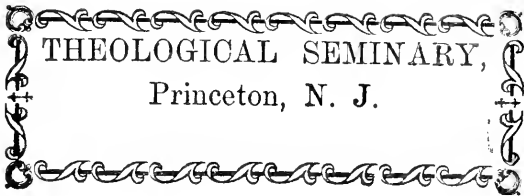
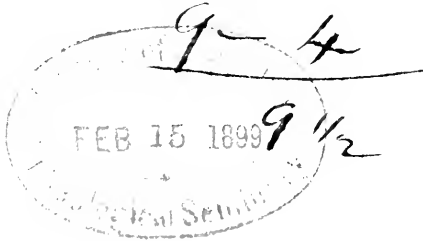




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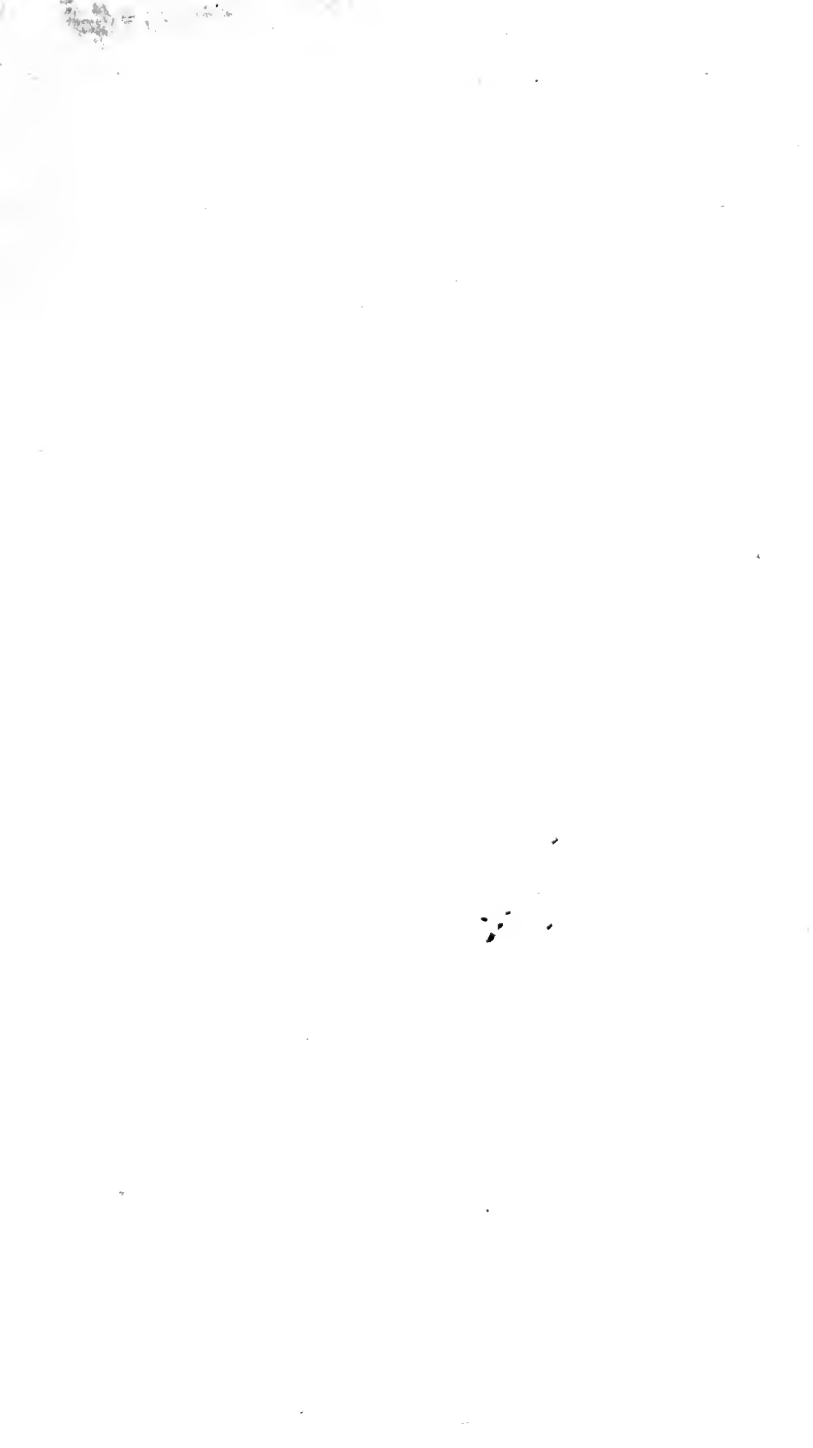
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Presented by the Hon^{ble}
Judge Livingston, of New York
to the Theological Seminary
of the Presbyterian Church

SERMONS

ON

Various Subjects:

WITH

A PREFATORY DISCOURSE

ON

Mistakes concerning RELIGION,

ENTHUSIASM, EXPERIENCES, &c.

BY

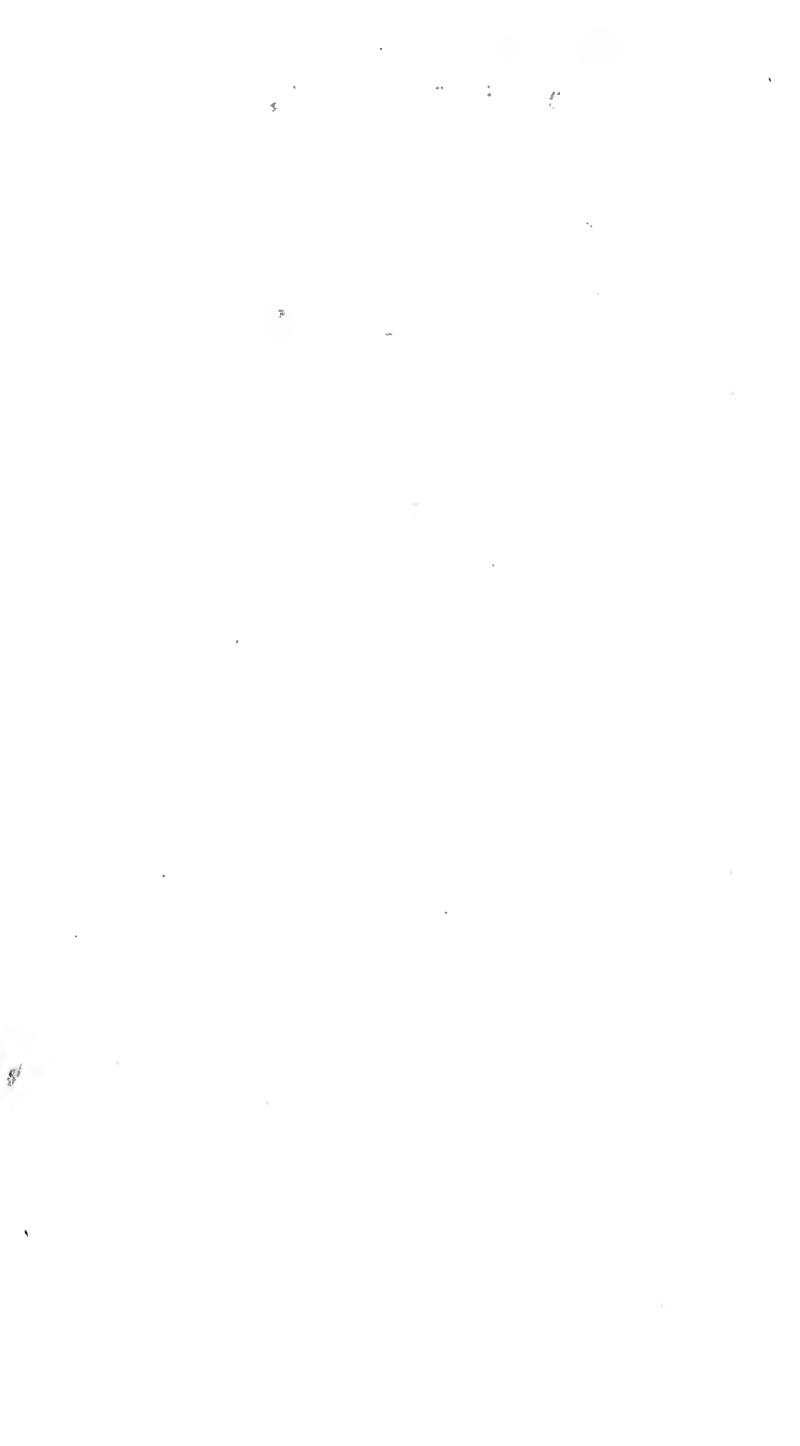
THOMAS HARTLEY, A. M.

Rector of WINWICK in *Northamptonshire*.

The SECOND EDITION, Corrected.

L O N D O N,

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TO THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE

SELINA,

Countess of *Huntingdon*.

MADAM,

I BEG Leave to present the following Work to your LADYSHIP in this publick Manner, as well in Acknowledgment of my being indebted to your Conversation for many things

A 2

in

DEDICATION.

in this Volume, as to add my Testimony of due Respect and Esteem for a Character become indeed RIGHT HONOURABLE; by a distinguished Zeal for the Gospel of *Christ*: That this Zeal is according to Knowledge, and that of the best Kind, I can truly affirm, having found it profitable to many for Instruction in Righteousness. But if, MADAM, you stand thus largely indebted to the divine Goodness for the Gift of Knowledge, your Obligations to the Same are still greater for the Grace of Charity; as this is *yet a more excellent Way*.

The Narrowness that is observable in many *Christians* (who in other respects

DEDICATION.

spects are of good Report) towards such as differ from them in some particular Points of Doctrine or Modes of Worship, is not only a great Hindrance to their Perfection, but also a very unhappy Blemish in the Beauty of Holiness, and owing chiefly to their resting in the outward Courts of the Temple, and not entering into that which is within the Vail; for the more spiritual any Person is, the more diffusive of Benevolence and Charity is the Heart of such a one towards all the Members of *Christ's* mystical Body: And this is well exemplified in that easy Access to your LADYSHIP which the truly Pious of every Denomination are sure to find: Such free Intercourse of Christian Fellow-

DEDICATION.

Fellowship, such unlimited Good-Will towards Men, as it is the most amiable Expression of a Catholic Charity, so, I am sure, it is bringing the highest Honour to any particular Church; for it bears the aptest Resemblance to that blessed Communion of Saints in Glory, where all human Distinctions are swallowed up in the Unity of the Spirit and the Bond of Peace; and where no other Preference takes place than what arises from Superiority in Holiness and Love.

That you may go on, MADAM, in the same Strength of divine Grace to adorn the Doctrine of God our Saviour in all Things, and to evince by
your

DEDICATION.

your persevering Example that Piety
gives the truest Dignity and brightest
Lustre to Nobility, is the sincere
Prayer of,

MADAM,

Your most respectful

and most obedient Servant,

THOMAS HARTLEY.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

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P R E F A C E.

THE main Design of the Sacred Writings is to bring us acquainted with our lost State, under the Corruption and Apostacy of the Human Nature by the Fall, and with our Redemption by *Jesus Christ*. The Rules and Precepts laid down both in the Law and the Gospel were given primarily to restrain us from Sin, which, as it was the Occasion of our Ruin, so, if continued in, will be the certain Hindrance of our Recovery: And the Doctrines therein contained instruct us in the Nature of that Grace which bringeth Salvation, and teach us to turn to it as our only Help and Remedy: Thus in refraining from Evil, and being subject to Grace, we are in the way of practical and acceptable Obedience to all God's Commands. To deny that Man is by Nature wretched and sinful argues extreme Ignorance or Perverseness, and to affirm that he

came such out of the Hands of his Creator is to contradict the Testimony of the Scriptures, and to charge God both foolishly and impiously: To deny therefore Original Sin, in the Sense of our Church, is the most complicated of Heresies, as it makes void the Covenant of Grace, and saps the Foundation of revealed Religion. Every one carries in his own Bosom a Witness to the Truth of this Doctrine, as every one finds in himself, in a greater or less degree, a want of due Love both to God and his Neighbour.

The Gospel of *Christ* is a Dispensation of Peace, graciously calculated to reconcile us both to God and one another, but how it has failed in general of these blessed Effects, through the prevailing Power of Corruption and Sin, let the Annals of Church History testify, which inform us how often *Christendom* has been turned into a Field of Blood, and represent the horrid Barbarities of *Christians*, so called, towards their Brethren, as equalling, and in some Instances exceeding, the tyrannous Hatred of persecuting Heathens: And therefore all those Prophecies which foretel the peaceable happy State of *Christ's* Church on Earth suffer Violence
when

when expounded as already fulfilled: The outward Establishment of *Christianity* has in no sufficient Sense yet answered the glorious Description, and consequently they must refer to some future joyful Time when Men shall not only live safe under the Profession, but also in the Temper and Spirit of the Gospel: Then, and not till then, shall Nation cease to lift up Sword against Nation, and they that are called by the Holy Name, depart from Iniquity and love as Brethren.

The bloody Sword of Persecution hath indeed for some time slept in its Scabbard, but the Spirit of it neither slumbereth nor sleepeth: The Animosities that prevail among the several divided Parties of *Christians* in the World are an indubitable Proof of this; nor can we hesitate to pronounce that they have War in their Hearts whilst they sharpen their Tongues like a Serpent, and shoot out their Arrows, even bitter Words. If we go to and fro among the outward Churches of *Christendom*, and fix our Attention on the wrangling Disputes of the Learned, and the bigotted Zeal of the ignorant Multitude, instead of saying, Lo here is *Christ*, or lo, there! we shall be tempted to say, that He is neither here

nor there, but that the whole is a Babel of Contention, and that were the emblematic Dove sent forth from the Ark of God amongst us, she would find little Rest for the Sole of her Foot; nay, to such a Height have the Waters of Strife prevailed as scarcely to afford her an Olive Branch for a Token of Peace upon the Earth: Now where Envy and Strife is, there is not only Confusion, but every Evil Work, Wickedness in High Places, and Wickedness in Low.

Great Pains and much Invention have been employed by Authors of different Persuasions to fix the Character of *Antichrist* on this or that particular Church: Some of our own, learnedly wise in their Expositions of the *Apocalypse*, have fancied that this Mystery of Iniquity, in every Limb and Feature, is exactly and singly pourtrayed in the Bishop of *Rome*; and some among the weaker of the Protestant Dissenters, led by an educational Prejudice against Episcopacy, have divided the Hoof, and given one half to the Church of *Rome* and the other to the Church of *England*, not knowing that *Antichrist* has no more to do with the Hierarchical than with any other

other Form of Church Government; that he is not confined to any particular Characters, Places, or Churches, but hath set his Foot on the Breadth of the whole Earth, and erects his Throne as easily in a Synod of Presbyters as in a Consistory of Cardinals: For wherever there is a thirst after earthly Dominion, or the Exercise of tyrannical Power over Mens Consciences; wherever the same Hands that deal out the mystical Body and Blood of *Christ* are defiled with the Wages of Unrighteousness; wherever those Hearts which should be Temples of the living God, and bear the Image and Supercription of the humble *Jesus*, are exalted in Pride above their Brethren; wherever any thing that is in Man, or can be of Man, usurps the Place of *Christ*, and robs Him of any Part of the Honour of our Salvation; and lastly, wherever Persecution hangs out her bloody Flag for the ravening Wolves to hunt and devour the harmless Sheep of *Christ*; whether this be at *Rome* or *Geneva*, among *Papists*, *Lutherans*, *Calvinists*, or others—There Abomination sitteth in the Holy Place — There *Cain* smiteth *Abel*—There *Antichrist* lifts up his Horn.

That is a common Error and fatal in its Consequences to true Religion, which places more to the account of the outward Constitution of that national Church to which Men belong, than to the Life and Power of Godliness: Hence it is, that most of the Disputes which have exercised the Pens and Patience of Writers and Readers, have been about the external Polity, the Ceremonies, or the different Opinions of this or that Church, rather than concerning the Fundamentals of *Christianity*: and hence that in general People do not so much mean by *making Converts* the winning of Souls to *Christ*, and bringing them under the powerful Influences of Gospel Salvation, as making them Profelytes to some particular Modes of Worship, or to a certain Way of Thinking about Religion. That Sameness of Communion in Externals among *Christians*, who are united in Spirit and Affection, is a desirable thing no one can well deny; but that such Agreement in all outward and accessory things is necessary or to be expected, ought not to be affirmed; * for

* The falling of the Church into a Variety of Opinions and Modes of Worship is impossible to be prevented by lawful Courses, since infallible Guides and Prophets have disap-

were People divested of that Pride, Selfishness, and Impatience which so indispose them for bearing with others, they might find that different outward Communions among *Christians*, are as compatible with the Peace of the Universal Church, as different Bodies Corporate are with the Peace of a Kingdom : I speak of such Christian Societies as build upon one Foundation, hold the same Head, and maintain no Principles contrary to the Essence of Faith or the Safety of Civil Government : Such different Families of *Christians*, if the Expression may be allowed, amicably dissenting concerning lesser Points, and applying *St. Paul's* Doctrine of Moderation about Meats and Drinks to the respective Subjects of their Difference, may have been permitted in the Church from the Beginning to serve as so many Checks one upon another to restrain from disorderly Walking,

peared : Therefore it is a thing not to be condemned in itself; for under Diversity of Judgments and Forms God may be worshiped in Spirit and in Truth, as in the primitive Time by the Jewish and Gentile Christian ; which Variety offends not God, so that Obedience to Magistrates be firmly retained, and a Zeal for Holiness more than for Opinions, and those healing Principles of Charity be kept alive which cherish mutual Forbearance and Love to each other, under our different Apprehensions and Modes of Worship. See *Bromley's* Sabbath of Rest, Article MAKKELOTH.

to excite holy Emulations, to afford various Occasions for the Exercife of Christian Charity, to prevent Combinations to corrupt the Scriptures, or as a Means to preferve or revive fome precious Truth or Doctrine that might otherwise fuffer Lofs: But tho' fome or other of thefe good Ends may hereby be answered through the over-ruling Power of Providence, yet it would confefledly be making a bad Ufe of this Argument to form it into a Pretext for Divifions entered upon through Wantonnefs, or to palliate the Guilt of caufeless Schifms grounded in Fondnefs for Novelty and Change.

What has here been faid in Favour of tender Confcienccs well agrees with the Temper and Moderation of our excellent Church in this Matter; yet fome, otherwife minded, object to all fuch charitable Indulgence, That God is the God of Order and not of Confufion: But the Application of this Text obtains no proper Place here, as Order is well confiftent with Diverfity, tho' not with Confufion, nay Diverfity, in proper Difpofition and Arrangement, is in frequent Inftances the very Beauty of Order; and fuch Diverfity is vifible in all God's Works; every *Genus* of Animals and Vegetables

tables in their different Tribes bears Testimony to this Truth, and doubtless the Blessed Angels and Spirits of just Men made perfect belong to different Classes and Governments, according to their various Kinds and Degrees of Excellence, and their different Capacities for Glory: If Men therefore differ, let it be according to their Order and to the Will of God, and then all is well, the want of Unity in their Form will be no Hindrance to their Unity of Spirit in the Bond of Peace, and their Differences will become only as different Notes in a Psaltery, whose Variety harmonizes in one melodious Tune of Praise to the Lord of all Lords, whose Wisdom, Power, and Goodness are displayed with infinite Diversity, tho' wonderful Order, throughout the Kingdoms of Heaven and Earth.

As the Word *Establishment* is often used by some as a Plea for Uncharitableness, and such a Constitution is too much rested in by others as a proper Security for the Truth and Welfare of Religion: That we may not grow remiss by our Advantage, and so become Losers by that which was intended for our Benefit; that we be not high minded but fear, and not trust in the Arm of Flesh

Flesh for our Defence, but in the living God, it will be proper on this Account, as well as to answer other Designs of this *Preface*, to consider some of the various Changes and Revolutions that have happened in the Church since its first Alliance with the State. And here we shall do well to reflect, that the Establishment of *Christianity* under the Countenance and Protection of the Civil Power, great as the Blessing is in itself, is but an accidental Circumstance, and no essential Property of a Christian Church, seeing that we acknowledge those to have been the purest Ages of it before it knew any such Tutelage: For so it has happened, thro' the Malice of *Satan* and the Corruption of human Nature, that the pious and praise-worthy Care of Christian Princes in providing for the Encouragement and Support of Religion and the Security of its Professors, has been in many Instances disappointed, and that by a most unhappy Reverse of hoped for Consequences, the Indulgence of its Friends has on many Occasions proved more fatal to the true Interest of *Christianity* than the Persecutions of its Enemies. The Church which before, under all the Weakness and Disgrace of Infancy and

and Sufferings, grew up as a tender Plant, and as a Root out of a dry Ground, yet bearing much precious Fruit, when transplanted into the richer Soil of an Establishment, did soon lamentably degenerate: It waxed great indeed in the Sunshine of Prosperity, and under the copious Showers of Royal Favour and Bounty, but its Fruitfulness was impaired thereby: She stretched forth her Branches unto the Sea, and her Boughs unto the River, but little else than Leaves were seen to grow thereon. No sooner did Riches and Honours, *Satan's* last and most prevailing Temptations, flow in upon her than *Christianity* began to wear another Aspect, the hitherto inflexible Spirit of its Professors gradually softened into a Conformity to this World, and Christian Simplicity gave Way to Earthly Policy: Ease and Affluence engendered Security, and whilst Men slept in a false and fatal Peace the Enemy with a full Hand sowed thick the Tares of Covetousness, Ambition, and Worldly-mindedness in their Hearts, which grew up and choaked the good Seed. Henceforward, as Church History informs us, was to be seen great striving among Ecclesiastical Persons for the highest Digni-

Dignities and richest Preferments, and much Pontifical Contention about Precedency and Jurisdiction: The Disciple now wanted to be above his Master, and the Servant above his Lord: Nay, *Christ's* pretended Vicars began to aspire at supreme Sovereignty over Princes, and to set the Foot of Church Power upon the Neck of Royalty.

Most Authors fix the ceasing of miraculous Powers in the Church about the Time of *Constantine*; and the Reason commonly assigned for such Discontinuance is, that being now under the Protection and Security of an Establishment, she no longer stood in need of those extraordinary Seals and Attestations to the Divinity of her Original and Doctrines; whereas the Truth of the Matter in a great Measure lies here: The inward Gifts and Graces of the Holy Spirit were eminently possessed by the primitive *Christians*; their ardent Love of God, their holy Imitation of the Life of *Christ*, their powerful Faith, their severe Discipline, their Deadness to the World, and their fervent Devotion, enriched their Souls with wonderful Communications of the Divine Energy; they were indeed Living Temples of the Holy Ghost, and *Christ* wrought

wrought in their Faith and by their Faith, and therefore many mighty Works did shew forth themselves in them : But when *Christians* forsook their first Love and became wedded to the Things of this World, they commenced Members of another Kingdom, their spiritual Powers departed with the spiritual Life, and consequently the Effects ceased ; so that from the Fourth Century downwards we meet with but few Miracles of public Notoriety that may be depended on.

Under this visible Declension of *Christianity* in the Spirit and Power of it, the outward visible Church, conscious that these Divine Signatures were departed from her, and that she was no longer, in general, that pure, that chaste, that heavenly Spouse of *Christ* all glorious within, and marvellous in Gifts as before, began to deck herself in all the painted and pompous Ornaments of a glistering outside Worship ; magnificent Temples with much Imagery and Sculpture, were erected, and beautified with all that Man's Art and Device could project and execute ; costly Vestments, gilded Furniture, Crosses of Gold and Silver decorated with precious Stones, stately
4 Wax

Wax Candles, &c. were introduced into the Churches, as well to feed the Pride of Man as to make a sanctimonious Show, and to supply the want of the true Riches. It was now also that Men began to fetch their Divinity from the Schools, and to substitute human Learning in the room of that Wisdom which is from Above, whilst a System of Opinions, Distinctions, and curious Speculations on the one hand, and a gorgeous Ceremonial on the other, made up the Religion of the Times.

From this Glance of Things thus far, there is too much Reason to conclude that true *Christianity* was far from gaining Ground from the Time of its Establishment downwards, and that earthly Riches and Honours proved Means ill suited to advance the Interest of Evangelical Piety; nor is it difficult to point out wherein the Church, in these more early Days, mistook her Province and lost her Way; as also how much better she would have consulted her Safety and true Honour, if content with Protection and Support from the State, she had more faithfully preserved her Allegiance to Him whose Kingdom is not of this World, and not defiled herself with the Maxims, Politics

ticks and Alliances that are only of this World, mindful of the Fate which attended the confederate Ships of *Jehosaphat* and *Abaziab*, at *Ezion Geber*. But the Lord, who never left himself without Witnesses even in Times of the greatest Degeneracy, and who raised up Prophets of old to recover the Apostate *Jews* from their Defections to Idolatry, has in all Ages of the Church called forth holy Men, animated with a pure and fervent Zeal for his Glory and the Good of Souls, to bear their publick Testimony to the Truth, and to rescue Religion from Ignorance, Error, and Corruption: Accordingly we read of *Waldo* at *Lyons*, *Claude* Arch-bishop of *Turin*, *Thomas à Kempis*, *Thauler*, *Wickliffe*, and others, either boldly protesting against such Innovations in Doctrine as had endangered the Foundations of Religion, or built thereon nothing better than a rotten Superstructure of Wood, Hay, Stubble; or else leading the benighted *Christians* of those Times through the Darkeness and Formality of an outside Worship to Repentance from dead Works and a living Faith, to a Righteousness and Truth in the inward Parts: nor ought we to think so uncharitably of those who were out of the

Reach of their Instructions and Examples, as therefore to conclude that among them were wanting many holy Souls who, tho' in much Weakness and Superstition, yet in Simplicity and true Devotion, found their Way to God, and were accepted of Him.

An Author of Church History, who betrays no Partiality in Favour of the Ascetic Life, gives the following short Account of some *British* Monks who lived according to the Rule of St. *David*, at *Vall Rosine* in *Pembrokeshire* * : “ They were raised with
 “ the Crowing of the Cock from their Beds,
 “ and then betook themselves to their Pray-
 “ ers, and spent the rest of the Day in their
 “ several Callings. When their Task was
 “ done, they again bestowed themselves in
 “ Prayers, Meditations, Reading and Writ-
 “ ing; and at Night, when the Heavens
 “ were full of Stars, they first began to
 “ feed, having their temperate Repast to
 “ satisfy Hunger on Bread, Water, and
 “ Herbs: Then the third Time they went
 “ to their Prayers and so to Bed, till the
 “ Circulation of their daily Employment
 “ returned in the Morning. A Spectacle
 “ this of Virtue and Continnence! who altho'

* *Fuller*, in his *Church Hist.* Book VI.

“ they

“ they received nothing or any thing very
“ unwillingly, yet were so far from wanting
“ Necessaries, that by their Pains they provi-
“ ded Sustainance for many poor People,
“ Orphans, Widows, and Strangers.”

To the above-mentioned Names succeeded, at some Distance, the illustrious Catalogue of Reformers both at Home and Abroad, who pared off many Errors and Superstitions from Religion, and exalted the Doctrines of divine Grace on the Downfal of Merits, Indulgences, and other lucrative Figments of Man's Invention : The People were now permitted to read the Bible; the publick Service of the Church was performed in a Language understood by all, and Persecution was no longer established by Law. Thus Light, Liberty, and Moderation, became the Glory of our excellent national Church : And tho' it be generally allowed that our Reformers went too far with *Calvin* in some particular Points, yet a Church so well ordered and modelled in the main of her Doctrines and Constitution had little Reason to complain of some few Tenets which in the Hands of moderate Men could do no Hurt to Religion. But to evince, how insufficient all outward Reformation is to attain its End where the

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Heart

Heart is unrenewed by Charity and the Spirit of a sound Mind; our Forefathers were no sooner rescued a second time from the Yoke of Bondage in *Q. Elizabeth's* Days, but they entangled themselves and disturbed the Peace of the Church with Disputes about the most indifferent Things, whilst Opinions concerning the Preference due to this or that Service Book, particular Vestments, bodily Gestures, nay even the Figure and Situation of a Communion Table, proved of greater force to divide their Affections than their Agreement in fundamental Doctrines to preserve them in Brotherly Love: And, as if on purpose to teach us, not to place our Strength and Confidence in any the best framed Constitutions, and to instruct us in our need of continual Watchfulness, in less than a Century *Arminianism* got footing amongst us and met with Encouragement: The Dignity and Powers of the human Nature began to be more highly thought of than according to the Doctrine of our Articles, Men's Attention was called off from the Inside to the Outside of Religion, and more Pains employed to decorate the Form than to urge the Power of Godliness: Nor did it a little help Religion on its Way
down-

down-hill, that some who talked loudly of Grace and the Spirit shewed themselves Men intoxicated with the Dregs of earthly Policy, thirsting after temporal Dominion, and turning Faith into Faction. This served to confirm Prejudices already conceived against Doctrines good in themselves, but disgraced by the Practices of some that held the Truth in Unrighteousness: Add to this, that an overstrained Rigour in some things, and an aukward Formality of Behaviour in many who assumed the Garb, but wanted the Life of Religion to give it Comeliness and Grace, proved so disgustful to the opposite Party, that to avoid the Name of Precisians they cast off the very Appearance of Religion, and so turned Liberty into Licentiousness: Every thing that looked like Piety was now termed Puritanism; Profaneness and the Love of Pleasure knew no Bounds, and it was common to place more of Loyalty and Religion in drinking Bumpers to Church and State than in sober Seriousness. Politicks and Polemicks began now to have a great share in the Religion of the Times, and this occasioned a variable and time-serving Kind of Divinity: Thus the same Doctrine of passive Obedience and Non-

resistance which was a distinguishing Badge of Orthodoxy in one Reign, was eliminated in the next: One while he was thought best affected to the Church of *England* who exclaimed loudest against the Church of *Rome*; and soon after a Spirit of Moderation appearing in Favour of scrupulous Consciences, the Alarm was sounded, that the Church was in Danger from a very different Quarter, and the Rage lately vented against the *Papists* was now turned against the Protestant Dissenters: the gross of the Establishment espoused the Quarrel, and parted themselves into the nonsensical Distinctions of High-Church and Low Church, whilst a mad party Zeal ran away with the Charity of both sides, and true Religion was lost in the Scuffle.

The Enemies of revealed Religion triumphed at beholding these Animosities and Divisions in the Church, and from such Inconstancy and Change of Principles fetched Arguments in Favour of Infidelity. They considered the Clergy as labouring more to support the Credit of a Party than the Interests of true Piety, and were tempted to think that nothing more was meant by Church, than that outward Constitution

of it from which they derived their Power and Preferments: And that which contributed to the Growth of Deism as much as any other Cause was the great Defection from the Doctrines of the Reformation: In the room of these, dry theological Reasoning and Moral Essays had long before been substituted, and the Fashion in this respect was not altered; the prevailing Divinity with many was a sort of ethical, political, polemical Something that we have no Name for, a kind of *Christianity* with little or nothing of *Jesus Christ* in it; it came not tinged with the Spirit of the Gospel, and therefore produced no spiritual Effects in the Temper of the Times. How long this continued in Fashion, or how much of it is still left, I take not upon me here to affirm: However, we are bound in Justice to allow, that many excellent Names, with good Bishop *Beveridge* at the Head of them, come in for Exceptions to the above Remark.

A learned Divine of the Church of *England*, in a Treatise published about the Time I am speaking of, wherein he freely censures the Defect beforementioned, together with that erroneous Way of debasing *Christianity* to a Level with natural Religion

made use of by some celebrated Divines then living, and whose Writings are still held in too high Admiration by many, expresses himself thus: “ It is verily a Fault in too
 “ many of the publick Teachers of our
 “ Times, that their Sermons are moral
 “ Harangues generally, as if they were
 “ preaching at Old *Rome* or *Athens*, and
 “ their Auditors were all Infidels: We see
 “ the bad Effects of this on more accounts
 “ than one: The constant insisting on no-
 “ thing but Morality hath lately inspired
 “ Men’s Heads with this Notion, that re-
 “ vealed Religion is of little Consideration
 “ and Worth; and this hath been one
 “ great occasion of Deism.” And a few
 Pages after: — “ Since so many Preachers
 “ have confined their Discourses as to the
 “ main, to Morality, there hath been less
 “ Success in Preaching than ever. There is
 “ plenty of excellent Discourses from the
 “ Pulpit wherein the Nature of all moral
 “ Offices is set forth, but notwithstanding
 “ this, there never was less Morality in Mens
 “ Lives and Actions, which shews that
 “ there is something of a higher Nature
 “ wanting, and that the bare inculcating of
 “ moral

“ moral Duties and virtuous Living is not
 “ sufficient to mend Mens Practices *.”

It must be allowed that there is too much Truth in these Complaints, and that the Strain of our Divinity has warped much from the Reformation Standard within this Century, as will plainly appear by comparing the Writers of both Times. We abound with learned and ingenious Discourses on the Extent and Obligations of natural Religion, ideal Fitnesses and Relations of Things, and the Beauty of moral Rectitude: But these serve rather to amuse than amend the Age, and bring us no nearer to true *Christianity* than an Hypothesis in natural Philosophy: Such airy Speculations have always proved too weak a Foundation for practical Piety, they want both Solidity and Authority. It is an unpardonable Error in most of these Writers, that they consider human Nature as standing in the Ability of a perfect Freedom, and therefore instead of leading the Soul to God in an humble Acknowledgment of its natural Impotence and Corruption, that He may help and heal it with renewing and sanctifying Grace, they address themselves to a

* Dr. *Edward's* Preacher, Vol. I. p. 73.

supposed Sufficiency in Man, crying out — *Do this and live*, tho' where heⁿ may find Strength for the doing they shew not: Thus they turn the Covenant of Grace into a Covenant of Works, and send us to the Law for Justification; they make Reason, unenlightened Reason, our Guide, and Free-will our Strength, and so lay other Foundations than that which is laid in the Gospel of *Christ*. The Social Virtues, and relative Duties must be urged, and urged Home too, for they confessedly make a considerable Part of our Business here; but then if we write to *Christians* let us consider them in their necessary Connexion with Gospel Principles; let us represent them as only acceptable to God in *Christ* when founded upon a sound Conversion generated by a living Faith, and accompanied with Humility, and the Love of God: In a word, they must be Christian Graces exemplified in Practice and wrought in us by the Influence of the Holy Spirit, otherwise they cannot be called Christian but natural Morality, mere civil Virtues, useful indeed in the present System of Things, but void of all Relation to the divine Life and the Kingdom of Heaven.

Another

Another Method of treating Divinity, too much in use with some, is that which consists in curious and needless Speculations on the external Evidence of *Christianity*, and in dry Appeals to natural Reason for the Credibility of it: Thus to hear it very elaborately proved that *Jesus Christ* was no Impostor, and that his Religion is an Institution that challenges the Assent of every rational Enquirer: To be entertained with nice Disquisitions on the Nature of Miracles, in order to shew that the Apostles did not do them by any Art of *Leger de main*, nor yet by diabolical Conjurament: To hear it made very plain, that they were downright honest Men, and that it is not at all likely that they had any Intention to deceive us in what they have related, &c. &c. However such kind of Reasoning may be allowed to take place in refelling the Cavils of Infidels, and putting to silence the Ignorance of such foolish Men as start such foolish Objections, yet this way of Proof from the Pulpit is inept and futile, and so far from ministring Grace to the Hearers, or helping to build them up in the Faith, that it rather serves to suggest matter of Doubting in things whereof they made no Question before. Curious Enquiries

Enquiries in Religion have of late Years, in many Instances, been carried to a great length of fanciful Indulgence, giving birth to many unprofitable Questions, and been so far from answering any pretended Usefulness in repressing the Spirit of Infidelity amongst us, that it has greatly increased under it; which proves that these are not the Weapons that are mighty through God to the pulling down the Strong-holds of Unbelief, and to make Converts to the Gospel of *Christ*. Does it not require much Patience to hear the Credibility of Gospel History measured by that Distance of Time at which any Age is removed from the first Publication of it; in which one Author * has gone so far as to assert, that at the Expiration of 3150 Years its Evidence will be quite extinct, and therefore *Christ* will come to Judgment before that Time. To invalidate the Proof of this Author, a late Writer on Miracles assures us, that the Evidence of *Christianity* is so far from losing any thing of its Force that it grows stronger by Length of Time, because the Examinations of learned Men furnish us with fresh Motives for believing, and because the longer it has kept its

* Craig's *Theol. Christiana Principia*.

Ground the surer it stands. Can any thing be more trifling than such whimsical Calculations? Can any thing more derogate from the Honour of the Christian Religion than to subject the Credibility of it to the Inventions of learned Men, or to build any Part of its Evidence on so lubricous a Foundation as the Lapse of Years? Does it not look as if we were sadly distressed for Arguments in Favour of *Christianity*, when its pretended Advocates have recourse to such airy Figments of a sportive Fancy in order to support it? Are not its old Foundations sufficient to bear its Weight? Or must we stay till new *W——ns* arise to furnish us with more fresh Discoveries to evince the Truth of the Bible?

Whither will the Affectation of Novelty, this Itch of saying or hearing some new thing, carry us? And how long shall we go on to gratify the corrupt Taste of a vain Age, which seeks only Amusement in Reading? Is it not high time to engage the Attention of Mankind on the Side of solid and important Truths, to take leave of our polemical and conjectural Divinity, and no longer deal out of that light Bread which satisfieth not? We have now of a long time
been

been speaking to the Head according to the Rudiments of this World, and in the Way that Man's Wisdom teacheth, and we find the World neither the wiser nor the better for it. Let us then lay the Axe to the Root, and level our Strokes at the Heart, break open the Fountain of its Corruption, uncover the hidden Mystery of Iniquity in the inward Parts, shew Men their horrid Apostacy from God in the very Essence of their fallen Nature, and bring them to the loathing of themselves by the Sight of their Vileness, Wretchedness, and Sinfulness, till they are forced to cry out with the Leper—Unclean, unclean! In this Part of our Ministry the Law of God does its Office, by holding forth a Glass that exposes to full View our Nakedness and Shame, shewing us how we have joined actual to original Sin, and so added Iniquity unto Iniquity; here Conscience is taught to plead guilty, and we are brought to subscribe to the Equity of our own Condemnation, and to justify God in the Execution of the Sentence! The Pride of Man's Glory being thus stained with Disgrace, and his Haughtiness laid low by these and such like humbling Convictions, the Soul begins to feel its Need of a Redeemer,

Redeemer, and the Mind is prepared for the Reception of Gospel Truths better than by a thousand Arguments of a metaphysical Texture, or the most persuasive Eloquence of Man. A Fountain open for Sin and for Uncleaness in the Side of a crucified Saviour — The Offers of Pardon and Peace from a God willing to be reconciled to his rebellious Creatures in the Son of his Love — A free Tender of Salvation to poor lost Sinners — These are Truths which recommend themselves emphatically. — They stand in no need of Help from human Learning to set them off, nay they are Subjects which would suffer Diminution from the most pompous Strains of Rhetoric. The Heart mollified by Grace and a tender Sensibility of its Sin and Danger, exults at the Sound of these glad Tidings, like the Child in the Womb of *Elizabeth* upon the Salutation of *Mary*; it is willing and desirous to be saved in God's own Way, and therefore confers not with Flesh and Blood about the Means or the Mystery; it objects not, with *Nicodemus*—How can these things be! But silences every Doubt of carnal Reason with — *Lord, if thou wilt thou canst make me clean — I believe, Lord help thou my Unbelief.*

belief. In this Obedience of Faith under Grace the Soul no longer makes Resistance to the Drawings of the Father to the Son, and so receives the Spirit of Adoption, for as many as receive Him [*Christ*] to them He giveth Power to become the Sons of God. And in this Ground is opened the Doctrine of the New-birth, or God's spiritual Kingdom in the Soul, where *Christ* is represented as sitting on his Throne and ruling with his Sceptre of Righteousness in the hidden Man of the Heart, there doing the Office of a Refiner's Fire and of Fullers Soap, by cleansing us from inward Pollution, and purifying us unto Himself a peculiar People zealous of good Works, and making us Partakers of his own Divine Nature.

Here we take a double View of Gospel Salvation, *viz.* as it stands both in the History and in the Mystery. In the former is fully exhibited to us *Christ* the Lamb of God slain and offered up a Sacrifice for the Sins of the whole World, and raised again for our Justification: Herein is characterised that just one who fulfilled all Righteousness and satisfied all Justice for Man by his active and passive Obedience; the Prince of Peace
reconciling

reconciling God unto the World by the Blood of the Cross; the perfect Pattern of immaculate Purity and Holiness setting us an Example that we should follow his Steps: In a word, the ministering, suffering, dying, and yet triumphant Saviour of the World. In the latter, *viz.* the Mystery of the Gospel, we see how Things inward answer to Things outward as Face to Face in a Glass, by a corresponding Work of the Spirit of God in our Souls. Thus we are baptized into his Sufferings and made conformable to his Death by the Energy of divine Grace, slaying in us the Body of Sin, and crucifying the World unto us and us unto the World: Pursuant to this we are risen again with *Christ* unto Newness of Life by the quickning Power of his Resurrection, for being planted together in the Likeness of his Death, we shall be also in that of his Resurrection. In like manner as *Christ* was in his outward Office the Minister of Reconciliation betwixt God and us, so is he styled the same by his spiritually dwelling in us: "If being
" Enemies we were reconciled by his Death,
" how much more shall we be saved by his
" Life," *i. e.* by the Life of *Christ* manifested in us, which the Apostle calls "the
" Riches

“ Riches of the Glory, (or exceeding rich
 “ Glory) of the Myſtery of the Goſpel, *viz.*
 “ *Chriſt* in us the Hope of Glory.” And
 as our Peace is aſcribed to the Blood of the
 Croſs, ſo is Peace of Conſcience to the
 cleaning Blood or life giving Virtue of an
 inward and Spiritual ſprinkling : Thus all
 Righteouſneſs and Peace are fulfilled both
 externally and internally, and *Chriſt* is made
 unto us compleat Redemption.

Were it not that we are in general ſo
 much accuſtomed to hear and read and think
 of Religion only as ſomething without us, or
 as ſomething to be done by us, we ſhould
 readily ſubſcribe to the following Truths de-
 livered by the moſt Rev. *John Arndt*, in his
 Book of *True Chriſtianity*, Ch. VI. “ Foraf-
 “ much as the Subſtance of the Chriſtian Re-
 “ ligion conſiſts in our Regeneration, or the
 “ ſpiritual Renovation of the Mind, it was
 “ the Will of God, that thoſe things which
 “ ſhould be tranſacted in Man ſpiritually
 “ and by Faith, ſhould be alſo outwardly
 “ ſet forth in Writing, and in the Words of
 “ Scripture : For ſince the *Word* is the Seed
 “ of God in us, it is neceſſary that it ſhould
 “ ſpring up and bring forth ſpiritual Fruit
 “ in us : By Faith muſt that be effected
 “ within

“ within us which the Scripture declares
 “ in the Letter without us: If this Effect
 “ doth not follow, then ’tis plain that the
 “ Word is still unto me a dead Seed, and an
 “ Embrio destitute of Life and Motion:
 “ Hence in Faith and in Spirit I ought to taste
 “ and to see the Truth of the Scriptures:
 “ for when God manifested his Will therein,
 “ He did not design that it should be buri-
 “ ed in Paper and Ink, but that in Faith
 “ and Spirit it should spring and grow up in
 “ us to another Man, even a new and in-
 “ ward Man: The Reason is, because all
 “ is to be fulfilled and performed in Faith
 “ and Spirit whatsoever the Scriptures do
 “ outwardly teach.” He then goes on to
 exemplify this Truth in many Particulars,
 and concludes as follows: “ The Sum of
 “ all is: The Holy Scripture doth outward-
 “ ly bear Witness to all those things which
 “ by Faith ought to be fulfilled in Man:
 “ They describe that Kingdom of God in
 “ the Letter which must receive its Accom-
 “ plishment in the Spirit; it describes *Christ*
 “ from without who must live within me by
 “ Faith; it describes *Adam* in his Fall and
 “ Restoration, which I must find in my-
 “ self; it describes the new *Jerusalem*,
 c “ the

“ the new Birth, the new Creature, all
 “ which I must have some Experience of,
 “ or else the Scriptures will profit me no-
 “ thing : Now this is all of Faith, it is the
 “ Work of God, and the Kingdom of God
 “ in our Hearts.” *Christianity*, thus consider-
 ed in a spiritual View, and consequently in
 its true Relation and Benefit to the Soul of
 Man, comes represented in a way suitable
 to its Dignity and Usefulness, and is prop-
 erly distinguished from that ideal or external
 thing which so commonly usurps its Name ;
 making known to all Men, that the Perfec-
 tion of that Religion which bringeth Salva-
 tion consisteth not in Notion and Specula-
 tion, but in Spirit and in Truth ; not in
 Form but in Power ; not in Opinion called
 Orthodoxy, or in bodily Exercise, but in
 Experience and Change of Nature ; and
 that no Creeds nor Systems of Divinity, no
 particular Schemes or Modes of Worship,
 have any other Excellency or Help in them
 for us, than as they are proper Means to
 produce or cherish the Life of God in the
 Soul of Man.

The Reverend Mr. *William Law*, in
 some of his excellent Treatises*, has expli-

* See his *Appeal to Deists*, &c. Treatise on *Regeneration*,
 and *Spirit of Prayer*.

cated the Doctrine of the new Birth with uncommon Penetration, and shewed with great Solidity, that the Whole of our Salvation is grounded in it and rises from it: He has with a convincing Sagacity rescued this most important Mystery of our Redemption from the Errors of particular Systems, and the learned Ignorance of verbal Critics; opened the Nature of original Sin thro' the Fall in so rational and satisfying a manner, as fully justifies this Doctrine of Scripture against the most acute Objections of cavilling Infidels; and at the same Time refuted that irreverent, but common Notion of the Divine Majesty's being actuated by a Spirit of vindictive Wrath in his Proceedings against fallen Man. He has likewise therein shewed what we are to understand by the Wrath of God with respect to Man, even that horrid, dark, anguishing State of his Soul, which is its proper Condition and Nature as separated from the Divine Life and Image, and which can only be restored by a Birth of the Son of God in its inmost Essence, and so becoming a central Source of Light and Meekness, of Love and Joy therein: that the Reason why the Unregenerate do not feel

themselves in such a State of Woe and Torment in this Life is, because the Soul, during its Union with the Body, qualifies or unites with the Gratifications of Sense, the cheering Influences of the Sun, and other Satisfactions of outward Nature, which charm its Misery for the present * ; but that upon this Constitution being dissolved, and all its Communication with the animal Life and the elementary Kingdom of this World ceasing, the Soul so unredeemed loses every Source of Mitigation and Comfort, and falls into its own proper Hell, described in Scripture by the never-dying Worm, and the unquenchable Fire. From this Explanation of the Doctrine before us, the gracious Method of our Redemption by *Jesus Christ* in the way of our Union with Him, and receiving a Divine Nature from Him, presents itself as the sole possible Remedy of Man's Misery, the only conceivable Ground of his Salvation: it sets forth God's Love to all without Partiality, in providing a Saviour for all under every

* Thus it is credible, that the very Devils find some Mitigation of their Torment by uniting with the Bodies of Men and Beasts, [which is the probable Cause of their great Desire after such Union, as in the Case of the Swine, *Matth.* viii.

