving it to his Disciples as his last Com-  
mandment and most earnest request, that  
they would *love one another as he had*  
*loved them*; making it the Badge and dis-  
tinguishing Mark, whereby *all men should*  
*know that they were his disciples, if they*  
*had love one towards another*; and decla-  
ring it to be the Sum and End of that  
Religion, which he came to establish in  
the World, that we should *love the Lord*  
*our God with all our hearts, and our neigh-*  
*bours as our selves.* These considerations,  
if we will be Christians indeed, cannot  
but produce in us the greatest Endear-  
ment;

S E R M. ments of mutual affection; and those, if  
 XVII. they be sincere, must necessarily show  
 forth themselves in suitable effects. *We ought, if need were, even to lay down our lives for the brethren, saith St John, 1 Job. iii. 16: But how do we answer this character, if, when we see our Brother in want, we are not willing to part with any of the Superfluities of life, to relieve his Necessities, for whom Christ was not unwilling to die? In the Primitive Times the Disciples sold all that they had, and distribution was made to every one according as he had need: God does not now require, any such thing of us; but we are very ungrateful to him, if, when the circumstances of things are so changed, that far less is required of us; we be now more unwilling to contribute our small proportion, than they were then to offer up their whole estates. The least we can do, is to give such experiment of this ministration, as St Paul expresses himself, that men may glorify God for our professed Subjection to the Gospel of Christ, and for our liberal distribution to our brethren and to all men; 2 Cor. ix. 13.*

3dly; WITH respect to *ourselves*, the Obligations incumbent upon us to be charitable and beneficent, are very considerable. Compassion is by the Wisdom of our great Creator, implanted in the very frame of our Nature; and men cannot without great and long habits of Wickedness, root out of their minds so noble and excellent an inclination. 'Tis almost as natural for us to feel an agreeable Satisfaction and unexpressible Pleasure of mind, upon *satisfying a hungry Soul with bread, or cloathing the naked with a garment*; as 'tis for *Them* to be pleased with the Sense of their being relieved from these natural wants. And the greater abilities and opportunities God has endued any man with, of enlarging his bowels of compassion, and doing good to greater numbers of his Fellow-creatures, and diffusing his virtue more widely through the World in acts of bounty and beneficence, in imitation of the great Creator and Preserver of all things; the greater Capacities and Advantages has such a one, of obtaining higher degrees of that Satisfaction and Complacency of





mind, in the perfection of which consists in great measure the Happiness of God himself. On the contrary, *what pleasure, what benefit is there in the possession of those good things, which after supplying our own necessities, and making reasonable provision for our families, are laid up as useless and unprofitable superfluities? Concerning which, What good, saith the wise man, is there in them to the owners thereof, saving the beholding of them with their eyes? Real Good indeed, and any true advantage, there seldom is; but very many times great mischief, and strong temptations. There is a sore evil, saith Solomon, which I have seen under the Sun; riches kept for the owners thereof to their hurt: And they that will be rich, saith St Paul, fall into temptations and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts; which drown men in Destruction and Perdition. If we intend only to secure ourselves, against future contingencies; a reasonable provision of this kind, is neither contrary to religion, nor inconsistent with charity; but beyond this, an unbounded de-*  
fire

fire of heaping up great riches, is by no means so advantagious in this very respect, as a charitable dispensing them in wise proportions would be. For such is the instability of all temporal things, that, as the wise man elegantly expresses it, *Riches make themselves wings, and fly away, as an eagle towards Heaven*; that is, we cannot with all our Care, secure them to ourselves for any certain time; much less are *Riches for ever*, or do our possessions *endure for all generations*. We know not how soon they may be snatch'd from *Us*, by numberless unforeseen Accidents; or we may as suddenly be taken from *them*, and our Soul be required of us this very Night. In this Case no other part of them will be really beneficial to us, but that which by works of Charity hath been before *lent unto the Lord*, who in the Life to come *will repay it again*. And even in respect of our continuance in this *present World*, That which has been well laid out in doing Good to Mankind, has a greater Probability of turning to our Advantage even *here*; (considering the variety of Accidents

S E R M. dents all human Affairs are subject to ; )  
 XVII. than that which may have been covetously treasured up. For, as *Solomon* excellently expresses this matter, *Cast thy bread upon the Waters, and thou shalt find it after many days; Give a portion to seven, and also to eight, for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth, Eccles. xi. 1. and iii. 31. He that doth good turns, is mindful of that which may come hereafter; and when he falleth, he shall find a stay.* But this leads me to the