Dispensation, and represents *Jesus Christ* as that Saviour in the most intimate Relation to us that can be, even as that quickning Spirit which is the Soul's true and only happy Life. All the Difficulties that embarrass our common Methods of Reasoning with Unbelievers on the Subject of our Redemption vanish before this Explication of it, as it likewise vindicates the Honour and Goodness of Almighty God from that profane Charge of his being the Author of Man's eternal Misery thro' such Want of Compassion and Forgiveness as is declared to be an Offence against God in ourselves; for it proves to a Demonstration, that everlasting Death is no arbitrary Infliction of the God of Love upon Man for Sin, seeing that He has done all that could be done to prevent our Ruin, but that it is the natural and necessary Consequence of Sin chosen, loved, and persisted in, and of Grace and Salvation rejected. If the Reader is not satisfied with this Author's Manner of treating these Subjects; as his Writings are abundantly sufficient for its Defence, I refer him in particular to his Treatise, intituled, *The Way to Divine Knowledge*, in which he has obviated most of the material Objections

that can be brought against it. Upon the whole, this Author's Works are excellently well calculated for Usefulness to many different sorts of Readers, and to promote Piety in all. His *Serious Call* and *Christian Perfection* contain very affectionate Addresses urged with the most cogent Motives to this End, and are liable to no other Objection than what is natural for Persons of too relaxed a Piety to offer. His *Answer to the Plain Account, &c.* is a judicious Confutation of that gross and fundamental Error, which consists in placing Religion more in the outward and visible Sign than in the inward and spiritual Grace. His *Appeal to Deists, &c.* proves with great Force of Reason, that the Oeconomy of our Redemption by *Jesus Christ* is no positive or arbitrary Institution, but a Display of infinite Love and Goodness according to the Laws and Constitution of eternal Nature. His *Answer to Dr. Trapp* is a just Correction and Representation of the *Folly, Sin, and Danger* of cautioning a careless World against being *Righteous over much*: And his subsequent Writings do, according to their several Subjects, assert the Honour and Dignity of the Christian Religion as a
Divine

Divine Nature and Life, against the dogmatical Dullness of the Sophist; the artificial Pedantry of the literal Sciolist; the malevolent Narrowness of the Bigot; and the infectious Oscitancy of the Formulist. A Person of high Character and of a penetrating Judgment in Divine things (whose Name would give Authority to this Remark) in a Letter to a Friend, speaks of Mr. *Law's* Works as follows: "They are
" certainly some of the best things for well
" disposed Minds to read that I ever met
" with — They lead out from *Babel* and all
" the Delusions of a Sectarian and Party
" Spirit in Religion; and I find them the
" only Books for the sensible Deist." It must be owned, that in his latter Writings there are some things of an uncommon Texture, which suit not the Apprehension or Turn of every Reader: but then let it be remembered, that as one Part of his Business lay with the subtle Deist, who, sheltering his Infidelity behind the Intrenchments of Philosophy, bids Defiance to Revealed Religion, it would have been inept to argue with such a one from Principles which he absolutely denied, and therefore he found it best to force his Lines, and to engage him

upon his own Ground : And here he proves that to be no other than a deceitful Reason and a false Philosophy that furnishes Arguments for Infidelity ; and shews that *Christianity* receives Illustration and Evidence from that true Philosophy which is the Light of God in the Soul, making manifest Himself and his Works both in material and spiritual, in temporal and eternal Nature, and which is profitable, as well to establish the Faith of the Believer as to put to silence the Ignorance of foolish Men. I shall conclude these Remarks with the Author's own Words, in his *Way to Divine Knowledge*, p. 246.

“ Let not the genuine, plain, simple,
 “ *Christian*, who is happy and blessed in
 “ the Simplicity of a Gospel Faith, take
 “ Offence at this Mystery, because he has
 “ no need of it ; for it is God's Goodness to
 “ the distressed State of the Church, fallen
 “ from the Life and Power of Gospel
 “ Faith, and groaning under the Slavery,
 “ Darkness, and Perplexity of bewildered
 “ Reason and Opinions.

“ Neither let the Orthodox Divine,
 “ who sticks close to the Phrases and Sen-
 “ timents of Antiquity, reject this Mystery

“ as heretical, because it opens a Ground
 “ of Man and of the Divine Mysteries not
 “ known or found in the primitive Writers :
 “ For this is the very Reason why he
 “ should thankfully receive it with open
 “ Arms, as having and being that very
 “ thing which the distressed, divided State
 “ of the Church now so greatly wants, and
 “ yet did not want till it was fallen from
 “ its first Simplicity of Faith: For whilst
 “ Faith and Life defended the Mysteries
 “ of Religion, the Ground and Philosophy
 “ of it was not wanted: But when Ortho-
 “ doxy had given itself up to Reason, and
 “ had nothing else for its Support but Rea-
 “ son and Argument from the Letter of
 “ Scripture, without the least Knowledge
 “ of the first Ground of Doctrines, then
 “ it could only be defended as it is defend-
 “ ed in every Sect and Division of the Chris-
 “ tian World.”

And here we cannot sufficiently admire
 and adore the Divine Goodness in raising
 up such Lights and Helps as are best suited
 to the Needs of his Church in every Age
 and Circumstance of it: Our own Obligati-
 ons in this Particular call upon us for large
 Returns of religious Gratitude: We have
 seen

seen *Christianity* not only defended with invincible Strength against its Enemies, but rescued from Errors of Ignorance, and a dead Formality no less dangerous than open Infidelity. We have our skilful Workmen of different Denominations that need not be ashamed; some demonstrating in a Method of Proof not to be gainsaid, that the sacred Truths of our Religion have their sure Foundations in the Depths of a Divine Theosophy: Others by apt Analogy between Things Natural and Divine, added to profound Skill in the original Language of the Old Testament, pouring Light on the Mysteries of the New: A third Sort urging evangelical Doctrines in Demonstration of the Spirit and of Power, to the Conviction and Conversion of their Readers and Hearers: And lastly, some enabled by long Experience in spiritual things to help the *Christian* on his way thro' the secret mysterious Paths of that Life which is hid with *Christ* in God. The chief of these both in Number and Strength we challenge for our own — Members of the same Communion — Sons of the Church of *England*, and an Honour to our Church: For are they not faithful Soldiers of *Christ*, mighty thro' God to fight the Lord's Battles,
and

and such as both defend and adorn it by their Faith, by their Doctrine, and by their Lives? But what kind of Reception and Encouragement have many of them met with from us? Have we given them the Right Hand of Fellowship, and the Honour due to Champions for the Truth, and Men of Renown? Or have we not given them Cause to complain that they have been wounded in the House of their Friends? Have not opprobrious Names and Distinctions been fastened on them to make them pass for Sectarists and Schismaticks? Has not every Door to Favour and Advancement been shut against them, and, whilst Church Preferments are daily sold to the highest Bidder like Fishes in a common Market, have we not seen some of them starving in little Schools, Curacies, and Lectureships, or depending on occasional Benefactions for their Subsistence? And have we not seen of these able Ministers, not of the Letter only but of the Spirit also, supplicating Votes to be received for their Pastors by those who, had they known their true Interest, would first have sought this Honour and Blessing of them; and have we not seen them supplicate in vain? These things ought

ought not to be said, if these things were so: But it is not the Design of this Preface to be particular. O when shall we learn to distinguish better! When shall we rightly know the Things that belong unto our Peace!

What Cause shall we assign for that Opposition to Gospel Truths that appears amongst us, and for that Dislike to those who urge the Necessity of Regeneration and of the Spiritual Life? The true Reason is nigh at hand, tho' others are pretended: Such Doctrines are contrary to the Maxims and Principles that govern the Hearts and Conduct of the Children of this Generation, are at Variance with the false Interests of Flesh and Blood, declare open War against the Kingdom of Self, and strike at every thing that is most near and dear to corrupt Nature; and therefore carnal Men of every Denomination think themselves concerned in Character to oppose and discredit such a Representation of *Christianity*. They can be zealous for Opinions, Forms, and an external Worship of any kind, because these leave them in quiet Possession of their Ambition, their Covetousness, their Love of themselves, and their Love of the World:
They

They can readily take up a Profession of Faith in a suffering Saviour, nay bring themselves to trust in an outward Covering of his Merits and Righteousness for Salvation, because this costs them nothing; but to be cloathed with his Spirit of Humility, Poverty and Self-denial; to renounce their own Wills in his Lowliness, Meekness, and total Resignation to the Will of God, to mortify the fleshly Appetites; to be crucified to the World; to strip themselves of all Complacency and Satisfaction in those Endowments, whether natural or acquired, which appear great and glorious in the Eyes both of themselves and others; and, in a word, to take up their Cross, and nakedly follow a naked *Christ* in the Regeneration: — These are hard Sayings, they cannot bear them: But Wisdom is justified of her Children: unacceptable as these Doctrines are to others, yet to them, and in them too, they are the Power of God, and the Wisdom of God. It was by such Foolishness of Preaching that *Christ's* Kingdom first prevailed over the Kingdoms of this World, and it must be by the same Doctrine, under the Influence of the same Spirit, that we can only hope for its Continuance

ance to the End of it. Evangelical Preaching is the most proper Means of producing Evangelical Fruit, such as a living Faith in *Jesus Christ*, Heavenly-mindedness, and Holiness in the inward Parts; and unless the great Gospel Doctrine of Regeneration be mainly insisted on, the People in general will be so far from seeking a new Nature, that they will not know that they want it: But these Truths affectionately urged enlighten the Understanding, convince the Sinner, warm the Heart, and through Grace are powerful to convert and change it: And accordingly we find, that where this great Mystery of Godliness, God manifest in the Flesh and revealed in the Heart by his Spirit, is preached with Energy, and from an inward Experience of its Power, the Word prevails mightily, and is received into every fitly prepared Heart, not as the Word of Man, but, as it is in Truth, the Word of God, who still bears Testimony to the Word of his Grace with Power from on High.

That the Doctrine of Regeneration, or a new Spiritual Birth of a Divine Nature in the Soul, together with other Matters of inward Religion, as well as they that preach them,

them, have of late Years fallen under the Disgrace and Reproach of Enthufiasm with many will not be denied: But that this Charge is nothing new, or contrary to what might be expected, the pious Mr. *Burkitt* declares, in his Note on that Passage in *St. Mark* where some are said to have gone out to lay Hands on our Lord, faying that He was befide himfelf, “ Learn “ hence (fays Mr. *Burkitt*) that the forward “ Zeal and Diligence of *Chrift* and his “ Minifters in Preaching the Gofpel, is “ accounted Madnefs and Phrenfy by a “ blind World: But they may fay with “ the Apoftle, *If we be befide ourfelves, it is “ unto God.*” And in his Note on thefe laft Words (2 *Cor.* v. 13.) he obferves as follows, “ Wicked and carnal Men account “ and represent the holy Servants of God “ as a fort of Mad-men: Workings of “ Grace are fometimes fo far above Reafon “ that they feem to be without Reafon. “ There are feveral Acts of Holinefs which “ the profane World efteems as Madnefs, “ as eminent Self-denial, great Serioufnefs “ in Religion, their burning Zeal, their “ holy Singularity, their Fervors of Devo- “ tion, their Patience and Meeknefs under
“ Sufferings

“Sufferings and Reproaches. All these
 “Acts of Holiness represent the Saints as
 “Mad-men to a carnal Man.” I shall
 dwell the longer on the Article *Enthusiasm*,
 as well because a late Author has availed him-
 self of the common Acceptation and Abuse
 of this World to ground thereon his irreverent
 and profane Treatment of the Mysteries
 of the Divine Life, and to cast Reproach
 upon every thing that is inward and expe-
 rimental in Religion, as because it will
 open the way to some useful Instructions
 for the common Reader.

As the Word *Enthusiasm* is frequently
 misapplied, because little understood, it
 will be needful to settle its Definition and
 Kinds, in order to fix its Sense: For want
 of due Precision herein many confound
 different Kinds of Enthusiasm widely re-
 mote from each other, tho’ their Reason
 for this is oftentimes easy to discover: The
 Word, according to its present vulgar Use,
 answers well enough the Purpose of Re-
 proach, and as few Persons have Discern-
 ment sufficient to see the Misapplication, the
 Odium intended easily falls upon the Person
 or Doctrine they are pleased to connect
 with it. But if this Word is sometimes

taken in an ill Sense, it has also a good Meaning belonging to it, as will be shewed in its proper Place; and in the latter Sense, to use the Words of a learned Author, “ A
 “ Spice of Enthusiasm is no unreputable
 “ thing, seeing that a Man seated on this
 “ Bench finds himself in very good Com-
 “ pany, some of the greatest Philosophers,
 “ Prophets, Legislators, Doctors, Fathers,
 “ and Saints in all Ages being confessedly his
 “ Assessors.”

Enthusiasm, as it respects Religion, divides itself into a threefold Distinction, all agreeing in the Sameness of the Object, but differing in the State of the Persons who are the Subjects of it. I shall consider these three Kinds under the several Epithets, malignant; mixed, and pure.

One Species of a malignant Enthusiasm and that the most common, consists in a blind intemperate Zeal for something called Religion, of any Denomination, under the embittered Fury of a Party Rage, directed by the untutored Passions of the animal Man, and standing in all the Depravity of corrupt Nature. It can look no farther than Names and sensible Things, and therefore treats with Contempt the Mysteries of
 d the

the Divine Life, is an utter Enemy to all Spirituality in Religion, and uses the Word *Sanctified*, as applied to Persons, only as a Term of Derision, appropriating Sanctity to Places, Buildings, Vessels, or Vestments: But tho' its Zeal be exercised on nothing better than Ceremonies, Names, and sensible Objects, yet it is no less interested in their Defence than if eternal Salvation entirely depended on them, and therefore such as come under this Predicament are ready upon the least Preference given to the Essentials over the Circumstantials of Religion to cry out as loudly as the Men of *Ephesus* for their great *Diana*. If some Notions about Doctrines enter into this kind of Zeal, as Charity is wanting, they only serve to inflame it the more, whilst they go about to sanctify their Wrath with the Pretence of contending earnestly for the Faith. The mad Knight Errantry of the Crusades was strongly tinged with this Spirit of Enthusiasm, and likewise all Wars in every Age that have been entered into for the Propagation of Religion; and such Madness unto the Death has been fancied Martyrdom. Now as this kind of a wild-fire Zeal greatly inflames the unmortified Passions, the
Devil

Devil finds an easy Access thro' it to the Heart, where he reigns with uncontrolled Dominion, and is properly and truly Abomination sitting in the Holy Place, even that Place which should be a Temple consecrated to God, and the peaceful Mansion of the Spirit of Love: And this is deservedly called a malignant Enthusiasm from the Effects it produces, as Variance, Wrath, Strife, Wars, Persecutions, and Massacres on account of Religion, Men acting the Part of Savages one by another at the Instigation of the Devil, and calling the Murder of their Brethren the doing God Service. All such Professors, however they may boast the Antiquity of their Church, the Excellency of its Constitution and Discipline, or the Orthodoxy of its Creed, do notwithstanding fall greatly short of the Religion of good Heathens, and we scruple not to pronounce that *Plato* and *Plotinus* had a far better Faith and Practice. The learned *Dr. Henry More* * speaking of the Illumination of certain Theosophists, which he attributes to natural Light and a complexional Philanthropy, expresses himself thus: " This Illumination of the Theosophists

* See his *Divine Dialogues*.

“ is not so contemptible but that they justly
 “ magnify it above the grim Ferocity of
 “ the superstitious Factions in the embitter-
 “ ed Churches of the World, who have
 “ not so good an Inspiration as this, but
 “ their Tongues and Hearts are set on Fire
 “ of Hell. This Light of Nature, I say, is
 “ abundantly well appointed both for Right
 “ and Skill to chastise and reproach the gross
 “ and grievous Immoralities of hypocritical
 “ Religious, and to be subservient to that
 “ Truth and Life that is really Divine.”

Is there any need to justify the Doctor's Remark, or to prove that mere human Virtues founded on natural Benevolence are preferable to a persecuting and therefore false *Christianity*? How even Reformation has been deformed by this Antichristian Leaven in some who have boasted in her Name, a moderate Acquaintance with Church History will make appear, and sadly shew how the same Spirit of Wrath and Bitterness which, in the Form of *Popery*, burnt the *Protestants* in Queen *Mary's* Days, soon after crept into a better Form, and hunted down the *Puritans* in those of Queen *Elizabeth*: And when Presbytery got into the Chair of Authority, the same evil Genius,

nius, dressed in a new Cloak of Reformation, forged the Fetters of a new Uniformity, and laid the Axe to the Root of Episcopacy. Independency promised better Things and pleaded loudly and strongly for Liberty of Conscience and Universal Toleration; and yet when *Independents*, driven by the Rigours of Church Government out of *Old England*, got Footing and Power in *New England*, they forgot their Sufferings and their Principles, and there persecuted the *Quakers*; but these last, tho' we have seen them with Government in their Hands, were never known to persecute or molest any for Conscience sake. To the Honour of that People this is spoken. But to proceed.

Under this Species of malignant Enthusiasm stand likewise ranged all those who have made themselves infamous in the World by their impious Pretensions to a Divinity of Character, equalling themselves to one or other of the three Persons in the sacred Trinity; of which Sort were some of the Heresiarchs of old; and among the more modern ones are to be reckoned *David George*, who gave out, that he was the spiritual Messiah in whom all the Prophecies centred, and other Blasphe-

mies: As also that *Peruvian* Doctor, who affirmed that he was possessed of a Sanctity superior to that of Angels, and that God Almighty had offered to make him Partaker of the Hypostatic Union, &c. To which may be added in a lower Degree the chief Leaders of a Fanatic Tribe in *Germany* in the Sixteenth Century, who boasted that they were commissioned by God to restore the Kingdom of *Christ*, aspired at Sovereignty, and attempted to depose Princes, declaring that they themselves were the Meek who should inherit the Earth: And with these may be joined the Fifth Monarchy Men of the last Age, and all such filthy Dreamers as go about with carnal Weapons in their Hands to erect *Christ's* spiritual Kingdom on mundane Systems.

We see in these Instances how Zeal for Religion springing up in Hearts unpurified by Christian Faith and Humility, partakes of all the Foulness of the Soil that feeds it, mixes with the unsubdued Passions of the natural Man, and, where it meets with any uncommon degree of Pride, and affected Singularity, lays itself open to all the Delusions of Satan, becomes impregnated with the Spirit of Error, and brings forth
the

the poisonous Fruits of a malignant Enthusiasm.

The second Kind of Enthusiasm that falls under Consideration is of a mixt Nature: I do not mean that it partakes in any Degree of the Malignancy of the foregoing Species, for the Soul in this Case is so far influenced by the Holy Spirit, that the Devil has not sufficient hold of it to drive it into any criminal or sinful Excesses, yet it is not without a greater or less Degree of Infirmary, Weakness, and Error. But before we proceed on this Head, it will be proper to give the original Sense of the Word Enthusiasm, according to its true Etymology.

They who were supposed to be in this State were called by the Antients *Ενθουσιασαι*, *Ενθεοι*, *Θεοληπτοι*, or *Numine afflati* — Men animated in an extraordinary Manner with the Spirit of God, or apprehended, seized, or inspired of God. And this Meaning of the Word is allowed and used by Dr. H. More, in his *Treatise on Enthusiasm*, where he speaks of *verum, pium, probat inque Enthusiasmum sanctarum, sincerum inque animarum*, or the pious, true and approved Enthusiasm of sincere and holy Souls: doubtless

meaning among these such as he describes in *the Vision of the Rider of the White Horse*, Men rooted and grounded in the Love of God, and flaming with a Holy Zeal for *Christ*, and therefore fit Instruments to reform the World. I cannot help quoting the Passage (tho' with some little Abbreviation) as it seems to be delivered in the Ardour of a prophetic Spirit: " The sharp-
 " edged Sword which is here said to come
 " out of the Mouth of *Christ*, is in Effect
 " the very same that comes out of the
 " Mouths of his Saints, who rule the
 " World by convincing them of their
 " Wickedness and causing them to return to
 " God. This sharp, piercing and vehe-
 " ment Reproof out of the Mouths of the
 " People of God against the Beast and
 " the false Prophet is here said to be a
 " Sword coming out of the Mouth of *Christ*,
 " because their Mouths are his Mouth, and
 " He inspires them by his Spirit to transmit
 " that Blast of Fire and flaming Breath
 " (as it is called in *Esdra*s) whereby the
 " Wicked are consumed. This Flame
 " and this Sword I take to be clear Truth
 " and sound searching Reason inspired from
 " the Eternal Word, which whetted with
 " a holy,

“ a holy, sincere, and unaffected kind of
 “ Enthusiastic Zeal, and backed with an
 “ unexceptionable Life and Conversation,
 “ will be like a sharp-edged Sword with the
 “ Weight of running Quick-silver in the
 “ Back of it, whose Stroke will fall with
 “ such a Sway that it will even chine the
 “ Enemy at one Blow, will divide asunder
 “ Soul and Spirit, and pierce through the
 “ Joints and Marrow.” Let thus much
 suffice to distinguish between true and false
 Enthusiasm, and to rescue the Word from
 that popular Odium and Abuse of Lan-
 guage with which the Pretence or Delusion
 of some feigned or fanciful *Illuminati* have
 disgraced it.

But however exalted the foregoing Cha-
 racter given by the Doctor may seem, and
 really is, yet inasmuch as it generally comes
 under the Denomination of mixt Enthu-
 siasm, it is not exempt from Infirmity and
 Error: But if we resolve to admit of no
 Reformers but such as are perfect Saints,
 and free from every Degree of Hallucination
 and Misconduct, we are not likely to see
 any Amendment wrought in the World.
 That Difference which appears among
 the Fathers of the Church in their Judg-
 4 ment

ment concerning some Points of Religion ; their Disputes one against another * ; their Retractions, and some other Particulars in their Lives and Conduct, if brought to the Test of a severe Examination, may all serve to exemplify the Truth of the Apostle's Words, that *every Priest taken from among Men is compassed about with Infirmary*. Yet what shall we say of a *Bayle* or a *Middleton*, who could overlook the eminent Gifts and Graces of these holy Men, to pick out their Blemishes of human Infirmary, in order to discredit their Testimony and all that was divine in their Characters. There is not perhaps any thing more opposite to the Genius of true *Christianity* than that Closeness and Bigotry of Spirit which hinders us from seeing and loving the Beauty of Holiness in the Character of any Person, only because he thinks not or walks not with us ; as if the all-bountiful God measured out his Grace and Goodness according to the scanty Pattern of the national, notional Orthodoxy of Men : And therefore what a little Heart must a late Writer have had when he went about to depreciate the exalted Virtues of **the**

* As betwixt *Chrysoſtom* and *Epiphanius*, *Jerom* and *Rufinus*, *Cyri*l and *Theodoret*, &c.

Marquis *De Renti*, on account of his being of the Romish Communion! could he see nothing worthy of his own Imitation in that excellent Nobleman, that Mirrour of *Christian* Piety? Could he fix his Eye upon nothing in so glorious a Character but his Reverence for a monitory Crucifix, that Excess of Honour he paid the Saints, and some other Particularities of his Church which we commend not? Let it be told him, what he might have seen, if his Eyes had not been blinded by Prejudice: He might have seen in him a young Gentleman of Quality and Fortune renouncing the Pomps and Vanities of the World for the Love of God: He might have seen in him an Instance of profound Humility in high Life walking in the Steps of his Blessed Master, and after his Example going about doing good both to the Bodies and Souls of Men: And he might have beheld in him the manifest Tokens of a devout Heart and heavenly Affections, and a most illustrious Exemplification of divine Faith, Hope, and Charity. All this he might have seen in the Marquis *De Renti*, if it had not better suited a mocking Humour to ridicule his Mortification and Self-denial together with some Mixture
of

of Weakness in a Life consecrated to God. How much more ingenuous, of how catholic a Spirit was that honest Quaker who was so charmed with this Pattern of Christian Excellency (tho' I believe as much averse to Superstition as this Author) that he thought an Epitome of such a Character an Embellishment to his Book *. " He
 " was (says he) a Man of an enlightened
 " Mind; and of a Soul mortified to the
 " World, and quickened to some Taste of
 " a supernatural Life: Let his Youth, let
 " his Quality adorned with so much Zeal
 " and Piety, so much Self-denial and Con-
 " stancy, become exemplary to those of
 " worldly Quality who may be the Readers
 " of this Book." But it seems, *He had
 a strong Tincture of the Enthusiastic Spirit.*
 Let it be asked, instead of a Reply; What Spirit he was tinctured with, and what Cause he meant to serve, when he took so much Pains to disgrace the Character of the holy Marquis *De Renti*?

The Reader probably by this time begins to grow better reconciled to Enthusiasm in a proper Sense of the Word, and to find that it is no such terrible Bugbear

* Penn's No Cross no Crown.

as they might before imagine, nay, on the contrary, wears a beautiful Form! But let it be carried in Mind, that they in whom the Spirit of God so dwells are but Men, and that therefore, as they have this Treasure in earthen Vessels, their Strength will be joined to Weakness, like the Feet of *Nebuchadnezzar's* Image which were partly of Iron and partly of Clay; for few, very few there are, who have their Minds so thoroughly enlightened with Wisdom from Above, and their Hearts so totally purified by Faith and Humility, as not to have remaining in them great Mixtures of Ignorance and Frailty: Hence arise frequent Mistakes in very eminent *Christians* with regard to their Spiritual Estate, great Unevenness and Inconstancy: They find in themselves at times a very ardent Love for God, and the Flame of their Devotion rises high; and in such Frames scarce any Figures are lofty enough to express the Sublimity of their Raptures.— We see them skipping like Roes upon the Mountains — riding on the Wings of the Wind, or soaring as an Eagle towards Heaven. These may be called irregular Flashes of the celestial Fire, or transient Touches of the divine Spirit, which even penetrate the

the animal Nature and transport them beyond themselves. Young Converts to the divine Life have generally the most sensible Experience of them, the Reasons of which are assignable ; but they are apt to place too much to their account, immoderately coveting them, and as much dejected upon their being withdrawn ; hence frequent Complaints of Desertions, Darknes, the Hidings of God's Face, &c. The like Vicissitudes we meet with in *David* ; sometimes we see him set upon his high Places, and boasting, that his Hill is made so strong that he shall never be moved ; and then presently he is in Heaviness — God has turned away his Face from him, and he is troubled.

The Soul is sometimes in a more tender Frame, and feels itself as it were melted into divine Love, so that if the former may be compared to Fire, this State may be said to resemble Oil, which is a Figure (if it be only a Figure) often used in Scripture to denote inward Joy and Gladness, as well as the Graces of the Holy Spirit. When the Soul is thus affected, it is natural for it to adopt another kind of Language whose Style is pathetic and mellifluous — It walks in the Garden with its Beloved,
whose

whose Lips like Lilies drop sweet Myrrh — It leans upon his Bosom, and he spreads over it the Banner of his Love — All is ineffable Sweetness, and the Burden of the Song is — My Beloved is mine, and I am his. The Reader need not here be told that this is the Language of the *Song of Solomon*, which was doubtless the divine Breathings of a Spiritual Affection, and not, as some of an earthly Mind suppose, the amorous Expressions of a carnal Love. But these Gusts of Suavity and Delectation are not ordinarily of any long Continuance, being rather designed as refreshing Cordials to sustain the Spirit in this its State of Weakness, to allure it on its Way, and to disgrace the low, gross Satisfactions of Sense, than appointed for its constant and daily Food, and therefore ought not to be passionately or impatiently coveted. We should leave the dispensing of his Comforts to God alone, who knows best what we stand in need of, and remember that a Life of Faith, under the Denial of these Spiritual Delicacies, accords for the most Part, better with the Nature of a probationary State. It may not be amiss to observe here by way of Caution, that to publish or promiscuously declare

declare these our inward Experiences is not at all Times prudent: What passes in the Interior betwixt God and our Souls, is not always designed for the Benefit of others, but for our own private Instruction, Trial, or Improvement: Besides, as the Religion of the Many rises no higher than their Forms, it will be talking to them as in an unknown Tongue, whilst People of a cavilling and scoffing Spirit will not fail to treat the Relaters as mad-brained Enthusiasts: But this must be left to Christian Prudence, as there are confessedly Occasions where they may be of great Use to such as are fit to profit by them.

Another Error which People of good Dispositions under strong Religious Influences are subject to, is that of confounding the Motions of God's Holy Spirit with those of their own natural Wills and Propensions. It is said of *Socrates's* Genius or Dæmon, and that by himself, that it was dehortatory, not impulsive, restraining by inward Checks from acting upon particular Occasions, but not prompting him upon any: Tho' this is not true of that good Spirit under whose Influence all true *Christians* are, and from whom all our holy Desires

fires and good Councils do proceed ; yet as to the distinct Knowledge of its Operations, we are generally more sensible of its restraining than inciting Power over us: However that be, where the Impressions are not clear and convincing (as oftentimes they are not) they should be attended to with a cool deliberate Judgment, and a Mind as free as possible from all partial Affections and every sinister Bias, tried by the Rule of the written Word according to the Light given us, and offered up in Prayer for clearer Direction, and then if the Instigation continues, and does not cross any plain Duty, we are warranted in acting pursuant thereto, tho' it be contrary to the common Sentiments and Ways of others, for the *Christian* is not to be judged by the Opinions and Rules of common Men ; but if he doubt, let him not act, for whatever is not of Faith is Sin : However, in this Case, it is both safer and better to call his Motive by the Name of Impression or Persuasion than an Impulse of the Spirit, since by the last we generally mean some extraordinary Vouchsafement of Light, or holy Violence upon the Will, and that upon uncommon Occasions: For want of distinguishing with a cool dispassio-

nate Judgment in Cafes of this Nature, the Ebulliency of natural Fervors and a premature Zeal will be apt to pafs eafily upon the Mind for divine Impulſes, and our own haſty Reſolves for the Dictates of God's Spirit.

A third Error which has ſometimes miſled very ſerious and pious People, is that of the Imagination drawing Pictures of ſo lively a Reſemblance as to impreſs them with a ſtrong Belief of their Reality: And to theſe Illuſions penſive and ſolitary People are the more ſubject, on account of their greater Abſtraction of Thought, for as the imaginative Faculty has a kind of creative Power, ſo it gains Strength by the habitual Exerciſe of it. The Lives of the Romiſh Saints are full of Relations of this ſort, and as the People of that Communion generally exceed on the ſide of Credulity as much as ſome of their Neighbours on the contrary Extreme, ſo this their Fondneſs for the Marvellous has proved a great Temptation to the Writers of thoſe Lives to make great Additions to the Truth. But becauſe many of theſe Appearances have been merely illuſory, or Creatures of the Imagination, we are not upon that account to diſbelieve ſuch as come properly

properly attested by Persons of Credit, seeing every Deceit as a Counterfeit implies a possible Reality: Besides, an absolute total Incredulity in this respect can only be supported by a degree of Credulity in another way that is more than sufficient to believe the Point in Question; for it must proceed upon a Belief that there can be no Communication between us and the World of Spirits, or that all such Communication is ceased, which admits of no Shadow of Proof; as also that some of the best People in all Ages have born their Testimony to an Untruth in what they have related concerning such Appearances as from their own Knowledge. That Instance of this kind given us by Dr. *Doddridge* in the Life of Colonel *Gardiner*, may, I think, be safely admitted; and, were it not that I well know with what Prejudice Narratives of this sort are generally received, I could add others of equal Authority. If it be replied, that these, according to my own Supposition, might only be Representations presented to the Mind by the Imagination—It is readily allowed: But yet to affirm that there can be no possible Way for the Party immediately concerned to distinguish betwixt Fan-

cy and Reality, in these things, is to affirm, that *St. Paul* could have no Certainty in Relation to the Vision of the *Macedonian*, nor in that of the Angel in his Voyage to *Rome*, and yet we do not find that he was in any Doubt as to either, nay Doubt here would necessarily have defeated the End for which they were sent, the one being appointed for his Direction, the other for his Consolation. But I think it will scarcely be doubted, for sure it ought not, whether God can give us so lively and vigorous a Perception of such Representations as to stamp upon them all the Clearness of Certainty: Nor is it material whether the Imagination be the Seat of them or not, as He can convey unquestionable Notices to us by this as well as any other Faculty of the Mind; and to deny this Power to his good Spirit whilst we allow that evil Spirits can practise upon the Imaginations of Men with delusive Images, is placing the greater Power in the wrong Scale. As to the Credibility of these Appearances with respect to others, that will depend much upon the good Estimation in which the Relator stands with us for Veracity and Soundness of Mind, for, as these things are mostly for
private

private Use, they seldom carry with them any further Credentials, unless some remarkable Effect follows which is so connected with them as to add a corroborating Evidence, and such perhaps may be reckoned the sudden Reformation of Colonel *Gardiner*.

Upon the whole; as the Imagination in this our fallen State is much disordered, like the other Faculties of our Minds, through that Darkness and Deceivableness which Sin hath occasioned, therefore, as in the Matter of Impulses before, so here, great Care and Caution should be used, that we suffer not the Workings of our corrupt Nature to impose upon us, nor give Access through them to the Spirit of Error and Delusion to deceive us into a false Enthusiasm: And in order to this it will be needful to live in a daily Mortification of the sensual Appetites and Passions, which have a very powerful Influence over the Imagination; not to indulge any fond Desire after Visions and Voices, but to cherish an humble Frame of Mind, that no Inflations of Spiritual Pride may dispose us to believe a Lye: and to be much in Prayer to God to deliver us from the Temptations and Delu-

sions of *Satan*, and all Deceits of our own treacherous Hearts, so apt to betray us into the Enemies Hands; and that He will give us a right Judgment in all things, that we may be able to discern betwixt Truth and Error. Such a Discipline will be a Means to preserve our Minds from the Imposture of false Pictures and Images, and enable us to make a right Use of God's Dealings with us both in the Dispensations of his Providence and his Grace.

There was the more need to be particular on this Head, as well to guard on the one hand against an Error which some well-meaning and pious People have been misled by, as against that prevailing Incredulity on the other which treats all Appearances of a supernatural kind as Fictions or Distemper of Mind, which is too much the fashionable *Hobbism* of this Age, and has a direct Tendency to Atheism: And indeed a strong Tincture of the latter is much to be suspected where Men openly profess themselves so far *Saducees* as to disbelieve all Manifestations of Angels or Spirits upon any Testimony whatever. Such Persons generally make the highest Pretensions to the Name of rational, tho' in this Instance they

they give no Proof of their being so, seeing that Reason is not more concerned in denying than affirming the real Existence of these Things, it being rather the Office of Reason to seek for Truth here, as in most other Cases, in the Mid-way betwixt believing too much and too little : And as to any Difficulty of distinguishing betwixt true and false in this Matter, the Objection concludes no more strongly here than it does against trusting to the Report of our Senses, to the Professions of Friendship, or to many other Matters that occur in common Life, on account of the various Deceits and Impositions that we are daily liable to.

It may not be unseasonable in this Place to add a general Caution against treating with Ridicule or Levity what serious and religious People declare concerning their Experiences, tho' they may not be altogether free from Indiscretion or Mistake therein. Whatever passés betwixt God and the Soul, tho' according to our most imperfect Apprehensions of it, is a Subject of serious Consideration, and the very weakest of our Brethren, if well-meaning, are in this Case among those little ones whom we should not dare to offend. These things have been

treated of late in a very unbecoming Manner, and it is high time to take Notice of it, and to rescue the Myſteries of the divine Life from the Mockery of profane Jeſters. *Chriſtianity* is too much conſidered by many as a Science only, but they who denied it to be experimental alſo know nothing of it yet as they ought to know, nor are qualified to ſpeak with Propriety on any one Grace of the Goſpel. The Soul has its Senſations as well as the Body, its Affections and Paſſions are confeſſedly ſuch, nor is it eaſy to conceive how we can be made Partakers of thoſe Fruits of the Spirit, Love, Joy, Peace, but by our ſpiritual Senſes put into Exerciſe by a Principle of ſpiritual Life, unleſs it may alſo be affirmed that we have no other way whereby to judge of our bodily Health and Soundneſs than by diſtinct Acts of Perception or Reflexion. What a ſtrange kind of Divinity then muſt that be which would rob Faith of its ſubſtantial Comforts, and explain away the high Privileges of the *Chriſtian* into ideal Nothings, whiſt it allows to the animal Man a ſenſible Experience of his vain Loves and earthly Satisfactionſ!

Let

Let thus much suffice under the Article of mixt Enthusiasm considered as that State of the divine Life in which there is much of Infirmitv and Mistake, and oftentimes of Deception and Error arising from Complexion, Prejudice of Education, Passions not thoroughly mortified, or wrong Habits not sufficiently subdued; but notwithstanding this Mixture of Darkness and natural Corruption with the Light and Grace of God's good Spirit, still Holiness is the prevailing Principle, and divine Love keeps the Ascendant in the Soul, as a Flame never extinguished, tho' varying in Steddingness and Lustre from different Causes. We are furnished with many eminent Instances of Persons in this Character in every Church, all holy People, (whatever outward Communion of *Christians* they belong to) being fellow Members of that Catholic Church for which we pray, and joint Associates in that blessed Communion of Saints of which *Christ Jesus*, God blessed for ever, is the only supreme Head.

It remains that something be said of pure Enthusiasm (according to the proper Definition of the Word) as signifying that high State of Christian Perfection in which
Men

Men of purified Souls hold intimate Communion with God through the Fellowship of his Holy Spirit, having their Minds defecated from all heterogeneous Mixtures, irradiated with his divine Light, and tasting the ineffable Sweetness of that Love, Joy, and Peace, which constitute a self-evident and glorious Display of the Kingdom of God within us. He that is come up hither may well be compared to *Jacob's* Ladder; tho' he standeth upon the Earth, yet he reacheth unto the highest Heavens: He is in Possession of every thing that is Great and Excellent, for he is united to God; he hath attained to the End of all Ordinances, for Love fulfilleth all things in him, and *Christ* giveth him to eat of spiritual Meat, and to drink of the Water of Life freely: He needeth not that one teach him, for he is taught of God, and that Wisdom which is a Breath of his Power maketh her Abode with him, and feedeth him with the Bread of Understanding: he is got above the Reach of Delusions arising from the Phantasms of an irregular Imagination, being reduced to an entire Poverty of Spirit, denuded of all Self-hood, and mortified to natural Sensibilities, so that his Illuminations
are

are clear as the Rivers of Paradise, and the divine Communications to his Soul pure as the shining Light. But how shall he particularize this State who hath attained to no Experience of it? seeing those few who have, declare it to surpass Description: the great *Dr. More* before quoted (who in one Part of his Life seems to have been of this Number) calls it “ a most joyous and lucid
 “ State of Mind, and such as is ineffable ;” and in some Places, “ a Union with the
 “ divine Celestial Principle:” “ I am (speaking of himself in this State of glorious Liberty) *Incola Cæli*, an Inhabitant of
 “ Heaven; He that is come hither, God
 “ hath taken him to be his own familiar
 “ Friend, and tho’ He speaks to others
 “ aloof off in outward Religions and Pa-
 “ rables, yet He leads this Man by the Hand,
 “ speaks to him plainly in his own Lan-
 “ guage, sweetly insinuates himself into and
 “ possesses all his Faculties, Understanding,
 “ Reason, and Memory: This is the Dar-
 “ ling of God, and a Prince amongst Men,
 “ far above the Dispensation of either Mi-
 “ racle or Prophecy*.”

The Doctor was well aware that the

* *Life of Dr. Hen. More by Ward.*

Relation of such high Experiences would meet with but a very indifferent Reception from those cold stiff Religionists, whose icy Hearts were unthawed by the Fervors of divine Love, and never tasted the Sweetness of an elevated Piety, and therefore in his Mystery of Godliness, Book VIII. Ch. xiv. intituled, *A Vindication of the true Members of Christ from Pharisaical Aspersions*, he obviates their Charge of Madness and Phrenzy upon the Children of God. The whole Chapter is so pat to the Purpose, that I had much ado to forbear transcribing the Whole; but I content myself with giving the Reader an Abstract of the xith Section. “ It must needs be that those who
 “ speak with much Zeal and Vigour things
 “ true in themselves, yet to others unintelli-
 “ gible, must be by them reputed no better
 “ than Madmen: And hence it was that
 “ *Festus* told *Paul* that much Learning had
 “ made him mad. Here probably may be
 “ the Ground of that ordinary Saying —
 “ *Nullum magnum Ingenium sine admixturâ*
 “ *Dementiæ*; and according to Analogy it
 “ may well be said that *Nullus insignis Chris-*
 “ *tianus, &c.* that there is no eminent
 “ *Christian* that will not seem to have some
 “ Spice

“ Spice of Madness in him, especially if he
 “ be judged by the formal stiff *Pharisee*,
 “ whose Postures and Actions are always
 “ kept, as it were, in an outward wooden
 “ Frame, as a Child in a standing stool;
 “ his Traditions and customary Opinions
 “ being as deeply scored and carved in his
 “ Memory as the outward Shows of Things
 “ are scrawled out in the rude Furrows of an
 “ Idiot’s Brain: and as the unskilful Ruf-
 “ tic would suspect him scarce sound in his
 “ Senses that should confidently speak any
 “ thing that palpably crossed those gross
 “ Scrawlings written in his Imagination:
 “ So certainly would the formal *Pharisee*
 “ not stick to judge him mad that should
 “ with Zeal and Boldness pronounce such
 “ things as were not parallel nor agreeable
 “ to the Prefigurations of his prejudiced
 “ Mind, but most of all, if they were
 “ such as are above the Reach of his Appre-
 “ hension: Surely the more earnest a true
 “ Member of *Christ* should be in such
 “ Points, the more mad he would appear
 “ in the Eyes of the cool, prudential *Pha-
 “ risee.*”

It is observed with regard to this Dispen-
 sation by those who have been raised to it,
 that

that it is seldom of any long Duration, being rather a short Earnest or Prelibation of the Beatific State afforded to pure and holy Souls, than any permanent Dispensation; and it is generally, if not always, followed by some humbling Trial; accordingly we read in the Case of *St. Paul's* being caught up to the third Heaven, that immediately after this Rapt or Vision there was given him *a Thorn in the Flesh, the Messenger of Satan to buffet him, lest he should be exalted above Measure*; by which we cannot understand less than that he was exercised with some sharp bodily Affliction for his Humiliation: And this may help to explain what frequently happens to those who belong to an inferior State, according to their more remote or nearer Approaches to this respectively, who find their joyous and delectable Intervals succeeded by Fits of Heaviness and gloomy Overcasts, whence their Complaints of Aridities, Desertions, &c. which People of a moderate Experience in the divine Life cannot be unacquainted with, tho' many, for want of Light into the Methods and Reasons of God's Dealings with Souls, are apt to be troubled above Measure upon these Occasions, as tho' some strange thing
had

had happened unto them, not knowing, or not considering, that the same Afflictions are accomplished in their Brethren, and that they are sent, after they have suffered a while, to perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle them.

It will be proper to observe here, that the Way to any good Degree of Perfection in the divine Life lies through great Mortification and Self-denial: Some think it enough to get Doctrines into the Head, but till the Heart is in some Measure purified by Faith nothing is rightly done: And in order to this the Children of *Anak*, those corrupt Passions and Inclinations that war against the Soul, must be driven out, the Perverseness of the Will broken, the Understanding simplified, the Pride of our Hearts pluckt up by the Roots, and all the Cords that bind us to the World and the Things of it untwisted; in a word, our Idols must be cast out, and every cursed thing removed that separates betwixt God and us, for the pure in Heart and they only shall see God: It was by this kind of holy Violence practised on themselves that the Worthies both of the Old and New Testament, in all Ages of the Church, have
laid

laid hold on the Kingdom of Heaven, been favoured with such rich Communications from God, and enabled to work such Wonders as surpass the Belief of many in this degenerate incredulous Age: And that a preparatory Discipline of Strictness and Severity is necessary in order to qualify us for any extraordinary Vouchsafements of Illumination and Grace, we may learn from the Schools instituted among the *Jews* for the training up of Persons for the Prophetic Office, where they were educated in great Abstraction from the World, in the Government of their Passions and the Mortification of their natural Propensions, that being so disengaged from the common Impediments of a holy Life, they might be more at Liberty for Devotion and the Contemplation of heavenly things, and by such previous Exercises become fit Instruments for the Holy Spirit and more receptive of heavenly Wisdom. Thus came they out holy Enthusiasts, Men of God furnished to every good Word and Work, Scribes well instructed unto the Kingdom of Heaven, and fearless of giving Offence in the Way of Duty, even before Kings, being no less qualified for Reproof and Correction than

for Doctrine and Instruction in Righteousness, Patterns these for all Persons of a Religious Character, whether they live in Colleges or are in Kings Houses; whether they attend on those who go clothed in Purple and fine Linen and fare sumptuously every Day, or are called forth to a more promiscuous Employment of their Office: for tho' the Dispensation of Prophecy as it respects the foretelling future Events, has of a long Time ceased in the Church, yet the Character of Prophets in the Capacity of Expounders and Declarers of God's Word and Will, and as Denouncers of his Judgments on all impenitent, even the most dignified, Offenders, is never to cease in it, neither is the Lord's Hand shortened that it cannot extend Comfort and Courage, Light and Direction for these Purposes now as formerly: But alas! our Hearts are straitned that they cannot receive it as they ought, and we are so entangled, as to many of us, with such an evil Covetousness after the Things of this Life, so studious to seek the Honour that cometh of Man more than the Honour that cometh of God, that we want Boldness to hold the Faith of our Lord *Jesus Christ* without Respect of Persons: For let Men

be never so highly titled or character'd, let their Pretensions to Learning be what they will, and their Acquaintance with Creeds, Canons and Commentators never so extensive, yet so long as they continue Men of this World, and follow the Things of it, so long as their Affections are set on Things beneath, and their Hearts unfurnished to God, they are no better than dry Bones as to the divine Life, without Marrow or Moisture; and as they cannot in such a State receive the Things of the Spirit of God, not having spiritual Senses exercis'd thereto, so will these things of course appear Foolishness unto them in others, and they will speak Evil of that which they know not.

I am here led to say a word concerning Inspiration, and to observe that this best of God's Gifts to Men (however the Belief of this may be deemed Enthusiasm by some) is the certain Privilege, in one degree or other, of every true Christian; for a Gospel Faith is nothing less than a supernatural Light and Power communicated to the Soul from the Father of Lights; and every saving Grace in us is, in its measure, a real Participation of the Divine Nature. The prevailing Pre-
judice

judice against the Doctrine of Inspiration thus held arises in part from a gross Misconception concerning some supposed physical Distance between God and the Soul, whereas nothing is nearer to God than the Soul of Man in the original Constitution of its Nature, nor is it now separated from Him by Distance of Place, but only by the Condition of its Existence in Sin. In proportion then as it is purified by Faith from Sin, and gives itself up in Obedience to the Drawings of the Father thro' his Spirit, so far it advances in its Union and Communion with God, and comes into Fellowship with the Father and the Son: So that the Light of Divine Truth shining in our Hearts, and all holy Tempers and Dispositions of Soul are by the Inspiration of God, and real Emanations from the Fountain of Light and Love. For this Inspiration we are taught to pray in the Service of the Church, but few seem to mean any thing by the Word, and the Learned by their false Glosses and Interpretations of the Scriptures on the one hand, and by exalting the Sufficiency of human Reason on the other, have so explained away this important Doctrine of all Religion both natural and revealed that we no longer wonder

that the Belief of all internal Operations of God in the Soul is treated as Enthusiasm or Fanaticism. It is by these superficial Dealers in the Letter that we have seen the Life of the Letter taken away, the beggarly Elements of human Ideas set up in the Room of the Light of God in the Soul, and the Scriptures disgraced by opprobrious Comparisons drawn between them and Heathenish Compositions, as if one main Excellency of the Sacred Writings consisted in outdoing *Homer* in Imagery, or *Demosthenes* in Oratory: But such degrading Encomiasts would do well to remember that He whose Character is that of being the Wisdom of God, and who in the Days of his fleshly Appearance spake as never Man spake, made no account of human Eloquence; and that the Authority with which he spake consisted not in the Sublimity of Figures, or the Elegance of Diction, but in Demonstration of the Spirit and Power from on High.