II<sup>d</sup> T H I N G I proposed to speak to, namely, what great Benefits and Advantages accrue to ourselves, by the Practice of this excellent Duty. And these I have but time barely to mention. And

*1<sup>st</sup>*; As has already been hinted; the Charitable man in the natural and ordinary course of things, lays up for himself a truer Security against the Accidents of the World, in the Love and Favour, the Affection and Good-Will of Men; than he could do by hoarding up the largest treasures. For these he may be robbed of by many Accidents; but *he which giveth to the poor, shall not lack, faith*



saith Solomon; and he that deviseth liberal things, saith the Prophet, by liberal things shall he stand. S E R M.  
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2dly; HE leaves behind him an honourable memory, which will be a benefit to his Children and Posterity after him. *He has dispersed abroad, he has given to the poor, his righteousness endureth for ever, his horn shall be exalted with honour: His seed shall be mighty upon earth, the generation of the upright shall be blessed,* Ps. cxii; 9, 2. And this, humanly speaking, even in the natural consequence and tendency of things. But

3dly; SUCH a person has moreover special Promises of the particular Blessing and Protection of Providence to himself and his posterity. *The liberal Soul shall be made fat, and he that watereth shall be watered also himself,* Prov. xi. 25. *If thou draw out thy Soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted Soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noon-day. And the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy Soul in drought, and make fat thy bones, and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like*

SERM. *like a spring of water, whose waters fail*  
 XVII. *not, If. lviii. 10. Be as a Father unto the*


*Fatherless, and instead of a Husband unto their Mother; so shalt thou be as the Son of the most High, and he will love thee more then thy Mother doth, Eccclus. iv. 10. But because now under the Gospel, temporal Blessings are not dispensed with the same certainty and regularity, as in the time of the Jews; therefore*

*4thly; THE Duty of Charity has likewise the largest promises of the Life to come. He that soweth bountifully, saith St Paul, shall reap bountifully: And our Saviour affirms of them that abound in this grace, that they make to themselves bags which wax not old; and lay up a treasure that faileth not, in the heavens, where neither moth nor rust doth consume, and where thieves do not break through and steal. And, as was before observed, in his description of the process at the great Judgment, he represents our Behaviour in this one respect, as that which will principally determine the final and irreversible Sentence at that dreadful Day.*

*Lastly,*

Lastly, THE Scripture frequently intimates, that Charity is one of the best Instruments of Repentance, and of assuring to us the pardon of past Sins. *Break off thy Sins by Repentance*, said Daniel to the King of *Babylon*, and *thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor*. *Water will quench a flaming fire*, saith the wise Son of *Sirach*, and *alms maketh an atonement for Sins*, Ecclus. iii. 39. *Blessed are the merciful*, saith our Saviour himself, *for they shall obtain mercy*. And *Charity*, saith *St Peter*, *shall cover the multitude of Sins*. The meaning is not, that Charity will excuse any man's continuance in Sin; but that it is an excellent mark and evidence of the Truth and Sincerity of our Repentance, and will afford us greater comfort and assurance in the expectation of the full pardon of Sins past and forsaken. And in this Sense we are to understand those Words of the Author of the Book of *Ecclesiasticus*, ch. xxix. ver. 9. *Help the poor for the commandments sake, and turn him not away because of his poverty*. *Lay up thy treasure according to the commandment of the most high, and it shall bring thee*

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S E R M. *more profit than gold. Shut up alms in thy*  
 XVII. *store-houses, and it shall deliver thee from*  
 *all affliction. It shall fight for thee against*  
*thine enemies, better than a mighty shield*  
*and strong spear. It remains in the*

III<sup>d</sup> and last place, THAT we consider briefly, in what particular Methods and Instances, this Duty may best and most usefully be performed. And here, the several manners of performing this Duty, are as various as the necessities of those who want to be relieved. We are to visit the sick, to relieve the needy, to feed the hungry, to cloath the naked, to comfort the afflicted, to instruct the ignorant, to reprove the wicked; in a word, to do every thing that we can observe will be beneficial to the Body or to the Soul of our Brother; as the Providence of God shall offer us opportunities, or as every man's Prudence shall direct him in the choice of objects on which to dispose his Charity. Concerning which there are no certain rules to be given; but every man has his Liberty to employ his bounty in such manner, as to himself shall seem best, and  
 most

most useful to the purposes he is chiefly desirous to promote. Only here I must not omit to observe, that there is one comprehensive method of Charity, which in its extent and effects is a compendium of all the instances of beneficence in one; and That is the education of poor children, to which your contribution is now desired. This is *feeding the hungry, and cloathing the naked with a garment*; this is instructing the ignorant, and propagating the knowledge of the Gospel of Christ; This is early sowing the Seeds of virtue and piety, and preventing the first beginnings of those habits of wickedness, which afterwards perhaps no Zeal for Reformation of manners would ever be able to root out; This is preventing idleness and poverty, and all their consequent ill effects; and (by a double benefit) making those to be useful members of the publick, who otherwise might be a burden and a hindrance to it. This is at once relieving the necessities of the present generation, and preventing the wants of those which are to come. To *this* therefore we are exhorted by all those