A distinct Consideration of the Nature of Enthusiasm is at this Time the more requisite, inasmuch as the anonymous Author before referred to, in his Work on this Subject, has not distinguished the different Kinds of it, but confounded Truth and Error,

ror, Light and Darknefs in one promiscuous Huddle, that he might with a fuller Hand fling the Dirt of his Reproach upon experimental Religion, at the fame time ridiculing the Infirmities and aggravating the Blemifhes of many pious *Chriftians* of different Communions, both among the Living and the Dead, in order to form diftorted Comparifons for the Sport of Buffoons and Infidels. To inftance in what he fays of thofe two different States of Mind which Chriftian People, who attend to what paffes within them, make frequent Mention of, *viz.* as being at certain Times exercifed with Doubts and Fears about the Condition of their Souls, and under a total Abfence of fpiritual Comfort, at others, highly tranfported with grateful Refentments of the divine Love and Favour, and filled with great Joy and Peace in believing. Now he can fee nothing more in thefe than the common Effects resulting from the Mechanifm of the animal Oeconomy: “The Force
 “ of Diftemper and bodily Diforder, fays
 “ he, will account for fuch dark and difcon-
 “ folate Thoughts” (in the former Cafe;) and as to the latter, he refolves it into Enthufiafm, “ a kind of Drunkennefs (thefe are his

Words) “filling and intoxicating the Brain
 “with the heated Fumes of spirituous Par-
 “ticles.” And in order to compleat his
 Parallel betwixt those two States of the
 Mind and a common Debauch, he adds:
 “No sooner do the Inebriation and Inca-
 “lescence go off, but a sinking of the Spi-
 “rits, a Coldness and Dullness take place,
 “and the lower is the Depression in Propor-
 “tion to the preceding Elevation!”

How shall we answer such Treatment of
 spiritual Things without Rebuke! What
 shall we say, when one who owns himself a
 Minister, is not ashamed to reflect so dis-
 gracefully on religious Matters! Let us sup-
 pose then (if such be his Character) that
 one under his Charge should apply to him
 for Direction and Comfort under great Dis-
 tress of Mind, complaining of uncommon
 Abatements of the Love of God in his
 Soul, and of great Deadness in Prayer; that
 he took no Satisfaction in the Way of Ordi-
 nances and Duties as usual, but on the con-
 trary found in himself a Backwardness to all
 religious Exercises, and a total Insensibility
 of Comfort from them. Would he tell
 such a one that he ought to make no account
 of these things; that it was all owing to
 the

the sinking of the animal Spirits, and that he might find his Relief from riding out or cheerful Company, only taking in the Paroxysm of the Fit, (as he is pleased to express it) *q. ſ.* of Spirit of Harts-horn? Suppose again, that some such disconsolate Person were so happy as to receive Benefit from some of his Discourses, (if we may suppose him to have any suitable to such a Case) and should come to thank him as the Instrument of his Consolation, telling him withal, that the Cloud which before intercepted his Light and Comfort was removed, and that he no longer doubted his State of Acceptance, being strong in Faith and Hope, and his Soul invigorated with a refreshing Sense of the divine Love and Goodness. Now what would be his Reply upon this Occasion? Nay what other Reply can we suppose him to make, upon his own Principles, than as follows? “ Neigh-
 “ bour, do not deceive yourself, by laying
 “ any Strefs upon this Change of Mind that
 “ you talk of, for between you and me (if
 “ I may deal plainly with you) it is nothing
 “ but a Fit of Enthusiasm, a kind of
 “ Drunkenness, filling and intoxicating
 “ your Brain with the heated Fumes of

“ spirituous Particles, and when the In-
 “ briation and Incalcescence are gone off,
 “ the following Depression will be in Pro-
 “ portion to your present Elevation.”

Thus the Affections and States of the Soul, with regard to its spiritual Concerns, are resolved by him into the Effects of Matter and Motion, and one great Part of *Christianity* subjected to the Laws of a mechanic Philosophy, and therefore no wonder that he treats the Belief of all supernatural Influences upon Man, whether Divine or Diabolical, with such an Air of Ridicule, as particularly where he banters the Belief of being possessed by evil Spirits, recommending a Dose of Physic to the Patient as the best Dæmonifuge. The Fathers of the Church held these Cases in more awful Consideration: They appealed to the Roman Court for the Truth of the Matter*, and challenged a Trial of their Power to cast evil Spirits out of the Possessed, not by Manna or Senna, but by the all powerful Name of *Christ*: And should this Author be ever so unhappy as to be troubled with so foul a Guest, he will know of a Truth, that his cleansing must be effected by a

* See *Tertullian*, *Lactantius*, and other Apologists.

very different kind of Cathartic from that which he so ludicrously prescribes.

But he has found out the Secret whereby to account, as from a Principle, for all these Enthusiastic Irregularities and Variations in the Temper, and that is, from a complexional Melancholy; and he refers the Reader to Dr. *Henry More's* Treatise on Enthusiasm. Now the Doctor in that Work professedly treats of the false Enthusiasm, or that ranked here under the Distinction of Malignant, and distinguishes in the very same Work betwixt that Species of it, and what he there calls the approved and pious Enthusiasm of holy Souls, as observed before*. He allows a complexional Melancholy at the Bottom of both, fruitful of much Evil in the former, as of much Good in the latter Case, nay he passes a great Encomium on this particular Temperament, as being greatly helpful to “ rouse the Soul from its
“ spiritual Lethargy, to put it upon suspect-
“ ing its State of false Peace, to stir it up
“ to Self-examination and Circumspection,
“ to guard against Levity and *foolish Jestings*,
“ and to prepare faithful and obedient Souls

* See Sect. Ixiv. as also his large Note on that Section in *Scholia* at the End of the Dissertation. *Latin Edition.*

“ for

“ for the Work of true Regeneration and
 “ the Influxes of the Holy Spirit.” It is
 very plain, from the Quotations before given
 from the Doctor, that he was no Enemy
 to Enthusiasm, properly so called, nay, he
 freely confesses, that he had a Tincture of it
 himself: his Works shew it; and it was
 this divine Fire that gave Wings to his Soul,
 and Sublimity to his Sentiments, carrying
 him at times far above those little Exactnesses
 and Rules of Language, which suit much
 better those minute Critics who sit trimming
 their Phrases and turning their Periods,
 than Persons of his Elevation and Genius:
 And yet when we say, that this great Man
 at times fell short of himself, and that the
 Freedom of his Spirit in some Instances
 was contracted into something of a narrow
 Partiality, we only say, that he was a Man.
 I here take my Leave of this Author at
 present with referring the Reader to the lxiii^d
 and lxivth Sections of his *Scholia in Enthusiasmum
 Triumphatum*, for the Commendations
 which he there gives to a true Enthusiasm,
 and for the Usefulness which he ascribes to
 a right Melancholy in the divine Life.

Melancholy is generally considered as a
 Distemper of the Mind, whereas it only
 becomes

becomes such through an Excess of it in the animal Oeconomy, it being one of those four Complexions which distinguish the human Constitution. The animal Body of Man is compounded of the four Elements, answering to the four Complexions, and the animal Spirit may be called a Quintessence or fifth Essence. Now according as one or other of these four Elements predominates in Man, so is he denominated Choleric, Melancholy, Phlegmatic, or Sanguine; and from the particular Crasis or Mixture of these Ingredient Principles arises his natural Disposition, Genius, &c. Thus he that has most of Fire in his Composition, which is the choleric Complexion, is more prone to Anger and Pride than others, impatient of Contradiction, &c. and if mistaken Apprehensions concerning Religion mix with this Temperament it is apt to flame out in a furious persecuting Zeal, for, if it be not well qualified with the Water of Life, the Devil has great Power over it, and it is easily set on Fire of Hell, as the Words and Actions of People under the Dominion of passionate Anger too fully demonstrate. The phlegmatic Complexion is more inert and less susceptible of Impressions — The Melancholy

lancholy is fixt, retentive, and circumspect — The Sanguin, active and cheerful, but inconstant. Hence proceed the different Tempers observable in Men, as also what we commonly call constitutional Virtues and Vices, (the Sin that so easily besets us) and where the Power of the Complexion is naturally strong, it stamps its Signatures oftentimes in the Lines and Configuration of the Features, so as to make them an Index to the Complexion, and herein is the true Ground of the Art of Physiognomy. Now Religion, tho' it lies deeper than the Complexion, even in the Soul or immortal Spirit (which communicates with the spiritual World from whence it has its Birth) yet its Operations are tinged by the Complexion as Light is tinged by the Colour of the Glass that transmits it: And this will account for that Variety of Appearances and Dispositions in which Religion manifests itself in the best of Men under a great Diversity of Talents, Inclinations, and Tempers, as in the active and retired *Christian*, the meek and the courageous, the reserved and the communicative; for the religious Principle doth not so much alter and change the Complexion, (tho' it goes a great way towards

wards it in some, by giving to it Consistency and Fixedness) as it qualifies, corrects, and purifies it; and perhaps this is what we are to understand by the Sanctification of our Bodies, not of the gross corruptible Flesh, but of the Complexion.

It is easy to believe, by what is said of *Paul's* breathing out Threatnings and Slaughter against the Disciples of the Lord, and of his being exceedingly mad against them in persecuting them from City to City, that he was by Nature choleric; nor are we to suppose that his Conversion wrought a total Change in his Complexion, but sanctified it: His Zeal was ardent both before and after, but here lay the Difference: In the one Instance it was a natural Fire or blind Impetus, in the latter a holy Zeal for God and Souls, under the Direction and Influence of divine Light and Love: *St. John* perhaps had all his Light and more than all his Love, but not so high a degree of fervent Zeal. Now what should we say of any one that should go about to explain the holy Zeal and Love of these great Apostles from a natural Elevation of the animal Spirits, or the heated Fumes of rarified Particles? We could not, I think, say

say less, than that such chemical Reasoning ill accounts for Christian Graces. Had the Author who says such Things been a mystic Writer, and spoken of spiritual Inebriation, after the Manner of those Authors we could well have borne with him, but it plainly appears that he had no Notion of that, any otherwise than as a fit Subject of Banter, and therefore could only speak of it in Derision. Let us hear the divine *Macarius* describing the Elevations and Depressions of spiritual Persons in a way becoming so serious a Subject, and like a Man thoroughly experienced in heavenly Mysteries, in the following Extract from his xviiith Homily, where he ascribes them to the Operations of the Spirit of God in holy Souls. “ At certain Times they are
 “ elated as at a Royal Banquet, and re-
 “ joice with Gladness and Joy unspeakable :
 “ at others, as the Angels, light and agil,
 “ and as it were free from all Incumbrance
 “ of these material Vehicles : and at other
 “ Times, like Men overcome with Drink,
 “ exhilarated and even intoxicated with the
 “ Spirit. At other Seasons they are sunk
 “ into Grief and Lamentation for all Man-
 “ kind, interceding for the whole Stock of
 “ *Adam,*

“ *Adam*, and taking up a wailing and weep-
“ ing for it: Then again so inflamed with
“ the Joy and Love of the Spirit, that, if
“ it were possible, they would snatch up
“ every Man into their Bosom. Some-
“ times they are humbled so far below every
“ other Person in Self-abasement, that they
“ think themselves inferior to and less than
“ all: At others, they resemble a strong
“ Man, who comes forth in Royal Armour
“ to the Battle, and valiantly overcomes his
“ Enemies, &c. So very various is the Way
“ of the Spirit in conducting the Soul
“ to God, sometimes refreshing her, and
“ sometimes trying and exercising her, that
“ so she may be presented pure and perfect
“ to our heavenly Father.”

In a word — To go about to explain and account for spiritual Effects from the sole Agency of material and mechanical Causes, and thereby to exclude the divine Spirit from the Work of Religion in Man, argues great Ignorance in the true Nature of things, nay it is more than *Cartesian* Infidelity, and borders upon Atheism. If therefore we would speak philosophically upon Religious Subjects, we must know something of the spiritual World, that so we may be
able

able in part to conceive how the Good or the Evil Spirit in Conjunction with the Soul acts in and through Man's Animal Nature, according to the Laws of his material System: And this Knowledge, as far as it goes, will help to explain the Connexion of the Soul with the Body through the Mediation of the Animal Spirit, and also account for a great Variety of Matters in experimental Divinity: But this must be from the same Light which gives us the spiritual Knowledge of the Scriptures, and even in the most illuminated will be knowing but in Part, and seeing as through a Glass darkly in this State of great Imperfection; however, it may well be called Day-light if compared to the Darkness of the natural unenlightened Man, who, as such, cannot know the Things of the Spirit of God, but will account them Foolishness. Thro' want of some degree of Knowledge as to the Communication betwixt spiritual and material Nature it is, that our Systems of Philosophy in general are so very defective, and rather leaning to Infidelity; and hence probably may have proceeded that well known Reproach cast upon Physicians, for that being led by the Study of their Profession in-

to a more intimate Acquaintance with the physical Causes and Operations of the Animal Oeconomy, many of them, either through want of Faith, or want of Knowledge in spiritual Nature, have mistaken second Causes for the first, and so by resting there, have stopt short of God. Sure it is, that true Divinity and true Philosophy are never at variance, but on the contrary, when rightly understood, are mutually helpful to each other: And yet after all we must allow, that the nearest way to God is by Faith, Hope, and Charity, and that these far surpass, and will do more for us, than the Knowledge of the highest Mysteries. But to return to the subject of Melancholy.

This of all the Complexions is best fitted for receiving and retaining religious Impressions, as being the most stable and serious, and, if properly qualified with the Sanguine, is perhaps the most perfect and amiable of the four: Yet this, like the others, has its Dangers, and Temptations, for by Reason of original natural Corruption the evil Spirit has Access to the Soul through this likewise, none but the Lord of Life having ever been able to say — “ He hath no Part

“ in me.” That Melancholy will operate very powerfully in Persons of this Complexion in the Religious as well as any other Character, sometimes driving them to Despair, and in some Instances ending in Madness, stands confessed: Hence the Undiscerning are apt to ascribe it to Excess in Religion, or to what Dr. *Trapp* calls *being Righteous over-much*, whereas the true Cause is some radical Evil, or vicious Excess in the Complexion, and therefore Madness in this Case is to be accounted for in the same way that we account for Phrenzy, Lunacy, or Idiocy in any other of the four Temperaments: and we may with as good Reason blame the Sun for producing noxious Weeds and poisonous Plants, as attribute these Effects to Religion, which is well calculated to correct all Disorder of the Passions, and to settle the Mind in Tranquillity, Peace, and Comfort. The primary and fundamental Doctrines of the Gospel are, first, that of Original Sin, or our lost, undone State by Nature; but this Disease, mortal and universal as it is in itself, finds its Remedy in that Redemption which is by *Jesus Christ*. Secondly, the Impossibility of our being justified before God by any Works or Deservings of our own: But then

then here we are relieved from our Impotence and Misery by the free Offer of that Faith and Grace, which are abundantly sufficient for us. Thirdly, the Necessity of a spiritual Birth of a divine Life in the very Essence of our Souls, in order to which there is no help to be found in Man, for there is no Medicine for such spiritual Health in us: But here the Almighty Saviour stands engaged by his sacred Promise, that “to as many as will receive him He will give Power to become the Sons of God.” Here is no other Ground of Despair in these Doctrines than that of being able to become our own Saviours, and such kind of Despairing must be allowed a necessary Step to right Believing.

Let us now briefly consider what Effect these, and the like evangelical Doctrines, when powerfully urged, are likely to have on different Persons, according to the Difference of their State and Disposition: The hardened Sinner and the impenetrable Infidel will mock and deride with the *Athenians*, or oppose and blaspheme with the *Jews*, whilst those of a more pliable Temper, and whose Hearts lye open to the Stroke of Conviction will be rouzed

from their Lethargy, and made to cry out, "What shall I do to be saved?" The Formulist, if his Ears be open to Instruction, will be taught, that the Kingdom of God standeth not in external Forms and Modes of Religion, but in Power, and that the true Worshipers are those that worship the Father in Spirit and in Truth; And the Legalist, if he can be moved from his false Foundations, will here learn the Vanity of going about to establish his own Righteousness, and be driven to seek and sue for that Righteousness which is of God by Faith: Or, where these Doctrines prove insufficient to persuade, the Terrors of the Lord, as held forth in the Law, may be powerful to convince both the outward Sinner and the Pharisee, and compel them to give up both their Unrighteousness and their Self-righteousness; and this by breaking open the whited Sepulchre, and discovering the Rotteness and Corruption that are within; by making manifest the Purity and Holiness of God's Nature, and the Impurity and Sinfulness of Man's Nature; by shewing the Perfection of God's Law, and the Imperfection of Man's best Obedience, and by laying open to the Conscience the Sins of the
Heart

Heart and the Sins of the Life, and so bringing into Judgment. Now it may so happen, that the same Terrors and Denunciations which are needful to pluck some as Fire-brands out of the Burning, may be turned by others of a deep complexional Melancholy into the Matter of their Despair, nay into such a kind of it as may prove incurable, notwithstanding the most skilful Applications both of the bodily and spiritual Physician; but this we cannot prevent, any more than some other obstinate Distempers incident to the human Mind; the Law and the Gospel must be enforced according to God's Appointment, and the Event be left with Him who can save by Fire as well as by Water, and is not obliged to give an account of these his Matters. But after all, these are to be considered as particular Instances, and therefore making no Part of a general Rule, for it is far otherwise, for the most Part, with Persons who are exercised with strong Fears concerning their spiritual Condition, and who under such Circumstances, are not only curable, but in the right way of their Cure, this Sickness being not unto Death, but for the Glory of God, that the Son of God

may be glorified hereby in the Salvation of their Souls.

Convictions on account of Sin, (which is the preparative Work for the Gospel State, or the Kingdom of God within us) may not improperly be termed the Physic of the Soul, and in order to operate efficaciously it must act powerfully, for that sorrowing after a godly sort which it produces works great *Carefulness, Indignation, Vehement Desire, and Self-Revenge*; it penetrates deep, even to the very Foundations, and sometimes, for a while, spreads a horrible Gloominess over the Mind, the Party feeling the Sentence of Death in himself and subscribing to the Justice of his own Condemnation. This was certainly the Case of *David* in that Day of his Complaint, when “the Arrows of the Lord stuck fast
“in his Soul, and his Flesh trembled for
“fear of his Judgments;” when he had
“no Rest in his Bones by Reason of his
“Sin, and all God’s Storms went over
“him.” The same is well understood in one degree or other by every experienced *Christian*; and others would do well to beware how they ridicule or speak lightly of such distressing Perplexities — far better
would

would it be for them that they were in the same Condition. Too many there are who being entirely ignorant in this way of God's dealing with Souls take upon them the Office of Advisers, and so are apt in Cases of this Nature to prescribe improper Reliefs and false Comforts; they are for healing the Wound before it is searched and cleansed, which causes it to ulcerate the more, not considering that this is not a Disease which is to be got rid of at any rate, and the sooner the better, but a State which is to be passed through, figured by the Journeying of the *Israelites* through the Wilderness from *Ægypt* to *Canaan*. The Soul is here in its right way of Discipline, and placed at the Foot of *Mount Sinai* under Thundrings and Darknes and Fire, to make it sensible of its Sin, and of the terrible Majesty of a Sin-avenging God, that so the Law may do its Office upon it as a Ministration of Condemnation, and act the Part of a School-master to lead it to *Christ*, as its only propitiatory Sacrifice, Righteousness and Salvation. Thus the Way to *Sion* lies by the burning Mountain of *Sinai*, and *Moses* with his correcting Rod conducts us to *Christ* through *John's* Baptism of Repentance, as

P R E F A C E,

this prepares us for the Baptism of Regeneration. These Persons then are not mad, as the World supposes, but returning Sinners coming to their right Mind, as the prodigal Son is said to have come to himself when he became sensible of his Folly and was brought to Repentance: They are under the Leadings of the Father to the Son, that the Son may present them to his Father cleansed and redeemed by his Blood, and that the Holy Ghost, proceeding from the Father and the Son, may sanctify them and make them a peculiar People holy in all Manner of Conversation and zealous of good Works.

Or if this must be called Madness, let it at least be allowed a less dangerous kind of it than Presumption and Madness in Sinning, as a wounded Conscience affords more Hope than a benumbed or seared one. But do you herein shew that your Minds are set upon Righteousness, and that you judge the thing that is right, O ye Sons of Men! Turn your Eyes to the great Bedlam of the World, where its Votaries are running mad at such a rate after Folly and Riot, where Invention is racked to lull Conscience asleep, and where Millions are rocking them-

themselves to spiritual Slumber in the Cradle of Death, and treat every faithful Watchman that sounds the Alarm to rouse them from their false Peace, as the Enemy of their Repose: Cast your Eyes, I say, on this Theatre of Vice and Frolick, this Fair of Vanity, where Prince *Abaddon* holds his perpetual Jubilee, and say which of these two Schools, *Christianity* or the World, turns out the greater Number of mad Folks. Which would an Angel pronounce most rational and sound in Mind? The sordid Race of Mammonists, the giddy Tribe of Pleasure-seekers, and the fantastic Croud of Fashion-followers, or the poor broken-hearted *Christian* lamenting his Sin and Misery, and in the Power of divine Grace working out his Salvation with Fear and Trembling, and following a despised *Jesus* through Mockery and Derision to eternal Blessedness and Glory? If you are not of the Number of the infatuated, you cannot hesitate a moment to resolve the Question aright; for Wisdom is justified of her Children.

I have the longer insisted on the Subject of Experiences, as well because all true Religion must both begin and end here, as be-

cause very few of our Theological Writers touch upon these Matters; and therefore whilst some lay down excellent Rules for the practical Life, enforce the Obligations to a regular and decent Discharge of all the Parts of external Worship, or imbue the Mind with sound and wholesome Doctrines, let others be permitted, according to the Length of their Line, to launch out farther into the Deep, and there let down their Net for a Draught: Thus, whilst some are instructed in the Principles, or Rudiments, of the Doctrine of *Christ*, and others are led on unto Perfection: Whilst we deal out Milk to Babes, strong Meat to those that are of riper Age, and speak the Wisdom of God in a Mystery to them that are perfect, the whole Body is edified in Love, and every Man hath Praise of God.

It is very certain that the greatest Part in every Age and Place have stopt short of the Truth and Substance, by resting in the Outside of Things; and therefore St. *Paul*, that great Preacher of inward and spiritual Religion, takes much Pains both with *Jew* and *Gentile* to convince them of their gross Ignorance and Error in this Particular; for if the latter were in general ignorant of the
true

true God, the former worshiped Him not in Spirit and in Truth; if the latter bowed down to Stocks and Stones, the former idolized their Forms of Worship instead of worshiping God, through their Forms; and so all had sinned and come short of the Glory of God. The *Jews* esteemed themselves the Chosen, the Temple of the Lord, and the Seed of the Covenant, and they pleaded their Circumcision, their Priesthood, their Temple-services, and their Ordinances of divine Institution as the Marks of their Election: And a peculiar People they certainly were, and chosen to distinguished Favours and Privileges, but no otherwise elected to Salvation than as they continued in the Grace and walked in the Light and Love of God; “for he was not a
“ *Jew* which was one outwardly, neither was
“ that Circumcision which was outward in
“ the Flesh; but he was a *Jew* which was
“ one inwardly, and Circumcision was that
“ of the Heart, in the Spirit and not in the
“ Letter;” the outward Ordinance representing to them that Corruption of our Nature by original Sin which was to be cut off and renounced, and that they were to be a spiritual People, holy to the Lord, and
“ born

“ born again, not of the Will of the Flesh,
 “ nor of the Will of Man, but of God.”

And here we cannot but lament among the many sad Effects of the Fall, its having introduced such Grossness and Darkness into the Mind of Man, that it so hardly elevates itself to the Consideration of heavenly Things. From this Propensity to Matter and Sense Idolatry first took its Rise — Men wanted Objects of Worship that they could see with their bodily Eyes, and so adored the Host of Heaven, or Images of their own making: And hence it is that among those who profess to worship the true God so many are wholly taken up with what is external in Religion: “ See what Manner of
 “ Stones and great Buildings are here!” said one of the Disciples to our Lord: “ And
 “ *Jesus* answering said unto him: Seest
 “ [admirest] thou these great Buildings;
 “ There shall not be left one Stone upon
 “ another that shall not be thrown down.”

And as there is an outside Worship void of the Spirit of Devotion, which availeth not, so likewise there is an outside Knowledge in Religion, without the Spirit of Wisdom that profiteth not; for it is not a literal or historical Understanding of the
 Scriptures

Scriptures that maketh wise unto Salvation : The Art of Criticism and Skill in Languages may make a fair Show in the Flesh, and procure us the Reputation of learned Men, but unless the Spirit give an affecting and edifying Interpretation of them, they will be but as a sealed Book to us in Things pertaining to God. St *Paul* disclaims all human Knowledge and Self Ability, considered separately from the divine Teachings of the Spirit, as insufficient for the Work of the Ministry — “ Our Sufficiency, says he, is of God, who hath made us able Ministers of the New Testament, not of the Letter, but of the Spirit.” These things rightly considered, there will be little need of an Apology for insisting, and that strenuously, upon the Necessity of the inward and spiritual Life, the Kingdom of God within us, as that divine Source from which alone all holy Desires, all good Counsels and all just Works can proceed ; as that heavenly Light which alone gives true Wisdom, and makes all our other Knowledge and Learning of any real Benefit to us in the Christian Life ; and as that Principle of Holiness which sanctifies all our Morality and Religious Services, and without which they are nothing worth.

It

It is further evident, that nothing less than calling People to the Spirit and Power of Godliness can be sufficient at this time to bring about a Reformation both of Principles and Practice amongst us; and most serious People think, that this was never more needed. That the best things when corrupted become the worst, is a proverbial Truth, and if so, bad *Christians* must be the worst of Men. Corruption did perhaps never spread wider nor sink deeper than at present; and the want of Truth and Justice in the Words and Dealings of *Christians* is become our Reproach in the Mouths of *Turks* and Infidels: Nay, are not the Provisions made by publick Appointment for the Redress of Injustice become, some how, so slow in Execution, so vexatious and burdensome oftentimes in their Process, that to suffer Oppression in many Cases is a less Evil than the tedious and expensive Operation of its Remedy? What shall we say of the Sophistication of Wares and Merchandise, the abominable Adulteration of Medicinal Drugs and Liquors and other Frauds in Trade commonly practised, nay Frauds supported by customary Perjury: And lastly, what shall we

we say of a Depravation of Manners so horrid and worse than heathenish, that the very *Savage Indians of America* are afraid to suffer their Children to converse with *certain Europeans* lest they should be corrupted by them*. Must not that be a false Charity that casts its Mantle over such national Sins as these? Must not that Zeal for Religion have lost both its Name and Nature that can be silent here!

Lastly, It is from a Revival of the Spirit of true *Christianity* in the Hearts of Men alone that we can hope to see Peace restored on Earth among the divided Churches of *Christendom*. Whilst Religion resides only in the reasoning Part of Man, it is tinged with all the Prejudices and Passions of his Nature, and his Reason will be ready to plead for or against the Truth, as Interest or Education sways the Man, it being little better than that hired kind of Logic that wrangles at the Bar, whether it rails in the Pulpit, harangues in the Synod, or wields the Club of Controversy. Much of political and polemical Divinity is of this Sort. But the Wisdom that is from Above, is first

* See the late Bishop *Berkeley's* Tracts, and Dr. *Hales's* Advice to Dram Drinkers.

pure,

pure, then peaceable, gentle, full of Mercy, and without Partiality; for the same good Spirit that enlightens the Understanding, cleanses the Heart from all Bitterness, Malice, and Hypocrisy, and therefore operates by Pureness, by Knowledge, by Love unfeigned. A Party Spirit, whether it be in Religion or Politics, proceeds from Littleness of Mind and Narrowness of Heart, and it puts out both the Eye of the Judgment and the Eye of Charity, and so hinders us from seeing the brightest Excellence in our Neighbour that is not just as high or low as ourselves, as I heard a Man of Learning once say that he could not allow *Milton's Paradise Lost* to be a good Book, because written by an *Oliverian*. But the *Christian* knows no such Straitness, for his Bowels are enlarged towards all that will come within the Embrace of his Charity, which is as wide as the East is from the West. He cannot wrangle and hate about Differences of Opinion, for he is got above them; his Call, his Universal Call is to Love, and he has adopted for his Motto that Saying of *Luther* — *In quo aliquid Christi video, illum diligo* —
 “ In whomsoever I see any thing of *Christ*,
 “ him

“ him I love.” In this Man, wherefoever he lives, and by what Name soever he is called, the Kingdom of *Christ* is come; and of such heavenly Men and Women it will consist in that enlarged glorious State of it which we are given to look for: And what if it be already begun on Earth?

I cannot conclude this Preliminary Discourse better than with an Extract from Dr. *More's* Preface to *the Mystery of Godliness*. After he had before asserted, that the End which all Parts of the Christian Mystery point at, is the Advancement and Triumph of the divine Life in the Soul, in the Exaltation of which God is most highly glorified, he declares his Belief of a future happy State of the Church when the Spirit and Power of the everlasting Gospel shall prevail in the Hearts of Men.

“ There shall be, there shall be, most
 “ certainly, a Time, when the Sun of Righteousness being risen, *Ægyptian* Mists and
 “ Darkness shall be dispersed: When all
 “ the Filth and Dross of the Church shall be
 “ consumed and purged away by the Ardor
 “ of divine Love: When all Barbarity of
 “ Manners, and filthy Superstitions and Ido-

h

“ and

“ and Brimstone: When, finally, *Calvi-*
“ *nism, Lutheranism, Popery,* and what-
“ ever other Distinctions, shall be melted
“ down into one (which shall be instead of
“ all) truly Catholic and Apostolic *Philadel-*
“ *phianism.* Which Times that God would
“ hasten, and thereto incline the Hearts of
“ Christian Princes and People, ought to
“ be the fervent Desire and Prayer of all
“ good Men.”

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S E R M O N I.

The Sin and Danger of being ashamed
of the Gospel.



R O M A N S i. 16.

*I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ;
for it is the Power of God unto Salvation
to every one that believeth.*

IN the foregoing Verses the Apostle acquaints the Christians at *Rome* with his longing Desire to see them, declaring, that it was not through want of Good-will, but of Opportunity, that he had not yet made them a Visit: *Often-times*, says he, *I purposed to come unto you, but was let* (or hindered) *hitherto*. The same Lord who had called him to the Ministry, had Work for him to do elsewhere; and as his Time and Labours were consecrated to his Master's Service, so did he submit the Direction and Disposal of Himself and them to his good Pleasure. We may design or desire to serve

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B

God



God in this, or that Place, or Way, but it may be more for his Honour, or the Good of his Church, that we be ordered to some other Post or Part : Thus *Paul* and *Timothy* were forbidden to preach the Word in *Asia*, and when they essayed to go from *Mysia* into *Bithynia*, the Spirit suffered them not, for the Lord had appointed them to preach the Word in *Macedonia*. Learn hence, that we must not think of being our own Masters, even in our best Intentions, but divest ourselves of all Self-will, and offer them up in Prayer to God for Direction, and then we need not doubt but that such Notices will be impressed upon our Minds, or such providential Occurrences cast in our Way, as will determine us to act in such a Manner, as will be most for the Glory of God. However, in this unlimited Resignation of ourselves and Undertakings to the Divine Conduct we may lawfully purpose and desire this or that good Act or Office, as *St. Paul* did to visit the Faithful at *Rome* : *I long, says he, to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual Gift, to the end you may be established, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual Faith both of you and me.* Blessed *Paul* ! how art thou changed

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changed from that persecuting *Saul*, who a little before breathed out Threatnings and Slaughter against the Disciples of the Holy *Jesus*! So powerful is both the constraining and restraining Grace of *Christ* to change the Rage of Lions into the Meekness of Lambs, and to turn all our Hatred into Love! We see then, that the Motive of the Apostle's earnest Desire to see and be present with the Faithful, to whom he sends this Epistle, was not to pass his Time with them merrily, in the way of what is now generally understood by good Fellowship, nor to live upon them at Free-cost; nothing of this kind was in his view; he sought not theirs but them, not their temporal good Things, but their spiritual Welfare, to build them up in the Faith by a holy Conversation, to instruct and encourage them in the Knowledge and Practice of the Christian Life, and to give and receive Consolation, mutually by comparing what great Things the Lord had done for their Suls: And O that there were more of these edifying Communications amongst us now-a-days when we meet together! How might we strengthen and comfort one another by such godly Conferences, and be able to say at the

End of every Visit, It is good for us to have been here! — But to proceed,

St. *Paul's* delaying to visit the Brethren at *Rome*, occasioned by his ministerial Labours in other Places, gave Occasion, as it seems, to some among them to represent it as the Effect of Fear, for *Rome* was at that Time the Capital City of the World; thither resorted the Philosophers and Learned from all Parts, there the Great and Wealthy lived in Pomp and Pleasure, and there the Tyrant *Nero* kept his Court: Such discouraging Circumstances some might think sufficient to deter even an Apostle from preaching the Gospel of *Christ*, and the self-denying Doctrines of his Religion in such a Place; but in thinking so they betrayed their Ignorance of St. *Paul*, and the Spirit he was of, for neither the Opposition of the Learned and Great Ones of the Earth, neither Bonds nor Imprisonments, nor even Death itself had any thing in them to be feared by him, who *counted not his Life dear unto himself, so that he might finish his Course with Joy, and the Ministry which he had received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the Grace of God.* But whether it was to obviate a Suspicion that might arise

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or to refel a Charge already formed against him, either by the Mistake of Friends, or the Malice of Enemies, the Apostle who was ready on this, as on every other Occasion, to give sufficient Proof of his being an undaunted Workman, to whom the Lord had given the Spirit not of Fear but of Power, declares as follows; “As much as
“in me is, I am ready to preach the Gos-
“pel to you that are at *Rome* also; for I am
“not ashamed of the Gospel of *Christ*, for
“it is the Power of God unto Salvation to
“every one that believeth.” As if he had
said, “Do not ascribe my delaying to come
“unto you to any Fear or Shame in me of
“preaching *Christ* crucified in your great
“City, the boasted Mistress of the World;
“for however the Doctrine of the Cross
“may be despised, or rejected by the wise
“and great Ones of this World, of which
“there are many in that Metropolis, yet I
“am so far from being ashamed of it, that
“it is my Rejoicing and Glory, for it is
“the Power of God unto Salvation: I have
“experienced the convincing and convert-
“ing Power of it in myself, and it is equal-
“ly powerful to produce the same Effects,
“in all that hear it, with a Disposition

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“ to receive it ; and therefore trusting
 “ in that Almighty Saviour, whose Mi-
 “ nister I am, that he will give the same
 “ Efficacy and Success to the Word of his
 “ Grace as heretofore, as much as in me
 “ is, as far as I am left at Liberty, and not
 “ elsewhere employed by my Lord, I am
 “ ready to preach the Gospel to you that
 “ are at *Rome* also.”

I shall *first* speak briefly on the Power of
 Gospel Salvation ; and
Secondly, On the Danger and Sin of be-
 ing ashamed of it.

By the Gospel of *Christ* is here meant
 the great Subject of Gospel Doctrine, or
 Man's Redemption by *Jesus Christ* : And
 this does confessedly carry in it most evident
 Signatures of divine Power, both in its ex-
 ternal and internal Ministration ; nay every
 thing leading to it, and preparing the World
 for it, was an Apparatus stamp'd with the
 Image and Superscription of Omnipotence
 in every Part of the amazing Oeconomy :
 What Visions, what Voices, what Prophe-
 cies, what extraordinary Providences, what
 astonishing Miracles, declared, foretold, and
 ushered

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ushered into the World this mysterious God-Man? Behold him in his Entry as cloathed with Meanness and Mortality, (for human Nature in its best Estate is but Disgrace, and the Difference betwixt its highest and lowest, though much to our childish Conceptions, is nothing to God) yet see here the Power of the Creator manifested essentially in the Weakness of the Creature. Angels proclaim the Advent of the Infant King, and Wise-men from the East, by heavenly Direction, fall down and worship *him* who was no less the Light of the *Gentiles* than the Glory of his People *Israel*. How high, how low, how rich, how poor, how little, how great, is this wonderful Person! In him Extremes are reconciled; in him Contradiction and Opposition unite; God comes down to Man, Man is exalted to God; the Enmity between the two Natures is slain, and in him is laid the Foundation of Love, universal Love.—Glory to God in the Highest for Peace restored on Earth, and for Good-will towards Men! Let us view this second great Representative and the Saviour of Mankind in his Probation, in his Ministry, and in the Sequence of it: And here how invincible was he in his



Temptation! how patient in Sufferings! how mighty in Word and Deed! how faithful in Obedience! how persevering unto the End! how victorious in his Death! how triumphant in his Resurrection! how glorious in his Ascension! *Truly this Man was the Son of God.*

But if this Mystery of our Salvation, in the outward Oeconomy of it, is nothing less than the mighty Power of God, the exceeding Greatness and unspeakable Riches of his Power and Goodness are perfected in the Ministration of the Spirit of Christ, whereby we are given to know him, and the Power of his Resurrection in raising us from the Death of Sin unto the Life of Righteousness. If *Christ*, represented to us under the Types and Shadows of the Law, (that Ministration of Condemnation) was glorious: If that same *Christ* manifested in the Flesh, to make Atonement for Sin, to fulfil all Righteousness, and to destroy the Works of the Devil, was still more glorious: *Christ* reigning in the Hearts of the Faithful, through the regenerating Power of the Holy Ghost, is most glorious of all. This is the third, last, and highest Dispensation of the divine Goodness on this Side of our

our



our glorious Immortality, and to which every preceding one was subordinate and subservient: Here Redemption attains to the Limit of its Accomplishment in Man; here Grace and Truth meet together; here Righteousness and Peace kiss each other, and the Bridegroom rejoiceth over the Bride, for *the Marriage of the Lamb is come, and his Wife hath made herself ready.* Thus we see that the Kingdom of God is not in Word, nor in Form, nor in Profession, but in Power: It is the Power of the Holy Ghost in the Word that begetteth Faith in the Heart of the Hearer, and by Virtue of the same divine Power it is that the Corruptions of our Nature are subdued, our Hearts purified, and we enabled to resist the Devil, and overcome the World thro' Faith: And lastly, through the powerful Energy of this holy Principle it is that we are born again of God, and joined to the Lord in one Spirit, and so have Fellowship with the Father and with the Son: So that from the Beginning of our Conversion to the End of our Sanctification we are saved, not of ourselves, but by that Grace of the Gospel, through Faith, which is the Power of God unto Salvation to every one that
be-

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believeth. As to Unbelievers, such whose Hearts are hardened against all Gospel Impressions through the Deceitfulness of Sin, it is not so with them : In these the Word of God faileth of its first Work, *viz.* to beget the Beginning of Faith in their Hearts ; and therefore the Word, though preached again and again, doth not profit them, not being mixed with Faith in them that hear it: Hence it was that some could mock even at the preaching of an Apostle, and afford him no other Return for his Labours of Love, in declaring to them J E S U S, and the R E S U R R E C T I O N, than that deriding Question, *What will this Babler say?* And hence it is, even at this Day also, that God manifest in the Flesh, and revealed in our Hearts by his Spirit, with other Things pertaining to this great Mystery of our Redemption, are either a Stumbling-block, or appear no better than Foolishness, to the fleshly Wisdom of so many amongst us, for in that Way of Knowledge they cannot know them, because they are spiritually discerned : But to every one that believeth the Gospel of *Christ* is *the Power of God unto Salvation* : Powerful are the Convictions it carries with it, and powerful its

its Comforts; powerful it is to establish, strengthen and settle that Faith which its own Power first begat, and powerful to enable the Man of God to work Righteousness, to pull down the strong Holds of Sin and Satan, and to bring every Thought, and Imagination under Obedience to Christ. Thus by Grace are we saved through Faith from first to last, for by this Faith we first turn from Sin to God, herein we stand, herein we conquer, and so attain to the End of our Faith, even the Salvation of our Souls.

One main Reason why so few conceive rightly of the Power of Gospel Salvation, is their Ignorance concerning that Power of Sin in themselves, from which it is to save them: Did they but see how the Mystery of Iniquity worketh Sin and Death and substantial Enmity against God in their Souls, they would soon be brought to acknowledge and adore the great Mystery of Godliness as nothing less than the Right Hand of the Lord put forth to destroy these Works of the Devil in Man. Were Original Sin nothing more than a mere Imputation of *Adam's* Guilt to his Posterity, as some absurdly suppose, then a mere Imputation
of



of Innocence would be sufficient for the Discharge of it, without any thing more; but if it consist, as it most certainly does, in the actual Derivation of a corrupt Nature from a corrupt Original, according to this necessary Consequence that, as is the Root such are the Branches; in this Case, nothing less than an Exertion of Omnipotence, equal to that of Creation, can set all right again; nothing but the exceeding Greatness and effectual Working of that same Power of God which wrought in *Christ* when he raised him from the Dead, can raise a Soul from the Death of Sin unto a Life of Righteousness, and *turn us from Darkness to Light, and from the Power of Satan unto God, that we may receive Remission of Sins and Inheritance among them which are sanctified by Faith in Jesus.* By that Power of God unto Salvation then declared in the Gospel, we are to understand the victorious Power of *Jesus*, our King and Conqueror, subduing his and our Enemies under his Feet; for in this little World of Man are two Kingdoms at War, Heaven against Hell, and *Christ* against *Belial*, and where these are the Powers engaged what is thy utmost Strength, O Man, but as the shaking of a Leaf?

The



The Battle is the Lord's, and it is his own Arm that getteth himself the Victory : Go not up then to the Fight, but stand thou still and see the Salvation of God, for *in Quietness and Confidence shall be thy Strength.*

In vain we go about to trim and adorn ourselves with our Professions and self-practised Reforms, as with the true Wedding-garment, whilst the Man of Sin is in full Possession of the Heart, for tho' these Things may be profitable unto Men, they cannot commend us unto God; no Plant that our heavenly Father hath not planted can bring forth Fruit good and acceptable in his Sight. This new Plantation, Production, or Creation, is every where in Scripture ascribed to the mighty Power of God, and to nothing that is in Man, whether it be a notional Knowledge of our Redemption by *Christ*, the Doctrine of a self appropriated Election, or any Works done in his own Strength, for to use the Words of a pious Author: " All the Powers of
" Flesh and Blood, that is, of Man in his
" fleshly Nature, are utterly insufficient for
" this Purpose; and if you take never
" so much pains to adorn your outward
" Man with a civil, and even Saint-like
" Be-

“ Behaviour, as thinking any thing to be
 “ Conversion but that which is effected by
 “ the Power of the Holy Ghost, you en-
 “ tirely mistake your Case, and will be in
 “ Danger of rejecting your Remedy*.”

Secondly, If such and so powerful be the Gospel of *Christ*, even the Power of God unto Salvation, one would be apt to think cautionary Dehortations concerning the Sin and Danger of being ashamed of it almost needless; but this is not so, for there is a Cross and a Reproach attending it, to exercise the Faith and try the Fidelity of the Servants of *Christ*, who is upon this Account no less a Rock of Offence, than a Rock of Salvation to many. Human Respects have always been a great Snare even to Persons of a good Disposition, in the Ways both of Virtue and Godliness, which gave Occasion to that Caution of the Son of *Sirach*, “ That we suffer not the Reverence
 “ of any Man to cause us to fall.” And this would hold true of the Gospel of *Christ* in a more especial Manner, as the Genius and Spirit of it are directly contrary to those

* See an excellent little Book, intitl'd, *Practical Lectures on the Church Catechism*. By the Revd. Mr. Adam. Printed for C. Hitch, in Paternoster-Raw.

which govern the World: Hence it is that God and the World, *i. e.* People who live only to Time, and follow the Propensions and Gratifications of corrupt Nature, are all along spoken of in the New Testament as contrary the one to the other: The World is there said to lie in Wickedness, and therefore we are commanded neither to love nor to be conformed to it: And forasmuch as the Respect and Praise of worldly People cannot be acquired nor preserved, unless in some measure our Thoughts be as their Thoughts, and our Ways as their Ways, we find a Wo denounced against those whom all Men speak well of: But as the pious Mr. *Burkit* observes, “The World has all along taken effectual care, by their cruel Mockings, bitter Reproaches, and sharp Invectives, to free *Christ’s* faithful Servants from the Danger ‘of this Wo.” Had we a particular History of the Old World, I doubt not but this Observation would stand verified in the Treatment of *Enoch* and *Noah*, as it does in that of *Lot*, the Patriarchs, and the Prophets, of *Christ*, the Apostles, and most other eminent Preachers of Righteousness downwards, confirming *St. Paul’s* Assertion, that, “As he

“ who



“ who was born after the Flesh persecuted
 “ him who was born after the Spirit in
 “ Times past, so it is now.”

In vain we plead the Establishment of Christianity, under the Protection and Countenance of the civil Power, to evade the Force of this Truth : Rulers may compile good Articles, and good Canons, and frame wholesome Laws for the Government and Polity of the outward Church, but the Spirit and Power of Godliness they can neither give nor secure Respect to : A pleasure-loving, sensual, sinful World, must upon Principle be at Enmity with the Children of the Kingdom, who have turned their Backs upon what they idolize, and have set their Faces full for *Zion* ; and consequently the Reproach of *Christ* will never fail to be the Badge of the true Christian's Discipleship ; for this he is prepared, and in so many Places exhorted and encouraged to endure the Cross, and despise the Shame, after the Example of his blessed Master.

Beware then, O Christian, how thou promisest to thyself Ease and Security here, saying, Peace, Peace ; for thou art engaged in a Warfare which ends not on this Side the Grave, and therefore thou must perse-
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ashamed of the Gospel.

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vere in the Combat like a valiant Soldier, and be faithful unto Death, as thou expectest to receive a Crown of Life. Beware how thou feedest thyself with vain Hopes of the Riches and Honours of this World, whilst so considerable a Share of them is lodged in the Hands of its own Children, and which are therefore a Kind of forbidden Fruit which thou canst hardly touch, without wounding thy Conscience: Consider, thou art a Pilgrim on thy Way to a better Country, and needest but little for thy Journey; much would be an Incumbrance, and perhaps thou hast already more than thy Master had, and yet he was therewith content: And as to the Favour and Friendship of the World, it would only prove a Snare to thee, for thou canst no more please two Masters so contrary by Nature, and in the Services they require of thee, than thou canst reconcile Light with Darkness: Why then do we go on halving it betwixt God and *Mammon*, catching at heavenly Things with one Hand, and at earthly Things with the other; let us be cold or hot, let us declare for God or *Baal*: If we worship the Beast in our Hearts, why do we refuse to receive his Mark in our Foreheads? Or if

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we are really Disciples of a crucified Master, why do we flinch at bearing the Cross after him, seeing it is Honour enough for the Servant to be as his Lord? Nor will he own them at the last Day, who are now ashamed to confess him before Men in a Life and Conversation becoming the Gospel. Besides, whilst we stand ballancing betwixt Christ and the World, our Lives are more miserable than those of the very brute Beasts: The almost Christian is crucified betwixt Heaven and Earth, without having any Portion in the good Things either of this Life, or of that which is to come. Thus we seek to avoid the Reproach of the Cross of *Christ*, which would set our Hearts at Liberty, and enrich us with spiritual Blessings, and so fall under the Reproach of Conscience which worketh Sorrow and Death, and enslaves us to the most tormenting Fears: We assent unto the Truth with the Understanding, and so are speculative Believers, but through the prevailing Power of Human Respects suffer it not to take Root in our Hearts, that it may become a Divine Faith, bringing forth Fruits unto Holiness, and filling us with all Joy and Peace in Believing: How can ye believe
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(to the saving of the Soul) who receive Honour one of another, and seek not the Honour that cometh from God only?