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arguments *in conjunction*, which *singly* incite us to dispense our Charity in any particular instances. To this we are invited by all the considerations of publick benefit, and by all the Motives of Religion. To this we are encouraged by the united force of all those promises at once, which in Scripture are made upon diverse occasions to the several methods of exercising Mercy and Charity. Which that they may have their full effect and influence upon us, *God of his infinite mercy, &c.*





# SERMON XVIII.

Of the Necessity of Offences arising  
against the Gospel.



LUK. xvii. 1.

*It is impossible but that Offences will come;  
but wo unto Him through whom they  
come.*



S, in matters of *Property and* S E R M.  
*Civil Right*, it cannot be but XVIII.  
Wars and Desolations will a-  
rise among Men; the Cause

of which Calamities ought  
always to be charged, not upon Him who  
happens to strike the first stroke, but up-  
on Him who by Oppression, Pride, and  
Ambition, unjustly incroaching upon his

E e 3 Neighbour's

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Neighbour's Rights, makes the Breach unavoidable: So, in matters of *Religion* likewise, it is impossible but that *Offences will* come. The Progress of the *Gospel*, and the Prevailing of *Truth* in the World, *will* be hindred by the ill behaviour of *Some*; And the Practice of *Righteousness*, among those who have already embraced the Truth in Profession, *will* be discouraged by the Corruption and Perverseness of *Others*. But *Wo* be to that man, says our Saviour, through *whom these Offences come*: *Wo* be to *Him*, who by his *Wickedness* hinders the Propagation of *Truth*, or the practice of *Virtue*. Concerning *Other* Sinners, and such as through *Infirmity* fall into Errors of all kinds, our Saviour always speaks with great *Tenderness* and *Compassion*; treating them, as a *Physician* does a weak Patient, with all possible *Gentleness* and *Care*. But those who through *Pride* and a *Tyrannical Spirit* oppose and set themselves against the *Truth*, or through *Ambition* and for worldly Ends persist in things which necessarily cause *Divisions* and *Contentions* among *Christians*, or by profligate Living  
 corrupt



corrupt and debauch Mankind; against those through whom *such* Offences come, he always denounces the most severe *Wo*. S E R M.  
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THE word, *Offence*, in its general and most usual acceptation, signifies every *Sin*, every Action whereby God is offended or displeased. But in the *Text*, it seems more particularly to be meant of *such* Sins, as are occasions either of deterring men from embracing the Gospel, or of tempting them to disobey it. For so our Saviour in the very next words, after he had declared *Wo be to Him through whom Offences come*, explains it by adding, ver. 2. *Better were it for him, that a milstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the Sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones*; that he should offend them, that is, that he should cast a *stumbling-block* before them; so the word *literally* signifies; that he should cause them to sin, that he should discourage them in their duty, that he should tempt them to offend God. In the *old law*, it is written, *Deut. xxvii. 18. Cursed be He that maketh the Blind to wander out of the way*; and *Lev. xix. 14. Thou shalt not put a stumbling-*

E e 4 bling-

S E R M. *bling-block before the Blind, but shalt fear*  
 XVIII. *thy God.* In the *literal* sense, the Com-  
 mandment is right, and, no doubt, in-  
 tended in the Law: But the *spiritual* sense  
 is of more importance, and perhaps *ulti-*  
*mately* intended in the *Law itself*; Cursed  
 be He, that by his Example or Authority,  
 maketh the Weak to wander out of the  
 way of Righteousness. In the *parallel*  
 place of St *Matthew's* Gospel, our Savi-  
 our still more expressly explains This to  
 be the meaning of the Text; ch. xviii. 6.  
*Whoso, says he, shall offend one of these*  
*little ones that believe in Me*; one of these  
*little ones*; that is, any plain and sincere  
 Christian, such a one as in the foregoing  
 part of his Discourse he had compared  
 for simplicity and sincerity to a little  
 Child; *Whoso, says he, shall offend one of*  
*these little ones*; whoso shall draw or lead  
 such a one into Sin, *better were it for him*  
*that a milstone were hanged about his neck,*  
*and that he were drowned in the depth of*  
*the sea.* And then he goes on, ver. 7. *It*  
*must needs be that Offences come*; but *Wo*  
*to that man, by whom,* (not, by whose  
*occasion* perhaps, but by whose *Fault,*) *the*  
 Offence

Offence cometh. In which passage what he means by *Offence*, he again explains, ver. 10.----*Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; take heed lest ye think it a light thing, a Matter of small consequence, to draw them into Sin; for I say unto you, that in Heaven their Angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in Heaven: that is, those mean and sincere persons, whom ye have so little regard for, are the Care of Angels, and under the Protection of God.*


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BUT to consider more distinctly the words of the Text: *It is impossible*, says our Saviour, *but that Offences will come; but Wo unto Him, Wo to That Man, or Body of Men, thro' whom they come.* In Discourſing upon these words, it will be proper to show particularly, 1st, *What* the principal of those *Offences* are, which hinder the propagation of the Gospel of Truth: 2dly, In *what* Sense our Saviour must be understood to affirm, that 'tis *impossible* but such offences *will* come; or, as 'tis expressed in St *Matthew*, that it must *needs be* that *Offences* come. 3dly, Why a *particular Wo* is, by way of emphasis

S E R M. *phasis and distinction*, denounced against  
 XVIII. the Persons *by whom* these Offences come.  
 4<sup>thly</sup> and *lastly*, I shall draw some *particular Inferences* from the Whole.

I. IN the *First* place, it will be proper to consider, *what* the principal of those *Offences* are, which hinder the Propagation of the Gospel of Truth. And though *every thing* that is faulty in *any* kind, does in its measure and degree contribute to This Evil; yet whoever considers the State of the Christian World, and the History of the Church in all Ages from the Beginning, will find that the Great *Offences*, (or, as the original word literally signifies, the *Stumbling-Blocks*) which have all along chiefly hindred the Progress of true Christianity, are these which follow.


*1st, Corruption of Doctrine.* The Gospel of Christ, as taught by himself, and his Apostles in its original Plainness and Purity, is a Doctrine of Truth and Simplicity, a Doctrine so easy to be understood, so reasonable to be practised, so agreeable to the natural notions and reason of Mankind, so beneficial in its effects

fects if men were really governed by it; S E R M  
 teaching them nothing but the Worship XVIII.  
 of the True God, thro' the Mediation of   
 Christ; and towards each Other, Justice,  
 Righteousness, Meekness, Charity, and  
 universal Good-Will; in expectation of  
 a future judgment, and of a lasting State  
 of Happiness in a better World, for them  
 who love God and keep his Command-  
 ments: This Doctrine of Christ, I say, in  
 its native Simplicity and Purity, is so rea-  
 sonable, so excellent, and of such irresist-  
 ible Evidence; that had it never been *cor-*  
*rupted* by Superstitions from *within*, it ne-  
 ver could have been opposed by Power  
 from *without*; but it must of necessity  
 have *captivated* Mankind, *to the obedience*  
*of Faith*; 'till the *knowledge of the Lord*  
*had filled the Earth, as the Waters cover*  
*the Sea.* But *Offences* soon came, and the  
 Enemy sowed *Tares* among this Wheat.  
 The *Jewish* Believers, even in the Apostles  
 own times, contended for the necessity of  
 observing the *rites and ceremonies* of the  
 Law of *Moses*; And This gave just *Offence*  
 to the *Gentiles*, and deterred them from  
 readily embracing the Gospel. Others,  
 built

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built *hay and stubble* upon the foundation of Christ; bringing in *mixtures of Jewish Fables*, and *questions that ministred strife*, rather than *godly edifying*; and introducing (after the Example of the *Pharisees*,) *will-worship*, and *voluntary humilities*, and *commandments of Men*; which, like a Cloud, darkned the clear Light, and obscured the inexpressible *native beauty*, of the *glorious Gospel of Christ*. After This, *Other Offences* arose from among the *Gentile-Converts*, who by degrees corrupting themselves after the Similitude of the *Heathen-Worshippers*, introduced *Saints and Images*, and *Pompous Ceremonies*, and *Grandour* into the Church, instead of true *Virtue and Righteousness of Life*. Concerning These, our Saviour speaks, *Rev. ii. 14. Thou hast them that hold the Doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto Idols, and to commit fornication: By fornication, meaning spiritual fornication, or corruption of the plain and uniform Worship of God. These were Offences indeed; Offences, which gave occasion at*  
length,