But if some come short of the Crown thro' the Fear or Shame of the Cross, others add to the Weight of their Cross by refusing to bear it now; they cannot endure the Thought of losing all Interest in *Christ*, and therefore resolve to follow him, but first desire Leave to do this or that; they want perhaps to get a little more of this World's Goods, or wait for some more favourable Season to declare for *Christ*, when there may be less of Danger, or Scandal in the Cross; but either such Limitations and Reserves will not be allowed us, or, if the Lord bear with our Weakness in this Thing for a Time, he is sure to reckon with us for it afterwards. When *Peter*, through Fear and Shame, denied his Master, he little thought what Anguish and Bitterness of Soul that Unfaithfulness would cost him; for *Peter* must be deeply sorry for that Fear, and ashamed of that Shame, and also suffer for his Master at last. It is probable, that *Nicodemus*, the Ruler, and the rich *Joseph of Arimathea*, thought it sufficient for them to be Disciples of *Jesus* in secret; but this



would not serve their turn, and they who were ashamed to own him publickly in his Life-time, (for Fear of the *Jews*) must be brought to own him, in his Death, under the additional reputed Disgrace of a crucified Malefactor. Thus every Christian, after the Example of *Jonah*, pays dear for his Unfaithfulness, and after all his Reluctance must do the Work which his Lord has appointed for him; but then he loses the Satisfaction and Praise that would attend a willing and chearful Obedience, and suffers more from being dragged to the Cross than he would from a patient enduring of its Weight.

It is easy to foresee, that this and every other Representation of Christianity in the View of a suffering and self-denying Religion, will be ill received by many; but those Words of our Lord, *If any Man will come after me, let him deny Himself, and take up his Cross, and follow me*, contain the indispensable Condition of our Discipleship in every Age of the Church, whilst it continues in a militant State. Sit down then, Professors, and count the Cost of being a Christian; for you must not think of sacrificing to the Lord your God, of that which
costs

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costs you nothing, and perhaps this will cost you more than you are willing to pay: As first it will cost you the Love of the World, for, *If any Man love the World, the Love of the Father is not in him*; secondly, it will cost you the World's Love for you, *If ye were of the World the World would love its own, but because ye are not of the World, but I have chosen you out of the World, therefore the World hateth you.* The Christian cannot take Pleasure in the Company of vicious, and disorderly, nor yet of vain Persons, however he may have had his Conversation with such in Times past, he has now neither Time nor Inclination for Vanity, and therefore to all these he saith, What have I to do with you, get ye behind me? my Delight is henceforth in them that excel in Virtue, Men fearing God and working Righteousness. And, thirdly, This will cost him much of Character with those whose Ways are not as his Ways: They will say of him, This Fellow is a Judge, to condemn us and our Doings; or, perhaps, that he is beside himself; and thus he must bear the Reproach of Christ. And, lastly, it will cost you the Love of Self, *For even Christ pleased not himself*, and therefore all



Self-will, Self-seeking, and Self-pleasing must be offered up in Sacrifice to God, that his Will may be done in us, and by us, without any Resistance on our Part. In this total Surrender of Self the Christian walks at Liberty, and finds Peace and Rest to his Soul; for it may be affirmed of a Truth, that his most slavish Fears, and tormenting Bondage, are occasioned by some Idol not yet cast out, some Opposition in his own Will to that of God, and therefore our Lord saith, *Unless a Man forsake all that he hath, he cannot be my Disciple.*

Thus we find that it will cost much to be a Christian, and that if we mean to purchase this goodly Pearl of Gospel Salvation, we must keep back no Part of the Price, but sell all that we have, to give in Exchange for it. But how hard is this Doctrine! how few can bear it! what Pleadings of Nature, what Torturing of the Scriptures, what ingenious Pretences, what learned Evasions in Favour of the Sin that most easily besets us, and to reconcile Duty with Inclination! How great is thy Patience, O loving Lord! towards Sinners, whilst we refuse to hear and accept thy loud Calls, and gracious Invitations to come unto thee,
that

that we may have Life, *Behold, I stand at the Door*, says Christ, *and knock, if any Man hear my Voice and open the Door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and be with me.* But alas! my Brethren, how do we lock and bar the Door against him, and will neither go to him, nor suffer him to come to us, but serve him as the Men of *Bethlehem* did of old? Infomuch that it is to be feared, as to many, that if the Language of their Hearts were put into plain Speech, it would be on this wise: My carnal Acquaintance, and worldly Friends, those Partakers with me in the Lusts and Pleasures which my Soul loveth, are come to lodge and abide with me; and the Company of a poor despised *Jesus* would disgrace me in their Sight, blast my Character, give a Check to good Fellowship, and moreover ruin my Hopes and Interest in the World; depart therefore, for there is no Room for thee in the Inn of my Soul: However, I will not utterly disown thee, nay, I will speak of thee as respectfully as I decently can; but as to receiving thee for my Guest, or professing any Intimacy with thee, in this Thing I pray thee have me excused. But what is the Reply that such

a false ungrateful Wretch has to expect? What but this? Know, O Sinner, that as thou hast rejected the Counsel of God against thyself, and shuttest the Door against the Visits of my Grace and Salvation now, behold the Time cometh, when thou shalt knock at the Door of Mercy and find no Admittance thyself, but receive for Answer, Depart from me, I know you not; for, *whosoever shall be ashamed of me, and of my Words, in this adulterous and sinful Generation, of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he cometh in the Glory of his Father with the holy Angels.* But God forbid, that as some Men glory in their Shame, so we should be ashamed of that which is our highest Glory, ashamed of owning and living to him, who was not ashamed of dying for us. Brethren, the Time is short, and the Day of the Lord is nigh at Hand; let us with the Eye of Faith behold it as present, and see the everlasting Doors of Heaven wide open presenting to our View the Son of God: Behold! he comes to Judgment with Myriads of Angels: the Throne is set, and a Rainbow round about the Throne: the Books are opened, and the World kneels before him. How does

all created Nature bear a Part in this dreadful Solemnity! The Sun is darkened before the Brightness of his Majesty; the Heavens pass away with a great Noise, and the Elements melt with fervent Heat. Whither now will ye flee from his Presence, who were afraid to confess the Lord *Jesus* before Men? Could you climb up into the highest Heaven, lo! that is the Court of this great King; if you go down into Hell, behold, there is your Place of Torment: If you could take the Wings of the Morning, that you might dwell in the uttermost Parts of, or could go down into the Depth of the Earth, and say unto the Darkness, Thou shalt cover me; yet his all-seeing Eye shall find you out, his mighty Hand shall pluck you thence: Besides, the Sea shall boil, as in the Words of *Job*, like a Pot of Ointment, the Earth also, and the Works that are therein, shall be burnt up. O how great must be the Confusion of those who were once ashamed of him whom all the Host of Heaven delighteth to Honour! Pardon, O Holy *Jesus* whereinfoever we have been offended because of thee! and grant, that henceforth, if called to it, we may esteem the Reproach of *Christ* greater Riches

Riches than the Treasures of the whole Earth; For thou art the King of Saints; Thou art the Lord of Glory. To conclude, Have you, my Brethren, found of a Truth, by the Evidence of a living Faith, that the Gospel of Christ is the Power of God unto Salvation? If so, it has indeed been to you, what its Name imports, *Glad Tidings*. This, I trust, is the Case with some, and it is my Heart's Desire and Prayer to God, that it may be so with all of us, for happy are the People that are in such a Case, and only they.

As to you who have not yet found this goodly Pearl of great Price, let me intreat you, let me adjure you by the living God, that you seek it earnestly, that you seek it instantly: You need not say, whither shall we go, and in what Communion of Christians may it be found? for *Christ* is not far from any one of you, nay, as you have just now heard, he stands at the Door of every Heart; do not then deny Admittance to so kind, so honourable a Guest; for, my Brethren, he is your Saviour, the Light, the Love, the Salvation of God, the Lord by whom alone you can escape Death: Such is the Guest that intreats you to receive him,
and



and indeed he will well requite your Love in so doing, for as many as receive him, to them will he give Power to become the Sons of God. O let me plead with you yet again, for it is for Life, even the Life of your Souls; I pray ye then be ye reconciled to God, in the Son of his Love: The Lord, even the Lord *Jesus*, is desirous to come into his Temple, which Temple ye are: Persist not then in refusing him Entrance, to the infinite Wrong and Damage of your Souls; for if he depart, and return no more, you are undone for ever, and better were it for you that you had never been born; for though he is the Lamb of God, meek and gentle to humble penitent Sinners, loving them freely, and cleansing them thoroughly from all their Sins, by his most precious Blood; yet is he also the Lion of the Tribe of *Judah*, to the Obstinate and Incurable. *Kiss then the Son, lest he be angry, and so ye perish from the right Way, if his Wrath be kindled, yea but a little:* for as he is the Power of God unto Salvation to every one that believeth and receiveth him, so will he, at the last Day, be the Power of God unto Destruction to every one that shall have rejected him; powerful
in

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in offended Majesty, when he shall “ be re-
 “ vealed from Heaven, with his mighty
 “ Angels, in flaming Fire, taking Vengeance
 “ of them that know not God, and that
 “ obey not the Gospel of our Lord *Jesus*
 “ *Christ*, who shall be punished with ever-
 “ lasting Destruction from the Presence of
 “ the Lord, and from the Glory of his
 “ Power, when he shall come to be glo-
 “ rified in his Saints, and to be admired in
 “ all them that believe.”

Finally, Let me beseech you, by the Mercies of God, that ye receive not the Grace of God in vain, and whilst the Gospel sounds in your Ears, that you shut not your Hearts against it, but turn unto the Lord in Repentance and Faith, who is willing and desirous to turn you away from your Iniquities that they may not be your Ruin : And, for your Encouragement I speak it, though in Times past ye have been disobedient, ungodly, Despisers, nay Persecutors of them that are good, yet forasmuch as ye did it ignorantly and in Unbelief, ye shall obtain Mercy, for the Lord is merciful, loving and gracious, and rejecteth no returning contrite Sinner, for he hath said, *Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.*

ashamed of the Gospel.

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out. He will bless your Sorrows to you, comfort your Hearts with a Sense of pardoning Grace, and sanctify you wholly in Spirit, Soul and Body, and you shall know of a Truth, as concerning the Gospel of *Christ; That it is the Power of God unto Salvation.*

SERM. I.
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S E R-

S E R M O N II.

The Inward Glory of the true
Believer.



PSALM xlv. 14.

The King's Daughter is all glorious within—

SERM. II.

HOWEVER this Psalm might be composed on the Occasion of King *Solomon's* Marriage with the Daughter of *Pharaoh*, King of *Egypt*, yet the Scope and Intendment of it is spiritual, pointing out to us the mystical Marriage between *Christ* and his Church; and therefore if we mean to make a right Use and Improvement of this Portion of Scripture, we must lift up our Minds from earthly to heavenly Things, *for a greater than Solomon is here.*

The Scriptures are compared, by a Father of the Church, to the Manna that fell in the Wilderness, which is supposed to have

have had a Taste accommodated to the Palate of the Eater : so, the sacred Writings afford something suitable to the Taste of every Reader : The Historian, the Orator, the Critic, find each of them herein Matter for the Exercise of their respective Talents ; the carnal Man readeth the Scriptures with a carnal Eye, and therefore only findeth in them a carnal Sense : The Moralist there discovers excellent Rules for the Conduct of the outward Life, but not having Eyes to see farther, he discerneth not the Wisdom of God in a Mystery ; whilst the spiritual Man eateth of the hidden Manna, and searcheth out the deep Things of God, comparing spiritual Things with spiritual, for they are only spiritually discerned : To such a one the Scriptures are Meat indeed, and Drink indeed ; and whilst others are detained below in that Faith of the Letter that killeth, he ascendeth into the Presence Chamber of the most High, by the Faith of the Spirit that giveth Life : To him the *Psalms* from whence the Text is taken is like *Jacob's* Ladder which reached from Earth to Heaven, on which he ascends from the Representation of an earthly Marriage to the Contemplation of that blessed Union
which



which subsists betwixt Christ, the King of Glory, and his Spouse the Church: And, indeed, unless we allow that these Things are an Allegory, neither the Psalm before us, nor the Song of *Solomon*, carry in them any further Profit, or Improvement to a religious Reader, than a beautiful Ode or a dramatic Poem, in the Subjects of which we are no Ways concerned; nay, are rather apt to excite Ideas ill suiting with the Purity of a Christian Mind: But *to the pure all Things are pure*. That the spiritual Sense here mentioned does belong to these divine Writings stands confirmed by the Judgment of holy Men, in all Ages of the Church, who by such a Use and Application of them in their Expositions, Meditations, and Prayers, have made them subservient to the Purposes of an elevated Piety. But not to detain you any longer from the Text, I proceed to explain,

First, Who is meant by the King's Daughter: And

Secondly, In what Sense she is *all glorious within*.

And *First*, By the King's Daughter is meant, the Church of *Christ*; by which we are



are not to understand any one particular outward Church, according to the narrow and confined Notion of some concerning that Word, but the whole collective Body of holy Souls, under whatever Dispensation they have lived, or however dispersed over the Face of the whole Earth: Of this Multitude, gathered out of all Nations and Languages, which no Man can number, is composed that Church, which *Christ* so loved that he gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the Washing of Water by the Word, that he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having Spot or Wrinkle, or any such Thing, but that it should be holy and without Blemish. This is the heavenly *Jerusalem*, whose Foundation is on the holy Hills, and whose Builder and Maker is God: Here are the Gates of *Sion*, which the Lord loveth more than all the Dwellings of *Jacob*.—Such excellent Things are spoken of thee, Thou City of God! We profess to believe in the Communion of Saints; now, this is the blessed Fellowship here spoken of, and is called the Bride, the Lamb's Wife: For the Saints in Heaven and the Saints on Earth constitute but one Family, and one Body,

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of which *Christ* is not only the Political, but the influencing Head; they are Partakers of the same Grace of divine Love, and will shortly partake together in the same Glory: Nay the Faithful, whilst on Earth, are said to be blessed with spiritual Blessings in heavenly Places in *Christ*, for by their Union with him their Right and Title to these cannot fail them, for if *Christ* is theirs, in Him they have all Things; and Nothing but this thin Partition of Mortality hinders the Saints militant from joining Society with their fellow Members the Saints triumphant, who now wait in joyful Expectation of that Time, when God shall accomplish the Number of his Elect, and hasten his Kingdom; and when all the angelic Host shall celebrate the happy Day, saying, *Let us be glad and rejoice, and give Honour to God, for the Marriage of the Lamb is come, and his Wife hath made herself ready.*

It was to bring about this mystical Marriage that the Son of God condescended to take our Nature upon him; for it is not possible there should be an Union betwixt Persons or Things that subsist not in one common Nature: Now in order to Man's Sal-



Salvation, the Image of God must be replaced in his Soul, he must again be made Partaker of that divine Nature from which he had fallen: But Man was no more capable of effecting this of himself, than of plucking the Stars from the Firmament; and therefore it must needs be that *Jesus Christ* communicate himself, in our Nature, to all that will receive him, that they may have Power to become the Sons of God, otherwise there could be no Redemption for them: This the holy Angels knew full well, and therefore in Testimony of their friendly Joy for Peace restored on Earth, and such an amazing Manifestation of Good-will towards Men, sang Praises to the eternal King at the Birth of the incarnate God.

This Conjunction of the divine and human Natures in the Person of our Lord for the Salvation of Mankind is represented to us in the Gospel under the Parable of a Marriage which a certain King made for his Son, and all to whom the Gospel is preached do receive a particular Invitation to the Marriage Feast: You, my Brethren, have often been called to share in the Blessedness of this sacred Solemnity, and I do at this time repeat the Invitation, in my Master's



Name, and declare unto you, that all Things are prepared, and the Wedding is ready : Why then are not you ready also? Wherefore do you make Excuses, and refuse to accept this Message of Peace, to come to this Feast of Love, which the King of Heaven has prepared for you? Behold! we are Ambassadors for *Christ*, as though God did beseech you by us; We pray you in *Christ's* stead, that ye be willing to be reconciled to God, who thus shews himself both willing and desirous to be reconciled to you: Nay, you are called, every Soul of you, to the Honour of being the King's Daughter, by a Marriage with the King's Son, for such Honour have all his Saints: It is not enough that he has married our Nature, unless he be joined in spiritual Wedlock to our Souls in particular, for *Christ* in us is the only Hope and Earnest of our Glory, who speaking to his heavenly Father of the Souls which he had given him, saith; *I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one. I have declared unto them thy Name, and will declare it, that the Love wherewith thou hast loved me, may be in them, and I in them.*

Behold,

Behold, my Brethren, what Manner of Love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the Children of the most High, even Sons and Daughters of God! Behold how *Jesus* loved us, in that he took the Miseries of our Nature upon Him, that He might bestow the Dignity and Blessedness of his Nature upon us! We read that *Sampson* went down to *Timnath*, and took unto himself a Wife of the Daughters of the *Philistines*, who were Idolaters and Enemies to *Israel*; that *Boaz* espoused *Ruth*, a poor *Moabites*; and that *Hosea*, at the Command of God, married a Wife of Whoredoms. Wherefore are these Things mentioned, but for our Instruction? and to teach us, how much more the Son of God hath condescended for our Sakes in marrying us to Himself, when we were poor indeed, and had Nothing to bring him, but the filthy Rags of our Wretchedness and Sinfulness; when we were alienated from him both by original and actual Defilement, nay, even Enemies to his Government by open and repeated Rebellions, and most unworthy of his Embraces by our spiritual Whoredoms with the Creatures on which we had set our Loves.



It is no less worthy of being remarked, for to that end it is written, that in the Line of Christ according to the Flesh we meet with some Sins of a Crimson stain recorded, as Incest, Whoredom, Adultery, and Murder, the first in the Instance of *Judab* and *Thamar*, the second in that of *Rahab*, and the two last in the History of *David* and *Bathsheba*: now some perhaps may wish that these Marks of Infamy had not been recorded in the Genealogy of Christ, as tending to disgrace his Family, and to bring a Reproach upon his Birth: But how blind and sottish is the Wisdom of Man in things pertaining to that God whose Thoughts are not as our Thoughts! For to the end that our Hope may be confirmed and our Faith established are these things written. If *Jesus Christ*, according to such like Notions of Honour, were not to have come but of a spotless Family, how should He be of the Seed of *Abraham*? nay, how could He have been a Descendant from *Adam*! Who then must have born our Sins and made Atonement for Transgressors? and if He was to bear our Sins tho' spotless in Himself, was He to bear our lesser and not our greater Sins also? Yea, for this Cause came He into the World, that He

might



might be allied to the Chief of Sinners, that so He might shew Mercy to the Chief of Sinners. See, how the Goodness of God triumphs over the feeble Objections of cavilling Reason, in that a Saviour was manifested where the greatest Need of Him stands confessed, and that where Sin abounded, there Grace hath much more abounded! “ O the depth of the Riches of the Wisdom, “ and Knowledge and Mercies of God !”

But I pass on to the Second Proposition, which was to shew in what Sense *the King's Daughter*, as meant of the Church of Christ, *is all glorious within*.

And this she is by her Espousals to Christ, and not before — “ I have espoused you, says the Apostle to the *Corinthians*, “ to one “ Husband, that I may present you as a “ chaste Virgin to Christ.”

Before the Heart is turned to God in Faith, however highly we may think of ourselves, we are all as an unclean thing ; our best Works (as is affirmed in the Thirteenth Article of our Church) have in them the Nature of Sin, and Iniquity is written upon the Face of all our holy things: And therefore we doubt not to pronounce concerning



every one in his natural unconverted State, before the Grace of Christ is suffered to stir and work in his Heart, that he can do nothing but Sin; whether he eat or drank, buy or sell, lend or borrow, go to Church or stay at home, nay, whatever is in his Thoughts, Words, Desires or Actions, it is all Sin — “the very plowing of the wicked is Sin,” says *Solomon*; and the Reason is obvious: Such a Person only follows the Motions of corrupt Nature in all that he does, and therefore as the Principle that governs him is evil, so must every thing be that proceeds from it: Alluding to this Truth are those Words of *Job*, “Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one.” But when the Soul becomes sensible of its own Vileness and Impotence to Good, and cries out with the Leper, unclean, unclean! when it ceases from its own Will and its own Ways, and from every thing that can be called Self, and is resigned to the Conduct of God’s Holy Spirit, which long strives with it, then Christ gives his Grace into the Desire and Faith of the humble, contrite Soul, and enters into his Temple, doing there the Office of a Refiner’s Fire, to purge away its Dross, and of Fullers Soap, to cleanse it from the Defilements

ments of Sin, and marries it to Himself; thus it becomes Partaker of the Divine Nature; old things pass away, and all things become new: She is thenceforward the King's Daughter, the Bride of Christ, *all glorious within.*

And this may serve to explain to us those mysterious Words in the Book of *Canticles*, which the Bride, the Church, speaks of herself — *I am black, but comely*; black by Nature, but comely by Grace, loathsome in my self, but lovely thro' my Espousals to the Beloved of my Soul, beautiful in his Beauty, and glorious in his Glory. As no one is truly beautiful but the Believer, so no one is so sensible of his natural Deformity: In himself by original Constitution he sees nothing but Ingratitude, Infidelity and Sin; and upon this Account, as well as because of the Remains of indwelling Corruption, he saith, *I am black*; but being washed, being sanctified, being made one with Christ thro' Faith and Love, by the Spirit of the living God, he can, by virtue of this Union, truly say, *I am comely, for my Beloved is mine, and I am his.*

This



This exceeding great Love of Christ towards his Church, and the two very different States of Believers by Nature and Grace, is aptly represented to us in *Ezek.* ch. xvi. under the Figure of a wretched Infant. The following Passages are full of useful Doctrine, and will deserve a particular Attention :

“ Thou wast cast out in the open Field to
 “ the loathing of thy Person in the Day that
 “ thou wast born, and when I passed by
 “ thee and saw thee polluted in thine own
 “ Blood, I said unto thee, Live : Now when
 “ I passed by thee and looked upon thee,
 “ behold thy Time was the Time of Love ;
 “ and I spread my Skirt over thee, and covered thy Nakedness ; yea I sware unto
 “ thee, and entered into a Covenant with
 “ thee, saith the Lord God, and thou becamest mine : Then washed I thee with Water ;
 “ yea, I thoroughly washed away thy Blood
 “ from thee, and I anointed thee with Oyl ;
 “ I cloathed thee also with broidered Work,
 “ and I girded thee about with fine Linen ;
 “ I decked thee also with Ornaments, and
 “ put a beautiful Crown upon thine Head,
 “ and thou wast exceeding beautiful, and
 “ thou didst prosper into a Kingdom, and thy
 “ Renown went forth among the Heathen

of the true Believer.

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“ for thy Beauty, for it was perfect thro’ my
“ Comeliness which I had put upon thee,
“ faith the Lord God.” Such is the Beauty
and Dignity of the King’s Daughter, the
Church which Christ hath purchased with
his Blood, and sanctified by his Spirit ; not
excelling in outward Splendor, as the mere-
tricious Ornaments of Gold and Silver and
worldly Grandeur ; for in this respect she
has generally resembled her blessed Head in
the Days of his Flesh, being without any ex-
ternal Form or Comeliness that carnal Minds
should seek or desire her ; but her adorning
is the hidden Man of the Heart in that
which is not corruptible ; outwardly she has
often been, and must be content to be, de-
spised, persecuted, afflicted, for the King-
dom of this World is not her proper
Country, being here as a Stranger in a
strange Land, but in that divine Life which
is hid with Christ in God, the King-
dom of God within us, it is far otherwise
with her ; here she is in Communion with
the Saints, dignified with the Favour of
God, and rich in the Graces of his Spirit,
and will hereafter be glorified with an ex-
ceeding and eternal Weight of Glory —
Such is the Dignity and Happiness of all those
whom

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whom the King of Heaven delighteth to honour.

You see here, my Brethren, your high Calling, *viz.* to be a holy Nation, a chosen Generation, a Royal Priesthood: “walk
“worthy therefore of the Vocation where-
“with ye are called.” And here let me put you in Mind of some of the Graces which must adorn the Bride of Christ, or the believing Soul; for every Member of his Church must be glorious within, as well as the collective Body, tho’ the Part cannot be so compleat as the Whole.

And *first*, It is required that she be found faithful. Hath the Saviour given Himself for you, that he might redeem you from all Iniquity; and purify you unto Himself a peculiar People! Did He set his Love upon you when you was altogether unlovely, nay, filthy and defiled? And hath He called you to the high Honour of being his Beloved, his Spouse? Take heed that you be betrothed unto Him in Faithfulness. Should the Son of an earthly King espouse some mean Damsel, and she should prove false to him, would you not say that she deserved to be stoned with Stones till she died? See then that wherein thou judgest another thou con-



condemnest not thyself as worthy of sorer Punishment. Hast thou given in thy Name to Christ in the Day of thy Espousals? Behold, thy Maker and thy Redeemer is thine Husband! and thou hast set thy Seal to thy everlasting Shame and Condemnation, shouldest thou prove false to thy first Love. Thy broken Vows, like an hideous Spectre, will continually haunt and terrify thee; Men and Angels and all the Creatures will witness to thy Reproach, and instead of the loving Embraces of the heavenly Bridegroom, thou shalt find in Him an angry and a jealous God, even a God that is a consuming fire to all that have dealt treacherously against Him. Wouldest thou then say, *My Beloved is mine*, see that thou be able to say also, *and I am his*; His in Duty, His in Faithfulness, His in Love? and as thou art espoused to one Husband, see that thou keep clear of all adulterous Loves, and admit not any Rival into Partnership with Him, for He will not accept of divided Affections — He gave his own Heart's Blood for thee, and will have thy whole Heart's Love for Him, “except a Man forsake all that he hath, says Christ, “he cannot be my Disciple.”

Secondly,



Secondly, The Bride of Christ must be adorned with a meek and humble Spirit, which is in the Sight of God of great Price: And this the heavenly Bridegroom teaches: — “ Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly
 “ in Heart, and you shall find rest unto
 “ your Souls.” He to whom all Power was given both in Heaven and Earth, could, by a very slender Exertion of it, had He been so minded, have appeared in all the Pomp and Splendor of earthly Wealth and Grandeur ; but He took upon Him the Form of a Servant, and veiled his Majesty in Meanness, to teach us a Lesson of Humility : Ye covetous and ambitious Spirits, How can ye believe this without being covered with Shame and Reproach ! When the Officer struck *Jesus* with the Palm of his Hand, saying, “ Answerest thou the High Priest
 “ so ?” Our Lord, meek and patient like the Lamb of God, only replied, “ If I have
 “ spoken Evil, bear witness of the Evil, but
 “ if well, why smitest thou me ?” Say, O ye Sons of Thunder and Lightning, who burst into Passion and flaming Resentment upon every slight Indignity, how will ye be able to justify your Behaviour by this Example of the patient *Jesus* ! Hear Him,
 after



after this, upon the Cross, under his expiring Agonies, praying for his Murderers, and declare, O ye malicious and revengeful Hearts, if you can any longer withhold your Forgiveness from an offending Brother!

The Law did allow a Retaliation for Injuries, an Eye for an Eye, and a Tooth for a Tooth, it being a Ministration of Wrath, and Fire its Emblem, for God out of Christ is a consuming Fire against all Ungodliness and Unrighteousness of Men: But we are not now under the Law, but under Grace, even that better Covenant whose Influence is Peace and Love in all its Children, as it requires that we be “kindly affectioned one towards another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for *Christ's* sake hath forgiven us.” This meek and amiable Spirit of the Gospel Dispensation is figured in many Places under the Symbol of Water; and Christ is said to have come by Water and Blood, to denote by the former the Virtue and Power of his Spirit to cleanse us from Sin, which is the Fewel of God's Wrath in the Soul of Man: “He that believeth on Me, says our Lord, out of his Belly shall flow Rivers of living Water,” speaking of the Spirit in the Hearts of Believers:



lievers: And with this Spiritual, Heavenly Water (of which the outward in the Sacrament is the visible Sign) we must be baptized; of this we must be born again before we can enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. Now when the Gospel Grace of Meekness, as a Stream from the Fountain of Life, flows in upon the Soul, it extinguishes the Fire of Wrathfulness, Impatience and Vengeance in our fallen Nature, calms the Passions, composes the Mind to Devotion, and makes us the Friends both of God and Men. Evermore, Lord, give us this Water, that we thirst not!

Zeal for the Honour of God and his Righteous Laws is a commendable Virtue, and was the distinguishing Characteristick of the Old Testament Worthies; but then let it be remembered, that they were Ministers of a Legal, not Evangelical Righteousness, and were rather the Executioners of God's Vengeance, than the Messengers of his Love to Mankind: And therefore tho' we shall do well to follow their Faith and Patience, yet we must be cautious how we propose to our selves their Zeal for a Pattern under the milder Dispensation of the Gospel, and be particularly careful, that it be guided by
Know-

Knowledge, and tempered with Charity. *John the Baptist* came in the Spirit of *Elijah* and, like his Fore-runner, was austere in his Life, severe in his Censures, and bold to rebuke Sin and Vice: our Lord bears this Testimony to him, that “among all that were born of Women, there had not risen a greater than him.” And great indeed he was; for he stood at the End of the Law and at the Beginning of the Gospel; was the immediate Harbinger of Christ, initiated Him into his Ministry; and declared as concerning his own Baptism of Repentance, that it was only to prepare the Way, and lead Sinners to Him the great Minister of Reconciliation, “The Lamb of God that taketh away the Sins of the World.” But tho’ such and so great was the Office of this extraordinary Man, yet our Lord pronounces him to be less than the least of those who were baptized with his Spirit of Meekness and Love.

If then a Zeal for God against all Sin and Wickedness, tho’ kindled at the sacred Fire of *Sinai’s* Mount, comes so far short in Blessedness of that meek and gentle Flame of heavenly Love which warms the Breasts of *Sion’s* Sons and Daughters, what shall we



say of that unhollowed Zeal kindled up by Rage and Hatred in the Hearts of this World's Children against their Brethren, who, because they cannot call down Fire from Heaven to consume them, are resolved to fetch it from Hell to work their own Will and malicious Wickedness: The Zeal inspired under the Law, tho' fierce, was holy, and appointed to be the Minister of Justice and Judgment against the Enemies of God; but this is from beneath, and spends its Fury against his Friends: Surely, the least we can say of all such is, "that they know not what Spirit they are of."

The Glory of Christ's Kingdom stands not only in Righteousness but in Peace, and accordingly we are told, that in those happy Days of the Church, when true Religion shall be established and exalted in the Earth, there shall be no destroying in all God's holy Mountain: and where the Kingdom of Christ is begun in the Hearts of his Children, this Truth is already exemplified; for there the destroying Spirit is cast out, and all is Love, Joy, Peace; for as the King's Daughter, like the King's Son, is meek and gentle to others, so does she enjoy a State of Complacency

placency and Serenity within; and indeed if we have not the Peace of God in our Hearts, we can hardly be at Peace with others. This inward Freedom from unruly Passions, and all such Perturbations of Mind as hinder our Intercourse with God in Prayer, and other devout Exercises of the Heart, is signified to us in what is related concerning the building of the Temple, which was a Type of the Spiritual Church, *viz.* that there was neither Hammer nor Axe, nor any Tool of Iron heard in the House whilst it was building; figuring thereby, that there must be no restless Agitations of Spirit, no Tumult of disorderly Appetites in the Soul that draweth nigh unto God, but all must be still and quiet within, that it may be the better disposed to listen to the gentle Whispers of his Holy Spirit: To the unconverted and unawakened Sinner, to his disobedient and rebellious Offspring, God does indeed, for the most part, make Himself known in a more alarming Way, even as clothed with the Terrors of his Majesty, but to his Beloved, to the King's Daughter, his Manifestation is not in the Fire, nor in the great strong Wind, nor in the Earthquake, but in the small still




Voice: Nor, on the other hand, are we to think, that we shall be the better heard either for our much or loud speaking, for unless the same Spirit that comforts and blesses us, help our Infirmities, and be in our Prayers and Praises the Spirit of Supplication and Thanksgiving, the utmost Efforts of Nature joined to the most ingenious Devices of Art, and tho' we cry aloud from Morning till Evening, will prove but as "sounding of Brass or a tinkling Cymbal."

The third Qualification of the King's Daughter that I shall take notice of, is Purity of Heart; "Blessed are the pure in Heart, for they shall see God." By Purity we are not here to understand any Perfection in Man by Nature that can commend him to God, for in this respect we are all as an unclean thing, and the Heart declared to be "deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, and all the Thoughts and Imaginations of it to be evil continually:" But "Christ so loved his Church that He gave Himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it:" Now it is required of the Soul, thus cleansed and washed from the Pollutions of Sin, that she preserve her Purity,



Purity, and so continue fit for an *Habitation of God thro' the Spirit*; for she is *the Temple of the living God*. Now, *if any Man defile the Temple of God, him shall God destroy*. And here it is not sufficient that she keep herself unspotted from the World, and free from the outward Infection of Sin, but also from the inward Contagion of it, even from those Lusts and evil Thoughts (as much as possible) which war against the Soul.

That vain, impure, or other bad Thoughts do involuntarily arise in the Minds even of good Men, is a frequent Subject of their Complaint, and that the best find this to be the Case with them at times will hardly be denied: Where these proceed from bad Dispositions and Habits voluntarily contracted, as they are the natural Consequence of our Sin continued, we cannot be supposed free from Guilt in this matter, and even otherwise, where we delight in or consent to them, we make them our own, and they take upon them the formal Nature and Essence of Sin. There is the more need to observe upon this Head, inasmuch as the Sin of the Thoughts is not sufficiently attended to by many, who think that they are free from the Guilt of this or that particular


 Sin if they are not chargeable with the outward Commission of it, whereas from the Heart proceeds every thing that defileth the Man; that is the Womb in which Sin is conceived; Imagination and Desire form the Child, and the actual Perpetration is only the Out-birth, tho' it confessedly adds aggravated Malignity to the Transgression, as our first Parents in eating the forbidden Fruit set the Seal of Rebellion to the Purpose of Disobedience: And to shew that Sin begins before it is brought forth, nay tho' it proceed not to overt Act, we are told in Scripture, that a lustful Look is a Species of Adultery, and the Hatred of our Brother a kind of Murther. "Cleanse us, O Lord, " from our secret Sins, and enter not into " Judgment with us on their Account, for " how great is the Sum of them! But Thou " art not extreme to mark what is done " amiss; there is Mercy with Thee, therefore shalt Thou be feared. [*worshipped.*]

Now the King's Daughter having her House not only swept and garnished, but also washed and cleansed from every thing that materially defileth, she endeavours to keep it so for the Reception of her heavenly Bridegroom, when he vouchsafes her the Honour

of his Visits, the gracious Manifestations of his Presence: Bold Intruders may break in upon her, and the unclean Spirit may at times enter the House against her Will, but she gives no Entertainment to such unwelcome Guests, nay, she casts them out with all possible Speed, for having set her Affections on things Above, and her Face towards the heavenly City, her Thoughts naturally tend the same way: And after all we must allow, that, amidst the various Rules laid down for the Government of our Thoughts, the best Course we can take to order them aright is to begin with the Affections, inasmuch as these are the Source from whence they flow; for what a Man loves best he is sure to think most upon.

Another Evidence of Purity of Heart is Simplicity, which takes in what is meant in Scripture by the single Eye and Singleness of Heart, both with respect to God and Man; the contrary to which is rebuked in those Words of St. *James*, “Purify your
“Hearts, ye double-minded.”

The Hypocrite wears two Faces, and the Men of the World bewilder themselves in the crooked Paths of a serpentine Cunning, and are therefore continually laying Snares



for their Consciences; whereas the simple hearted Christian hath but one Meaning and one Way, and therefore he walketh uprightly; with him is not Yea and Nay: He needeth no Casuistry to his Divinity, to teach him how far he may follow his own Inclinations without sinning, for his only Inclination is to do the Will of God in all things, and therefore the Purity of his Intention gives Acceptance (thro' the Beloved) to his most indifferent Things; and the Spirit of Love, which in him is the Law of the Spirit of Life, flows into a spontaneous Obedience to all that God requires of Him. Does any one abound in good Works? it may truly be said of the King's Daughter, that herein she is more abundant, for she adorns the Doctrine of God her Saviour in all things; And therefore as she is *all glorious within*, so *her Cloathing is of wrought Gold*—her Soul is clothed with the Righteousness of Christ, as the Garment of her Salvation; and in her outward Life she “lets her Light so shine before Men, that they may see her good Works, and glorify her Father which is in Heaven.”

It might here be expected that Mention should be made of those other eminent Christian

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tian Graces, Faith, Hope, Charity, as these are the most distinguished Parts of the Divine Life, the most comely and amiable Features in the Beauty of Holiness: But these are Topics of more general Note, and such as have been much insisted on at other times: Let it suffice then to add here, that the King's Daughter is complete in the King's Son, for Christ in her is both the Hope and Earnest of her Glory here, as He will be the Fullness of its Accomplishment hereafter.

Thus doth the Lord, when he He is come into his Temple, *beautify the Place of his Sanctuary, and make the Place of his Feet glorious,* for He adorns the faithful Soul with the Graces of his Spirit, even as a Bride is adorned with Jewels: And tho' at times He may prove her with Trials and Crosses, yet it is that she may be approved of by Him; thus all these things work together for her good, and he will assuredly at last *compass her about with Songs of Deliverance, give her the Oil of Joy for Mourning, and the Garment of Praise for the Spirit of Heaviness.*

Hail, Thou beloved Daughter of the King, all glorious within! Welcome, thrice welcome, to the City of the Lord, the *Zion*
of



of the Holy one of *Israel*, “ Whose Walls
“ are called Salvation, and whose Gates
“ Praise! The Sun shall be no more thy
“ Light by Day, neither for Brightness shall
“ the Moon give Light unto thee, but the
“ Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting
“ Light, and thy God thy Glory.”



S E R M O N III.

The Faith and Patience of the Saints
our Pattern.



H E B. vi. 12.

*Be not slothful, but Followers of them who
through Faith and Patience inherit the
Promises.*

THE *Jewish* Converts are exhorted in the Beginning of this Chapter to a farther Proficiency in the Knowledge of Christ and his Religion : “ Leav-
“ ing, (says the Apostle) the Principles of
“ the Doctrine of Christ, let us go on
“ unto Perfection.” He had before laid the Foundation like a wise Master-builder, and had grounded them in the Rudiments or initiatory things of Religion, such as Baptism, Confirmation, outward Ordinances, and the Belief of a Resurrection and Judgment to come ; and now proposes to instruct them in its more recondite Truths,

SERMON
III.



or



or the Mysteries of Gospel Redemption, to open to them the Spirituality of the Law, and to expound its typical, and allegorical Meaning in Reference to Christ, who was the Body and Substance of all its Shadows: “And this (says he) will we do, if God permit.”

The Religion of Christ has an Inside as well as an Outside, and is a Dispensation both of Light and Grace, his Spirit making manifest, as we are able to receive its Light, not only the Figures and Prophecies under the Law, but also the deep things of God, even the Wisdom of God in a Mystery; and therefore we are exhorted to grow, not only in Grace, but also in the Knowledge of our Lord and Saviour *Jesus Christ*. In both these respects the Gospel stands differenced from the Law; and of this the Tabernacle of Old was a Figure, being divided into two Parts by a Veil, into the innermost of which the High Priest only entered: But this Veil was taken away by Christ, and every Christian has free Access, thro’ Him, into the Holy of Holies: We must pass thro’ the outward Tabernacle where is the Candlestick and the Table, and the Shew-Bread, into the inward, where
is



is the Golden Censer, the Ark of the Covenant, and the Cherubims of Glory shadowing the Mercy Seat, *i. e.* We must take Sacraments and Institutions only in our Way to *Christ*, without resting in them; direct our View thro' the Glass of Ordinances to his Merits, Intercession, and Propitiation, and by Faith press thro' the outward visible Sign to the inward and spiritual Grace, that our Souls may be nourished thereby, till we grow up unto perfect Men, unto the Measure of the Stature of the Fullness of Christ.

But (alas! How many amongst us content themselves with being Children both in Knowledge and Grace all their Life long! seek to know little more of their Religion than what they formerly learned in their Catechism, and if to the repeating of their Creed and Confession, and to their joining in the outward Ordinance, they add a decent Performance of the other Parts of external Worship, think that they have done God good Service; but this is sticking in the first Principles or Rudiments of the Doctrine of Christ, and not going on unto Perfection: Nay some go farther, and yet come far short of the Mark, even such as have attained to much
Know-

Knowledge in the written Word, can talk wisely about Doctrines, argue learnedly from the Law and the Testimony, can distinguish betwixt Covenant and Covenant, and comment critically upon the great Points of Faith, Grace, and Justification; but their Knowledge is all scientific, it is received from the Letter only, and therefore passes no farther than the Head, their Law is outward, and not the Law of the Spirit of Life, and their Testimony is outward, not the living Witness in themselves, and therefore they are only wise *about*, but not *unto* Salvation; for tho' the natural Man may form much ideal Knowledge in his Mind from the Words of Scripture, yet "the things of the Spirit of God he receiveth not, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." Besides, the Wisdom which is from Above, being always tempered with Humility and Divine Love, is pure and peaceable; whereas that which is from Beneath, (from the earthly Part in Man, and therefore called *Fleshly Wisdom*) however it be exercised on Divine Subjects, leaves the Heart in as bad a State at it found it; nay, rather feedeth its Corruptions, by puffing up with
Pride



Pride and begetting a Contempt of others; it is the very Ground of Strife and Debate, the Parent of bigoted and furious Zeal, and has been the Cause of much Persecution in all Ages of the Church.

True Religion then, in the Power and right Knowledge of it, lies deeper than Ordinances or Doctrines, it reaches to the inner Parts, or rather springs up there, even in the hidden Man of the Heart, where Christ bruises the Serpent, erects his Throne, and consecrates us Temples of the living God: Here the true Worshipers worship the Father in Spirit and in Truth: The Apostle, therefore, who well knew Man's natural Propensity to Knowledge, and both the Unprofitableness and Danger of it where the Heart is not sanctified by Grace, stirs up his Converts to Diligence in their high Calling, that they might be practical as well as knowing Christians, and exhorts them to Faith and Patience, those eminent Graces of the Divine Life, which fit us both for doing and suffering the Will of God, adorn the Doctrine of God our Saviour in all things, and enable us to prove victorious in our Spiritual Warfare: *Be not slothful, but Followers of them*



them who through Faith and Patience inherit the Promises.

The Text is full of useful Matter, as well as of universal Extent, for it is applicable to every Person and every State of the Christian Life : The Slothful may here be shamed into Action, and the Diligent spurred on to quicken their Speed ; the Faint-hearted are encouraged by the Example of those who have fought the good Fight, and now inherit the Promises, and we are all here instructed how we may follow them to that Blessedness which they enjoy, *viz.* by Faith and Patience.

I shall speak to each of these Particulars in my way, and then conclude with a Word of Application.

And first for a Word to such as are slothful in the full Extent and Meaning of the Word, who have stood all the Day idle, and have not yet so much as set about the Work they came into the World for, and which they ought by this Time to have well nigh finished : Now to such of you, my Brethren, if any such be here, I am almost at a loss how to address myself, or by what Name to call you : Shall I call you Christians? that cannot be; for a slothful Christian
is



is a Contradiction in Terms: Or shall I call you rational Creatures? neither will that Name fit you with more Propriety, unless it may be deemed rational to live in a total Neglect of your only true Interest, without making any Provision for the well-being of your immortal Souls, which, for what you know, may this Night be required of you.

Every Part even of inanimate Nature may serve to reproach the Inactivity of the slothful Person; the Planets and heavenly Bodies are in Motion to finish their destined Course; the Elements are at work carrying on the Designs of the Almighty in the Wonders of his Providence; and the Vegetable World no less displays his Wisdom, Power, and Goodness; nay the whole Creation travelleth in Pain till it be delivered from that Bondage of Vanity, Disorder, and Corruption into which the Curse of Sin hath cast it; for there shall be a Redemption in Nature as well as in the Souls of all just Men, even at that time when there shall be new Heavens and a new Earth.

Say, now, ye Sons and Daughters of Sloth, how will you appear when you are judged? and what Answer will you make to your Lord, when he calleth upon you to give



an Account of your Stewardship? The Heavens and the Earth declare the Glory of God and shew forth his Praise; every Meteor and every Creature, Snow and Vapour, Wind and Storm fulfil his Word and Will, whilst you, whom He hath endowed with such exalted Faculties and Powers, do Him no Service, and bring Him no Praise.

The Persons here spoken to are not so charged with Slothfulness as if they sat still and did nothing, this is not the Meaning of the Charge, for you may be as active and industrious in your temporal Affairs, as busy in your Shops or Farms, or as intent upon the Management and Improvement of your Estates, and more so, than the best of your Neighbours, rising up early, late taking Rest, and eating the Bread of Carefulness; you may thrive and prosper in the World, provide Things honest in the Sight of Men both for yourselves and Families, enjoy the good Things of this Life with Decency and Reputation, and leave the rest of your Substance for your Babes; and in all these things your Maxims and worldly Prudence will meet with Applause, and Posterity will praise both your Sayings and your Doings, and will go and do likewise: But for all this you
may



may be as slothful, in the Sense of the Text, as *Solomon's* Sluggard, who will not plow by Reason of the Cold; for it is Spiritual Sloth that is here spoken of, which is by far the most fatal kind of it, even that by which the Soul is left destitute of all Spiritual Cultivation and Nourishment, unprovided with every saving Grace, and consequently void of its true Interest in Christ: If Diligence be wanting here, it is but lost Labour in every other Instance, "For what will it profit a Man if he gain the whole World and lose his own Soul?" That which is of the Earth is earthy; if we sow to the Flesh we shall of the Flesh reap only Corruption; if our Motives and Labours are of a temporal Nature, the Reward and Fruit of them must be so too, and perish with Time, for what a Man soweth, that only shall he reap; but if we sow to the Spirit, we shall of the Spirit reap Life everlasting: If we are led by the Love of God to chuse and seek the things of God, to be renewed in the Spirit of our Mind, to be conformed to the Image of his Son, and to glorify Him on Earth; then, as our Work is spiritual, so will our Wages be also; and when the Shadows of earthly things are passed away as a Dream, and the

Substance of things hoped for is come, we shall rise to substantial Blifs and immortal Glory.

And now let me persuade you, O ye Children of Sloth, and would to God that I could persuade you! to consider in this your day the things which belong unto your Peace, to consider wherefore you were sent into the World, what you are, and whither you are going: Open your Eyes, if but for a moment, and behold your Danger, for you are as one walking blindfold on the Brink of a Precipice, where one false Step will tumble you headlong into Destruction; or, like unto him that sleepeth on the Top of a Mast, whom the next irregular Motion of the staggering Ship will toss into the great Deep, from whence there is no emerging: O for the Voice of an Angel to call out to you in more than the Loudness of Thunder; “**A-**“ wake thou that sleepest and arise from the “**Dead, that Christ may give thee Light!**”

But, *Secondly*, There are others who take some Thought about Soul-concerns, and are at some Pains for Salvation in outward things, and yet on account of their Slackness in the Spiritual Life, may find a Reproof in the Charge of the **Text**; and it is to be feared



ed that every one of us, more or less, comes in for a Share in the same: Let us instance in a Character not very uncommon in the World, and such as meets with high Commendation from it, and yet so defective in the Essentials of true Christianity, that we must pronounce it far short of the Gospel Standard.