length, to the rise and growth of the S E R M. *Turkish* Empire, in opposition to Chri- XVIII.  stianity; Offences, which have all along prevented the Remains of the Nation of the *Jews*, from universally embracing the Profession of Christ's Religion: Offences, which together with the introducing of dark and unintelligible Doctrines, and the requiring of blind Submission to an *Infallible Guide*, instead of exhorting men to study seriously the *word of God*, and to live in the Practice of all *virtue and righteousness* in expectation of that Great Day when God shall judge every man according to his Works; ended at last in that Great and General Corruption, which the Scripture calls, *Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth*. This therefore is the *First* Great Offence, which hinders the propagation of the Gospel of Truth: *Corruption of Doctrine*; or, Destroying the Plainness and Simplicity of the religion of Christ.

2dly, T H E Next is; *Divisions, Contentions, and Animosities* among Christians; arising from Pride, and from a Desire of  
Do-

S E R M. Dominion, and from building matters of  
 XVIII. an uncertain nature, and of humane In-  
 vention upon the Foundation of Christ. *Other Foundation, says the Apostle, can no man lay, than that which is laid, even Jesus Christ. Upon This foundation, the whole Building fitly framed together, groweth unto an Holy Temple in the Lord; supported by Righteousness and true Virtue, and united in one Holy Bond of Charity and Love. By This, says our Saviour, shall all men know that ye are my Disciples, if ye have Love one to another. And St John tells us, that God is Love; and he that dwelleth in Love, dwelleth in God. And St Paul declares, that Love is the Fulfilling of the Law, Rom. xiii. 8; For, all the Commandments, says he, Thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not steal, and so on; and if there be any other Commandment, they are all briefly comprehended in This Saying, Thou shalt Love thy Neighbour as thy self. Did men rightly understand This to be the Great End of Christ's Religion, and sincerely endeavour to practise it accordingly; whence then could Heats and Enmities, Contentions and*



*and Animosities*, possibly arise among S E R M. *Christians*; among those, whose Religion XVIII. teaches them nothing but Meekness, Goodness, and Charity; *Charity* towards their *brethren*, and *Meekness* even to those that oppose themselves? St James shows us the only Spring, from whence Contentions arise; ch. iv. 1. *From whence*, says he, *come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even from your Lusts?* from the Lust of *Dominion*, and *Temporal Power*; from the Lust of *Contentiousness*, *Peevishness*, or *Ambition*; from the Lust of being Lords over each other's Faith, instead of being *Helpers* towards the common Salvation. *Rom. xvi. 17: Mark them which cause Divisions and Offences, contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned;* (that is, contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned of *Christ and his Apostles*;) Mark those, who, contrary to This doctrine, *cause Divisions*, by laying the great Strefs, in matters of Religion, upon *Commandments and Traditions of Men*, *Col. ii. 8.* Almost all *Heats* and *uncharitable Contentions* among *Christians*, have in all Ages sprung from this

Root :

S E R M. Root; not so much concerning the Com-  
 XVIII. mandments of *God*, which are plain and  
 easy to be understood by *All*; as about  
 the *Impositions*, and the *Authority* of *Men*.  
 These have been the *great Offence*, which  
 has hindred the Conversion of the World  
 to Christ; while Infidel Nations observe,  
 that Christians who preach that their Re-  
 ligion is *Charity*, yet *bate* and *revile* and  
*persecute* each other. The *Great Offence*,  
 I say, which in all Nations and in all  
 Ages has hindred the propagation of the  
 Gospel of Truth, has been a hypocritical  
 Zeal to secure by Force a fictitious uni-  
 formity of opinion, which is indeed im-  
 possible in nature; instead of the real  
 Christian Unity of Sincerity, Charity, and  
 mutual Forbearance, *which is the bond of*  
*Perfection*.

3dly, THE *Third* and *Last* great *Of-  
 fence* I shall mention, by which the pro-  
 pagation of true Religion is hindred; is  
 the *vicious* and *debauched Lives*, (not of  
*Christians*, for That is a contradiction;  
 but) of those who for Form's sake *pro-  
 fess* themselves to be so. For as the good  
*Lives* of those who stile themselves the

Servants of God, are a *Light shining before men*, causing them to *glorify the God of Heaven*, and to admire a Religion which is of such great Benefit to Mankind : So, on the contrary, the *vicious and corrupt Practices* of those who call themselves Christians, cannot but raise a Prejudice against, and cast a Reproach upon, the Religion which seems to have so little influence upon the Lives of its Professors. Among those who are *already Believers*, the minds of the Weak are by such ill Examples corrupted, tempted, and emboldened to sin ; being by degrees made less *sensible* of the *Danger* of Wickedness, and edified *as it were* unto destruction : So St Paul most elegantly expresses himself in the instance of Idolatry ; 1 Cor. viii. 10. *Shall not the conscience of him that is Weak, be edified*, (that is the word in the original, and in the margin of our Bibles,) *shall he not be edified, i. e. be led on by degrees, to eat things offered unto Idols?* And by the same means, that the *Manners* of Believers are corrupted ; Infidels are at the same time confirmed in their *Unbelief*, and emboldened to despise and




mock at all Religion. *By This Deed*, said the prophet *Nathan* to *David*, reprov- ing him for his Adultery and Murder; by *This Deed thou hast given great occasion to the Enemies of the Lord* to blaspheme, 2 Sam. xii. 14. And by reason of the Wick- edness of *Eli's Sons*, 'tis recorded that *men* abhorred *the Offering of the Lord*, 1 Sam. ii. 17. And, speaking of the Corruption of the *Jewish Nation*; *The Heathen*, says God by *Ezekiel*, profaned *my holy Name*, when they said to them, *These are the peo- ple of the Lord*. Which passage of the Prophet, *St Paul* cites and applies to wicked Christians, *Rom. ii. 23. Through breaking the Law, dishonourest thou God? For the Name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles, through You, as it is written.* And the same Argument he urges like- wise in *other* of his Epistles; Exhorting men to the practice of Righteousness and Holiness, that *They of the contrary part may be ashamed, and that the word of God be not blasphemed*, *Tit. ii 5, 8.* and *1 Tim. vi. 1. that the Name of God, and his Doctrine, be not blasphemed.*

TO conclude this Head; our Saviour S E R M.  
 in his Parable, where he compares the XVIII.  
 End of the World to the Time of Har-  
 vest, describes Iniquity under the charac-  
 ter of an *Offence* or *Scandal*, in the sense  
 I am now speaking of; *The Son of man*,  
 saith he, *shall send forth his Angels, and*  
*they shall gather out of his kingdom all*  
*things that offend, (in the original it is,*  
*all Scandals,) and them which do iniquity.*  
 Matt. xiii. 41.

II. HAVING thus at large explained  
 what is meant in the Text by the word,  
*Offences*; I proceed in the *Second* place to  
 consider in what sense our Saviour must  
 be understood to affirm, that 'tis *impos-*  
*sible* but such *Offences* will come; or, as  
 'tis expressed in *St Matthew*, that it must  
*needs be* that *Offences* come. And here  
 there have been some so absurdly unrea-  
 sonable, as to understand this of a *proper*  
 and *natural* Necessity; as if God had  
*ordained* that *Offences* should come, and  
 had accordingly *predestinated* particular  
 men to commit them. But This, is di-  
 rectly charging *God* with the Sins of *Men*;  
 and making *Him*, not *themselves*, the Au-