Come then, such a one as I am here speaking of, and let us reason together: Thou sayest that thou art a Christian, and in Evidence of it, frequentest the Church and Sacrament; thou profanest not the Lord's Day, nor his Holy Name on any other Day; thou art neither a Drunkard, Whoremonger, nor Extortioner, thou art true and just in all thy Dealings, hast Morning and Evening Prayer in thy Family, sometimes readest a good Book, and occasionally givest something to the Poor — Thus far thou dost well, and more than Thousands; and for none of these things shalt thou be reprov'd: But if this be the whole of thy Religion, thou hast got to the End of thy Line before thou hast half learn'd the Christian Catechism: Thy Religion, O Man, is chiefly negative, or, if thou hast taken in some of the outward Duties, thou

hast left out all the inward Graces of it. Behold! here is not a Word of Faith, Hope, and that Charity which is the Love of God and Man; not a Word of thy being a Sinner, nor of the Way of thy Recovery: Thou sayest thou dost so and so; but dost thou hope to be justified by thy Doings? Know of a Truth, that if thou settest up thyself for thy Saviour, Christ will profit thee nothing. Hast thou not seen that thou art by Nature a Child of Wrath, born into the World under the Curse of Sin, and that unless thou be born again thou canst not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven? Hast thou not seen the Pride and Naughtiness of thy Heart, and its Enmity to God in thy unrenewed State, teaching thee that Evil is in thy best Actions, and that thy very Duties stand in need of being repented of, and consequently that, being by Nature a wild Olive, thou must be grafted into Christ the true Olive by Faith before thou canst bring forth good Fruit? And hast thou not seen, and dost thou not know that thou art become a fallen Spirit, and must therefore be quickened again to Newness of Life by the Holy Ghost? that all that Sin hath done in thee must be undone, thy false Confidence and Sufficiency
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in thyself slain, thy Lusts mortified, and the World crucified to thee and thou unto the World, that so Christ, who is the Power of God, may be exalted above every Creature, and live, and dwell and reign in thee; if thou hast not seen all this; and if the Sight thereof has not led thee in Repentance and Self-abasement to the Lord *Jesus* as thy only Saviour, however thou mayst say, I am rich, and increased with Goods, and have need of nothing, yet thou art in very deed poor, and miserable, and blind, and naked.

Again — Thou callest thy self a Christian; if so, thou art a Warrior, for thou hast engaged to fight under Christ's Banner against the World, the Flesh and the Devil: But dost thou fight successfully, or only as one that beateth the Air? Is thine Armour of a heavenly Temper, such as the Shield of Faith, the Breast-plate of Righteousness, and the Sword of the Spirit; or, are the Weapons of thy Warfare only carnal, such as human Prudence, constitutional Courage, and thy natural Reason? Look well to it! for the *Philistines* are upon thee, and will soon prove what Metal both Thou and thy Weapons are made of.

Once more: Dost thou strive lawfully,



that is, according to the Law of Arms and the Rules of Discipline to be observed in the Christian Warfare? Dost thou keep under thy Body and bring it into Subjection, and by the Grace given thee fight manfully against those worst of Enemies the Corruptions of thy Nature and the Sins that most easily beset thee, that having subdued the Foes that are of thine own House, thou mayst the more safely engage those that are without? Dost thou, upon gaining any Advantage over thine Enemy, sit still in Repose and fancied Security, or keep a watchful Eye both on the Right Hand and on the Left to guard against a Surprise? For know, O Christian, that there is no Time of laying down of Arms for thee here, and that if thine Enemy slacken his Efforts or withdraw his Forces, 'tis only a Feint, that he may attack thee to more advantage at some unguarded Hour: For we are not ignorant of his Devices.

Lastly, Dost thou resolve, the Lord being thy Helper, to persevere unto the End, under whatever Difficulties or Disadvantages may happen, and tho' thou sometimes lovest Ground, and the Adversary chance to get the upper Hand, canst thou
say

say with a full Confidence in the Lord thy Strength — Rejoice not against me, O mine Enemy; “ when I fall I shall rise again, “ when I sit in Darkness the Lord will be a “ Light unto me? If thou canst answer to these Questions aright, happy art thou, for thou art a faithful Soldier and beloved Servant of thy Lord, and shalt go on conquering and to conquer till thou hast trodden down all thine Enemies under thy Feet. But how few of us, my dear Brethren, can say thus much! How do we entangle ourselves with the Affairs of this Life, and, instead of laying aside every Weight that may hinder us in the Christian Race, go on to load ourselves with the Cares and Incumbrances of the World, so that we move at best but heavily and slowly. How many *Martha's* are there in this Congregation, who mind the Business of the Kitchen more than the one thing needful! How many *Demas's* who thro' Love of this present World have left their first Love for Christ, his Ways, and his People! How many, like *Dives*, are intent only upon enjoying their Temporal good things! And how many prodigal Sons and Daughters who spend all their Time and Substance



in Pleasure and riotous Living! so do the Profits or Diversions, the Vanities and Follies of the World run away with us, and leave us neither Leisure nor Inclination for Seriousness: Nay, among the best of us, how much Reason is there for Complaint! What Backwardness in Religious Duties! What Dulness and Dryness in the Performance of them! How little Devotion in our Closets! How little of Godliness in our Conversation! How unmortified in our Lives! How unspiritualized in our Affections! Inasmuch that I fear, that the Precept in the Text comes home rather as a Word of Reprehension than Caution to every one of us.

But if the former Part of the Text carries in it a Rebuke to the Lazy and the Loiterer, the latter Part of it holds forth Encouragement to the Faint-hearted — *Be Followers of them who thro' Faith and Patience inherit the Promises.* We are here not only told our Duty, but, to animate us in the Discharge of it, have proposed to our Imitation the Examples of those who have gone before us in the Way, have fought the good Fight, and finished their Course, and are now in Possession of that Crown of Life which is laid up for all that endure



endure unto the End. And of these we have an illustrious List upon Record of undoubted Authority, as the venerable Line of the Patriarchs, the goodly Fellowship of the Prophets, the glorious Company of the Apostles, and the noble Army of Martyrs and Confessors, besides numberless other now glorified Saints in all Ages of the Church, who are so many burning and shining Lights to kindle us into Zeal, and guide our Feet in the Way to Heaven. Take then for your Patterns these Hearts of Gold purified Seven Times, these Sons of the Morning, these glittering Stars of Light, and, fired by their Examples, press on to Victory and Glory: Say not within yourselves, their Virtues are inimitable by us, such Perfection is too high for us, we cannot attain unto it; for they were Flesh and Blood as we are, Men of like Passions with ourselves; and both their Failings and Falls are recorded, not only for our Caution, but also for our Encouragement not to despair, and shew us how weak they were by Nature, tho' so strong by Grace, that the Excellency of the Power may appear to be, not of Man, but of God. We praise God in our Prayer for the

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the Church militant, for all his Saints and Servants departed this Life in his Faith and Fear: but let us not mock God by praising Him for that which we design to be no better for, seeing their Lives and their Deaths were written for our Imitation, that we together with them might be made Partakers of the Promises. Having then so great and bright a Cloud of Witnesses, let us enter upon our Warfare with Alacrity and Emulation, and that the rather, forasmuch as no one Encouragement that our Hearts can wish for is wanting to animate us in it; we have Men and Angels for our Spectators, Saints for our Examples, Christ for our Captain, and, in case of Victory, Heaven for our Inheritance.

But as we are directed to follow those who now inherit the Promises, so must we follow them in the same way they went, *viz.* thro' Faith and Patience.

What great and glorious Things do we read of Faith in the Scriptures as exemplified in the Lives of the ancient Worthies, for which in particular I refer you to the xith Chapter of this Epistle; whence we may learn, that Faith in Christ is not a Grace peculiar to the Gospel Dispensation,
for



for He always was, is, and will be the Light of the World manifesting itself to all that are receptive of Him, tho' in different Degrees, and according to different Miniftrations. *Enoch* and *Noah* before the Flood knew *Christ*, and preached from his Spirit; *Abraham* saw his Day and was glad; the whole Law was a figurative Exhibition of Him; the Prophets represented Him more distinctly; but we have seen Him in a still clearer Display of our Salvation as the only Begotten of the Father full of Grace and Truth. It is Faith in this Saviour that distinguishes us from those that sit in Darkness and the Shadow of Death; 'tis thro' Faith in his Redeeming Blood that our Justification is evidenced to us; by the Power of this Faith all the Christian Heroes of old Time were enabled to contend for the Truth so valiantly; and by the same we and all that follow us may go and do likewise. Courage then, O Christian! and let not thy Heart faint within thee: Art thou tossed in a troubled and tempestuous Ocean where the Billows of Adversity and Affliction dash against thee, and the Floods of Ungodliness make thee afraid? Have Faith, and like *Noah's Ark* thou



shalt ride securely on the Top of the Waters. Do Difficulties and Discouragements, like Lions in the Way, oppose thy Passage to the City of God, or does the Flame of Persecution threaten thee? Take Heart, and follow those who by Faith stopped the Mouths of Lions, and quenched the Violence of the Fire. Nothing is too hard for Christian Faith; "all things, says our Lord, are possible to him that believeth:" Nay, if thou hast a right Faith Christ is thine, and in Him all Things, Life and Death, Things present and Things to come; behold, they will all work together for thy good, and thou shalt at last assuredly receive the End of thy Faith, even the Salvation of thy Soul.

But then, in the next Place, remember that to Faith thou add Patience, for tho' Faith, in a vigorous Exertion of its full Power, be a kind of Christian Omnipotence, yet, that thou mayest know it to be a Gift and not a Child of thine own, the Lord is pleased at times to withhold the precious Fruits and Comforts of it, tho' the Root remaineth in thee: at such Seasons thou mayest go forth like *Sampson* to shake thyself and rouse up thy Powers, but thou wilt find thy Strength departed, and that



that thou art to all Appearance weak as another Man; but be not dismayed, for the Lord has not left thee; He has only withdrawn the Evidence of one Grace to afford occasion for the Exercise of another; He suffers thy Faith to disappear, that Patience may have her perfect Work in thee.

The Christian Life is not a State of uninterrupted Comfort, as some describe it, herein speaking from their System, and not from any Experience of their own. It is not the Way of God's Dealings with us, nor is it meet for us, that we should always walk on our High Places, and feed on the Mountains of Exaltation, but descend at Times into the Valley beneath for our Trial and Humiliation: It was here that the Son of God walked when He sweat as it were great Drops of Blood: Here it was that He drank off the Bitter Cup of his Passion: And here we must follow Him thro' Death to Life eternal; " For it be-
" came Him for whom are all Things,
" and by whom are all Things, in bring-
" ing many Sons unto Glory, to make the
" Captain of their Salvation perfect thro'
" Sufferings: For both He that sanctifieth
" and they who are sanctified are all of
" one;



“one; for which Cause He is not ashamed to call them Brethren.” Thus then if we mean to be Partakers of Christ’s Holiness, we must also be Partakers of his Sufferings; and if we suffer with Him patiently we shall reign with Him eternally.

Here then we see our need of Patience, as before we saw our need of Faith: And God be praised, that He hath provided Virtues and Graces suited to every State and Stage, every Time and Exigency of the Christian Life. What tho’ the Day of Rejoicing seem to be over with some of us, or perhaps not yet begun, and Sorrow be nigh at hand; tho’ no Voice of Joy be heard in our Dwellings, but our Abode be called *Bochim*, or a Place of Mourners; yet O Christians, sorrow not as Men without Hope, but in Patience possess ye your Souls: You sit at the Foot of the Cross weeping; look up to Him who hanged on it with the Desire of your Souls, and put your Trust in the Lord, even the Lord *Jesus*, for your Groanings are not hid from Him; He will put your Tears into his Bottle, and your Sorrows shall be noted in his Book: If He delay for a while his gracious Visits, yet wait for Him,



Him, He will not tarry long, He will not leave you comfortless, He will come to you. Look at the Generations of Old, and see! Did ever any trust in the Lord and was confounded! Or did any abide in his Fear and was forsaken! Or whom did He ever despise that called upon Him! Consider well, therefore, the Patience of the Saints, and be not slack “to follow them “who thro’ Faith and Patience inherit the “Promises.”

And now having laid before you a short Sketch of the Christian Warfare, with some suitable Motives for your Encouragement in it, suffer me to conclude with a Word of Exhortation to you all, to use your utmost Diligence to make your Calling and Election sure.

Consider, my dear Brethren, that your Work is great, and the Time for doing it both short and uncertain: What Proficiency you have already made in it God and your Consciences know best; this however I am sure of, that none have any Time to lose, but ought to redeem every Day and Hour of it. If the great Business is yet to begin in any of you, and the very Foundation of Repentance from Dead

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Works,



Works, and of Faith towards God yet un-
 laid in your Souls, make no longer tarrying
 to turn unto the Lord, and put not off
 from Day to Day, for who knows whether
 the Mercy of another Day will be granted
 you or not? Who knows but the Son of God
 is now preparing his Throne for Judgment?
 that the Angel, to whom the Office of
 summoning the Quick and Dead before Him
 is assigned, has already received his Com-
 mand to blow the tremendous Blast, and
 that other Angel spoken of in the *Revela-
 tions*, to take his Stand upon the Sea, and
 upon the Earth, and to swear by Him
 that liveth for ever and ever that Time
 shall be no more? We cannot be sure that
 this is not the case, and therefore what
 Madness is it to risque eternal Salvation upon
 a Chance which we know not how soon
 may fail us! This, however, is certain, that
 Death cannot be far from any one, and
 will probably surprize some of us very soon,
 and as there is no Repentance or Work in
 the Grave whither we are going, it behoves
 us as much to prepare against the Hour of
 Death as for the Day of Judgment. You can-
 not say, that you want Instruction in Godli-
 ness, for you have Line upon Line and Pre-
 cept

cept upon Precept: You cannot say, that you want Calls to Repentance; for God the Father calleth you by Providences, by Mercies, by Judgments; God the Son calleth you by all that He hath done and suffered for you, by his Word, by his Ordinances, by his Ministers; and God the Holy Ghost calleth you by the secret Whispers and Strivings of his Spirit, and by the Checks and Admonitions of your own Consciences: Who then is that faithful and wise Servant who knoweth his Lord's Will, and prepareth himself to do thereafter? Blessed is that Servant, yea thrice blessed shall he be in that Day when the Lord maketh up his Jewels, for he shall shine as the Sun in the Kingdom of his Father for ever and ever.

Arise now, O ye slothful ones, from your Bed of Slumber, before your Eyes are closed in eternal Death. Be wise, O ye foolish Virgins, and provide Oyl for your Lamps before the Door of Mercy be shut against you: And tho' it be the Eleventh Hour with many of you, and ye have stood thus long idle, the Day is not yet quite spent — You may still enter into the Vineyard, and receive every one a Penny: And tho' your



Hearts be burthened with Sorrow on Account of your past Negligence and Slothfulness, and because of the many gracious Opportunities you have suffered to pass by unimproved, nevertheless it is not yet too late; only attend to the Voice of your forgiving loving Lord, who willeth not the Death of any Sinner, for He calls and invites you, saying — “Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you Rest.” And may the Power of Christ go along with his Call, as it did when he called *Simon* and *Andrew* his Brother, and compel you by a gracious Violence to forsake your Nets, even all your worldly Entanglements, and to follow Him likewise. And now, my Brethren, quit yourselves like Men, and be strong in the Lord, for the Kingdom of Heaven suffereth Violence, and the Violent take it by Force: And may the Work of the Lord prosper in your Hands and in your Hearts, to the Glory of God and the Salvation of your immortal Souls! Even so grant Lord Jesus! Amen.

S E R M O N I V.

Christ our only Safety in Spiritual
Conflicts.



M A T T H. xiv. 24.

*But the Ship was now in the midst of the
Sea, tossed with Waves; for the Wind was
contrary.*

AFTER our Lord had miraculously
fed a great Multitude of People,
He commanded his Disciples to get
into a Ship and to pass over to the other Side
of the Sea of *Tiberias* whilst He sent the
Multitude away, which having done He
went up into a Mountain apart to pray.

Tho' it was one Part of our Blessed Lord's
Character, after He entered upon his Mi-
nistry, that He went about doing good both
to the Bodies and Souls of Men, yet we
often read of his Retirements for Prayer,
teaching us hereby, that however publick
our Character may be in Life, how much

SERMON
IV.




soever it may be our Duty to labour and exert ourselves for the Benefit of others, yet this will not excuse our Neglect of private Devotion: We must frequently sequester ourselves from the Crowd, and from the Distractions of all external Occupations, to hold an holy Intercourse with God the Father of our Spirits, and to elevate our Thoughts to Heavenly Things.

Outward Duties have a considerable Place in Religion, forasmuch as we stand related to those that are about us in various Connexions which call upon us for frequent Expressions of our Charity in mutual good Offices towards our Brethren; but the Divine Life consists chiefly in the Exercise of inward Graces and devout Affections, bringing us into Communion with God, and so deriving from Him the Supports and Consolations of his Spirit: And in these Actings of Divine Faith, Resignation and Love it was, that our Lord's Humanity was enabled to overcome in his Temptation in the Wilderness, strengthened under his Agony in the Garden, transfigured on the Mount, and nourished with Meat that his Disciples knew not of, even the Communications of his own Divine Nature. Were we thus accustomed to
withdraw,



withdraw, at Times, after the Example of our Lord, from every busy Scene of Life and all Commerce with the World, to feast our Souls with Spiritual Entertainment, we should assuredly find the Work of God to go on more successfully in our Hearts, and that such religious Abstractions would prove not only refreshing Cordials to our Spirits on our wearisome Journey thro' this Vale of Misery, but also greatly helpful in fitting us for the active Duties of our Station: But to proceed.

It happened during this Recess of our Lord, that the Disciples were in great Jeopardy in a Storm, the Ship being now in the Midst of the Sea tossed with the Waves, for the Wind was contrary; and in the fourth Watch of the Night *Jesus* went unto them walking on the Sea. Whether our Lord foreseeing the Tempest ordered them out to Sea; or whether He, at whose Word the stormy Wind ariseth, appointed it for the Tryal of their Faith and to shew forth his Power in their wonderful Deliverance, is not material for us to know; sure it is, that it happened not without wise Design; for if even a Sparrow falleth not to the Ground without his Knowledge, much more

doth He concern himself in all that befall-
eth his Children. The Disciples then were
to be brought into Danger and Distress that
they might have a fresh Proof of their Lord's
Divinity and tender Care of them, and that
by such repeated Pledges of his Power and
Goodness, their Infidelity might be over-
come, and their Hearts melted into Love and
Gratitude towards their Divine Master and
Benefactor : So patient is our Lord towards
us, condescending, in Compassion to our
Infirmities, to manifest his Love to us at sun-
dry Times and in divers Manners, if by any
means He may conquer the Reluctance and
Stubbornness of our Nature, and gain him-
self the Victory over our unbelieving Hearts.
One would think, indeed, that the Disciples
stood in little need of any fresh Proof of our
Lord's Divine Power for the Confirmation
of their Faith after so recent a Demonstration
of it as that of his feeding Five thousand Men,
besides Women and Children, with only
Five Loaves and two small Fishes ; but St.
Mark, who also relates this Circumstance
of the Storm, tells us, that when the Wind
ceased upon our Saviour's entering into the
Ship, *they were sore amazed and wondered ;*
for, says he, they considered not the Miracle
of

of the Loaves, for their Heart was hardened.

SERMON:
IV.



And here we are naturally led to observe upon that kind of Faith which consists in a bare Assent of the Understanding arising from External Evidence only : This confessedly has its use when well applied, but how insufficient this is of itself alone to any good Purposes of the Divine Life, we may learn from this Instance of the Disciples during their unenlightened, unconverted State, whose Faith (tho' they were Eye-witnesses to so many mighty Works done by our Lord) seldom lasted from one Miracle to the next. It is said in the second Chapter of St. *John*, that many believed on “ *Jesus* when they saw his Miracles; but “ that He did not commit himself unto “ them, because he knew all Men ;” giving us hereby to understand, that altho' they owned his Character and Mission, yet theirs was not a true Faith, but they were probably such as thro' the Hopes of Favour or the Fear of Persecution would have betrayed Him. Hence we are taught, that there is a believing in Christ with a human Faith which we may be no better for, as far forth as it brings us no nearer to Him, nor Him to us as the Saviour of our Souls: This



must be the Office of that Divine Faith which is wrought in us by the Spirit of Grace, and wherewith the Heart believeth unto Righteousness, even that operative holy Principle which the Apostle speaks of where he saith; “ the Life which I now live, I live “ by the Faith of the Son of God:” The former kind of Faith carnal Men often have, and yet both live and dye in their Sins; the latter is that which purifieth the Heart from Sin, and under the Influence of which we believe to the saving of the Soul: With the one we call *Jesus* Lord by the Holy Ghost, and so with the Mouth make Confession to Salvation; by the other the Devils could cry out, “ Thou art the Son of God,” — for they knew that He was the Christ. Much Stress is laid by the Generality on the Evidence of Miracles, as if that were the best and surest Foundation of the Christian Faith, for outward Christians only build on outward Evidence; but where the Heart is shut against the Grace of Faith, and the inward Demonstration of the Spirit and Power of Truth; to such the raising of the Dead to Life (however it might furnish Matter for Curiosity or Admiration) would be ineffectual to the producing any beneficial



ficial Faith in the Heart. This Observation is not founded on Opinion, but Fact; for the *Jewish* Rulers knew of our Lord's raising not only *Lazarus* but also himself from the Dead, and yet did all they could to suppress the Belief and Effect of these Miracles: And for this Cause probably it was, that our Saviour who wrought many Miracles, to the End that no Credentials might be wanting to his Mission and Ministry, but that every Mouth might be stopped and all Infidelity remain without Excuse, yet refused to satisfy the Expectation of the *Pharisees* and of *Herod* on that Point, as likewise the Demand of those who required his coming down from the Cross, that they might believe. Thus does our Heavenly Father reveal to Babes, to the Humble and Simple, what He conceals from the Wise and Prudent of this World.—But to return to the Disciples in their Distress.

It is said in the second Verse after the Text, that when the Disciples saw the Lord walking on the Sea, they were troubled, saying, *It is a Spirit, and they cried out for Fear.* How natural is it for People under any great Calamity to terrify themselves



selves with the Workings of their own disturbed Imaginations? and that the Disciples were at this Time in such Circumstances as are apt to cause Perturbation of Mind we must readily allow, according to that just and elegant Description given by the Psalmist of Persons at Sea in a Storm: "They
 " are carried up to the Heaven and down
 " again to the Deep; their Soul melteth
 " away because of the Trouble; they reel
 " to fro, and stagger like a drunken Man,
 " and are at their Wits End." But allowing them to be so far Masters of themselves as to preserve their Minds free from Disorder and all Delusions of Fancy upon this Occasion, yet even so we must grant it to be no unreasonable Conclusion, that the Form of a Man seen walking upon the Waters could be no other than a Spirit; for what Body of Flesh and Blood was ever known to do so before? Who but he that created the Elements could suspend or alter the Properties and Laws of their Nature, and walk upon the Sea as upon dry Ground? But tho' we apologize for their Mistake, yet how shall we allow for their Fear because of an Apparition? For what is there so terrifying in the Sight of a Spirit? since those
 Beings

Beings are subject to the Command and Controul of Him who is the God of all Spirits as much as of his other Creatures: If they are good Spirits, they can have no Inclination to hurt us, but come on a friendly Errand for our Instruction, Direction, or Comfort; “ For are they not all ministring “ Spirits sent to minister unto them that “ shall be Heirs of Salvation ?” But if, on the other hand, they be of an evil Nature, and Enemies to Men, yet even so, they are subject to the Laws of their Kingdom, and the Almighty hath set them Bounds which they cannot pass ; and therefore we have nothing more to fear from Spirits than from Men or any other Creatures, which may serve equally by Commission and Appointment from God as Instruments of Good or Evil to us: But the Truth of the Matter lies here : The Disciples were at this Time frail and weak like other Men, who are more led by their Passions than sound Judgment: Add to this, that they were brought into seeming great Peril of Death, separated from their dear Lord and only Friend, in the Midst of the Sea in a tempestuous Night, the Ship tossed with the Waves and the Wind contrary, and thus surrounded with

Christ our only Safety

with the Horrors of the Deep thinking that they saw a Spectre risen from beneath to pronounce their Doom and bid them to prepare for their watry Grave: Such and so great was their Distress when *Jesus* spake unto them and said; *Be of good cheer, it is I, be not afraid*: And when He came into the Ship the Wind ceased, and they worshiped Him.

We may observe here the Lord's gracious Dealings towards his Children in the greatest seeming Severity of his Dispensations, and how in the midst of Judgment He thinketh upon Mercy: Were the Disciples brought into great Trouble? let not God's Children at any time complain when this happens to be their Case also, nor say, with murmuring *Jacob* when afflicted, "All these things are against me;" for all these things work for good to them that love God; "He chastneth them for their Profit that they may be Partakers of his Holiness:" Nay, Sorrow and Trouble is the Lot of all Men living, in a greater or less Degree, to answer some Purpose of the Divine Mercy and Goodness toward them, unless defeated by not profiting by them as they ought. How many would have sunk into a total
Forget-

Forgetfulness of God in the Ease and Sunshine of a fatal Prosperity, who have been brought to seek the Lord by a gracious Adversity! What Instances of Persons being deprived of their most valued temporal Blessings, their dearest Friends and nearest Relations for their good, when these Comforts have become Snares to them and stolen their Affections from God? And how has a Fit of Sickness, or being brought into Peril of Death by any other Means, served, like an Angel with his Sword drawn in the Way, to stop those in the Career of their Wickedness who were rushing violently upon Destruction! Thus does the Lord bring us low, that He may bring us near to Himself, and humbleth us that He may exalt us in due Time: Were we not made sensible of our own Insufficiency to help ourselves, we should not flee to Him for Succour; and were He not to suffer us to come into Trouble He could not be a Deliverer in our Distress, that so we might learn to praise Him.

We read that the Mariners in *Jonah's* Ship, upon occasion of the Storm, feared the Lord exceedingly, and offered Sacrifice and made Vows; the Sense of their
Danger



Danger excited that of their Dependence; and their Deliverance stirred them up to the Exercise of Gratitude and Praise to that God who shews his Wonders in the Deep, and commands the Winds and the Sea, and they obey Him. It would be well, if the many Thousands amongst us that go down to the Sea in Ships, and occupy their Business in great Waters, thus feared the Lord and revered his Holy Name instead of polluting it with their horrid Oaths and Imprecations: It is indeed a sad Consideration, that they who stand indebted to the Goodness of Almighty God in a more peculiar manner for Preservation in Dangers, should be observed in general to live under less Sense of Religion than any others.

But if Sufferings are designed to be of general use in bringing Men to Seriousness, they are in a more particular manner useful to the Sons and Daughters of God, in exercising their Virtues, and to prepare them for greater degrees of Grace. Thus *David* could say, it was good for him that he had been afflicted, and every Saint besides *David* that has been afflicted in like manner, has Reason to make the same Acknowledgment,



ledgment, or if he knows it not now, he shall know hereafter.

The Lord is oftentimes pleased to withdraw his Divine Comforts from his Servants after large Vouchsafements of his Favour, that they may not be exalted with their Gifts, nor ascribe that to Nature which is wholly of Grace, Instances of which we have many in the holy Men of Old, particularly *Elijah, David, and Jeremiah*, whose fore Tryals of this kind fetched from them very sorrowful Complaints, not without a great Mixture of human Infirmary; for at such Times they were also left in Darkness, and therefore lost Sight of the Reasons of the Divine Oeconomy: But yet to convince both them and us that tho' many are the Troubles of the Righteous, yet the Lord delivereth them out of all, we find that in the midst of the Sorrows which they had in their Hearts God's Comforts did sooner or later refresh their Souls, and that even in the darkeſt Night of their Affliction the Lord did appear unto them, if not in the first or second, yet in the third or fourth Watch, saying, *It is I, be not afraid*; "it was I that suffered this Dis-

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Faith,



Christ our only Safety

Faith, or for thy Improvement in Humility, and therefore thou oughtest not to have given way to Impatience and Distrust, nor to sorrow as Men without Hope; and it is I who am come now to thy Relief; therefore be of good Courage.”

I come now to consider the Inside of the Narrative of which the Text is Part; for every Miracle that our Saviour wrought, and every Parable that He spake, reads us a Spiritual Lesson. The Ship in the midst of the Sea is an apt Emblem of Christ's Church in this temporary State of her Passage to Eternity, as the stormy Wind lifting up the Waves thereof is of the various Tryals and Persecutions she must expect to meet with in her Voyage to that Haven of Rest where she would be; and our Lord's walking upon the Sea to the Relief of his Disciples, and his stilling the Raging of the Tempest, emphatically denotes his watchful and protecting Care of his Church in the worst of Times, and that he is always with it even unto the End.

That the few faithful Servants of God have in all Ages of the World met with a stormy Passage thro' it, the Scripture Account of the Church, as far as it comes
down,



down, abundantly testifies. The Opposition which the Children of the Kingdom were to expect from the Children of this World began to shew it self so early as in the Days of *Cain* and *Abel*; and so far did Ungodliness prevail in the Earth that we read of but one Family fearing God remaining upon it after an Increase of Mankind thro' the Space of Two thousand Years, and that Family doubtless suffering more from the Wickedness of the Times, than when afterwards tossed in the Ark upon the Waves of an Universal Deluge. After the new World was re-peopled we find but Threescore and ten Souls Worshipers of the true God, and their Seed soon after brought under cruel Bondage to *Ægyptian* Tyrants: And when the *Israelites* were set free and conducted into the promised Land, how were they oppressed and persecuted by the idolatrous Nations round about them, *Moabites* and *Ammonites*, *Philistines* and *Syrians*, as if the Church of God had been the Antitype of *Noah's* Dove, that could find no resting Place for the Soles of her Feet; and as if the Fidelity and Obedience of one entire People had been too compleat a Sacrifice for *Adam's* fallen Race



to offer up to God ; behold Ten Tribes out of Twelve apostatizing from his Worship to Idolatry, and the few that were found faithful among them forced to hide themselves in Dens and Caves of the Earth. And has it fared better with the Christian Church ! Did not the Dragon do his utmost to strangle the Child in its Infancy ? Was not this holy Nation put to a severe Proof of her Constancy in her early Days by ten sharp Persecutions ? and how many Thousands have sealed their Testimony with their Blood by the Murders and Massacres of After-times, finding as little Mercy from professing Christians of different Denominations as their Fore-fathers had done from Heathenish Idolaters. Add to this the many open Attacks which Christianity has sustained from the Armies of Infidelity, the Dangers it has been in from Heresy, Superstition and the Inventions of Men, and what is no less prejudicial to the Success of the Gospel, the great Scandal and Offence given to those that are without by the Immorality or mere Formality of many Professors, Men hating the Truth as it is in *Christ Jesus* as much as they disgrace it by their unholy Lives and vain Conversation.

IF



If we take into the Account all these Difficulties and Discouragements, this Opposition and Enmity which the pure and holy Christian Faith has all along met with, and must still expect to meet with from a vain, infidel and wicked World, we must own, that the Church of Christ, as consisting of spiritual, heavenly-minded Christians, too justly resembles a Ship in Distress in the midst of the Sea, tossed with the Waves, and the Wind contrary. But the same Lord who saved *Noah* and his Family in the Ark from perishing by the Waters; who preserved the *Israclites* a distinct People Four Hundred Years in *Ægypt*; and in the most corrupt Times of *Jewish* Apostacy left himself Seven Thousand Souls that had not bowed the Knee to *Baal*; that same Lord hath in these degenerate Times a few, I trust that I may say many Names, even in this our *Sardis*, who have not defiled their Garments, but have kept the Faith, bear their Testimony to the Truth as it is in *Christ Jesus*, and walk worthy of that holy Vocation wherewith they are called; for however this or that outward national Church, whilst it retains the Form, may fall away by a ge-



neral Apostacy from the Life, Spirit and Power of Godliness, yet in the most corrupt Ages and Nations Christ has a Faithful Remnant of secret ones which constitute that holy invisible Church which He has founded upon a Rock, and on which He will fulfil his Promise, that neither the Wind nor the Waves, nor the Gates of Hell shall prevail against it.

Having now considered the Text both in its History and Mystery, I proceed to make a spiritual Application of it to Two Sorts of Persons: And first to such as trust in themselves that they are righteous, and take not the Lord *Jesus* for their Saviour.

And here, what will you do, O ye foolish ones! in the Day of your Calamity, when God shall come to prove what is in your Hearts, shall bring you into Peril of Death, and erect his Throne of Judgment in your Consciences! For know of a Truth, that a Storm is appointed for your Tryal also. Behold then! the Tempest is begun, and thou art in the midst of the Sea, tossed with the Waves and the Wind against thee. What now is thy Strength, and wherein is thy Confidence? Canst thou still the rag-
ing

ing of the Sea? Canst thou withstand the Breath of God's Displeasure when he ariseth terribly to shake the Earth? Thou sayst that thou hast established thine own Righteousness upon the strong Mountains that cannot be shaken; but behold, the unstable Water is thy Foundation! Besides, thy Vessel is frail and leaky, thy Sails rent and torn, the Anchor of thy Hope no better than a bended Reed, and the Cable wherein thou trustest but as a Green With which breaketh as a Thread of Tow is broken when it toucheth the Fire. But hark! the mighty God hath a Controversy with thee: — He speaketh out of the Whirlwind and biddeth thee prepare for thy Defence; for lo! a dreadful Accusation is brought against thee. Thou art charged with the Guilt of High Treason against the Sovereign Majesty of Heaven; with having defaced the Divine Image in thy Soul, broken God's Laws, despised his Goodness, defied his Power, and rebelled against his Government. What now is thy Plea? and wherewith wilt thou come before the most High? Wilt thou gird up thy Loins like a Man and answer for thyself? Bring forth then thy strong Reasons and proceed to thy Defence—but



consider well how thou maintainest thy Cause, and what thou hast to offer in Arrest of Judgment; for God is Judge Himself, and He trieth the very Secrets of the Heart. Wilt thou plead thine Innocence and Purity before thy Judge? Alas, fond Man! forbear this Plea, or thou shalt be found a Lyar before God, for thou art corrupt in the very Essence and first Forms of thy Nature, wast conceived in Sin, and shapen in Iniquity, and consequently born a Child of Wrath; and therefore except thou be spiritually born again, and so brought into the true Filiation by Adoption and Grace, thou canst not inherit the Kingdom of Heaven. Urge not, then, fallen Man! thy native Innocence before a God of infinite Purity and Holiness, for in this respect shall no Man living be justified, nor any one that is born of a Woman be accounted clean before Him; yea, “the Stars are not clean in his Sight; “how much less Man that is Corruption, “and the Son of Man that is but a Worm.”

But perhaps thou chusest to stand upon thy Obedience, and therefore appealest to the Law and the Testimony for thy Justification: To the Law and the Testimony then thou shalt go, and they shall be thy Judges:



Judges : But take heed, O Man, what thou doest ! For herein thou appealest to a Court that sheweth no Mercy ; and therefore unless thou canst bring with thee a perfect Obedience to the whole Law in every Jot and Tittle of its Requirements, come not near the dreadful burning Mount of *Sinai* ; for what saith the Voice ? — “ Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the Book of the Law to do them.” But art thou resolved to abide by thy Plea, and to put the Issue of thy Trial upon the Validity of it ? Stand forth then and answer, before Heaven and Earth, for Men and Angels are thy Witnessess. Hast thou kept the whole Law, and walked in all the Commandments and Ordinances of the Lord blameless from thy Youth up until now ? Hast thou never done those things which thou oughtest not to have done ; and never left undone those things which thou shouldest have done ? Hast thou ever been a dutiful Child, and loved the Lord thy God with all thine Heart, with all thy Soul, and with all thy Strength, and thy Neighbour as thyself ? Hast thou set a watch continually upon the Door of thy Lips, and never offended with thy Tongue ?
And

And hast thou preserved thy Mind at all Times free from every unclean and sinful Thought, Desire, Imagination, and Lust; For know, that God's Commandment is exceeding broad, and extendeth to the inmost Recesses of the Soul. — Speak now, O Prisoner, and answer to thy Examination, for thou art upon Life and Death! — What, answerest thou nothing! How is it that thy Countenance is fallen, and that thou art become speechless in the Judgment! The Reason is evident—thy Plea of Obedience hath failed thee — thy Conscience testifies against thee—and the Law is become the Ministration of thy Condemnation. Behold, O Man! O Woman! whoever thou art that seekest to be justified by thy Doings, this is thy very Case—Thou art weighed in the Ballance and found wanting—thou art convicted of being a Debtor to the Law, and therefore shalt be cast into Prison till thou hast paid the uttermost Farthing, but this thou shalt never be able to do to all Eternity.

Come then, my fellow Sinners, be persuaded, ere it be too late, to retract your Pleas of Innocence and Obedience, to renounce as well your Righteousness, as your
your

your Unrighteousness, and to cast yourselves upon the Mercies of God in *Christ Jesus*. If you are obstinately bent upon standing Tryal at the Bar of God's Justice, I am bold to tell you that you are undone for ever, nor will it be in the Power of all the Host of Heaven to help you, for every Soul of Man is guilty before God, guilty of shedding the Blood of the Son of God, and therefore God's Justice is the Man-slayer, the Avenger of Blood : Flee then for your Lives—Flee for your Souls to the City of Refuge, and lay hold on the Horns of the Altar, for herein lies your only Safety, even in the Merits and atoning Blood of that Lamb of God whom our Sins have crucified and slain : Such is the Love of *Jesus* to Sinners ! — Such is the Love of *Jesus* to his Murderers ! — Are we then void of all Righteousness in ourselves that can justify ? all Transgressors of God's holy Law, and as such liable to the Curse and Condemnation of it ? Let us go as poor, penitent Sinners in Faith to the Author and Mediator of a better Covenant, even to Him who is *the End of the Law for Righteousness to all them that believe*, and who has fulfilled the Law, and was made Sin for us, that we might



might be made the Righteousness of God IN HIM. So shall He be to us a *Jesus* to save us from our Sins; and so shall we be able to say to him with Confidence in the Judgment: Thou shalt answer for me, O Lord my God! *For henceforth there is no Condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.*

To conclude with a Word to those who put their Trust in the Lord, and in that Righteousness which is of God by Faith.

Art thou a Christian? Suffer a Word of Exhortation, and permit me to remind thee that thou art on a Voyage to Eternity in the midst of a tempestuous Ocean, where many Difficulties and Dangers await thee; and therefore that thou must prepare thy Soul for Temptation. What if from thy first setting out until now the Wind has been fair and thy Passage favourable, yet flatter not thyself with vain Hopes, that it will hold thus with thee unto the End; for no one ever yet reached the Shore of the heavenly *Canaan* without meeting a Storm by the Way. *Moses*, and *Job*, and *David*, and all the Worthies of old Time bear Witness to this Truth from more than common Experience; nay, the Son of God himself had



had a Conflict with the sharpest Storm that Nature ever felt, for the Prince of the Power of the Air and all the Potentates of Darkneſs conſpired to heighten the Fury and Horrors of it ; yea, the Wrath of God was in it, and therefore it ſhook both Heaven and Earth. How then mayſt thou hope to eſcape without encountering ſome adverſe Blaſt ?

But perhaps thou art already come to thy Tryal, and therefore ſtandeſt more in need of Comfort than Warning : The ſtormy Wind perhaps is already riſen, Tribulation and Anguiſh have got faſt hold on thee, and thou art to thy thinking vexed with all God's Storms ; without are Fightings and within are Fears, whiſt thou art left in Darkneſs and in the Deep, without one Gleam of Light or Comfort to cheer thy benighted Soul, and ſerve thee for an Anchor of Hope : Nay, it may be, thou art not only toſſed with theſe Waves of Affliction and Sorrow, which ſhake the very Foundations of thy Faith, but the Wind alſo is contrary ; God's Providences ſeem all againſt thee, thy beſt Purpoſes and Reſolutions are defeated ; thy moſt promiſing Hopes miſcarry, and thou proſpereſt
in



in nothing thou puttest thine Hand unto ; yea thy very Prayers and Devotions seem not able to make their Way to the Mercy Seat, but to be blown back into thy Face by some envious evil Blast, and thou art tempted to cast away all thy Confidence in thy God. These things are hard indeed, and seemingly against thee : But do not give Way to desponding Thoughts, “ O thou “ Afflicted, tossed with Tempest and not “ comforted ! ” For what saith the Lord ? “ For a small Moment have I forsaken “ thee ; but with great Mercies will I gather “ thee.”

Be not then dismayed, O Christian Voyager, tho’ the Wind and the Waves be against thee : Nay, tho’ Spectres and Devils should be in the Way, yet make resolutely for the other Side : Besides, what wouldst thou do ! Thou art already half Way on thy Voyage ; and shouldst thou turn back, even so likewise thou mayst suffer Shipwreck in the Storm : Or, in case of thy safe Arrival in the Country which thou hadst forsaken, thou must expect to be treated with all the Reproach and Ignominy of a Deserter, and at last take up thy Abode in the City of Destruction, which shall shortly



be consumed with Fire: Better then, far better, if thou needs must perish, that thou perish in the right Way. Turn not back, then; nay cast not a wishful Look towards the Devoted Shore, but set thy Face unalterably fixt upon the promised Land: Neither faint, nor slacken thy Diligence to hold on thy Course, tho' the Waters rage and swell, and tho' the Mountains shake because of the Tempest; for Deliverance is near at hand; and the Lord is a present Help in Time of Trouble: That same *Jesus* who encountered the bitter Tempest of God's Wrath and prevailed, will overcome for thee in this Storm also. Behold! He is in the midst of the Sea, tho' thou knowest Him not — He hears thee when thou criest unto Him in thy Trouble, and will deliver thee out of thy Distress; for He maketh the Storm to cease, so that the Waves thereof are still: So shalt thou be glad when thou art at rest, when He bringeth thee unto the Haven where thou wouldst be.

And now, O Blessed Lord! who hast appointed thy chosen Servants to many Difficulties and Dangers for the Tryal of their Faith and Constancy, and for the Glory of thy

thy Name in their Deliverance: Suffer not the Spirit of thy feeble ones to fail before thee in the Day of their Calamity and Distress, but be with them in every Storm, and stand by them in every Temptation. Thou hast graciously promised, that when we pass thro' the Waters thou wilt be with us, and that when we pass thro' the Fire we shall not be burnt—Be it unto us, O Lord, according to thy Word: But above all, stand by us in our last and greatest Extremities: In the Hour of Death, and in the Day of Judgment, good Lord, deliver us!



S E R M O N V.

Spiritual Worship, the Religion of
the Law and the Gospel.

Preached at the VISITATION of the Rev. JOHN
BROWNE, D. D. Archdeacon of *Northampton*,
held at *Northampton*, April 30, 1747.



J O H N iv. 23.

*The Hour cometh, and now is, when the
true Worshipers shall worship the Father
in Spirit and in Truth: for the Father
seeketh such to worship him.*

TH E S E Words are Part of a Con-
ference between our Blessed Lord
and the Woman of *Samaria* at *Ja-*
cob's Well, and particularly refer to a Ques-
tion of her's touching the true Place of Di-
vine Worship; whether it was *Mount Ge-*
rizim, as the *Samaritans* held; or the
Temple at *Jerusalem*, according to the Re-
ligion of the *Jews*. Our Saviour declared
in favour of the latter; *Ye worship*, says he,
ye know not what: we know what we worship;
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for Salvation is of the Jews: Hereby not only condemning the Defection of the *Samaritans* from the *Jewish Church*, and that impure Mixture of Idolatry and heathenish Superstition, with which their Commerce, and Affinity with the *Assyrians*, had infected them, but also pronouncing the *Jewish* to be the true visible Church of God ; — *Salvation is of the Jews.* — In their Custody is the Law, and the Writings of the Prophets ; among them is the Priesthood established by God, and that Form of Worship which he has appointed ; and of them is the *Messiah*, the *Christ*.—

Isa. ii. 3. Out of Zion, therefore, should go forth the Law, and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

But our Saviour, not content with setting her right in this Particular (for now Converts were to be made, not to *Judaism* but *Christianity*) acquaints her, that all Disputes about Locality of Worship were frivolous and un concerning, seeing that Distinction of Place, which had till then obtained for the offering up of Sacrifices, and the more solemn Celebration of Divine Worship, was upon the point of ceasing, and the Time at hand, when God
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Almighty would be served in a more free and unconfined manner, and that of the Heart should be the only true and acceptable Religion;—*The Hour cometh, and now is, when the true Worshipers shall worship the Father in Spirit and in Truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.*

To worship God in *Spirit* does here plainly denote inward Piety and Holiness, in Contradistinction to the Ceremonial Law of the *Jews*, as it stood circumstanced in its several peculiar Rites and Forms of an outward Worship; as to worship him in *Truth*, relates to that fuller Display of it in the Gospel of Christ, who is indeed *Truth* in the very Abstract, as he is God *blessed for ever*; and in his Person and Offices, as God-man, is the very Antitype and Substance pointed at, and set forth, in so many figurative Representations under the Law, of which they were the Shadows and Resemblance only, and not the Truth itself. In this Sense, therefore, as *The Law was given by Moses, so Grace and Truth came by Jesus Christ.*

Rom. ix. 5.

John i. 17.

But was not the Law then a Spiritual Service? and was not God to be worshipped in Spirit and Truth then as well as



now? Yes, verily; and for the very Reason assigned by our Lord in the following Verse, for that God *is a Spirit*; which Argument concludes as strongly for spiritual Worship in the former as in the latter Case, and yet without any way lessening the Propriety, or weakening the Force of it, as urged upon the Occasion before us; as will appear in its proper Place.

But may it not be asked here, Wherein was the Law a Spiritual Religion? In the Moral or Ceremonial Part of it? Be it answered, Both in the one and the other, as to the Aim and Direction of it. This appears from the Ends assigned for its Delivery, two of which, as the most principal, and given by *St. Paul*, I shall briefly touch upon.

And, first, the Law (*i. e.* the Moral) was given as a Rule of Life, and to shew Men both their Sin, and their Duty: For such was the Corruption and Blindness of our Nature after the Fall, by the infatuating Power of Sin, that the human Race had, in many Particulars, lost the Distinctions of moral Good and Evil; nay, had erred in that great fundamental Point, the
 Knowledge

of the Law and the Gospel.

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Knowledge and Worship of the One True God: And therefore, in Reply to that Question — *Wherefore serveth the Law?*

Gal. iii.

St. Paul answers, *It was added because of Transgressions.* He elsewhere declares, that

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by the Law is the Knowledge of Sin; and instances in himself for the Truth of the Assertion: — *I had not known Sin, but by the Law*; for *I had not known Lust, except the Law had said, Thou shalt not covet.*

Rom. iii.
20.

Rom. vii.
7.

Some of the Heathens have indeed said many fine things on the Side of Virtue; but their Systems are all wretchedly defective, as theirs could not but be, who neither knew the Malady of human Nature, nor its Cure; nay, were Strangers to the Love of God, which is the Foundation of all true Morality, and grossly ignorant of his Nature and Attributes. Their Virtues therefore were, for the most part, of a political Nature, tallying well enough with the Interests of Civil Society, but little perfective of the Soul, and oftentimes the Result of Pride and Selfishness, Humour and affected Singularity. Some Virtues were passed over by all, and some Vices stood both uncondemned, and practised by most of them: And as to those few great Names among



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them, who rose above the common Level, and are distinguished by the Sublimity of their Sentiments, and their nearer Approaches to Truth; their Doctrines and Precepts wanted the Sanction of Authority, and therefore could go but a little way in gaining upon the Belief and Practice of the World.

At what a low Ebb the Religion of Nature was in *St. Paul's* Time, when human Learning was near its Zenith, may be judged of by his Discourse to the Men of *Athens*, and from the first Chapter of his Epistle to the *Romans*. What shocking Degeneracy and Corruption do they there stand charged with! What Blindness and Ignorance with regard to the first Principle of all Religion! *The World*, says he, *by Wisdom knew not God*: All the Learning of the Schools, and the so much boasted Philosophy of *Greece* and *Rome* had not taught them the first Article of Nature's Creed, nor done so much for them as the Light of Nature, dim as it was, and the Law of Conscience, might have done; for in *the visible things of God* they might have clearly seen *his eternal Power and Godhead*; and *the Law written in their Hearts*, if carefully attended to, would

Acts xvii.
23.