S E R M. thor of Evil. The plain meaning of our  
 XVIII. Saviour, when he affirms it to be *impos-*  
 ~~~~~ *sible* but that Offences *will* come, is This  
 only; that, considering the State of the  
 World, the Number of Temptations, the  
 Freedom of mens Will, the Frailty of  
 their Nature, the Perverseness and Obsti-  
 nacy of their Affections; it cannot be *ex-*  
*pected*, it cannot be *supposed*, it cannot be  
*hoped*, but that Offences *will* come; tho'  
 it be very unreasonable they *should* come.  
 Men *need* not, men *ought* not to *corrupt*  
*the doctrine of Christ*; they *need* not *dis-*  
*honour* their Religion, by unchristian *Heats,*  
*Contentions,* and *Animosities* among them-  
 selves; much less is there any *Necessity*  
 that they should *live contrary* to it, by  
*vicious and debauched Practices*: And yet,  
 morally speaking, it *cannot be* but that all  
 these things *will* happen. The manner  
 of using the like Expressions in *other*  
 places of Scripture, does evidently and  
 beyond contradiction show This to be the  
 true Sense of the words. Thus our Sa-  
 viour, St *Mar.* xiii. 7. speaking of Wars  
 and Tumults, *When ye shall bear,* says he,  
*of Wars and Rumours of Wars, be ye not*  
*troubled;*

troubled; For such things must needs be: S E R M. XVII.  
 They must needs be; that is, not that   
 God has laid upon men any necessity of quarrelling; but that, from the Wickedness of the World, nothing better can be expected. St *John*, by a like manner of 1 Joh. iii. speaking, tells us of *some* persons so far <sup>9</sup> improved in Virtue, that they cannot sin; and St *Peter*, of *Others* so extremely corrupted, that they cannot cease from Sin: 2 Pet. ii. <sup>14</sup>  
 and our Saviour himself, of *Rich* persons, for whom, *with* men, that is, *humanely speaking*, it is impossible to enter into the Mat. xix. Kingdom of Heaven. All which expressions most evidently signify, not *natural* <sup>23</sup> *Impossibilities*, but *moral Improbabilities* only. To mention but One place more; *It cannot be*, says our Lord, St *Luk.* xiii. 33; *it cannot be, that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem*: His meaning is This only; that *Jerusalem* was then so very wicked and corrupt a place, that it would be a very strange thing, a thing hardly to be imagined, that a Prophet should be slain in any *other* City. And Thus therefore likewise in the words of the Text, *It is impossible but that Offences will come*:

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That is to say; In the course of a World, wherein (according to the nature of a Probation-state) *all* men are *free*, and among Them *some* are *weak*, and *many* will be *wicked*; it cannot be expected but that Offences *must* come. And 'tis *very reasonable* for the Providence of God to *permit* it so to be, for the Trial and Improvement of the Sincere: 1 Cor. xi. 19. *There must be also Heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest*: The meaning is; There *will* be Factions, Parties, and Animosities, arising among worldly and contentious men from the Love of Power and Dominion: And by These, (by suffering These sometimes to prevail almost universally, and to exalt themselves with great Power and Authority in the World,) the Providence of God tries and distinguishes, *who* are Lovers of the Truth, and Goodness, and Meekness of the Gospel, and *who* on the contrary are of worldly, factious, and ambitious Tempers.

III. I PROPOSED to consider in the *Third* place, *why* a particular *Wo* is, by way of Emphasis and Distinction, denounced



nounced against the Persons by whom these Offences come: *Wo unto Him, Wo to That Man, or That Body of Men, who-soever or of how great Power soever they be, thro' whom the Offences come.* That, in general, those who by their ill Behaviour bring reproach upon the Gospel of Christ, are *worthy of Punishment*, notwithstanding the *Necessity* of such Offences coming; appears from what has been shown under the fore-going Head; *viz.* that the *Necessity* of Offences coming, is not that *God* lays a *necessity* upon any *Man to be wicked*, (which would indeed excuse the *Man*, and transfer the Fault upon *God himself*;) but only declares, that mens voluntary *wickedness and corruption* is such, that it *cannot be expected* but Offences *will* come. We have an extraordinary instance of This kind, in the case of *Judas*. *God decreed* that the Son of Man should be betrayed to Death; and accordingly *foretold* by the Prophets, that One of his Followers should betray him. Yet *God* did not predestinate *Judas* to be *wicked*: But *Christ*, in order to accomplish the Will of *God*, chose on purpose

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one such Disciple whose Heart he knew was *wicked*, and gave him (as might have been given to any *other* wicked man) an *opportunity* to betray him. Thus both the Will of God was accomplished in the Death of Christ; and yet *Judas*, like other wicked men, acted merely from the Wickedness of his own Heart, and therefore had no Excuse for his Crime: *Matt. xxvi. 24. The Son of man goeth, as it is written of him; but Wo unto that man by Whom the Son of man is betrayed; it had been good for that man, if he had not been born.* The expression is of the same kind, and the manner of arguing the same, as in the words of the Text; *It is impossible but that Offences will come, but Wo unto Him through whom they come; It were better for him that a milstone were banged about his neck, and he cast into the Sca; that is, better were it for him, that he had never been born, or that he had quickly perished by some untimely Death.* Thus it appears plainly *in general*, that the *Necessity* here mentioned of Offences coming, is *no Excuse* for those, by whose Wickedness they come.