1 Cor. i.
21.

Rom. i.
21.

would, in many Cases, have served them for a Monitor and Judge, *their Consciences bearing Witness, and their Thoughts accusing or excusing them*: But becoming vain in their Imaginations, their foolish Heart was darkened; and professing themselves wise, they became Fools. And yet these are the Men, whom the World makes such a Stir about; and to know their ignorant Conjectures is accounted so great a Part of our Wisdom. Some of the wiser and more virtuous Heathens, particularly among the *Platonists*, are excepted from this general Rule, as both their Lives and their Writings challenge our Admiration and Esteem.

If we go back to the Time of the Delivery of the Law we shall, in like manner, find the whole World over-run with Idolatry and Superstition; nor had all the Learning of the *Egyptians* secured them from the common Infection: So weak a Fence has human Reason ever been against the Corruptions of human Nature; and of such Necessity is a Divine Revelation, not only to enforce a general Obedience to, but also to furnish fallen Man with the Knowledge of the Divine Will. What shall



we say then of those mighty Men of Reason, who, in these latter Days, pretend to have found out a compleat System of Duties, without being at all obliged to Revelation for the Discovery? who know so dextrously how to *delineate the Religion of Nature* by the Sufficiency of their own Skill, and to lay a Foundation for every Virtue in some new-invented Fitness and Congruity of Things: Sure, I think, we may say, that they themselves are an Instance of the Defect of their Schemes, by the want of at least one Virtue, and that is Humility; which would lead them to acknowledge the Helps they have received, and that, if they see farther than their Forefathers, it is not owing to the great Sharpness of their Sight, but to the Eminence of their Station: They stand upon holy Ground, and are indebted to the Scriptures (though they are not ingenuous enough to own it) for their Elevation: But to return.

Such was the State and Condition of the World, with respect to Religion, when it pleased Almighty God to reveal the Law by *Moses* to the Children of *Israel*; to point out to them the Nature of Sin (by which

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which they had fallen from the Love of God) and to be a Means of recovering them from this Apostasy; for a mere external Obedience was not the End of the Law, any farther than such Obedience was an Expression and Test of their Love of God, which our Saviour styles *the first and great Commandment*: They were to be a People consecrated to God according to that very significant *Memento*, written on the Mitre of *Aaron*,—*Holiness to the Lord*; and to have *the Lord for their God* meant nothing less than to have him for the sole Happiness of their Lives, and Object of their Affections, as well as for their Lawgiver and Governor. Nor is it to be doubted, that many of those Rites and Ordinances which seem to have little or no Relation to a spiritual Worship, were yet calculated for that End, by serving as Emblems of some divine Truth, to represent the distempered Condition of human Nature, to separate them from the Commerce and Pollutions of the Heathens, or some way to engage their Attention in such a manner as might lead them to the Love of God, or keep them from any Hindrance to it: Certain it is, that the Rite of Circumcision, which had been instituted

Matth.
xxii. 38.

Exod.
xxviii. 36.

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Deut. x. 6.
Rom. ii.
29.

Ibid.

Levit.
xix. 2-

Gal. ii. 16.

Rom. viii.
3.
Ib. vii. 12.

Ib. x. 5.

Gal. iii.
10.

stituted long before, is interpreted both by *Moses* and *St. Paul*, as a Figure of inward Purity of Heart ; and those only were called true *Jews* by the latter, which were such, not *outwardly*, but *inwardly*. We know, therefore, that *the Law was spiritual*, and required inward Purity, as well as outward Practice, according to that Command of the Lord by *Moses* to the Children of *Israel*, *Ye shall be holy ; for I, the Lord your God, am holy*.

But this being the Case, how comes it to pass, that Justification was not by the Law ; for it is written, *By the Works of the Law shall no Flesh be justified*. *St. Paul* has satisfied this Question, where he tells us, that *the Law was weak through the Flesh*. *The Commandment was indeed holy, just, and good*, and the Law a perfect Rule of Duty, and *the Man that did the things contained in it, should have lived by them* : But where was the Man, the Man *Christ Jesus* excepted, that ever did them ? The Weakness of the Flesh, the Impotence of fallen Nature, was such, that no Man ever did or could pay that perfect Obedience which the Law required ; and so all came under the Curse of it ; for it is written, *Cursed is every*



one that continueth not in all things which are written in the Book of the Law to do them. Herein then the Law failed, in that it gave not Strength to those that were under it, to pay that perfect Obedience which it exacted; and yet passed Sentence of Death, in Case of Disobedience, and so became *the Ministration of Condemnation.* But were not Sacrifices appointed by the Law, in Case of Transgressions, and thereby a Cure provided for the Disease? They were indeed appointed; but, alas! they went but a little Way towards the Cure wanted; they could only *sanctify outwardly to the purifying of the Flesh*; but could not *take away Sin*, nor *make the Comers thereunto perfect*: The Blood of Bulls and Goats could not wash away inherent Corruption, and *purge the Conscience from dead Works*—No, *it costs more to redeem a Soul from Death*; and, were it to be left to that, *it must be let alone for ever.*

2 Cor. iii.
9.

Heb. ix.
13.
Ib. x. 4.
Ib. x. 1.

Pf. xlix. 8.

Thus far then the Matter seems not mended; and the Law, instead of being Gain, has brought Loss to the Soul; for under this View of it, Sin is become exceeding sinful; and, as *the Sting of Death is Sin*, so *the Strength of Sin is the Law*:

1 Cor. xv.
56.

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The Light it gives serves to set our Transgressions before us in full View, with aggravated Guilt; and Sin followed by Conviction comes home with double Force, and gives the Soul a deeper Wound. May we not then recur to the former Question, and ask *To what then serveth the Law?* The Answer to which is the second End assigned by St. Paul to that Dispensation: *The Law was our Schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ.*

Gal. iii.

24.

Though the Law and the Gospel stand distinguished under different Titles, and as different Covenants, yet are they but two Manifestations of the one great Scheme of the Redemption of the World by *Jesus Christ*: The former, in every Part of it, points and leads to this End. The Law, in its Time and Place, was the Twilight of the Day of Grace; and the Shining of the Face of *Moses*, as that of the Morning-Star, Harbinger to that Sun of Righteousness, which afterwards arose *with Healing in his Wings*. If we trace back the mighty Deliverer to the first Promise of his Coming, we shall find Christianity nearly as old as the Creation; and I make no Doubt of the Truth of this Assertion, That, from the Account of the Fall to the End of the Book

of

Exod.

xxxiv. 35.

Mal. iv. 2.

of *Genesis*, every principal Narrative has a special Reference to Christ, and our Redemption by him; and that some Part or other of this great Myſtery is ſignified and repreſented to us all along under the Truth of the Hiſtory: But to return:

The Law ſerved as a School-maſter to bring ſuch as were under it to Chriſt, chiefly by the condemning Power of it; for as many as were *under the Law*, were *under the Curſe of it*. The Sin of *Adam* was become the Sin of every Man's own Perſon; and Death, both temporal and eternal, had paſſed upon all, by the double Right and Title of original and actual Sin: But, behold the Wiſdom, and Power, and Goodneſs of God! who out of Weakneſs ordaineth Strength, and turneth the Powers of Death and *Satan* to the Deſtruction of their own Kingdom; for the poor helpless Soul, finding the Sentence of Death in itſelf, ſinking under the Terrors of the Law, and the dreaded Wrath of a ſin-avenging God, and deſpairing to obtain Salvation by its own Righteouſneſs, caſts itſelf upon the Mercy of God, as deſirous to have it in the way of *Free-gift*: And in this State of Anguiſh and Diſtreſs the ceremonial Law comes in to its Relief,

Gal. iii.
10.

Rom. v
16.



Numb.

xxxv. 12.

Rom. x. 4.

John viii.

56.

Rom. ii.

28.

Relief, and, under its various Sacrifices, and other Types and Figures, exhibits the Great Deliverer, the true *City of Refuge* from the *Avenger of Blood*, even Christ, the *End of the Law for Righteousness*, to all that believed on him then, as well as now: So that Repentance and Faith in Christ were the Means of Salvation (tho' no express Terms of the Covenant) under the Law, as well as the Gospel: *Abraham*, says our Saviour, *saw my Day, and was glad*: And all spiritual *Jews*, who were the Children of *Abraham's* Faith, saw the same, and were glad likewise: But, as to the Generality, it was not so with them; they contented themselves with being *Jews* only in the Letter, and with that *Circumcision*, which was outward in the *Flesh*, and, like titular *Christians* now-a-days, placed the Whole of Religion in the Outside of it: They passed over the more substantial Duties of the Moral Law, and rested in the Ceremonial, without carrying on their View to the End and Design of their Sacrifices, or reaping any spiritual Benefit from their divine Ordinances: By which gross Abuse and Neglect they became to them Statutes that were not good, carnal Commandments without

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1 Tim. iv.
8.

out Use and Meaning, and the Whole of their Worship a mere *bodily Exercise that profited nothing*. In order to remedy these Abuses, and to preserve the Life and Power of Religion among them, God Almighty was pleased to raise up an Order of Men of an abstemious and mortified Life, who, in the Spirit of Prophecy, denounced God's Threatnings and Judgments upon the Corruptions both of Priests and People, and boldly rebuked, even Kings, for their irreligious Backslidings: They were earnest in preaching up Repentance, and solid Piety; in condemning the *Iniquity of their holy things*, their commuting Sacrifices, and *vain Oblations*; and in directing their Views and Hopes to the *Messiah*, and his spiritual Kingdom, both through their typical Representations of him, and by express Prophecies concerning him: But neither had this Provision the desired Effect: — *Israel did not know*; for this *People would not consider*: Inward Reformation they were averse to; and these holy Messengers were accounted no better than Enthusiasts and Madmen; they persecuted and slew them.

Exod. xxviii. 38.
Isai. i. 13.

Ib i. 3.

Such was the State of the *Jewish Church* when Christ, the great Author of our Salvation,



Salvation, made his Appearance in the Flesh, and tabernacled among Men. The Service of the Temple, and the outward Forms of Religion, were indeed kept up; but the Power of Godliness was not: And in this Judgment we cannot be mistaken, when the strictest Sect amongst them stands charged by our Blessed Lord in so many Places with Formality and Hypocrisy: The Words therefore before us, and the Argument used in the following Verse, in Support of the Doctrine contained in them, are urged with great Propriety, Application, and Instruction; and do also set forth the greater Purity and Perfection of the Christian Religion; at the Approach of which the Veil should be done away from off the Face of *Moses*, the shadowy Representations of our Redemption by Types and Figures give place to the Manifestation of the great Redeemer in Person, and the many cumbersome Rites and Ceremonies of the *Mosaic* Law be superseded by Gospel Purity and Holiness: *The Hour cometh, and now is, when the true Worshipers shall worship the Father in Spirit and in Truth.*

These Words are evidently expressive of the Power of Godliness, or divine Life, in
the

of the Law and the Gospel.

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SERMON
V.
Luke
xvii. 21.

the Soul, which is elsewhere styled by our Lord, *the Kingdom of God within us*: And it is in this Light I shall briefly consider Christianity in what remains of this Discourse: Nor indeed can it in any other Sense be called, as it truly and emphatically is, *the Power of God unto Salvation*.

That true Religion is something spiritual, and perfective of the Soul, is clearly the Voice of Reason, as well as of Revelation; and the Argument made use of by our Saviour to prove it, is drawn from a rational Apprehension of God as a Spirit: And as the great Object, so likewise the Subject, of all Religion; is spiritual (for the Soul is of divine Original;) and consequently all Relation and Intercourse betwixt them must be spiritual: But there is one great Reason still behind, why true and saving Religion must needs be spiritual; and that is, the Condition of our Nature in Consequence of the Fall: The human Soul had thereby suffered a deadly Wound; the Image of God, in which consisted its Happiness and Perfection, was departed from it; and that Temple, in which the Holy Trinity delighted to dwell, was become polluted and defiled with Sin, and a Nest of unclean Spirits: Here then was a

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spiritual



Luke xi.
22.

Pf. lxxxix.
20.

Isai. ix. 6.

Gen. iii.
15.

spiritual Malady to be cured, a Loss of something spiritual and divine to be restored, and all the Powers of Hell to be subdued; the *strong Man armed*, that kept the House, must be dislodged by one that is *stronger than he*: But where was the mighty Champion to effect the vast Design? Fallen Man, like *Sampson* shorn of his Strength, was fast bound in the Hands of the Enemy, and, among the Angels none was found able to deliver him: Here then appeared the Goodness of God, in laying *Help upon one that was mighty*: Herein was manifested the Love of Christ, in taking the *Government of this great Work upon his Shoulder*. The Union of the divine and human Nature was the only Expedient found sufficient for the Recovery of a lost World; and it needs must be, that the Son of God become Man, that the Children of Men might become the Sons of God. The Promise, that *the Seed of the Woman should bruise the Serpent's Head*, was the first Discovery of this stupendous Mystery; and the important Business of our Redemption commenced immediately upon it, and was carried on from that Time under a wonderful Succession

of the Law and the Gospel.

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Succession of Providences and Dispensations towards its blessed Completion.

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But was this mysterious Union to be transacted only in the Person of the ever-adorable Redeemer? Not so: It was indeed begun in him; but through him it was in a degree to take place in every individual Soul of the human Race, in order to its Salvation; that, *as in Adam all died, even so in Christ should all be made alive*: As much of the Divine Perfections as was lost to the Soul by the communicated Infection of Sin from the first *Adam*, must be derived into it from the second *Adam*, as from another Fountain of the human Race, that *both he that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, may be all of one*. Nothing that is extrinſick to the Nature of the Soul, or that paſſes without it, can raiſe and reſtore a fallen Soul; but it muſt be fashioned anew, and a Meetneſs for Glory formed in the inmoſt Eſſence of it; *for Corruption cannot inherit Incorruption*: And therefore, *make me a clean Heart, O God, and renew a right Spirit within me*, was not only the Prayer of *David*, but alſo of every other enlightened Perſon under the Law, as well as ſince, from a full Conviction of this Truth. Our Bleſſed Lord

1 Cor. xv;
22.

Heb. ii:
11.

1 Cor. xv;
50.
Pſal. li.
10.



John iii.
3.

Rom. xiii.

11.

Eph. iii.

17.

Ib. iv. 23.

Rom. viii.

14.

2 Cor. v.

17.

Eph. iv.

24.

2 Theff.

ii. 13.

John iii.

8.

Rom. vi.

11.

bears Testimony to the Necessity of this great Change or Renovation which must pass upon the Soul, to qualify it for Bliss, in that solemn Affeuration to *Nicodemus*: *Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a Man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God*: And did the Doctrine of Regeneration rest only upon this single Text, we must allow it sufficiently established; but this is so far from being the Case, that it is set forth under a great Variety of similar Expressions, on purpose that we might be left in no Uncertainty as to the Truth and Meaning of it: As where the true Christian is said to *put on Christ*; to have him *dwelling in his Heart by Faith*; to be *renewed in the Spirit of his Mind*; and that *as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the Sons of God*. In like manner — *the new Creature; the new Man; the Sanctification of the Spirit*; to be *born of the Spirit*; and to be *alive unto God through Jesus Christ*, do all imply a new Principle of Life in the Soul, which it has not in its natural State, and evince the Truth of this fundamental Article of our Faith to a Demonstration: Nor does it stand only in the Strength of a few picked Passages, but
make

makes a considerable Part of the Language of the New Testament: Nay, it is both the Bottom and Top of all Religion: All that Christ has done and suffered, was in order to bring about this great Work of Regeneration in us; and the Sacraments he ordained, are only the outward visible Signs and Means of it: In a word, all that Man has to do in this World is to seek and sue for it; and all the Happiness he expects in the next, must be the Result of it.

Let us now, in one short View, see how all the chief Duties of the Christian Religion accord and harmonize with this Principle. Repentance, and Faith, confessedly stand at the *Head* of this Catalogue; and these are the Ground-work of this new Building, the two main Pillars of Gospel Salvation. *John the Baptist* came to prepare the Way, by preaching the former; and his great Master began his Ministry with *Repent, and believe the Gospel*. *Secondly*, The Evangelical Virtues of Humility, Meekness, Patience, Hope, Charity, &c. are all inward Habits and Graces relative to the spiritual Life; such as dispose the Soul for farther Communications of the Holy Spirit, and make it a fit

Mark i.

15.



Mansion for his sacred Residence. *Thirdly*, The Doctrines of Self-denial and Mortification, laid down in the Gospel, are greatly subservient to this End, as the Practice of these Duties tends to purify the Soul from all the Dross and Disorder of irregular Passions, and keeps it free from all undue Attachments to the Things of this World, which, by irresistible Distractions, call off the Attention from Divine Truths, fix it on sensible Objects, and render the Mind incapable of favouring the Things that be of God: It is therefore by this Kind of holy Violence committed on ourselves, that we resist the Motions of corrupt Nature, break those Bands asunder which tie down the Affections to Things below, and so take the Kingdom of Heaven by Force. *Lastly*, This Principle of Divine Life and Love, wrought in us by the Holy Spirit, stands closely connected with the whole System of Christian Morality; it is the only sure Foundation on which it can rest, the true Source from which it derives both its Beauty and Virtue: This is *the Altar* which *sanctifieth the Gift* in all our Offerings: Whilst we act in and from this Principle, *a Cup of cold Water* shall intitle us to a Reward; and, without
it,

of the Law and the Gospel.

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it, though we give all our Goods to feed the Poor, and our Bodies to be burned for Religion, it will profit us nothing: As therefore, when we add unto our Faith Virtue, we give Evidence of its being a Gospel and living Faith; so when our Virtue proceeds from our Faith, as the genuine Effect and Fruit of it; and we can truly say with the Apostle, *The Life, which I now live in the Flesh, I live by the Faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me,* our Works then, and only then, become good and acceptable to God by *Jesus Christ*.

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V.

1 Cor. xiii.
3.

Gal. ii. 20.

We have had much Disputing of late about *Justification*, whilst some have taken the Side of *Faith*, and others that of *Works*, thus dividing those Things which God hath closely joined together in the Christian Life; and therefore no Man ought to put them asunder: If indeed no more was meant by *Faith* than a mere historical Faith, a bare Assent of the Mind to the Credibility of Things (in the Language of the Schools,) as far forth as credible; a Belief of something extorted by Dint of Argument, rising no higher than moral Evidence can force it, and sinking again under the Objections of every

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subtle



Heb. xi.
33.

Ib. xi. 1.

Eph. ii. 8.

subtle Disputant; if this be all that is meant by *Gospel Faith*, it would indeed be Matter of Wonder, if such a Faith could justify: If this were a saving Faith, I should think the very Devils capable of Salvation: But surely we do not mean, that this is the Faith of which St. *Paul* speaks so many great and glorious Things; that *Faith* by which the Saints of old *subdued Kingdoms, wrought Righteousness, obtained the Promises, stopped the Mouths of Lions*, and did so many other marvellous Works: It cannot be said, that such is the Faith defined by the same Apostle to be *the Substance of Things hoped for, the Evidence of Things not seen*; putting us into a kind of present Possession of the Promises, and setting Divine Truths before the Mind in all the Light and Power of Demonstration: It cannot, I am sure, with any Truth or Propriety be so said of it: The Faith then that we contend for, as truly Christian and justifying, does not arise from historical Evidence only; much less does it consist in forced Speculations, or the uncertain Conclusions of human Reason; but is of higher Extraction, *even the Gift of God*: It is a Seed of the Divine Life in the Soul, growing up in a gradual Approach towards

of the Law and the Gospel.

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V.



Gal. v. 6.

towards Perfection, and bringing forth the Fruits of the Spirit; *a Faith working by Love*, producing Obedience to all God's Commands, and abounding in good Works, according to that Measure of Abilities which God hath given us: It is a Power from on high, at once enlightening and converting the Soul; it is that *Victory* whereby we *overcome the World*: And, to sum up all in this emphatical Conclusion, it is hereby that *Christ* becomes *Immanuel*, or *God with us*, and *is made unto us Wisdom, and Righteousness, and Sanctification, and Redemption*.

1 Joh. v. 4.

Matth. i.

23.

1 Cor. i.

30.

Christianity thus considered as a spiritual Religion, and thus highly perfective of the Soul, comes represented in all the *Beauty of Holiness*, and worthy of the Son of God for its Author: In this View of it, *Christ crucified*, though to the carnal Man a *Stumbling-block*, and to the self-conceited Philosopher *Foolishness*, is, to us who believe, *the Power of God, and the Wisdom of God*. But how different a Picture of it has been drawn by several of the contending Parties of professing Christians, and how unlike the Divine Original! How has *Zeal for Ceremonies*, or *Zeal against them*, usurped the

1 Cor. i.

18. 24.



Jam. iii.

17.

Ib. i. 20.

the Place of substantial Piety! What Strife about Matters of Opinion (and oftentimes the greatest Animofities where the least Difference,) instead of that *Wisdom which is from above, and is first pure, then peaceable!* And (O may it never be repeated!) instead of Brotherly-kindness and Charity, what Violence and Bloodshed, on account of Religion, have disfigured the Face of *Christendom*, as if *the Wrath of Man* were the only effectual Way to *work the Righteousness of God!* Good God! That thy pure and holy Religion, which was designed to recover in us the Divine Nature and Image, should be made an Occasion and Pretence for committing such Outrages as are even a Re-proach and Disgrace to Humanity! Blessed *Jesus!* That those who are called by thy most holy Name, should turn the *Gospel of Peace* into a two-edged Sword, to wound and destroy!

Are we agreed in Essentials? Why then do we quarrel about Circumstantials? Are we all Members of the same Body? Why then do the Fellow-members war one against another? Are we all the Sons of one Father travelling towards the same Country? Why then do Brethren thus fall out by the Way?



Way? Men may profess what they please; and boast of their outward Churches all they please; but, whilst they want a Catholic Spirit of Love, they want one necessary Mark of their being of the holy Catholick Church of Christ. It was from just such a Narrow way of Thinking, the same Contractedness of Heart, occasioned by placing the Whole of Religion in outward Things and little Things, that the Woman, in the Chapter from whence the Text is taken, said to our Lord; *How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest Drink of me, who am a Woman of Samaria?* and it is from the same Principle that the same Spirit still prevails, and that under a Religion which teaches the most diffusive Benevolence and Charity, whilst so many in the several Churches of *Christendom* harden their Hearts against their Brethren as Hereticks and Reprobates, saying, *Here is Christ, or, lo! there.* Is then *Christ, who is over all, God blessed for ever,* either here or there, in that confined Sense which these Men suppose? Is he, by a Majority of Voices, tied down to the Decrees of a *Pope* or Council? Limited to any particular human Establishment? Or shut up within the narrower Inclosure of any Sect dividing



dividing from it? It ought not to be so said; for his Kingdom is of wider Extent, even in the Hearts of all Christians, however outwardly distinguished or dispersed: And where there is true Repentance and Faith, Humility, Simplicity, and Purity of Heart; there is the Temple in which he delighteth to dwell: This is the true Communion of Saints; for they are influenced and guided by one and the same Holy Spirit: This is that mystical Body, of which Christ is the supreme and sole Head; and here only the Father is *worshiped in Spirit and in Truth.*

But must there not be an Outward and Visible, as well as an Inward and Spiritual Church? Yes, surely: *The King's Daughter*, as interpreted of the Church, is indeed *all glorious within*; glorious in *the Ornament of a meek and quiet Spirit*, and glorious in the Charms of unaffected Piety, and all Divine Graces: But then she is also comely and decent in her Apparel; her Government and Discipline, her Offices and Ceremonies, have their Beauty and Fitness, their Use and Excellency: Like the *Scripture*, they are *profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Instruction in Righteousness*;

Pfal. xlv.
14.

2 Tim. iii.
16.

of the Law and the Gospel.

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Righteousness; and generally necessary for the more orderly training and building us up in the Divine Life. It is by the outward Teachings of the Word, a right and due Administration of the Sacraments, and a regular and solemn Celebration of Divine Service, under God's Blessing, that the Mind is most generally impressed with saving Truth, the Affections raised to heavenly Things, and the Work of Grace both begun and carried on in the Heart: And therefore for any one to argue from the foregoing Doctrine in such a Way as might lessen, either the Expediency or Necessity of an outward Ministry and Worship, would be grossly perverting our Saviour's Words; would be arguing against Scripture, and the constant Practice of the Church in all Ages; and would tend to exclude one Part of the human Nature from its Share in the Service of God, even those Bodies, which we are taught to *present as a living Sacrifice, holy, and acceptable unto God, which is our reasonable Service.* But then we are to remember, that as the Soul is of a more excellent Nature than the Body, so is the Part it bears in the great Business of Religion; and therefore whilst we *hold fast the Form,*

Rom. xii.

1.

let



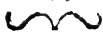
let us give *the more earnest Head*, that we also *worship the Father in Spirit and in Truth*.

Permit me to conclude with a Word of Exhortation addressed to you, my younger Brethren in the Ministry. It is indeed with an humble Sense of my great Weakness and a deep Consciousness of my unworthiness (I speak not this in a feigned Humility,) that I take this Office upon me ; but I hope my well-meant Zeal and Love will plead its Excuse : But need I make any Apology for it? Is there not a Cause, and is it not a Time, to exhort and encourage one another, like true Yoke-fellows, in the good Work that is given us to do, when Infidels and Scoffers do the same in the worst of Causes, nay, have set up *their Banners for Tokens*, and appear in open Defiance against *the Lord, and against his Anointed?* God be praised, we have not wanted, nor do yet want our Champions to go forth against these *uncircumcised Philistines*, to chastise them with their own Weapons : Their Arguments and Objections drawn from Reason, Philosophy, and human Learning, have been fully answered in Defences rational, philosophical, and learned ; and the Shafts which have been taken on both Sides out of
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the same Quiver, have proved, on theirs, but as *broken Reeds*, whilst ours have been as *Arrows in the Hand of the Giant*: But, though so often confuted, we have not yet been able to put to *Silence the Ignorance of these foolish Men*: What still remains wanting to this End, may your Learning and Abilities supply!—Go forth, and be valiant for the Truth; and may the *Enemies of the Lord be found Liars* before you!

But true Religion hath its Adversaries of other Denominations, with whom we have to do, as the openly Vicious and Profane, and its false Friends, no less dangerous Enemies, the self-righteous Moralist, and the decent external Professor, who sleeps so soundly upon the soft Pillows of his Forms: But neither are we unprovided for these also; for we have Weapons of a Divine Temper, taken from the Armoury of God, wherewith to engage all that oppose the Truth, or hold the same in Unrighteousness: Of this Number are *the Sword of the Spirit*, which is sharp and powerful, *the Shield of Faith*, and *the Breast-plate of Righteousness*. Thus appointed, my dear Brethren, we may declare boldly, not only against the Unrighteousness, but also against the Self-righteousness,



2 Cor. x.
4, 5.

ousness of Men (that abominable Idol of Pride, before which so many fall down, and worship; that filthy Cover of polluted Rags, that hinders Sinners from seeing the Corruption of their Nature, and the Rotteness of their Hearts;) and shall be *mighty, through God, to the pulling down the Strong-Holds of Sin and Satan, casting down all Imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the Knowledge of God, and bringing into Captivity every Thought to the Obedience of Christ.*

And can it be doubted, whether the utmost Stretch of our Zeal and Diligence for the Glory of God, and the Good of Souls, be at this Day necessary, when there is such a visible Decay of true Piety, such a general Falling-off from the Life and Spirit of Christianity; when there is but little of the Form, and much less of the Power of Godliness to be discerned; and when Corruption, Self-seeking, and a most idolatrous Love for the Things of this World, have so deeply infected all Orders and Degrees of Men-amongst us?

If we take our Measures of Religion from the Gospel of Christ, or the primitive Ages of the Church, how lamentable and shocking

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shocking will appear the Degeneracy of these Times! when that which, in the purer Days of the Gospel, would have been looked upon as short of the ordinary Standard of the Christian Life, is now stiled being *Righteous over-much*; and when a Degree of Piety and Zeal for the Honour of Christ, and the Purity of his Religion, above the common Level, shall go near to make a Man a By-word among the People.

To a World thus settled on its Lees, thus sunk in Softness, and wrapped up in all the Delusions of a seeming Security, and false Peace; we are to cry aloud, and shew the *Folly, Sin, and Danger* of every State and Condition that comes short of a *Gospel Righteousness*. A World thus be-fotted, asleep, and dead in Trespasses and Sins, is to be awakened, not by some smooth Lectures on *moral Virtue*, but by sounding in their Ears *the Terrors of the Lord*: And, to a World decking and contenting itself with the outward Forms of a *Pbarisaical Religion*, we must preach the Necessity of being *born again*, of being *created in Christ Jesus unto good Works*, and of that inward Righteousness and *Holiness*, *without which no Man shall see the Lord*.

John iii.
3.
Eph. ii.
10.
Heb. xii.
14.

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And,



And, as to any Difficulties and Discouragements that may present themselves to us in the Discharge of this Duty, let us be *Gallio's* in these Things: It is Comfort and Encouragement sufficient, that Truth is on our Side, and that *the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against it*. Let not then *Wickedness in high Places*, nor *the Overflowings of Ungodliness*, make us afraid; for He whose Cause we plead, whose Doctrine we preach and defend, and who hath *all Power in Heaven and in Earth*, He is, He will be *with us always, even unto the End*. Amen.

Matth.
xxviii. 18.



S E R M O N VI.

Conversion founded on Conviction of Sin.

Preached in the Parish-Church of *All-Saints*, in
Northampton, on *Sunday, October 30, 1748*;
Published by Request.



A C T S ii. 37.

Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their Heart, and said unto Peter, and to the rest of the Apostles, Men and Brethren, What shall we do?

WE have an Account in this Chapter of three Thousand Souls being converted to the Faith of Christ in one Day, by the Preaching of the Apostles: A glorious Beginning of the Work of God on the Hearts of Sinners! A convincing Demonstration of the Power of the Holy Ghost; which now, according to our Saviour's Promise, descended upon his Embassadors, and rendered their Ministry effectual to the Conversion of many more Thousands in all Parts of

SERMON
VI.

the known World: So mightily grew the Word of God, and prevailed, under the Conduct and Influence of this Heavenly Dispenser!

The miraculous Descent of the Holy Ghost being noised abroad throughout *Jerusalem*, great Numbers flocked to the Temple, many of them doubtless led by a natural Curiosity to see so extraordinary a Sight. Now there happened to be present in this mixt Multitude *Jews* of Fifteen different Nations and Countries, who in Obedience to the Law of *Moses* were come up to *Jerusalem* to the Feast: For though from the Time of the *Babylonish* Captivity they were dispersed almost over the Face of the whole Earth, yet they religiously kept the Passover at *Jerusalem*; and many stayed there till after the Feast of *Pentecost*, which was instituted in Memory of the Delivery of the Law on *Mount Sinai*.

Peter being moved by the Holy Ghost, takes Occasion from this great Concourse of People to preach unto them Christ a Saviour; to prove to them from their own Scriptures, that the same *Jesus* whom they had crucified was the *Messiah* therein foretold;



told; and to insist upon his Resurrection from the Dead, and Exaltation at the Right Hand of God. Upon which we read, that *they*, i. e. such of them as believed, *were pricked in their Hearts, and said, Men and Brethren, What shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the Name of Jesus Christ, for the Remission of Sins, and ye shall receive the Gift of the Holy Ghost. — And with many other Words did he testify and exhort.*

Now here it is observable, *first*, How God Almighty makes use of Natural, in conjunction with Supernatural Causes, to bring about the gracious Effect of Gospel-Salvation; and by a wonderful Cast of his Providence, improves the most common, and to us seemingly accidental Occurrences, to the Manifestation of his Power and Glory. Thus, out of a mixt Multitude brought together by mere natural Curiosity, to see some new thing, no less than Three Thousand Souls were caught in the Net of the Gospel by those *Fishers of Men*, as our Saviour forenamed the Apostles; and I doubt not but many a one, who has come to Church upon no better a Principle, has



been caught in like manner, and been pricked to the Heart, where he only expected Entertainment for the Ear.

2dly. We may learn hence, that the Lord hath appointed the Ordinance of *Preaching* as the most general and effectual Means of making Converts to Christ, even in Preference to *Miracles*: And were it possible to make the Calculation, I doubt not, for one Person profelyted to Christianity by the Miracles wrought by the Hands of the Apostles, Hundreds were brought over by their Preaching: Nay, it is plainly declared, that a Miracle would be ineffectual where Preaching is unprofitable. *If they will not bear Moses and the Prophets,* (for they were preached to the Jews every Sabbath Day,) *neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the Dead.* Now, who will say, that the Gospel of Christ, which has brought Life and Immortality to Light with clearer Evidence than was ever done before, is not as powerful a Means of Conviction as the Law and the Prophets? — Besides, Miracles declare no Truth; they only bear Testimony to the Mission and Authority of him that works them, and so become

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the Seal of his Commission; whereas Preaching is the Commission itself: And therefore, the outward Evidence and Authority of Christianity being once established, the Work of Conversion was thenceforward to rest upon Preaching, by a standing Ordinance in the Church of Christ for ever.

But the carnal Reasoner, ever wise in his own Conceit, will be ready to ask, If *Reading* will not do the Business full as well? Are there not as good Sermons in Print, as any that are Preached? And therefore, may we not receive as good Improvement in our Closets, as at Church?

I answer, that Reading even the best Books, however excellent a Means of Knowledge in its proper Place, will not do so well under the Neglect of Gospel-Preaching, where People have the Opportunity of attending on it. We have no Warrant to set up this or that Method of Improvement, in Opposition to a Divine Command: Faith and Grace are the free Gifts of God, which he will bestow upon his own Terms: And if he has been pleased to annex these to Preaching, in Conjunction



tion with other Ordinances, what hast thou to reply? Follow God in his own Way, if thou hopest to obtain the Blessing.

2 Kings v.
12.

When *Elisha* directed *Naaman* to go and wash in *Jordan* seven Times, with a Promise that he should be cleansed of his Leprosy, the conceited *Syrian*, like these Self-Willers, was for being healed his own Way, or not at all: *Are not*, says he, *Abana and Pharpar Rivers of Damascus better than all the Waters of Israel?* And better Rivers perhaps they might be; but yet he might have washed in them Seventy Times Seven, and not have found his Cure. In like Manner, the Three Thousand that were converted on the Day of *Pentecost*, and the *Eunuch* that was going down to *Æthiopia* in his Chariot, might have read all their Lives long, without attaining to a saving Knowledge of Jesus Christ, if he had not brought the former to hear *St. Peter*, and sent *Philip* to preach to the latter.

But to come to the particular Effect which *St. Peter's* Preaching had upon his Hearers, as expressed in the Verse of the Text: *They were pricked in their Heart,*
and

and said unto Peter, and to the rest of the Apostles, Men and Brethren, What shall we do?

An undiscerning Reader may be led by two Passages in this Chapter, to suppose that the Compunction of Heart here spoken of, was owing to their having had a Hand in shedding the Blood of Christ; forasmuch as the Apostle seems to lay this to their Charge: As in the Verse preceding the Text, *Let all the House of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.* But the Accusation lies only against *them* in general, as *Jews*, and of the same Kindred and Religion with those that had perpetrated this horrid Fact; and is not levelled at *them* in particular: For several of them came from afar, just in the Juncture of this Transaction; and were probably unacquainted with the Person and Doctrine of our Lord, and with the Proceedings of the Rulers against him at the Time of his Condemnation.

The Use I would make of the foregoing Observation is this, That the *pricking of the Heart* here spoken of, was not

John xvi.
8.

Acts ix. 6.

Acts xvi.
30.

on Account of their being *Jews* only, but Sinners; and as such, liable to the Wrath and Vengeance of Almighty God: And the inward Remorse and Anguish of Soul which they felt at this Time, was the Power of the Spirit of God working in them, whose Office we are told it is, to *convince the World of Sin*: It was a Stroke of the same Sword which smote St. *Paul* to the Heart at his Conversion, when *trembling and astonished* he first owned Christ for his Saviour, and cried out, *Lord, What wilt thou have me to do!* And which, upon the like Occasion, pierced the *feiler* to to the Quick, when he so hastily addressed *Paul and Silas* in the Prison, with, *Sirs, What must I do to be saved?* Nor is the Spirit less mighty in its Operations now, than it was then: The Word of God is still *quick and powerful*, and when sent home to the Heart by an Impulse of Divine Grace, does as fully convince, and effectually reform, as if it came out of the Mouth of St. *Peter* or St. *Paul*.

And here I am led to speak a Word of *sudden Conversions*. It must indeed be allowed, that Cases of this Nature are not
so

so frequent now, as they were in the Times of the Apostles. — They might then be necessary to answer the Design of the speedy Propagation of Christianity; and the Rapidity of the Progress which the Gospel made upon its first Entrance into the World, afforded, among many others, a strong Proof of its Divinity.—Besides, the Benefit of an early Education in the Principles of the Christian Religion, and constant Opportunities of attending on the Means of Grace, are Advantages which we enjoy, but they did not: And therefore it is, that the Business of Religion is now suffered to be carried on by more gradual Advances in the Soul, and as it were Step by Step; whereas Numbers of *them* were usually profelyted to the Faith at one Time by a single Sermon: So that *the Kingdom of God, or the coming of the Son of Man* in the Gospel Dispensation, might well be compared to *Lightning, which cometh out of the East, and shineth even unto the West*; so quickly did the Light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, coming from the Eastern, diffuse itself over the Western Parts of the World. — But tho' it

Matth.
xxiv. 27.



it be confessed, that the Work of God is not usually carried on now with the same Dispatch as formerly, yet to deny that there are any Instances of sudden Conversions, nay, to say that there are not many, is to contradict the Experience of Numbers, who have been awakened and changed all at once by the Spirit of God under the Ministry of the Word, and stirred up by a wonderful and inexplicable Influence on their Souls, to turn unto the Lord.

I know that Experimental Religion has long been under much Discredit with us; and I am sorry for it; for it is, among others, a sad Argument of the great Decay of Godliness that is amongst us.

A great Part of *Protestants* differ little from the most formal *Papists*, without knowing it; they are for going to Heaven in the Way of an outward Worship, and for sacrificing to God of that which costs them little or nothing. Forms and Ceremonies, and some external Works, consist well enough with inward Impurity, and offer no Violence to corrupt Nature; and therefore they are well content to be religious at so cheap a Rate: But do not, my Brethren, thus deceive your own Souls;

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for this is building a Tower which cannot reach unto Heaven, for *its Foundation is in the Dust*: If you would be in reality what you pretend to be, you must dig deeper, and lay the Foundation lower. The polluted Fountain must be cleansed, and the deadly Waters thereof healed by the Salt of a true and anguishing Repentance. Neither will a partial Reformation make us real Christians; This is only lopping off the Boughs and Branches from the Tree of Evil, which will sprout again the more: But we must *lay the Axe to the Root of the Tree*, and down with it even to the Ground: We must repent and turn unto the Lord with deep Humiliation, that he may *make us clean Hearts, and renew a right Spirit within us*; for this is the Lord's own Work, the sole Prerogative of that great Purifier and Restorer, who saith, *Behold, I make all Things new*: He therefore that taketh this Honour to himself is guilty of impious Presumption, and would he also learn the Vanity of the Attempt, let him go and bid the *Æthiopian* change his Skin, and the Leopard his Spots. Man's proper Powers, whether they be his Reason, Will, Desires, Affections or Imaginations, can be no other than

Rev. xxi.
5.



than the Workings of his own proper Nature, and if this be Evil *continually*, wherewithal shall he make himself good? Can the Branches change the Nature of the Root? Or can Waters issuing from a corrupt Fountain purify the Source from which they flow? What then is to be done? Why under a full Conviction of our Impotence, Sin and Misery we must go to Him who first made the Heart, that He may fashion it anew, that so we may become God's Workmanship in *Christ Jesus*.

Jerem.
xviii.

We read that the Prophet was ordered to go down to the Potter's House to learn the Word of the Lord: And he went down; and behold, the Potter "wrought his Work upon the Wheel, and the Vessel that he made of Clay was marred in the Hand of the Potter; so he made it again another Vessel, as seemed good to the Potter to make it." Now what is the Interpretation of this Parable? Was it only intended to set forth some Change in the political State of the Jewish Nation? Not only so, but it had thro' that a farther Meaning, for the whole Oeconomy of that People is a Figure of God's spiritual *Ijrael*, and these Things are an Allegory, written for more important Instruction

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Instruction than merely to acquaint us with the History of the *Jews*. Thou, O Man! art the Thing signified hereby: God made thee upright and perfect at thy first Formation, but Sin hath marred thee; thou art become an unclean, a spoiled Vessel, and must, by a thorough Contrition, become a broken Vessel, that thou mayst be formed anew, otherwise thou shalt be cast away as a Thing of naught: And tho' this Work be strange and great indeed, yet that thou mayst not doubt, behold, Omnipotence is thy Security: *As Clay is in the Hand of the Potter, so are ye in my Hand, saith the Lord.* The same Almighty Creator who stamps an Image on the human Nature at the Beginning, can restore it, and make that which is become a Vessel of Dishonour, to be a Vessel of more abundant Honour than at first: But then we must not harden our Hearts, but let Repentance do its perfect Work on them, that they may be pliable and yielding as soft Clay in the Hand of the Potter; and in order to this, not only the Reluctance of the Will must be broken, but every high Conceit, as tho' we by our own Power could contribute any Thing to this Work, must be brought low; for all
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the Strivings of corrupt Nature, every Effort of Self, however speciously coloured, are only so many Hindrances to the divine Operations: Grace alone is sufficient for its own Work, nor will God share the Honour with Man, as tho' He needed a Helper in regenerating a Soul any more than He did in the first Creation of it: And therefore to fit and prepare us for this great Change by a kind of Annihilation of Self, his Spirit striveth with Man thro' the Means of humbling Convictions, that so every Power of his Nature, and every Thought of his Heart may be brought to the Obedience of *Christ*.

But Sorrow and Sadness are Things so contrary to the Bent of our Nature, and lie so cross to every Appetite and Inclination of Flesh and Blood, that few People can bear to hear of *Mourning* and *Mortification* in Religion. We are called *the Troublers of Israel*, as *Ahab* stiled *Elijah*, when we insist upon these Doctrines; or else are reproached with *bringing an evil Report upon the good Land*, by giving such a discouraging Representation of it: But this we cannot help; for we must take Human Nature as we find it, and Religion

as we find it; and be content with such Remedies for our Misery, as Sin has made necessary.



Had Man continued in his first Estate, and all the Sons and Daughters of *Adam* preserved their Innocence; in that Case, to talk of Sorrow would have been bringing strange Things to their Ears, for nothing but *the Voice of Joy* would have been known in *the Dwellings of the Righteous*: But this is not the Case with us now; for Sin has deeply infected our Nature; now Sin is the Parent of Sorrow, and Evangelical Sorrow a sovereign Means of its Cure.— Say not then, *Speak unto us smooth Things*, and speak them *smoothly*; for we must suit our Discourses to your Needs, and not to your Likings; and therefore are frequently called upon in Duty to speak sharp Things, and to speak them sharply, if so by any Means the Word may *prick you to the Heart*, and bring you to cry out, *What shall we do to be saved?*

Isai. xxx.
10.

But it may be asked here, Why God Almighty hath made the Burden of Sin so heavy, and the Work of Conversion so piercing to the Soul of the Penitent? Something has been already offered upon this

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Head,



Head, but to satisfy so important an Enquiry more fully, let it be observed,

First, That he doth this in Grace and Goodness to divorce our Hearts from Sin; by giving us a feeling Sense of the Bitterness and Evil that is in it. — All the Arguments and Persuasions in the World would be insufficient to prevail with us to forsake our sinful Lusts and wicked Ways, if we were not to smart for them, if we were not to be humbled under the Remembrance of them, and to be terrified at the Sight of that Defilement which they have brought upon the Soul, and its Danger on that Account.

Secondly, This painful Sense of Sin and its Malignity brings us to see our Need of a Saviour, and teaches us to prize the Benefit of our Redemption by his Blood. People may talk of Christ with seeming Reverence, and profess to believe in him with a Shew of Sincerity, but he is only sweet and amiable to the Sin-distressed Soul: As Liberty to the Captive, and Sight to the Blind, so is Christ truly precious to the labouring and heavy laden Penitent: Grace then truly appears Grace, when Sin appears to be Sin — Whilst we think ourselves in Safety, and all to be well with us, in a vain
I Confidence



Confidence of its own Sufficiency the Heart of Man is apt to cry out, as the Devils did, *What have I to do with thee, Jesus!* But when the Soul is made truly sensible of its Sin and Misery, and finds itself sinking in the deep Waters, it then flieth unto *Jesus* for Help, and with *Peter* crieth out, *Lord save me, or I perish!*

Thirdly, Inward Suffering and Compunction on Account of Sin disposes the Heart for Grace, and makes it both receptive and retentive of its Impressions: It breaks up the fallow Ground, and mollifies the stony Heart, and gives free Access to the Word of the Lord: On a Soil thus prepared the Dew of Heavenly Grace and Instruction descends as Rain into a Fleece of Wool.

What is the Reason that the Word preached is attended with so little Profit to the Souls of many, insomuch that neither the Promises nor the Threatnings, neither the Mercies nor the Judgments of the Lord, as set forth by us, have any more Effect upon such to bring them nearer to God, than the Whistling of the Wind? Or if our Sermons are listened to, and perhaps the Style or Matter of them commended,

SERMON
VI.Ezek.
xxxiii. 32.

yet *they are unto them but as a lovely Song of one that hath a pleasant Voice, and can play well on an Instrument; for they hear the Words, but do them not.* What, I say, is the Reason of this, but because you have hardened your Hearts as Flints, so that the keenest Arrows from the Quiver, though aimed aright, cannot pierce them: The Word, like the Seed that fell upon stony Ground, gains no Admittance into them; and as it taketh no Root downward, so neither can it bring forth Fruit upward: Your Consciences are yet unawakened; you are yet in a State of Spiritual Death: May the God of Strength supply the Defect of his Ordinances, and break the Gates of Brass, and smite the Bars of Iron asunder, that *Jesus* may enter into his Temple, and dwell there!

But perhaps, there are other Reasons that come in for a share in the Cause of our Unsuccessfulness. — You see, that we are Men of like Passions and Infirmities with yourselves, and have not yet attained to that Pitch of Perfection which we preach to others: But let not that prejudice you against the Means of your own Perfection: We feel and lament our Weakness and Unworthiness,
and

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and we confess our great Need of Forgiveness at the hands of God, and our Need of your Prayers to God for us: But yet to such as we are is a Dispensation committed, and *Wo be to us, if we preach not the Gospel.* And tho' we have *this Treasure in earthen Vessels*, yet despise not the Riches of the former on account of the Meanness of the latter. You cannot have *Angels* for your Ministers; and if you could, the Matter, perhaps, would not be so much mended as you suppose; for it is not the Instrument, but the Power and Blessing of God going along with it that must affect your Conversion: Besides, those pure and spotless Beings, as they have no Defilement in their Nature, and experience no Corruption in their Hearts, so neither could they speak so feelingly and affectingly to yours: This however is certain, that tho' *they are ministring Spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be Heirs of Salvation*, yet *unto us*, and not unto them, *is committed the Ministry of Reconciliation*; and accordingly, tho' an Angel was sent from Heaven to *Cornelius* to comfort him, yet he was directed to send for *Peter*, to hear the Word of God at his Mouth. *Now then*, though weak and unworthy, yet we are

1 Cor. ix.
16.
2 Cor. iv.
7.

Heb. i. 14.

2 Cor. v.
18.

Acts x. 5,
6.

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Embassadors

Embassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you therefore in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

But, *Lastly*, Perhaps (for we must be content to bear Reproach,) some of you will say, that by this Craft we have our Wealth, and that it is our Profession and Livelihood to say these Things, though we believe them not ourselves: But do not, my Brethren, go on by the Help of studied Objections to reject the Counsel of God against yourselves, and to harden your Hearts in Unbelief: For *we speak that we do know, and testify that we have felt*; for our Faith is not founded on mere moral Persuasion, but on inward Conviction, and supported by Reason, by Scripture, by Experience.

That none enter into the *Priest's Office* nor continue in it, for the Sake of *Bread*, I cannot say: But this I am bold to say, that there are many amongst us who would preach the same Truths, and with the same Earnestness, though you were to give them Stones instead of Bread.

I shall now conclude with such an *Application*, as may suit the two different Characters of my Hearers, *viz.* those who have been

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been *pricked to the Heart*, and those who have not.

And *first*, to those who were never yet *pricked to the Heart*, and thereby led to cry out, *What must we do to be saved?* And whereas *the Word of God* has been *quick and powerful, and sharper than any two edged Sword* to others, it has not had one Edge for them; to whom the Scriptures are but as a sealed Book, or a Tale that is told; Preaching but as founding Brass; receiving the Sacrament nothing better than eating Bread and drinking Wine; and the Whole of Religious Worship but a Set of dull dry Forms, without Spirit and without Life: Who are diligent Seekers after the Things of this Life, constant Enquirers, What shall we do to be Rich? What shall we do to gain the Favour of Men, or to *make Provision for the Flesh, to fulfil the Lusts thereof?* — But, What shall we do to obtain the Pardon of our Sins? What shall we do to gain an Interest in Christ, and that our Lot may be among the Saints? These are Interrogatories, so faintly, if at all, insisted on, as plainly shews, that the Care of their Souls is the least of their Concern.

Heb. iv.
12.

SERMON
VI.Ezek. xiii.
10.

If any such be here, as I fear there are in so great a Congregation, How shall I address you? Shall I *Speak smooth Things*, and *daub with untempered Mortar*? Shall I *sew Pillows* to your Arms, that so you may sleep on securely? God forbid that I should be thus unfaithful to my Trust, and such an Enemy to your Souls! Bear then with my Plainness, whilst I tell you what I think of you; for though my Heart is full of Tenderness and Pity for you, yet my Voice must be a *Voice of Terror* to you. I think then, be you never so rich, or great, or jocund, that you *are of all Men most miserable*; and I would not be in your Condition for Ten Thousand Worlds; for if you die in your unconverted State, there is not a single Text in Scripture that gives you Hopes of escaping *the Damnation of Hell*. How can you close your Eyes to Sleep, when you know not but you may open them in everlasting Burnings? How can you walk the Streets without Fear, when even a Tile falling from a House may for ever separate you from all Possibility of working out your own Salvation? for all Nature, the Elements, and every Creature, is in a State of Hostility with the Man that

lives



lives at Enmity with God. Flee then for your Lives, O Sinners, flee for your Souls.

—But whither shall you flee? for the horrible Pit openeth wide her Mouth before you; the Avenger of Blood pursues you at your Heels, and the Terrors of the Lord are on your Right Hand and on your Left.

—But yet there is a Way to escape: Flee to the Lord *Jesus Christ*, in the lively Exercise of Repentance and Faith, and He will deliver you; for *He hath the Keys of Hell and of Death, and shutteth and no Man openeth.* He is the true City of Refuge from the Avenger of Blood; and in Him God is no longer a *consuming Fire*, but disarmed of his Terrors; for *in Christ He is a reconciled God*, full of Peace and Love.

Rev. i. 18:
iii. 7.

And now, may this *Foolishness of Preaching* be unto you a Means of Spiritual Wisdom! May the Lord give Power to the Word of his Grace, and send it home with a Divine Efficacy to your Hearts, that you may be pricked to the Quick, and with a solicitous Earnestness about Soul-Concerns, cry out *What shall we do to be saved?* May the *strong Man of Sin* now in Possession of the House, and *whose Goods are in Peace*, have his Foundations shaken, and the Walls wherein

Luke ix.
21.

Eph. ii.
12, 13.

wherein he trusted be as a tottering Fence! May the *Devil* be *cast out*, though it be with rending and tearing! And may that Scripture be fulfilled in you: *Ye were without Christ, being Aliens from the Commonwealth of Israel, and Strangers from the Covenant of Promise, having no Hope, and without God in the World: but now in Christ Jesus, ye who some time were far off, are made nigh by the Blood of Christ.*

I shall conclude with a Word to those, who have felt the Power of Gospel Ordinances, sent home to their Hearts by the Holy Spirit, to convince them of Sin; and who come to Christ *labouring and heavy laden* under the Remembrance and Burden of it, crying out *Lord, What shall we do to inherit Eternal Life?* And now, my Brethren, to such as you are, I heartily bid *God speed*, and wish you *good Luck in the Name of the Lord*. You have turned your Backs on Sin and the World, and set your Faces Heavenward: Go on and prosper, for the promised Land is in full View before you; and though the Entrance into it be somewhat difficult, yet be not dismayed, neither afraid of the *Canaanite*, nor yet of the Swellings of *Jordan*; for the Waters shall

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shall divide that you may pass over in Safety, and under the Command and Conduct of your spiritual *Joshua*, even the Lord *Jesus Christ*, you shall shortly see the victorious Banner of the Cross displayed on the Battlements of *Jericho*. Convictions for Sin are indeed troublesome, but Insensibility in Sin is infinitely dangerous: A wounded Conscience is painful, but a benumbed and hardened Conscience is destructive: Bear then the Chastisement of the Lord, not only with Patience, but Thankfulness; *for whom the Lord loveth he so chasteneth, and scourgeth every Son whom he receiveth*: So shall your *Sickness be not unto Death, but for the Glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified thereby*.

Heb. xii.
6.

John xi. 4.

And now, my dear Brethren, I have delivered to you a Message of Life and Death; and how am I pained for you, lest you should chuse amiss? But God forbid that you should chuse Destruction, and refuse Conversion! May He direct you in your Choice, and supply the Defects of his Messengers by the All-powerful Workings of his Spirit, that you may be *pricked in your Hearts*, and cry, *What shall we do to be saved?*

And



And may the God of Heaven incline his Ear unto your Cry, and help you, when you call upon him! May the Lord *Jesus Christ* wash away your Sins with his most precious Blood! and may you be perfected through the Sanctification of the Holy Ghost, that you may obtain the eternal Salvation of your Souls! Even so grant, Lord *Jesus*, Amen and *Amen*.



A

S E R M O N

Preach'd in the

Parish-Church of *All-Saints* in *Northampton*,

BEFORE THE

PRESIDENT and GOVERNORS

OF THE

County INFIRMARY

For SICK and LAME P O O R,

AT THE

ANNIVERSARY MEETING

ON

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 1750.

At the Anniverfary Meeting of the Governors and
Subscribers to the COUNTY INFIRMARY at
Northampton, on *Monday, Sept. 24, 1750.*

AGREED, That their Thanks be given to the
Rev. Mr. HARTLEY, for his SERMON
preached this Day before Them; and that He be
desired to deliver a Copy of the same to the SO-
CIETY, to be printed immediately.

Northampton, President.

T O

The Most Noble

CHARLES, Duke of GRAFTON,
GRAND VISITOR;

The Right Honourable

JAMES, Earl of *Northampton*,
PERPETUAL PRESIDENT;

The Right Reverend

JOHN, Lord Bishop of *Peterborough*,
DIOCESAN;

A N D

The Rest of the GOVERNORS of the
COUNTY-INFIRMARY at *Northampton*;

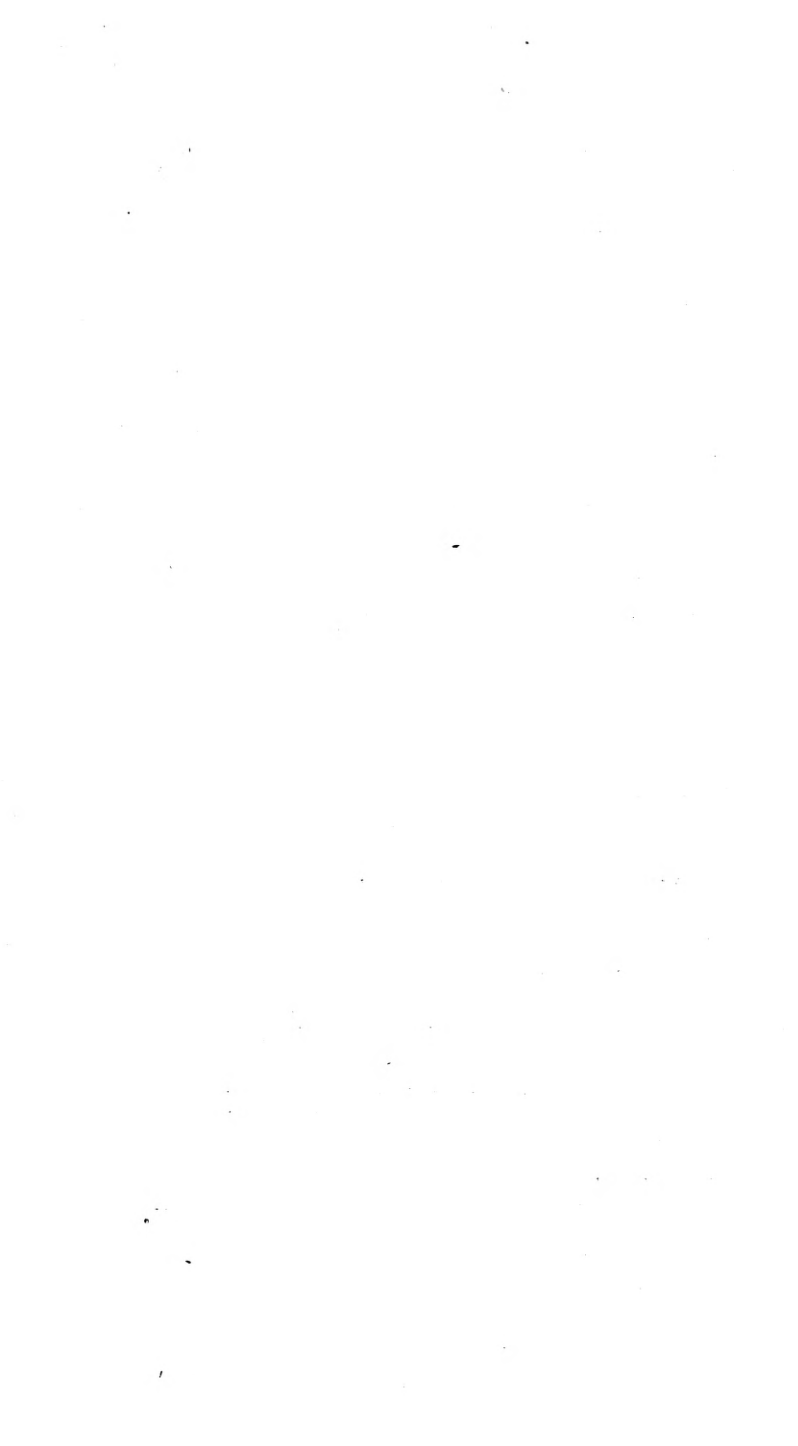
This S E R M O N

Is respectfully inscrib'd by

Their humble Servant,

Winwick,
Sept. 25, 1750.

THOMAS HARTLEY.



SERMON VII.



I C O R. xii. 31.

—*And yet shew I unto you a more excellent
Way.*

TH E S E Words are a kind of connecting Clause bringing into one View of Comparison the Subjects of this and the following Chapter : In the former the Apostle enumerates some of those extraordinary Gifts which were bestowed on the Church in its primitive State, as the Working of Miracles, Prophecy, Discerning of Spirits, Diversities of Tongues, with some others, which, tho' different in kind and Operation, yet, he tells the *Corinthians*, were Vouchsafements of one and the same Spirit, various Administrations under the same Lord and Head of the Church, and therefore to be employed with a single Eye

SERMON
VII.


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SERMON
VII.Eph. iv.
12.

to his Glory, and for the Profit of his Members, *for the perfecting of the Saints, for the Work of the Ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ.* And then, by aptly pointing out the Analogy betwixt Christ's mystical Body and the Body natural, he infers, from the mutual Relation and Dependence of the several Parts and Members thereof, the Necessity of friendly Agreement and true Fellowship, of perfect Harmony and Union amongst all the Individuals of the Church, whatever Difference there might be in their Gifts and Endowments respectively; that those who were distinguished with the highest and most honourable Allotments ought not, upon that Account, to be high-minded, and lord it over such of their Brethren as had received less; nor these on the other hand repine, because of the Inferiority of their Office, as tho' they were less useful or necessary in the Oeconomy of the Church: But that, as they had received all of the same Spirit, and were joined together in one Body, so they should jointly contribute their Supplies to the common Welfare of the Whole, and, as Fellow-Members, cherish the same Care and affectionate Regard one for another, that so there might be no Schism

Schism in the Body. He concludes this Subject with exhorting them to *covet earnestly the best Gifts*, not such as would bring most Honour to their Persons, but such as might best advance the Glory of God, such as were most needful for the converting of Sinners, or the edifying of their Brethren, and such as were best suited to their Instrumentality and Usefulness in the Management of them: *And yet, says he, shew I unto you a more excellent Way*, i. e. Great and glorious as such supernatural Endowments may appear in the Eyes of Men, whatever Honour they may reflect on the Christian Religion, however cogent a Proof they are of its Divinity, yet declare I unto you that which is still a higher Recommendation of it, more acceptable to God, more profitable to Man—and then he goes on — *Tbo' 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 tbo' I have the Gift of Prophecy, and understand all Mysteries and all Knowledge; and tbo' I have all Faith, so that I could remove Mountains, and have not Charity, I am nothing*: And, so proceeds to the End of the following Chapter, shewing how unavailable to Sal-

vation the Gifts of the Spirit are without the Grace of the Spirit, describing its many excellent Properties, and concluding with that well-known Preference—*Now abideth Faith, Hope, Charity, these three; but the greatest of these is Charity; Greatest, if we respect the Dignity of its Nature, for however excellent Things are spoken of FAITH, yet it is only the Handmaid to Love; HOPE, however glorious and animating, comforts us only with the Expectation of good Things, but CHARITY is a present Earnest of the good Things themselves; and greatest it is likewise, if we respect its Permanency; for Faith shall be swallowed up in Vision, and Hope will terminate in Fruition, (for when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away) but Charity will be the Enjoyment itself in its fullest Accomplishment; for where all is Love, there all is Joy and Peace.—In a word, CHARITY assimilates us to Angels, unites us to God, and endureth for ever—Charity never faileth.*

In the Progress of this Discourse I shall consider this Divine Grace of CHARITY in its *largest* Extent, as it takes in our Love to God and Man, and so becomes the End of



the Commandment, the fulfilling of the Law in the Duties of *both* Tables; for our Lord has pronounced the Principle to be alike in both, tho' it differ in the Object and Exercise of it: And, in speaking to the *second* Branch of this Duty, I shall consider it with a particular Reference to the Occasion of our present Meeting,

To begin with our Love of God, that *first and great Commandment*, the chief End and Happiness of Man, the Fountain of the Divine Life in the Soul, — from which, as its proper Source, streams forth true Christian Philanthropy; and from which, as its sanctifying Principle, every Religious Act and Temper derives its Beauty and Excellence.

Now let it be observed, that our Love of God rises in Proportion to the Manifestation of his Love to us, * and consequently must

1 John iv.
19.

* This is not meant to exclude or lessen any other Motives to the Love of God, particularly that which proceeds from the Consideration of the Excellencies and Perfections of the Divine Nature, concerning which many Persons of eminent Piety have spoken such exalted Things: But, thro' the prevailing Dulness and Corruption of Man's Nature, we find, that Arguments drawn from this Source are not of such general Use as could be wished; and that their Influence extends little farther than to Persons fitted by great Elevation of Spirit, and Abstractedness of Thought, (and, I may add

ascend higher under the Christian Dispensation than it possibly could under any other; for herein is the Love of God superlatively displayed, in that *He gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting Life.* And here it will be needful to glance at the State of Religion in the World before the Coming of *Christ*, as it stood divided into Heathens and *Jews*: As to the former, how does their gross Idolatry, their wretched Superstitions, and their unworthy Conceptions of the Divine Nature, argue their Ignorance in the first Elements of Natural Religion! But take the wisest, take the Best amongst them; I give you *Socrates*, I give you *Plato*, I give you *Archimedes*, Great Names, and of good Report! And yet, poor Heathens, shall we more admire that you went so far, or that you came so short in what most concerned you to know. Say, *Socrates*, that thou believedst in one God: yet thou knewest Him not (nor was it thy Fault) as a reconciled God in the Son of his Love, and, as such, the Father

too, by great Purity of Heart) for Divine Contemplations: And even these, it must be allowed, can no where take such amiable and animating Views of the Glory of God, as in the Face of *Jesus Christ*.

of Mercies, and God of all Comfort. Say, *Plato*, justly admired Heathen, that the Soul's Immortality was not hid from thee; yet the Way to a happy Immortality the Light of Nature could not teach thee. Say, lastly, *Archimedes*, Did the Heavens declare to thee the Glory of God? yet that Man was an Heir of Glory they declared not: Did the Firmament shew forth his Handy-work as its Creator? yet no Star therein could lead thee to *Christ*, the Power of God unto Salvation, as thy Redeemer. —Here, Philosopher, thy Perspective failed thee, such Knowledge was too high for thee; a God Incarnate uniting our Nature to Himself, that we might become the Sons of God, is an Abyss of Wonders which thy Line fathomed not; thou couldst not attain unto this Wisdom neither in the Height above, nor in the Depth beneath: It is higher than the Heaven, what couldst thou do; deeper than Hell, what couldst thou know? The Measure of such Love is longer than the Earth, and broader than the Sea. Conclude we then, that the wisest and best Heathens, for want of Revelation, could not attain to any Degree of Divine Love comparable to the Measure of the Christian,



being unacquainted with the Extent of God's Love to Man in his most important Interest. Besides, being Strangers to the Doctrine of the Fall, they could not explain the Evil they saw, both in the natural and moral World *, in any just Consistency with the Divine Wisdom and Goodness: And this rendered their Conceptions and Reasonings touching the Attributes and Providence of God perplexed and dark ; and therefore we the less wonder that the Worship of the most knowing among them was little better than erecting an Altar *To the unknown God.*

To the *Jews* indeed God vouchsafed a Discovery of his Nature and Will, and gave them a Law for their Directory to lead them to Himself, for the End of the Commandment was Love ; but they attained not to the End of the Commandment, and so it became to them a killing Letter, pronouncing Death on their Disobedience, whilst it gave them

Gal. iii. 10.
2 Cor. iii.
6.

* Their Ignorance of this, probably, first gave Rise to the Supposition of a Duality of Gods, as held by some of the most antient Philosophers in their Doctrine of the two Principles, the one of Good, the other of Evil. The former was called by the Persian Magi *Ormazdes* ; the latter, *Arimanius*. This absurd Error, under some Alterations and Improvements, was afterwards adapted by the *Manichæans* in the third Century. See Bayle's *Dict. Art. MANICHÆANS*. See also Theol. Ancienne, *par Chev. RAMSAY*.

not Grace and Strength for Performance, for such Communication belonged to a higher Dispensation, even a spiritual one; and therefore however glorious the Ministration of Condemnation was in the Promulgation of the Law, and in the awful Display of God's Power and Majesty, yet it was to be done away when He who was the End of the Law for Righteousness should come, as having no comparative Glory in respect of that Ministration which so far excelleth in Glory; when God's Justice should give Place to his Goodness, and Mercy rejoice against Judgment.—Hence we may see the great need there was of Gospel Salvation for the Recovery of fallen Man, in that no outward Rule of Action*, tho' of

2 Cor. iii.
10, & seq.

* The Energy of Divine Grace, as a sanctifying Principle in the Heart, made no Part nor Promise of the Mosaic Dispensation, so that Man's Nature could not be reformed by it; and therefore, the Prophets and holy Men under the Law were not saved by the Law, but by the Regenerating Spirit of *Christ* working in them, and speaking thro' them. Salvation was then the same free Gift, and by the same free Grace, thro' Faith, as now, tho' not revealed in the Way of a publick Dispensation till afterwards, when that better Covenant took Place, whose distinguishing Property and Privilege it should be, with respect to all the Faithful under it, that the Divine Laws should be within them, as a powerful living Principle of Love and Obedience,—*not written in Tables of Stone, but in the fleshy Tables of the Heart, with the Spirit of the Living God.* Jer. xxxi. 33. 2 Cor. iii. 3. Heb. x. 16.

Divine



Divine Appointment, could lead him to God in the Way of acceptable Love and Obedience, because of the Weakness of the Flesh in its State of natural Corruption :

Gal.iii.21. *If there had been a Law given which could have given Life, verily Righteousness should have been by the Law.*

And now we are led to that wonderful Mystery of our Redemption, God manifest in the Flesh to destroy the Works of the Devil, even all that Sin and Satan had done in our fallen Nature. In this Consolation of *Israel* we have the Substance of all Types and Shadows, the Accomplishment of all Promises and Prophecies, and the Fulfilling of the Law for all them that believe to the Saving of the Soul. *God, who at sundry Times, and in divers Manners, spake in Time past unto the Fathers by the Prophets, hath in these last Days spoken unto us by his Son.*—And what was the Message? It was Love; for, speaking of all them that received Him, he saith, *I have declared unto them thy Name, and will declare it, that the Love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.* Now, in an Evangelical Sense, God's Name is Love, for He was in

Heb.i.1,2.

John xvii.
26.

2 Cor. v.
19.

Christ

Christ reconciling the World unto Himself:

And therefore with great Propriety does the Gospel signify *Glad Tidings*.

And as in the Process of our Redemption by *Jesus Christ* we behold one great continued Mystery of Love, so, as was the Work such also was the End of it, *viz.* to bring back Man to the Love of God; for as in his Departure from this consisted his Sin and Ruin, so in his Return to it lay the only possible Means of his Recovery. To this End *Christ* lived a perfect Pattern of Divine Love, teaching us thereby to follow his Steps: To this end He both preached and practised Poverty of Spirit and Self Denial, by such instructive Lessons, to caution us against placing a fancied Happiness in those Possessions and Gratifications which only serve to alienate our Affections from Him who is the sole Fountain of true Felicity: And to the end that He might bring about a twofold Reconciliation between an offended God and sinful Man, He laid down his Life, slaying, by the atoning Blood of his Cross, the Enmity betwixt them; and now continues, under the perfecting Dispensation of his Spirit, to shed abroad the Love of God in our Hearts, and to give us Power to be-
come



come the Sons of God, by a Participation of the Divine Nature.

Where is the Wise, where is the Disputer of this World, who go about to rob the *Christian* of his best Hope, this Hope full of Immortality, and to sap the surest Foundation of our Love to God, by labouring to undermine our Faith in his best Love to us? But know, Unbeliever, that however *Christ* crucified may be to the carnal Heart a Stumbling-block, and to the conceited Wisdom of the proud Disputer Foolishness, yet to us who believe He is *the Power of God, and the Wisdom of God*. Look up, O *Christian*, and meditate on the Sufferings of thy bleeding, dying Saviour, think on thy Sins which pierced his sacred Side, on the Death of the Cross he endured to deliver thee from eternal Death, and on the Shame He despised to advance thee to Glory; and when thou thinkest thereon, refrain, if thou canst, from owning, that as no Sorrow was ever like his Sorrow, so no Love ever equalled his Love. How comes it in general that we are so little affected with these Views of his Redeeming Love? Is it not because our Hearts are more immoveable than the Earth which quaked, more impenetrable than the
Rocks

Rocks which rent at his Passion? Why burn they not within us? Why kindle they not into Flames of holy Gratitude and devout Affection whilst we open the Scriptures and preach unto you *Jesus*? Is it not, O sad Consideration! because we have given so much of them to the World, to the Creatures, and to our Lusts, and therefore the Love of the Father and of the Son has no Place in many of us.—Let us then cast out our Idols, and put away the cursed Thing that separates betwixt our Saviour and our Souls, and then we shall know what the Love of God meaneth.—*Give me thy Heart* is the Voice of the Lord to every Son and Daughter of *Adam*; and if we will but consent to the Conveyance, He will replenish them with his Love and the Graces of his Spirit, and they shall become *Temples of the living God*: In his Light shall we see Light; and in his Love shall we feel Love: For this excellent Grace of CHARITY is not the genuine Offspring of an apostate Spirit, but a pure Emanation of the Divinity in our Souls reflected back upon its Source.

Luke xvi.
13.

1 John ii.
15.

Prov.
xxiii. 26.

1 Cor. iii.
16. and
2 Cor. vi.
16.

But let us pass from the *first* to the *second* Table; for *this Commandment have we, that*

1 John iv.
21.



that he who loveth God, love his Brother also.

Matth.
xxii. 39.

John xiii.
34. and
xv. 12.
xiii. 35.
1 John. iv.
21.
1b. iv. 12.
Gal. v. 6.

Now this Branch of *Charity* is high in Rank and Eminence among the Duties of the Christian Life, and like unto the first. It was our Lord's Command to his Disciples more than once, that they should love one another; nay, He makes it a Badge of their Discipleship: It is laid down as a necessary Appendage of our Love to God; a Mark of his dwelling in us; a Test of true Faith: To which we may add, that it is the very Spirit that animates all the relative Duties, giving them Life, Direction and Uniformity: It is the Spring of Truth in all our Words, and the Basis of Justice in all our Dealings: It regulates our Obedience, sanctifies our Alms, and ennobles every Social Virtue: It is so necessary to the Comfort and Well-being of Society, that, where the Principle is wanting, to practice the very Appearance of it is considered as a valuable Part of Education, and Politeness is made the Substitute of Benevolence; so estimable is that Virtue, whose very Counterfeit the World holds respectable. But, if we mean to be *Christians* indeed, our *Love* must be
without

without Dissimulation: The bare Profession of it will neither profit ourselves nor others; for a feigned Virtue, as it is without Power and Solidity, so it must want Effect and Consistency.

Let us now, my Brethren, bring ourselves to this Test; let us measure ourselves by this Standard: The one true Church of *Christ* is the Communion of Saints, and *Charity* is the Life and Soul of it: Is then the Love of God shed abroad in our Hearts, and have we fervent *Charity* among ourselves? For, be it known of a Truth, that as much as we possess of this Heavenly Treasure, so much have we of *Christianity*, and no more; and that without it all Zeal for Religion is but Contention, all Modes of Worship but Formality, and all Orthodoxy but vain Opinion.

Charity, or Love to our Neighbour, may objectively be considered under this three-fold Distinction; the Love of Affection, the Love of Benevolence, and the Love of Beneficence.

By the first I mean not that instinctive Principle of Tenderneſs which we feel in ourselves towards our Descendants and near Relatives, for this has its Ground in Nature,
and



1 John iii.
14.

and therefore is in no wise peculiar to the Christian Dispensation, tho' capable of receiving all Improvements from it: Nor yet do I mean those Engagements of Friendship which we see in the World, arising from Similitude of natural Temper, or Manners, Combination of Interest, or Sameness of Pursuits; for such Union often binds together the Carnal and Unconverted: But by *Charity* of Affection here, I understand that Gospel Disposition which St. *John* lays down as one Evidence of our renewed State, where he says, *We know that we have passed from Death unto Life, because we love the Brethren*: Now such are all they who bear the Impress of the Divine Image on their Souls, and are led by the Spirit of God to set their Affections on Things above, and to order their Lives and Conversation as becometh the Gospel of *Christ*: And this is a powerful and constraining Love, nay, stronger than Death itself; for such are willing, if need be, to lay down their Lives for the Brethren: Such was the Love of the Primitive *Christians* even to a Proverb, and the same will be the Love of all true *Christians* to the End of the World; for however they are divided or dispersed through-

throughout the whole Earth among the several *outward* Churches, yet they are all of one Heart and one Mind in the Essence of Faith and Things pertaining to God; and they are of one Communion, for they have been all made to drink into one Spirit: They are mystical Members under one Head, Fellow-Heirs of the same Promises, Fellow-Travellers to the same Heavenly City, and will in the End form one glorious Church Triumphant in the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour *Jesus Christ*. In a word, this Evangelical Temper is nothing less than a Divine Principle in the Soul communicating with the same in our Brethren, and so uniting all, that are Partakers of it, in a holy Fellowship of such Love, Joy, and Peace, as passeth the Understanding of *all other* Men.

But as we are to love the Brotherhood, *Christ's* faithful Servants, with a distinguished and peculiar Affection; so,

Secondly, We are to honour ALL Men with the Love of a benevolent Respect; for the same Charity that connects in close Union those who are Fellow-Citizens with the Saints and of the Household of God,

O

extends



A Sermon before the Governors

extends its Benignity to all such as, tho' Members of the visible Church, are yet Aliens from the spiritual Commonwealth of *Israel*, and Strangers from the Covenants of Promise; nay, it enlarges itself to all Mankind without Exception; for one Property belonging to it is, that it hopeth all Things, and therefore it waiteth patiently, looking for the Time when it may please God to bring them nigh by the Blood of *Christ*, who are now afar off: Accordingly, the *charitable Christian* labours for the Conversion of his Brethren in the Flesh; prays for those that pray not for themselves; studies to convince the Unbelieving, and to reclaim the Erroneous; and thinks nothing too much to do for those Souls for which *Christ* died, if so be that by any Means he may become an Instrument of gaining some: Nay, tho' his Good be undeservedly evil-spoken of, and when he speaketh to them of Peace, their Souls everlasting Peace, they make themselves ready for Battle, and requite him Evil for his Good-will; yet even so, that *Charity*, which suffereth long and is kind, endureth all Things, even Reproach and Persecution, with Patience and Forgiveness, *not rendering Evil for Evil,*



withstanding such a Distribution, be void of the Spirit of *real Charity*. But I am now speaking of, and recommending that Kind of Beneficence, which is the Fruit of Christian Benevolence: And among the various Occasions which offer for the Exercise of it, the Relief of the sick and lame Poor of our County, under the Provisions of a Publick INFIRMARY, is that which lays Claim to our present Attention.

And here it may be remarked in Behalf of these Institutions, which I think holds true of few others, even the most excellent, that the Invention of Man has not yet been able to furnish us with any Objections to them; which Argument concludes no less strongly for their confessed publick Utility, than for their being founded on the most allowed Principles of Humanity. Many Considerations offer, which powerfully recommend Foundations of this Kind to our Encouragement and Support, and some which challenge a Preference of Regard to them above most others.

As, *first*, if we consider the Greatness of the Distress. Poverty joined to Sickness, or to an ulcerated, broken, or dislocated Frame of Body, bears doubly hard upon
human

of the Northampton Infirmary.

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human Nature, and Eloquence must fail, where such complicated Sufferings cannot move : for a *Lazarus* at the Gate is indeed a most affecting Orator, where the Heart is not hardened to a Degree of Insensibility more than brutal.

A *second* Recommendation of these Houses of Mercy is, that in this Exercise of our Bounty we are safe, both with respect to the Objects and the Application of it : As to the former, due Provision is made for sufficient Information concerning the Poverty of the Parties to be admitted : And as to their bodily Maladies, there are few Cases which do not explain themselves by corresponding Symptoms, or can elude the skilful Observations of the Persons appointed to inspect and examine them ; so that it is not Pretence, but Reality, not an artful Story, but actual Distress, that here solicits our compassionate Regard. And, in respect to the proper Application of the Sums sent in and collected for the Support of this our INFIRMARY, the Prudence, Condition and Character of the Persons who honour the Direction of it, the regular Accounts annually published, and a free Access to the Books to satisfy any more



minute Enquirer, are abundant Security on this Head.

A *third* Excellency of this *Charity* is the Care taken to promote and expedite, in the best Manner, the Cure of the Patients by a voluntary, regular, and gratuitous Attendance of Physicians and Surgeons of approved Judgment and Character in their Professions, and who on that Account, as well as by reason of their *charitable* Care in directing all Things relating to Diet, Cleanliness, and other needful Accommodations, may justly be styled principal Benefactors to this excellent Work, whilst we have the Satisfaction of seeing the Benefit intended to the Poor by our Contributions taking Effect at the easiest Expence, and thereby rendered the more extensive.

I shall only mention one more considerable Benefit arising from these Institutions, and that is the RELIGIOUS Use and Improvement of their Visitations, which we may justly hope for from the Patients in the future Part of their Lives: And here the Benefit of these Houses will rise in Proportion to the greater Number who receive their Cure in them, than what could reasonably be expected under the Want of
such



such salutary Provisions; so that the saving a Life, under God, is oftentimes the means of saving a Soul from Death. It is before we are afflicted, that we are most prone to go wrong: We cannot but be sensible how apt the untamed Spirits, flowing from an active and vigorous State of Health, are to run away with our Seriousness, and to hurry us into Vanity, and a Forgetfulness of our Creator: But when the chastening Hand of the Lord is upon us; when Sickness or fractured Bones have shaken the Walls wherein we trusted, and brought down our Strength in our Journey, the Pride of Man is naturally humbled, the hard Heart mollified, and the Afflicted taught to cry unto the Lord in his Distress: Thus does He dispose us to seek for the Strength and Succours of his Grace by the Weakness and Sufferings of our mortal Nature, and casts us down on purpose that He may lift us up, that we may know and feel, that our *Help cometh even from the Lord, who hath made Heaven and Earth.* It is our Duty to improve these weaning and instructive Providences to the Spiritual Welfare of our Brethren, and to co-operate with them by supplying the most likely Means of their

Psal. cxxi.

2.

Cure, that the Mercy of a Recovery may give the additional Weight of Gratitude to the good Impressions which bodily Afflictions first excited, that so being led, both by the Goodness and Severity of God's Dealings, to Repentance and Amendment, they may, when they depart, have cause to say, upon this Account also, It is good for us to have been here.

And here our Subject leads us to lament the sad Havock and Destruction which Sin hath brought upon the Earth in the various painful Diseases and Sufferings to which the Condition of Mortality exposes us. — How has the deadly Poison infected our Nature, and diffused universal Corruption through the human Race, wherein the lurking Venom carries on the fatal Work as certainly, tho' less sensibly, under the concealed Approaches of a gradual Decay, as by the more violent Attacks of a Calenture or Epilepsy, insomuch that it may truly be said of the whole Body of Mankind, that from the Sole of the Foot unto the Head, there is no Soundness in it; and well, therefore, may the World be compared to one Great Infirmary, where Death's Harbingers and Purveyors are preparing to execute on all
that



that irrevocable Sentence, *Dust thou art, and to Dust thou shalt return.* Ought we not then to have Compassion on our Fellow Servants, seeing that we ourselves also are in the same Condemnation! But, alas! the Malady of Man's Nature is gone still deeper, it has reached the immortal Part of it; nay, it was the Disease of his Soul which entailed that Corruption and Mortality upon his Body, on account of which Man, in his highest earthly Honour, is compared to the Beasts that perish.

Psal. xlix.
12.

We read that Almighty God, upon taking a Survey of the Six Days Work of Creation, pronounced of every thing which He had made, that it was very good: How beautiful and perfect then must he have been in his better Part, for whose Sake all Things were created! How excellent that Creature who was made in the Image, and after the Likeness of his Creator! But he lusted after the Vanity of Time, and so lost the Riches of Eternity; together with his Innocence, his Divine Light, and Love, and Purity, departed from him—*God made Man upright, but he sought out many Inventions;* he sought to be happy independently of God, and so lost his Happiness in Him:

Eccles. vii.
29.

Hence



Hence by Nature our sad Alienation from the Life of God; instead of Heavenly Wisdom, a serpentine Craft; instead of Divine Love, gross and corrupt Affections; and, in the room of that perfect Harmony in all its Powers and Faculties which tuned the Soul to Peace, all the Discord and Rage of conflicting Passions.— Behold, O Man! in this thy aggravated Misery of a distempered Soul and Body, the Greatness of thy Fall, and sad Apostacy! But behold also the Greatness of Redeeming Love, the infinite Compassions of thy so much neglected Saviour! who, *when thou wast cast out in the open Field to the loathing of thy Person, passed by thee, and when He saw thee polluted in thine own Blood, said unto thee — Live. I passed by thee, and looked upon thee; and I spread my Skirt over thee, and covered thy Nakedness; yea, I swore unto thee, and entered into a Covenant with thee, saith the Lord God, and thou becamest mine.* This Display of our Lord and Saviour's Commiseration and Love to the fallen human Race is beautifully figured in the Mercy which the good Samaritan shewed to the poor wounded Traveller that fell among Thieves.

Ezek. xvi.
5, 6, 8.

Thieves *. — The Priest and the Levite passed by, but afforded him no Relief; for neither the Law, nor the Levitical Ministrations, could avail to Man's Salvation; such Help could only come from the Great Physician of Souls, and Friend of Sinners, *who Himself took our Infirmities, and bare our Sicknesses*: And the Lord that *heal-eth* is his Name. But tho' this be the Inside and Spirit of the Parable, yet the Moral is drawn from the Outside and Letter of it. Did the Samaritan shew Mercy to the wounded and distressed Jew, ministring to him the Means of his Cure, and defraying the necessary Charges of it? *Go, and do thou likewise*; be merciful after thy Power to All, and shew thy Love to God by this Proof of thy Love to thy Neighbour: *For whoso bath this World's Good, and seeth his Brother have Need, and shutteth up the Bowels of his Compassion from him, how dwelleth the Love of God in him.*



Matth.
viii. 17.
Exod.
xv. 26.

1 John iii.
17.

* For the spiritual Interpretation of this Parable, in its Reference to our Redemption by *Jesus Christ*, see St. Aust. *Quæst. Evang.* lib. ii. as also, *Contra Pelag. Hypognost.* lib. iii. *Christi mos est in vulgaribus parabolis etiam sublimiora aliqua mysteria nobis commendare: ita certe hac in parabola admodum eleganter nobis summa nostri Christianismi ob oculos pingitur. Vid. Chemnit. Harm. Evang. in loco.*

See also the Spiritual Homilies of *Macarius the Ægyptian.* Hom. xxx.

The Application comes home to us, as Fellow-Christians, with additional Force; and the Occasion of our present Meeting gives a particular Emphasis to it: And therefore let us turn our Thoughts to the *House of Mourning*, for we are told that the *Heart of the Wise* is there; and thence learn a Lesson of Humility, a Lesson of Gratitude, and an Exercise of Charity.

Were I to consider only *my own* Unfitness to be your Solicitor this Day, I should have much Reason to be diffident of Success; but when I consider *whose* Cause I plead; when I consider before *whom* I plead; and, above all, when I consider in *whose Name* I plead, I will not, I cannot think, that I shall plead in vain: Nor need I here to fetch any Weapons from the Armoury of Eloquence, nor seek to engage the Passions on my Side with artificial Strains of Rhetorick, seeing the INFIRMARY itself affords the most persuasive Motives to urge a compassionate Relief; and it would be sufficient for this Purpose, would Time permit, to set open to your View that Theatre of Woes, where pining Atrophy, Convulsions, agonizing Throws, corroding Ulcers,

Ulcers, the Torture of broken and dislocated Bones, and various other Maladies and Disasters incident to the human Frame, form one complicated Scene both of visible and audible Distress. Look down, you Wealthy and Honourable Ones, from your Height of Opulency and Splendour, and in these Sons and Daughters of Affliction acknowledge your Brethren, and own yourselves to be but Men; for, *did not He that made you make them, and did not one fashion both in the Womb?*—Whilst in the Phrase of *Job*, you *wash your Steps with Butter, and the Rock pours out to you Rivers of Oil*, let the Streams of your Bounty refresh the Hearts of the Sorrowful, and your Abundance be the Supplement to their Wants.—Thus may you excel in Goodness as in Greatness, and be counted worthy of double Honour.

I next address myself to you who are in a middle Station, placed safely between the two Extremes of Affluence and Indigence, and so possessed of what *Agur* prayed for: And, as you know no Want yourselves, extend freely your Assistance to those that do. The Law commanded to help the Beast of our Enemy fallen under his Bur-

then: *Exod.*
xxiii. 5.

Job xxxi.
15.

Ib. xxix. 6.

Prov. xxx.
8.



then: Bring not then a Reproach upon that Holy Name by which you are called, by refusing to help a Neighbour, a Fellow-Christian, being burthened with his Infirmities. A Retrenchment of the Vanities, Superfluities, or in the fashionable Expences of Life, will amply supply the Means of Beneficence to your distressed Brethren; and by such a Christian Piece of Oeconomy you will join the Practice of two Duties together, whilst to that of *Charity* you add Self-Denial for *Charity's* Sake.

Lastly, as to you whose Portion in the good Things of this Life is small, tho' yourselves no less dear to God on that Account, I must call upon you also for a Token of your Love. It was ordained under the Law, in the Matter of Offerings, that the Person, who was not able to bring a Lamb, should bring two Turtle-Doves, or two young Pigeons; for no one was to *appear before the Lord empty*. Let not the Love of *Christ*, that perfect Law of Liberty, less constrain you: Let not the Free-will Offering of your *Christian Charity* come short of the Command of a *Jewish Oblation*: If thou hast but little, yet be merciful after thy Power, and do thy Diligence gladly to give of that little:

Lev. v. 7.
and xii. 8.

Exod.
xxiv. 20.

Tob. iv. 8.

little: The little that thou givest will sanctify the little that is left, and, trust in the Lord, thou shalt have no lack.

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This Application to you all of every Degree, on the Subject before us, comes backed with a Motive of undeniable Force, *viz.* that our Blessed Lord has declared his Acceptance of that Relief, which you afford to your afflicted Christian Brethren from a Spirit of *Charity*, as done to Himself; for such has He appointed his Substitutes for the Receipt of it: I call upon you then, for *Christ's* Sake, that you be *ready to distribute, willing to communicate*: Or if this Argument fails, there remains at least one, which, if rightly laid to Heart, I am sure, must prevail, which is, that we all stand in Need of Mercy, and therefore ought to shew it: I call upon you, therefore, for your own Sakes, by the Love you bear to your immortal Souls, that you come not short of the Promise of Him who hath said, *Blessed are the Merciful, for they shall obtain Mercy.*

1 Tim. vi.
18.

Matth. v.
7.

And now having pointed out that most *Excellent Way* of CHARITY, or *Love* to God and our Neighbour, that Gospel Way of Pleasantness, that sure Path of Peace leading on to Glory, what remains but that

we

we walk therein? We are *called* Christians, professing one Faith, one Lord, one Baptism: Let us this Day shew ourselves to be such, not in Word only, but in Deed, and in Truth; whilst our Faith worketh by Love, and our Love by shewing Mercy to the Poor.

It is a joyful Thing for Brethren to meet together in the House of God as Friends: May this Joy be now fulfilled in the Hearts of us all, both High and Low, Rich and Poor, one with another! and, as we join in one common Labour of Love towards the Needy and Afflicted, may the same good Disposition, improved, bring us together in the Unity of the Spirit, and in the Bond of Peace: Thus shall we *add to Brotherly-kindness Charity*: Thus shall the happy Effect of our assembling together cause Joy in Heaven, and make glad the City of God, whilst Saints and Angels tune their Harps to louder Strains of Praise, as *they* sing
 “GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST, AND
 “ON EARTH PEACE, GOOD-WILL TO-
 “WARDS MEN.”

2 Pet. i. 7.

S E R M O N V I I I .

True Liberty the Gift of the Son
of God.



J O H N viii. 36.

*If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye
shall be free indeed.*

WHEN many of the *Jews* believed on *Christ* upon hearing the Words which He spake, our Lord took Occasion to encourage them to persevere in believing: *If, says He, ye continue in my Word, then are ye my Disciples indeed, and ye shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall make you free.* As these Words seemed to reflect some Disgrace upon that People, according to their carnal Apprehension of them (for there is a Belief to the saving of the Soul, and a Belief which carnal Men may have) they immediately took Fire, and in a Fit of angry Resentment replied: *We be Abraham's Seed, and were never in Bondage*

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to any Man: How sayest Thou, Ye shall be made free? However this Answer might evince their Zeal for the Honour of their Lineage and Nation, yet it was far from being a Proof of their Regard to Truth; for tho' the former Part of it was true, *viz.* that they were *Abraham's* Seed, according to the Flesh; yet the latter was not so, their Forefathers having been Bond-Slaves in *Ægypt* and Captives in *Babylon*, and they themselves at that very time were, tho' not in Bondage, yet, under Subjection, and tributary to the *Romans*. However, our Saviour reproached them not with that; He meddled not with their Civil Liberties or Civil Matters—Bond and Free were alike to Him in that respect, his Business on Earth being of a Spiritual Nature, and such the Meaning of his Words, as his Answer shews: *Verily, Verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth Sin, is the Servant of Sin.* Wherever Sin reigns in the Heart and is obeyed in the outward Life, that Person is in the most miserable Thralldom and a Slave to the worst of Tyrants—*His Servants ye are to whom ye obey, whether of Sin unto Death, or of Obedience unto Righteousness.* Now, says our Lord in the next Verse, *The Servant abid-*

of the Son of God.

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VIII.



eth not in the House for ever, but the Son abideth ever. Which Words in their primary Sense refer to *Moses*, who was only a Servant in the Household of God, whereas *Christ* was the Son and Heir and Lord of all Things.—The Dispensation of the former was only temporary and to lead those that were under it to *Christ*, whereas that of the latter was to be an everlasting Covenant, even the sure Mercies of *David*.—The first was a Ministration of Bondage, Condemnation, and Death; the second of Liberty, Grace, and Life. But in a secondary Sense these Words of our Lord may be paraphrased thus:—As among Men, according to the Laws of Society, the Servant, tho' at present one in the Family, has no Inheritance or Right of Property in his Master's Goods, but these descend to the Son or Heir: So in the outward Church on Earth, however the Servants of Sin are mixed with the Servants of God, like Tares among the Wheat, yet when the Inheritance comes to be divided at the Great Day of Distribution, the latter only shall partake in it; for then it shall be said—*Cast out the Bond-woman and her Son, for the Son of the Bond-woman shall not be Heir with the Son of the Free-woman.*



But lest it should be replied — Are we not all Servants of Sin both by original De-filement and actual Transgression? Who then can be saved? Our Saviour therefore adds—*If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed*; i. e. However you are by Nature Children of Wrath, and however you may be, thro' sinful Acts and Habits, the Servants of Corruption, and as such can lay no Claim to any Part of the heavenly Inheritance, yet if the Son of God, who is Heir and Lord of all Things, free you from your Bondage and bring you into the Liberty of Sons, then shall you divide the Inheritance with Him; for tho' by original Ex-traction you are Aliens and out of the true Filiation, yet thro' Grace being made real * Children by Adoption and a vital Participation of the Divine Nature derived from the second

* Tho' the Adoption of Children among Men be only a nominal or reputed Relation, yet in the Divine Life it consists in a real and spiritual Birth, and indeed must do so; for altho' one Man has a natural Fitness or Capacity to inherit the things of another, yet this holds not true with respect to the heavenly Inheritance, for Corruption cannot inherit In-corrption: And therefore in order to our Meetness to be made Partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light we must by our Spiritual Union with *Christ* the King of Saints receive of his Fullness a Measure of that Holiness without which no Man shall see the Lord, and so by the Sanctification of his Spirit be qualified for Glorification in his King-dom.

Adam,

Adam, who is a quickening Spirit, and the Fountain of a new and holy Life to us; by this new Relation you become Heirs of God and joint Heirs with *Christ*. To which purpose are those Words of our Lord to his Heavenly Father concerning the Children of the Redemption: *The Glory which thou gavest me I have given them, that they may be one even as we are one.* For, *He who sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified are all of one, for which Cause He is not ashamed to call them Brethren.*

Thus to as many as receive Him into their Hearts by Faith, and continue in his Word, doth the Lord *Jesus* give such precious Promises and Privileges, for these are the true legitimate Seed of faithful *Abraham*, and rightful Heirs of the Covenant of Grace; nay a greater than *Abraham* is their Father, for they are *born not of Blood, nor of the Will of the Flesh, nor of the Will of Man, but of God.* O that this glorious Truth may be impressed upon our Minds in more durable Characters than if written upon a Rock with the Point of a Diamond! And O! (which is of the highest Importance to us) that the Experience of it may be sealed upon our Hearts by the Spirit of the Living God!