BUT

BUT then further, the reason why a *particular Wo*, by way of *Emphasis and Distinction*, is denounced against the Persons, by whom the Offences here spoken of arise; is because they are Offences of an *extensive Nature*; hindrances to the propagation of the Gospel; Sins, not only in the persons who immediately commit them, but *Stumbling-blocks* causing Others to sin likewise, and promoting in general the Cause of Satan. Now if *they who turn many to righteousness, shall shine* (as the Scripture assures us,) with a distinguished Glory as the Stars for ever and ever; and *he that converteth a Sinner from the Errour of his Way, shall hide a multitude of Sins*: for the same reason, they who by *corrupt Practices*, or by *absurd and unreasonable Doctrines*, (contrary to the express Command of our Saviour, *Call no man Father upon Earth, for One is your Father which is in Heaven; and be not ye called Rabbi, for one is your master, even Christ*: They, I say, who by introducing Doctrines upon the Authority of men, contrary to this express Command of Christ,)

deter

S E R M. deter men from believing the Gospel, and  
 XVIII. prevent them from coming into the way  
 of righteousness; deserve justly in proportion a *greater Condemnation*.

IV. T H E *Inferences* I shall draw from what has been said, are:

1<sup>st</sup>, F R O M the explication which has been given of these words of our Saviour, *It is impossible but that Offences will come*; we may learn, not to charge God with Evil; nor to ascribe to any Decree of His, the Wickedness and Impieties of Men. And whenever any Text of Scripture may possibly in the literal Sense to a careless Reader seem to give countenance to any such Notion, we must always be careful to compare with it *other* Expressions of the like nature, which will be found in other *parallel* places of Scripture; and then the true Sense of Both, will easily appear, even to a mean Understanding.

2<sup>dly</sup>, S I N C E our Saviour has forewarned us, that it *must needs be* that such Offences will come, as may prove Stumbling-blocks to the weak and unattentive; let us take care, since we have received

ceived this Warning, not to stumble or be offended at them. Let us not, because Christians (as they call themselves) *will* lead wicked lives, and *will* be contentious for dominion over each other's Faith, and *will* introduce blind, corrupt, and unintelligible Doctrines; let us not, I say, upon any of *these* Accounts, which our Saviour has so plainly fore-warned us of; let us not think at all the worse of *Christianity itself*, of the *true*, the *plain*, the *peaceable*, the universally *charitable* and *beneficent* Doctrine of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

3dly, AND above all; As we ought not to *take*, so much more ought we to be careful that we never *give*, any of these Offences. Let not any of them who call themselves Christians, live *vicious and debauched lives*. Let us not sow *Divisions*, by endeavouring to *impose* upon each Other in matters of Faith, and by *lording it* (as the Apostle expresses himself) *over the heritage of God*. Let us not, by departing from the unerring Rules of *Reason* and *Scripture*, corrupt the plain and beautiful Doctrine of Christ; but endea-

vour

S E R M. your always to keep it in that *original*  
 XVIII. *Simplicity*, wherein he himself has deli-  
 ~~~~~  
 vered it in such a manner, as to be level  
 to the capacity even of the meanest Un-  
 derstandings. Nay, let us *not only* not  
*give* any of these Offences, but let us by  
 all possible means endeavour diligently to  
*prevent* them. Our Saviour exhorts us, in  
 the words immediately following the  
 Text, as they are recorded in St *Matthew's*  
 Gospel, ch. xviii. 8; *If thy hand offend*  
*thee, cut it off; and if thine Eye offend thee,*  
*pluck it out*: that is, (as appears from the  
 connexion of these words with those of  
 the Text;) how great worldly Tempta-  
 tions soever, any *Man* or any *Body of men*  
 may have, to do any thing which will of-  
 fend or hinder Others from embracing the  
 Gospel; yet do it not. Abstain, (not in-  
 deed from any thing which is *necessary*  
 in order to preserve either the *Truth and*  
*Simplicity of the Gospel*, or the *Practice*  
*of Righteousness*; but abstain,) both from  
 imposing and from practising, even things  
*innocent and indifferent*, if doing other-  
 wise will accidentally be a prejudice to  
 true Religion: *Rom. xiv. 21. It is good,*  
*neither*

*neither to eat flesh nor to drink wine,* S E R M.  
(much less to insist on any needless Doc- XVIII.  
trine or Ceremony,) *nor any thing where-  
by thy Brother stumbleth or is offended, or  
is made Weak.* For my own part, says  
St Paul, *if meat make my Brother to of-  
fend, I will eat no Flesh while the World  
standeth, rather than make my Brother of-  
fend.* To conclude: *Provide things ho-  
nest,* says the same Apostle, *in the Sight  
of all men.* Have a good Report from  
*them that are without,* that is, even from  
Unbelievers themselves. In a word; *Give  
no offence,* says he, *neither to the Jews,  
nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of  
God.*

*The End of V O L. VI.*



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