It is observable, that the same Property or Power, *viz.* to make us free, which is ascribed to Truth in Ver. 32. of this Chapter, is ascribed to the Son of God in that of the Text, to evidence to us that *Christ* is what He declares himself to be, the Way, the Truth and the Life, not only as He has outwardly revealed Truth to us, but as He is within us that Principle of living Truth which is the Power of God unto Salvation: And therefore those Expositors who interpret these Words of Doctrinal Knowledge only, however great their Names may be, have not entered into the full Sense and Meaning of them; for People may have much Head-knowledge of the Scriptures, and right Notions of Doctrines, and yet continue the Servants of Corruption. In vain Men boast of the Purity of their particular Church or the Truth of its Doctrines, whilst they continue speculative Believers only, and have not their Hearts purified by Faith; for tho' a Distinction in point of Preference is due to one outward Communion of *Christians* above others, yet so long as they are not of the People of God, who worship the Father in Spirit and in Truth, and therefore have not Fellowship with the Father, nor with the Son,

Son, whether they worship at *Samaria* or *Jerusalem*, whether they be of the Church of *England*, or the Church of *Scotland*, of the Church of *Geneva*, or the Church of *Rome*, 'tis all one, for if any Man have not the Spirit of *Christ* he is none of his; he remains a Slave to his Sins or to his Ceremonies, to his Doctors or to his Doctrines, and is no Free-man, for *where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is Liberty*, and there only.

When *Pilate* asked our Lord, *What is Truth?* we do not read that He made any Reply to his Question, as an Interrogatory of that Importance seemed to require: And what may we suppose to have been the Reason of this Silence? Why this—The Question was probably captious or curious in the Design of the Proposer, and not offered for the sake of any real Instruction; and therefore it is not to be thought that an Answer tho' proceeding from the Oracle of Truth, would have had any good Effect upon the Mind of so ill-disposed a Querist: Hence it was that the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, who were present at so many of our Lord's Divine Discourses, received no Benefit from them, they came with an insidious Design to entangle Him in his Talk, and therefore,



tho' He spake as never Man spake, yet they went away neither wiser nor better for what they heard.

Beware then, my Brethren, how you entertain Prejudices against the Truth, for where this is the Case, tho' *Christ* himself, as in the Days of his Flesh, were your Preacher, you might not profit by Him; for however it is of the Nature of Truth to set us free, yet it does not set us free from wilful Prejudices and determined Opposition to it, because Truth can only operate within us, but this it cannot do if we stop the Way and shut the Door against it; and if it gain no Admittance into our Hearts that it may exert its Divine Energy there, it can no more help the Soul than Medicines can the Body that does not receive them. We call the Scriptures the Word of God, inasmuch as they testify of Him who is the Living Word of God that abideth for ever, and as they were spoken and written by holy Men of old as they were moved by the Holy Ghost; if then we receive their Testimony, and the Truth which they are appointed to convey, in Demonstration of that same Power and Inspiration by which they were given, they become really profitable for our Instruction
in



in Godliness; otherwise, whether they be preached or read, they are only Sounds and Syllables, we hear the Voice of Man but not the Voice of God, we read Language and Propositions and annex our own Ideas to them, but attain not to Divine Truth, for this lyeth not in the Conjectures, Apprehensions, or invented Meanings which Man's Wisdom teacheth, but is of far more noble Extraction, even the Breath of the Power of God, and a pure Influence that floweth from the Glory of the Almighty, the Brightness of the everlasting Light, the undefiled Mirrour of the Majesty of God, which entring into holy Souls maketh them the Friends of God and Prophets. This Inspiration of the Almighty giving Understanding is the only true Interpreter of Spiritual Things, the living Rule, the infallible Guide: *The Words which I speak unto you, says our Lord, they are Spirit and they are Life.* And this may help us in a sort to conceive in what Sense *Christ*, as to his Divine Nature, is called the Word of God, *viz.* as He is the full Energy of the Deity exerted and expressed in Operation and Act: Thus He is the Word of God's Power, for as He *created all things, so He upboldeth*



True Liberty the Gift

upholdeth all things by the Word of his Power: And He is the Word of God's Truth, the uncreated Wisdom, the Fountain of Illumination, and as such quick and powerful to convince, to convert, and to bring us out of Darknes into his marvellous Light. And He is also the Word of God's Grace which is able to build us up, and to give us an Inheritance among all them which are sanctified.

I proceed to discourse briefly on the Nature of Christian Liberty in some chief Particulars wherein the Son of God doth set us free.

And *first*, He sets us free from our natural Ignorance and Blindness with respect to the things of God.

In Man by Nature, we are told, dwelleth no good thing, and consequently no saving Knowledge of God, but *the only begotten Son which is in the Bosom of the Father He hath declared Him. Christ Jesus* hath been in all Ages of the World the Light of the World in Divine things, tho' under different Dispensations of Clearness and Manifestation; and He who to others in times past was as a Light shining in a dark Place, *hath brought Life and Immortality to Light* more abundantly thro' his Gospel: But as it was in the Days of *Moses* that the *Ægyptians* were involved



involved in Darkness, whilst the Children of *Israel* had Light in all their Dwellings, so it is now, *Light is come into the World, but Men love Darknefs rather than Light*, and so are deprived of the Benefit of it; for outward Discoveries of Truth till inwardly received, can no more profit than the Sun in the Firmament can give Sight to the Blind, but when that same God who *commanded the natural Light to shine out of Darknefs shineth in our Hearts to give us the Light of the Knowledge of the Glory of God in the Face of Jesus Christ*; then in his Light we truly see Light, and the two Witnesses agree together as Face answereth to Face in a Glafs.

The Difference of Judgment betwixt the spiritual and natural Man concerning Divine things lyes not in the rational Powers, or in the Acquirements of Learning, but in the different State and Condition of their Souls; the one sees them by a heavenly, the other seeks them by an earthly Light, therefore, like the Horses and Chariots of Fire at *Dothan*, what is clearly discerned by the one, is invisible to the other. How weak and ignorant was *Nicodemus* in his Conference with our Lord on the Subject of Regeneration! And yet *Nicodemus* was a Master in
Israel.



Israel. What a furious Persecutor of *Christianity* was *Paul* before his Conversion! and yet *Paul* was a great Scholar. But when it pleased the Lord to take away the Scales from their Eyes, and to open their Understandings, what they accounted Folly before, they now esteemed the highest Wisdom, and could say with the Psalmist, as touching their former Blindness, *So foolish was I and ignorant, even as a Beast before Thee.* And so it is with the *Christian* whose Eyes the Lord hath opened to see the wondrous things of his Law, for then he can truly say: "This one thing I know, that whereas "I was blind, now I see." He who before was ready to cast Stones at any that should tell him of his Weakness, Sin and Misery, now sees of a Truth and readily confesses, that he is of himself poor, and wretched, and miserable, and blind, and naked: He who once thought it enough to speak respectfully of *Christ*, but felt no absolute need of Him in his Soul, now sees Him to be his only Hope and only Help, and that in Him alone, as the only begotten of the Father full of Grace and Truth, lyes all his Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption: He who in Times past could see no Harm

Harm in the vain Pleasures, Pass-times and Amusements of a sinful World, but took Pleasure in them and those that followed them, now sees that the End of these things is Death, and can only take Delight in the Ways and People of God: And lastly, he who was accustomed to read the Scriptures only as a History or a System of good moral Rules and Precepts, the Vail being now taken away from before his Eyes, he discovers therein the hidden Treasures of Divine Wisdom, even the Wisdom of God in a Mystery: they are no longer a Book sealed, but the Lamb hath opened the Seals thereof, given him a right Understanding in all needful Truth, and made him wise unto Salvation.

But *secondly*: As the Son of God sets us free from all dangerous Ignorance and Error in things pertaining to God; so doth He likewise from the prevailing Power of Sin. When *Adam* fell from God, he fell under the Power of the Devil and his Angels; and had not the Son of God, by a miraculous Interposition of Love, come to his Relief, as the Bruiser of the Serpent, to destroy the Work of the Devil, even all that Sin had wrought to his Perdition, there could have been

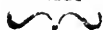


been no Help for him either in the Height above or in the Depth beneath—This is signified to us in the Parable of the Traveller that fell among Thieves. In this miserable Spectacle behold, O Man ! thy self pourtrayed : (for by Nature thou standest in the Image of fallen *Adam*, and the Image of God is thy new Birth by Grace from the second *Adam*;) thou art fallen among Thieves who have stripped thee of thy Virgin Innocence, robbed thee of thy fair Garland of Perfection, wounded thy Conscience and left thee half dead, even destitute of that spiritual and holy Life which was thy Crown of Glory and Immortality : Stop awhile and consider here thy twofold Original by Nature ; first, as thou camest out of the Hands of thy Creator, pure and spotless as the Angels, the Glory of the Creation, the Envy of Devils, and the Delight of God. How blessed was the Time when Man knew no Sorrow as he knew no Sin ; when a free Communication was open betwixt Heaven and Earth, and Angels were seen descending and ascending between the two peaceful Kingdoms, nay when God himself condescended to converse with Man with the Familiarity of a Friend.

But

But soon, alas! was this happy Scene closed by that fatal Period when Sin entered into the World, and Death by Sin. By this woful Apostacy was brought about in the Soul that sad Reverse from Purity to Pollution, from Innocence to Guilt: The Divine Image left sorrowful her defiled Mansion—The Soul felt itself wounded with the poisoned Dart of Sin—The Mind became darkened and disordered in all its Faculties, the Judgment perverted, the Affections misplaced, and the Will inclined to Evil continually—The Body became bestial and diseased, subject to Mortality and Corruption, and the whole Man (the most excellent Part of God's Workmanship) disfigured and spoiled, insomuch that he who was before a glorious Display and Temple of the ever-blessed Trinity, became at once the Captive and Derision of insulting Devils: Nay the whole Creation sympathized with Man in the sad Catastrophe of the Fall—That equable Temperature and Harmony in which consisted the permanent Health and Beauty, and the Perfection of every Creature, withdrew; Discord, the Parent of Distemper and Decay, raged thro' all the Elements, and every Life of Nature felt

Corrup-



Corruption : So much indeed of Good was left as might set forth the Wisdom and Power of the Creator, so much as might explain to Man the greater Good he had lost, but abundantly sufficient of Evil took place, thro' Loss of that Good, to make Man feel the wretched Effects of Sin, to convince him of the Folly of his Choice, and to lead him back to God by Repentance : At so dear a Price was bought the Knowledge of Good and Evil *.

Behold here, O Man, thy second sad Original, and see thyself in fallen *Adam*, and fallen *Adam* in thyself ! Where now is thy boasted Liberty, the Sufficiency of thy Reason, and that conceited Dignity of thy Nature which thou hast learned to prate of ? Why I tell thee from Authority no less than sacred, that thou art born blind ; that

* It may not be unseasonable to remark here on the Error of most Physico-Theologists in supposing the present mundane System to continue in its original State of Perfection, and who therefore stretch their Invention to reconcile the Disorder and Evil that is in Nature with the infinite Wisdom and Goodness of God, and to find out physical Uses for the same ; not considering that the present Constitution of Things is in a mixt Condition of Good and Evil, and that if natural Evil in some Instances may serve by its Counteraction to restrain or remedy the same in others, yet that such a necessity of working lay not in God, but is the gracious Effect of his over-ruling Power ; for that before the Curse all things were very good, and *only* became otherwise for moral Uses and Purposes to Man.

thou



thou wast conceived in Sin, and art by Nature a Child of Wrath; and that thou mayst with *Job* say to Corruption, *Thou art my Father, and to the Worm, Thou art my Mother and my Sister*: Nay thou art a diseased Leper all over, and from the Crown of the Head to the Sole of the Foot there is nothing but Wounds and Bruises and putrifying Sores; thou art likewise by Condition a Captive in the Hands of thy most deadly Enemies, and there is but a Breath of Air betwixt thy Soul and the Pit of Hell: Such is thy Genealogy and State by Nature: But see! The good *Samaritan* is passing by — He stops — He sees thee in thy Blood — He pities thy Distress and Poverty, and comes to thy Relief — He offers thee “ Gold tried in
“ the Fire that thou mayst be rich, and white
“ Rayment that thou mayst be cloathed, and
“ that the Shame of thy Nakedness do not
“ appear; and bids thee to anoint thine Eyes
“ with his Eye-salve that thou mayst see.”
In a word, He is come to pay thy Ransom and to loose the captive Chain, to do away thy Sin, and to heal thine Infirmities, and to give Power to as many as will receive Him to become the Sons of God: But for a Word of Doctrine upon the Point.

Rev. iii.
18.

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The



The Son of God sets us free from the prevailing Power of Sin by the Spirit of Grace and Sanctification in the Hearts of Believers: *for where the Spirit of the Lord is there is Liberty* in this respect also. Let it be remembered, that I speak here of Freedom from the prevailing Power of Sin, and not of sinless Perfection: and this Distinction ought to be well retained. Whatever is contrary to the Purity and Holiness of the Divine Nature has in it the Nature of Sin, and something of this remains even in the Children of the Regeneration during their stay in these earthly Tabernacles; and therefore it is that we hear even the Apostle complaining of in-dwelling Sin: And yet this well consists with those Words of St. *John, Whosoever is born of God, doth not commit Sin, for his (i. e. God's) Seed remaineth in him.* The regenerate *Christian* (taking his Name from his better Part) sinneth not in that Divine Nature of which he is made Partaker, for the incorruptible Seed, which is *Christ* in him the Hope of Glory, cannot sin: But the Law in his Members, that Seed of the Serpent which warreth against the Seed of the Woman in his mortal evil Nature (for they are contrary the one to the other) is daily fighting

fighting against and troubling him: But then he can say with St. Paul; *If I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but Sin that dwelleth in me*: Now he that can say this, is no longer the Servant of Sin to obey it in the Lusts thereof; tho' it be his Adversary to molest him and exercise his Vigilance and prove his Constancy, it is not his Lord to exercise Dominion over him, for he hates and strives against it; being then mortified in his Will and Affections to it, how can he who is thus dead to Sin live any longer therein? the *Christian* then, tho' assaulted, and that almost continually, by the Corruptions of his Nature and by the infernal Malice and Power of evil Spirits, *for we wrestle not only against Flesh and Blood, but against Principalities, against Powers, against the Rulers of the Darkeness of this World, against Spiritual Wickedness in high Places*; yet in all these things he is more than Conqueror thro' Him that loveth him, for the Lord, whose he is, and whom he serves, hath provided him with Armour, instructed him in the Use of it, and giveth him Victory in the Battle.

Thirdly, The Son of God sets us free from the Bondage and Condemnation of the

Law. The Law is generally considered only as an outward Directory or System of Duties, and not as likewise shadowing out a Condition of the Soul in its way to *Christ*: but herein it is not without its Spiritual Meaning and Reference. As the Servitude of the *Israelites* in *Ægypt* figures to us Man's spiritual Bondage by Nature, whereby he is tied and bound with the Chains of inbred Sin and Corruption, so the Maledictions and Condemnation of the Law represent to us that Sentence of Death in Himself which every Sinner feels upon the Law being sent home to his Heart with a convincing Power by the Spirit of God, filling his Conscience with dreadful Apprehensions of the Punishment due to Sin, and representing God as a consuming Fire taking Vengeance of all Ungodliness. These slavish Fears the troubled Soul oft-times continues under for a long Season, the Remembrance of its Sins being grievous unto it, and the Burthen of them intolerable; and in this Wilderness State of Doubts and Fears, surrounded with Dangers and Enemies on every Side, it travels as did the *Israelites* in the Desert till the typical *Moses* delivered them up to the typical *Joshua* to conduct them into the promised

mised Land: Thus the Law maketh nothing perfect, neither can it give Rest to the wounded Conscience: This must be the Work of *Jesus* our spiritual *Joshua*, to whom we are invited to come in Faith, that He may free us from this Bondage also, give us Rest in Himself, and guide our Feet in the way of Peace, according to that his gracious Promise, *Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you Rest.*

But having considered this Point more largely in another Place,

I proceed *fourthly* to observe, That the Son of God sets us free from the Slavery of the World, that great Tyrant which keeps so many Millions of Souls in Bondage.

We hear much Talk of Liberty, and see great Fears and Jealousies employed about it: and indeed, my Brethren, Liberty is a precious thing and well worth the Care and Pains of preserving; but yet how many among those who make such a Stir about it continue willingly the Servants of Corruption! What Man is he that goeth on to enlarge his Desires as Hell, that he may add House to House and Land to Land, and set his Nest on high? What Woman is that who wearieth herself for very Vanity, that she

may be as fine and fashionable as her Neighbours, and prideth herself in that which is no better than the Badge of her Shame? Who are all they that haste to rise up early and late take Rest, eating the Bread of Carefulness with such Distrust and Anxiety about the Supplies of Life as if there were no God in *Israel* that careth for his Children? These may call themselves *Christians* and free, but I tell you of a Truth, that all they who so mind earthly things are less than virtuous contented Heathens, and greater Slaves than the meanest Hewers of Wood and Drawers of Water; they are Vassals to their own unreasonable and foolish Passions, and Drudges to a short Life which the very Fowls of the Air pass with less Wretchedness and Disquiet: But when the Son of God hath stablished our Hearts with his free Spirit, we are delivered from the Hands of these Lords and Task-masters which have exercised such tyrannous Rule over us, we know that He in whom we trust both for Soul and Body is a faithful Creator, and therefore have learned to cast all our Care upon Him who careth for us.

Another Bondage which comes under this Head is the Fear of Man in things
per-

pertaining to God. This has ever been a Hindrance and Snare to many Persons even of Good Will in their religious Progress, they fear to honour God in their Lives, as they ought, lest the Lord should keep them back from the Honour that cometh of Man! But when the Son has made us free, his Spirit fortifies the Soul against all Opposition, and makes the Man of God valiant for the Truth; and here if we prove faithful to the Grace given us, we have nothing to fear, but shall be carried safe thro' Shame and Sufferings of every kind, for He that rideth on the White Horse is our Leader and Defender; and " He hath a Bow to wound his Adversaries, and a Crown to give his Followers, and he goeth forth conquering and to conquer."

The last Thing in which I shall instance as the *Christian's* Gift and Privilege, is a Freedom to Righteousness.

The heavy Bondage of the first Covenant or Legal Dispensation given by *Moses* and typified by *Hagar* and *Ismael*, consisted not, as it is understood by many, in the Number and Slavery of its Rites and Ceremonies,



remonies, but chiefly as it required of Man a perfect Reſtitution of Life without miniſtring Strength for the Work, like as the *Ægyptian* Task-maſters exacted of the *Hebrews* the full Tale of Brick without giving them Straw: Nor indeed is it in the Nature of an outward Law to give inward Power for Obedience: This muſt come from another Source, and fallen Man can only fulfil the Law of God by virtue of the Law of the Spirit of Life, giving both Will and Strength for Performance: And therefore as Obedience could not be paid to the Law by Man, ſo neither could Juſtification be attained to by it: This cometh by our New Creation in *Chriſt Jeſus*, which is that Grace of God which bringeth Salvation, and whereby we are made a willing People in the Day of his Power, to walk in the Obedience of Faith, and “ to offer
 “ up ſpiritual Sacrifices acceptable to God
 “ by *Jeſus Chriſt*.” Hereby the Will of God (which is our Sanctification) is wrought in us, and Works of Righteouſneſs (the Effect of a juſtifying Faith) are brought forth by us: In a word; hereby all Things obtain their proper Order and Courſe: The Tree is made good, and
 there-

therefore the Fruit is good also; Duties have their Foundation in Graces, and the Service of God is perfect Freedom. We therefore greatly dishonour as well as mistake the Nature of *Christianity*, when we represent it to ourselves or others as consisting in constrained Acts of Duty and outward Worship, in a set Behaviour, a forced Conversation on religious Subjects, in talking much of *Christ*, or speaking Scripture Language: for Labour and Study to do these Things shews that we are not yet brought into *Christian Liberty*, which is a Freedom to Righteousness and to a Life and Conversation becoming the Gospel of *Christ*: It is then only we can truly say, that his Yoke is easy and his Burden light, that the Ways of his Religion are Ways of Pleasantness, and that all its Paths are Peace; for in Newness of Spirit Newness of Life is natural, and therefore easy, and with Delight we run the Way of his Commandments when he hath set our Hearts at Liberty.

But here let it be observed by way of Caution to him who is called to be the Lord's Free-man, that he be not high minded but fear. Is he brought into Liberty?

Let



Let him rejoyce in his Liberty with an humble and thankful Heart, and have the tenderest Compassion on them that are in Bonds, even under the Law to *Christ*, not presuming to despise the Day of small Things in others, but condescending to Men of low Estate, and bearing their Burdens as a Fellow-helper with them in their Weakness; remembering that if he differeth from another, he hath nothing but what he hath received as a free Gift, and therefore ought not to glory as if he had not received it: Besides, God is the Judge, and He putteth down one and setteth up another.—Again; Let him use his Liberty with Moderation and Prudence both towards them that are without and them that are within; for tho' all Things of an indifferent Nature be lawful to him, yet all Things are not expedient: *Christian* Liberty ought to subject itself to the Law of Charity, and never be used where it may give Offence to our weak Brethren.

I shall conclude with the mention of some few Particulars, wherein the Son of God hath not set us free, to prevent some fatal Mistakes concerning the Nature of *Christian* Liberty. And

First,

First, He hath not released us from Obedience and Subjection to the Civil Powers, but on the contrary obliged us by Precept and his own Example to obey them that are in Authority and have Rule over us, as well for Conscience sake as because they are Ministers of God to us for good, either in the way of Protection, or Correction.

Secondly, He has not set us free from conforming to the Rules and Orders of that Society of *Christians* with whom we are in Communion, provided such Rules and Orders do not restrain us from bringing Glory to God, by promoting the spiritual Welfare of our Neighbour, nor any Ways hinder our own Advancement in Godliness; for in these Things one is our Master, even *Christ*, and no other.

Thirdly, He has not taken away or slackened our Obligations to any moral or relative Duty; for these are bound upon us by a Law that altereth not; and therefore *Antinomian* Doctrine is here *Antichristian* Doctrine; tho' there is the less Occasion for Caution in this Particular, as one great Part of *Christian Liberty* consists in
render-



rendering the Practice of these Duties our free Choice and willing Service.

Lastly, The Son of God does not set us free from Afflictions, Crosses and Temptations; for these prove the *Christian's* Fidelity, exercise his Graces, and perfect him in the School of *Christ*. But in all Things wherein we are entangled and held to the Damage of our Souls and to the endangering of our Salvation, if we wait faithfully and patiently, upon the Lord, He will deliver us; and if in these Things the Son shall make us free we shall be free indeed. Hath He then called us out of Darkness into his marvellous Light? Let us walk as Children of the Light and of the Day: Hath He rescued us from the Power of Sin and Satan to bring us into the glorious Liberty of the Sons of God? Let us stand fast in the Liberty wherewith *Christ* hath made us free, and not be intangled again with the Yoke of Bondage.

Now to Him who hath visited and redeemed his People, that we being delivered out of the Hands of our Enemies, may serve Him without Fear, in Holiness

of the Son of God.

*Holiness and Righteousness before Him
all the Days of our Life, be ascribed
all Honour and Glory of us and all the
Israel of God, now and for evermore.
Amen.*

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SERMON
VIII.



SER-

S E R M O N IX.

Christ both the hidden and revealed
Mystery.



COLOSS. i. 26.

*The Mystery which hath been hid from Ages
and from Generations, but now is made
manifest to his Saints.*

SERMON
IX.



WITHOUT Controversy, says the
same Apostle, “ Great is the My-
“ stery of Godliness, God was
“ manifest in the Flesh.” And St. *Peter*,
speaking of the Riches of Divine Grace
and Love displayed in our Redemption by
Jesus Christ, and preached by the Power of
the Holy Ghost, adds, “ which Things
“ the Angels desire to look into :” Im-
plying, that the Work and Process of Man’s
Salvation, as related in the Gospel and car-
ried on in the Souls of the Faithful, affords
Matter of Wonder and Astonishment to
those blessed Beings (how little soever some
more



more nearly concerned seem to be affected by it) who excited by a Holy Curiosity desire to pry into this Mystery of Compassion and Mercy, that they may be furnished with a fresh Theme for the Praise of the Divine Goodness. But the Holy Angels, tho' employed on many Occasions and Messages relating to this Wonder of Love; tho' they interest themselves so much in the Happiness of Men, as to rejoice at their Conversion; and are appointed to be their Guardians and Protectors under God, to minister to the Heirs of Salvation; yet as *Christ* took not on him the Nature of Angels, but the Nature of Man, so they cannot experience that Grace of God which bringeth Salvation, as they do not need it, nor penetrate into the Mysteries of a Faith which is neither suited to their Nature nor Occasions: But yet they know enough of the Love of *Christ* for Mankind to give Glory to God on High for Peace restored on Earth, and for such amazing good Will towards Men as is now manifested in the gracious and wonderful Oeconomy of their Redemption. The Mystery then here spoken of is the Whole of Man's Redemption as revealed in the Gospel Dispensation:
and



and the chief Business at present will be to shew,

First, In what Sense it was a hidden Mystery before the Time of this Revelation; and

Secondly, How and to whom it is now made manifest.

That *Christ* a Saviour was promised to *Adam* and *Eve* by God Himself under the Character of the Seed of the Woman that should bruise the Serpent's Head, we read *Gen. iii.* That this comfortable Doctrine was transmitted to their Posterity, and that *Seth*, *Enoch*, and *Noah* were Preachers of Righteousness in the Spirit of *Christ* is not to be doubted; for "by Faith *Noah*, being
" warned of God of Things not seen as yet,
" prepared the Ark to the saving of his
" House." But what other Faith was this than Faith in that Redeemer, of which the Ark was a Type, and who should save his People from their Sins?

Abraham soon after the Flood had, according to the Testimony of *Christ* himself, very clear Discoveries of Him; nay so eminent was his Faith, that he is styled the Father of the Faithful: And among



his near Descendants were some remarkable Types of the Messiah, as *Isaac*, *Jacob*, and *Joseph*. If we come lower down to the giving of the Law by *Moses*, the Predictions and Resemblances of the Saviour, in his Person and Offices, thicken upon us, the Law being in almost all its Ministrations and Services a School-master to lead its Disciples to *Christ*; accordingly, all its Sacrifices and Offerings, and the very Structure and Furniture of the Tabernacle, as likewise those of the Temple afterwards, were Prefigurations of this kind: Nay the miraculous Food and Water ministred to the *Israelites* in the Wilderness, their extraordinary Deliverances and signal Victories, together with the most illustrious and best of their Heroes, Judges, and Kings are considered, many of them by the inspired Writers, in their several Designations and Characters, as so many Lessons of Instruction to teach both them and us what *Christ* was to be, do, or suffer, in the Fullness of Time, for the *Israel* of God.

These things being so, we are not to understand by the Words of the Text, that the Mystery of Gospel Salvation was so hid before the Coming of *Christ* in the Flesh,

as to be entirely unknown, for that was not the Case ; but only that it was shaded under obscure and distant Resemblances, and represented in Types and Allegories then little understood by the Generality. The *Jews*, it is true, had the Writings of *Moses* and the Prophets, and these were read every Sabbath Day to the People, yet so great was their Blindness at the Time of our Lord's personal Appearance among them, that they knew not Him who was the Sum and Substance of their Scriptures, nay, argued against his Mission and Character from those very Writings which in so many Places expressly testified of Him : The Reason was this ; their Hearts were carnal, and consequently their Understanding also, and therefore they erred, not knowing the Scriptures : Hence *Christ's* humble Appearance in the Flesh was a hidden Mystery to those whose Minds were set upon Vanity, and who had pictured the Messiah on their fond Imaginations in the Likeness of earthly Majesty ; and hence it was that the Words which He spake, and the Works which He did, the Sufferings He underwent, and the Nature of that Kingdom which He came to erect, were all hidden Mysteries to

them: But tho' it was thus with the greater Part of the *Jews*, yet it was not so with all, for we read of *Simeon* and *Anna* and other spiritual Persons that looked for Redemption in *Jerusalem* at that Time; and are given to understand by this and other Proofs in Scripture, that our gracious and good God never suffered his Truth entirely to fail on Earth, never left Himself without Witness in the Hearts of some chosen Vessels, even in Times of the greatest Darkness and Apostacy, to testify of that Grace of God which bringeth Salvation, and to warn a careless World to flee from the Wrath to come: And therefore the *Mystery of Godliness* said here to be hidden from Ages and Generations, does not mean a total Concealment of it, but one comparatively so with respect to that greater Degree of Clearness in which Life and Immortality have been brought to Light by the Gospel, according to those Words of the same Apostle, speaking of the Extent of this *Mystery*, "which, saith he, in
" other Ages was not made known unto
" the Sons of Men, as it is now revealed
" unto his holy Apostles and Prophets by
" the Spirit."

Ephes. iii.
5.

But if it was thus with the *Jews*, that most favoured People; if Darknes was so upon the Face of the Deep, with regard to the Dispensation they were under, that they could hardly penetrate the venerable Obscurity in which the Mystery of their Salvation was wrapped up; what shall we say of the Heathen World? What, but that their Night was dark, and that their Lamp was dim indeed? The former had *Moses* and the Prophets for their Guides, significant Figures and Emblems, and many instructive Miracles and Providences, to serve as the Moon to give them Light in the Night Season, and to reflect, tho' with a fainter Beam, the Glory of that Sun of Righteousness which was hastening his Course to rise upon them with Healing in his Wings. But with the Latter it was far otherwise, for even the Light of this friendly Satellite was with-held from their Hemisphere: To these was appointed no *Moses* to conduct them thro' the Wilderness, no typical *Joshua* to lead them into *Canaan*, no Form of Worship by Divine Institution to give them mystic Patterns and Representations of heavenly Things, and no goodly Fellowship of Prophets to direct their View thro'

thro' Shadows and Figures to substantial and spiritual Verities; and therefore the great Mystery of Godliness, God manifest in the Flesh to destroy the Works of the Devil, was to them a hidden Mystery indeed, and the Darkness of their Dispensation compared to that of the *Jews* is represented by the Shadow of Death. But shall we here leave them as destitute of all Hope, as cut off from all Fellowship in the Mystery of Grace and Salvation, and without any Ray or Glimmering of Light to direct their Steps thro' the gloomy Vale to the unknown God of Mercy?—We are not warranted so to do, for he that made the greater Light to rule the Day, and the lesser Light to rule the Night, made the Stars also: The same Lord whose Mercies are over all his Works, and who hath declared Himself to be the God, not of the *Jews* only, but of the *Gentiles* also, left not Himself without Witness among the latter, for tho' He gave them not the Volume of the Book wherein the sacred Truths of our Religion are recorded, yet He left open to them the Volume of Nature in which they might understand the invisible Things of God, even his eternal Power and Godhead,

by the Things that are made. In this instructive Book are written many great and glorious Truths relating both to our temporal and eternal State; nor is it hard to conceive how even the Vegetation of a Grain of Corn, by which the Apostle so aptly illustrates the Resurrection of the Body, might possibly lead the attentive and pious Observer to the Knowledge of that Doctrine: Nay, highly credible it is, that the whole visible Creation bears Witness to the Divinity of that eternal Word which gave it Being*, holding out to us in that Analogy which subsists between Things natural and divine many significant Emblems of redeeming Love †. But still it must be confessed, and that with the most profound Gratitude on our Part for the gracious Discovery, that most of the important Points relating to our Redemption are only attainable, as to the distinct Knowledge of them, by Revelation, particularly, that wonderful Instance of Divine Love,

* *In toto mundo luget Trinitas* — a Trinity shines thro' all Nature—is a Maxim ascribed to *Zoroaster the Persian*. See his Fragments by *Le Clerc*.

† Those Words of the Apostle where, speaking of the Gospel he says, *Which was preached to every Creature which is under Heaven*, if literally translated, will run thus, "Which was preached in every Creation under Heaven." *Galoss. i. 23.*

the Incarnation of the Son of God by a Virgin : This being contrary to the Order of Nature, could not be learned in Nature : The wisest among Men could not be led to the Knowledge of this wonderful Nativity by any less Light than that of a miraculous Star : This was a Mystery hidden from all Ages and Generations of the Gentile World ; it was a Knowledge too wonderful and excellent for them, they could not attain unto it. But yet as they were not left destitute of all outward Light, small as it was, so neither were they without an inward Teacher ; and indeed without such a one to send Truth home to our Hearts with a practical Influence, all that we gather by the help of Reason, either from Books or Observations on Nature, are no better than shadowy Representations of Truth, and like those delusive Images that float in the Brain of him “ who dreameth that he “ eateth, and behold, when he awaketh, “ his Soul is empty.” Now that *Jesus Christ*, as that Truth and Grace of God that bringeth Salvation, hath communicated Himself in a measure to all the Children of Men, to a Possibility of Salvation, is a Truth founded on Gospel Testimony, and



answers well to that friendly Character given to Him, the glorious Son of Righteousness, as that Light which lighteth every Man that cometh into the World. He is the compassionate Voice of God calling out in every Heart, as aforetime to *Adam*, and saying, O Sinner, Where art thou? What hast thou done! O how great is thy Misery! He calleth them to Judgment at the Bar of Conscience, that they may be convinced of Sin, and stand Self-condemned for it; and then He calleth to them in a Voice of Mercy, Pardon and Grace — “Come
 “ unto me all ye that labour and are heavy
 “ laden, and I will give you Rest.” Indeed He telleth not his Name to all, as He told it not to *Jacob* when he blessed him: But if they come to Him as the Light and Love, as the Grace and Peace of God, He will give them to partake in the Blessedness of his Nature; for He “ who died
 “ for all,” and so became a sufficient “ Pro-
 “ pitiation, not for our Sins only, but also
 “ for the Sins of the whole World,” is loving and gracious to all that call upon Him: And to the End that we might neither doubt of the Extent of his Mercy, nor yet of the high Privilege of Believers, He
 Hath

Gen xxxii.
29.

1 John ii.
2.

and revealed Mystery.

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IX.

1 Tim. iv.
10.

hath declared Himself “ the Saviour of all
“ Men, but especially of those that be-
“ lieve.” To the Former, *viz.* to the
Gentiles, who are obedient to the heavenly
Call, He is the Wisdom and Goodness of
God in a hidden Mystery ; to the latter He
is the Revelation of the Mystery, as is fully
declared in the Verse of the Text in Con-
nexion with that which follows. “ The
“ Mystery which hath been hid from
“ Ages and from Generations, but now is
“ made manifest to his Saints ; to whom
“ God would make known what is the
“ Riches of the Glory of this Mystery
“ among * the *Gentiles*, which is *Christ* in
“ you the Hope of Glory.”

Shall we then say, That all who have
not heard the Sound of the precious Gospel
of *Christ* with the outward Ear, nor received
it in the Way of Man’s Ministry, have nei-
ther Lot nor Part in this Matter ? Let it

* It will be difficult to assign a sufficient Reason why
the *Greek* should be translated here *among* the *Gentiles* and
not *in* the *Gentiles*, seeing that the Preposition $\epsilon\iota\varsigma$ has the
same Power before $\tau\omicron\upsilon\tau\omicron\iota\varsigma$ [*Gentiles*] as before $\sigma\upsilon\iota\varsigma$ [you]
in the following Part of the Sentence ; and as an inward
Christ is predicated of in both Places, in *Them* as the hidden
Power of God to the Possibility of their Salvation ; in *You*
as manifested to be that Foundation whereon is built your
Hope of immortal Glory.

not



not be so said; for then must we say, that the precious Blood of *Christ* loses more than Half its Virtue; that by this dreadful Limitation by far the greater Part of Sinners was decreed to perish, and that Judgment hath triumphed over Mercy—Then must we say, that Grace hath not abounded as much as Sin, and that the Second *Adam* hath done less for the Salvation of the human Race than the First *Adam* did for its Destruction; and lastly, we must say, in flat Contradiction to the Scriptures, that tho' by the Offence of the latter Judgment came upon all Men to Condemnation, yet by the Righteousness of the Former the free Gift came *not* upon all Men unto Justification of Life.

But how can the free Gift belong to those that know it not? Be it answered; as Salvation does to Infants, who have the Grace tho' they want the Understanding of it: And that as the Heathens are involved in the sad Consequences of the Fall, without knowing the Source of their Malady; so do they stand in the Grace of *Christ* tho' they know not Him thro' whom it cometh. By this they are led to the one true God and Father of all, for “no Man cometh
“ eth

and revealed Mystery.

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“ eth unto the Father but by the Son :”
And their Works done in this Grace are accepted of the Father in the Beloved, as were the Prayers and Alms of *Cornelius* the Gentile before he had the Gospel preached to him ; for in this way alone, *viz.* thro’ *Christ*, he that feareth God in every Nation, and worketh Righteousness, is accepted of Him ; “ neither is there Salvation “ in any other, for there is none other “ Name under Heaven given among Men “ whereby we must be saved.” Let not then the Children of Faith boast themselves, because of their high Privilege, against the Children of Mercy who have not attained to their Faith, for tho’ the latter on Account of their Inferiority be esteemed but as Dogs, if compared to those who sit down to Meat with their Lord, yet they feed on the Crumbs that fall from his Table ; nay, if they are faithful to the one Talent given them, He will own them for his Sheep, tho’ of another Fold ; their Faith in the one true God, tho’ they know not his Distinction of Persons, and their earnest Desire of Acceptance thro’ Mercy, will penetrate the Heart of the Son who is in the Bosom and Essence of the Father, and He will be to them

Acts iv.
12.

John x. 16.



them a Saviour: And forasmuch as the Persons here spoken of are supposed to have been in a Disposition gladly to embrace the Gospel Tidings of great Joy, had they been called to that blessed Privilege, so will they appear as swift Witnesses in the Judgment against all such Infidels as, in the Light of a Gospel Day, have neglected so great Salvation, and rejected the Counsel of God against themselves, thro' an evil Heart of Unbelief.

But if they may be Partakers in the Fellowship of the Mystery of Grace who attain not to the Knowledge of it, what Advantage then have Believers over Unbelievers? Much every way; for to these are committed the lively Oracles of God, which are profitable for Reproof, for Correction, for Instruction in Righteousness: These have the instituted Means of Grace; the Life of the Holy *Jesus* for their Pattern, all that He hath taught, done and suffered, for the Confirmation of their Faith, Hope, and Charity; and they have also a fuller Ministration of the Spirit of Grace for their Growth in Godliness, and Fellowship with the Household of Faith for their Edification and Comfort: Sufficient Cause then have Believers

Believers to be thankful for that distinguishing Grace of God which thus maketh them to differ, tho' nothing to Glory in as of themselves.

But it may be asked here—How are we concerned in this Subject? And what have we to do with them that are without? To this be it replied; that we are concerned both as Men and *Christians*, under the Obligations of Humanity and Charity, to extend our Consideration and compassionate Regard to those that are allied to us in the same common Nature; and our pious Labours, by public Encouragement, to promote *Christian* Knowledge among those that have it not, confess them capable Subjects of Salvation, and not excluded, as some suppose, from the covenanted Mercies of God in *Christ Jesus**: for were they under the total Dominion of Sin and spiritual Death, which is the proper Condition of fallen Man out of Grace, there could be no Help for them, and the Word preached could

* This Error arises from Mistakes concerning the Nature and Extent of the Covenant of Grace, which is offered, tho' not manifested alike to all: And were any Persons totally excluded from the Benefit of it; in that Case, they would only differ from Devils as Devils incarnate; nor could they stand in any Relation to this World as a State of Probation.



not profit them : If *Christ* be not in them as a Seed of Grace and Power unto Salvation, they must then be Reprobates ; the outward Testimony of *Jesus* could not then be received inwardly into their Hearts by Faith, and our Preaching and their Hearing would be altogether in vain : But if the contrary be allowed, then let it be believed, that the merciful, omnipotent God who has not bound Himself to the Use of Means, can find Access to the Spirit of his Creatures without them, or that He will provide others in the Room of those which we hold to be, only generally, not universally, necessary to Salvation. When the diseased Woman sought her Cure from *Jesus* thro' touching the Hem of his Garment, she found it in the Use of the Means which her Faith had suggested to her : And when the Centurion answered our Lord, saying, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my Roof, but speak the Word only, and my Servant shall be healed ; according to his Faith, so it was. These Instances are, doubtless, recorded, not only to exemplify the Power of Faith in these two Gentile Believers, but also the unconfined Power of *Christ* to help and heal his poor sinful Creatures.

Second'y,

Secondly, This Doctrine may serve to mortify the Pride of the *Pharisee* and nominal Professor, who, on Account of their external Privileges and Advantages, appropriate to themselves the Favour of God, and despise others: But as *St. Paul* told the *Jews*, that the Uncircumcision of the Gentile, if found in Righteousness, should judge the Circumcision of the transgressing *Jew*, forasmuch as he only was the accepted *Jew* which was one inwardly, and the true Circumcision that of the Heart: So may it be said of thee and thy Baptism, O thou boasting Professor! What, tho' thy Name be *Christian*, yet if thou thyself art carnal, and livest to the World and the Flesh, thy Religion stands only in the Letter, and the spiritual Heathen shall judge thee also! Be not then high-minded but fear.

Lastly, This Doctrine is of Use to justify the Ways of God to Man, and to exalt the Praise of the Great Redeemer, in that, by a Display of Goodness commensurate to his Power, He hath extended his loving Kindness to the utmost Limits of his Creation *, that every Mouth may be stopped,

* Nay, it is a Doctrine which brings Glory to God, and Joy to all that can receive it, That the Energy of
when



when the Lord shall declare in Judgment to the Soul that dieth—“ In Me was thy Help—but thou hast destroyed thyself.”

In this View of *Christ's* comprehensive Grace and Love we see those Heathens left without Excuse, who when they knew, or might have known God, yet glorified Him not as God: Who forsaking the Guidance of that heavenly Ray which beamed upon their Souls thro' the Obscurity of their State, followed the Delusions of their own Imaginations, and the Wisdom of a vain Philosophy, by which they knew not God, and so their Understanding was darkened, and they given up to the Confusion and Errors of a reprobate Mind. Say then, O ye foolish and self-besotted Heathens! How will ye clear yourselves when you are judged, of all your filthy Superstitions, your gross Idolatry, your vile Affections, your execrable human Sacrifices, and other your abo-

Christ's redeeming Power extends even to this material System, and will one Day free it from that Evil, Disorder, and Vanity, under which it now groaneth and travaileth thro' the Curse of Sin, and wholly deliver it from the Bondage of Corruption into that heavenly Temperature and Purity of its paradisiacal State which is compared to the glorious Liberty appertaining to the Bodies of the Sons of God. See *Rom.* viii. 20, &c. *2 Pet.* iii. 13.

minable



minable Practices? Did the Light of Nature, or rather the Light of God in Nature, teach you this? Charge not your Maker thus foolishly and falsely, for our God is holy, and therefore cannot tempt nor lead to Sin: Or will you have to plead that you were left in the helpless Condition of your fallen Nature, reprobate to all Good, necessitated to Evil, and so sealed under Wrath by a Decree that altereth not? Neither will this Plea be admitted in your Justification, for a Seed of a heavenly Life and Nature was sowed in your Hearts, by which God was not only near to every one of you, but allied to you, by the Confession of your own Poets, calling you his Offspring: And in this near Relation, had you sought after Him you might have found Him: Besides, this good Seed in some amongst you took Root, sprang up, and bore much good Fruit: Now this divine Mystery hidden in you, and afterwards preached to many of you, was that Light, Love and Grace of God which bringeth Salvation, and given you to be the Reformer and Changer of your Nature: To this Saviour, tho' not revealed by Name, should you have turned, that He might pardon

Acts xviii
28.



your Offences, make you a clean Heart, and renew a right Spirit within you ; But you turned from your true Light into the Darknes and Deception of your own Reasonings, and here the Prince of Darknes laid hold on you, and so the Things belonging to your Peace were hidden from your Eyes : Say not then, that your Disease was incurable, and that an irrevocable Sentence of Death had passed upon you, whilst the peculiar People, the outwardly Chosen, had stolen away every Blessing, for the Tree of Life groweth on either Side of the River of God, and tho' its pleasant Fruit be the appointed Food for them, yet the Leaves of the Tree are for the healing of the Nations.

REV. xxii.
2.

But here let me turn aside one Moment to you who continue in worse than heathenish Infidelity under Advantages of Means and Light which the Gentiles had not ; for tho' the same Lord who is loving to every Man gave them sufficient to leave their gross Ignorance without Excuse, yet He who divideth his free Gift severally to all in such Measure as to Him seemeth good, nor giveth Account to any of this Matter, hath bestowed on you more than a
double



double Portion; for you have not only the hidden Mystery in common with them, but the Revelation of the Mystery; you have the Testimony of *Moses* and the Prophets, of *Christ* and his Apostles, besides many Calls and Invitations from the Mouths of his Ministers, loud and pressing: If then you will not hear your God speaking to you in the small still Voice, nor yet in his written Word, hear Him at least in the Voice of the Trumpet, for the Gospel hath founded even unto the Ends of our Land in this your Day of Visitation, nor hath it founded altogether in vain, for many have obeyed the Call.—Beware then that it found not in vain to you, for if it does not serve to convince, it will condemn. But we know you well, ye Sons of Reason, in your full Strength, and have weighed every Argument and Plea you have to offer for your Infidelity in the Balance of the Sanctuary, and found them wanting: Give us, you say, a Religion which we can comprehend, and Doctrines which will quadrate with our Reason, and we will believe them, but as to these unintelligible Mysteries we cannot away with them: But herein you err not knowing your own Weakness, in

that you set up a Sufficiency as of yourselves whereby to judge and determine concerning the deep Things of God; but as soon may you hope to mete out the Heavens with a Span, or to gather the Wind in your Fist, for these Things knoweth no Man of himself, but God revealeth them to us by his Spirit. Reason can indeed speculate upon the Works of God in the Creation, and frame Arguments and Conclusions from such ideal Knowledge, but the Things of the Spirit of God the natural Man, even of the greatest and most improved Abilities, as such, cannot receive them, nay counteth them Foolishness, for there is an infinite Disproportion betwixt his Faculties and these Objects, and therefore an utter Impossibility to discern supernatural Things but by a supernatural Light: Consequently, all Religion that has no deeper Foundation than in the Reasonings of the earthly Understanding must be attended with Doubts and Dissatisfaction, as wanting Evidence and Influence sufficient for the Mind to rest on with any tolerable Comfort: All that Men build hereon is no better than a Babel of Opinions and Conjectures, and all their Zeal and Knowledge in Religion but
walking



walking in the Light of their own Fire and in the Sparks that they have kindled. Will you admit of no Mysteries in Religion? Then you must live and die without any; for whether you consider God in the Methods of his Providence, or in the Works of his Creation, his Judgments in both are unsearchable, and his Ways past finding out: But are you desirous to believe and to be made Partakers of the Mystery of Godliness, “that you may know with all Saints “what is the Length and Breadth and “Depth and Height of the Mercies and Love of God in *Christ Jesus*?” Behold, the Work is half done; only cast out that Pride, and the Love of those Sins which indispose you for Faith, and trust in the Lord with all your Heart, and lean not unto your own Understanding, and the Father of Lights will cause the Light of Life to shine in your Hearts, which being received in Humility and the Obedience of Faith, gives the Knowledge of the Glory of God in the Face of *Jesus Christ*, for them that are meek will He guide in Judgment, and such as are gentle them will He teach his Way: So will He fill you with Joy and Peace in believing, and the Spirit of Truth



will rest upon you. And this introduces the last Head, which was to shew how the great Mystery of our Salvation by *Jesus Christ* is made manifest to us.

Tho' it be a great Blessing to have the sacred Scriptures in our Possession, as they are a profitable Means of Knowledge and a precious Testimony to that Eternal Word who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, yet the written Relation of what we are to believe and know of Him, without the Revelation of it to our Hearts by his Spirit, is not sufficient to make us wise unto Salvation: And therefore St. *Paul* to the *Ephesians*, prays, that “ the God of our Lord
 “ *Jesus Christ*, the Father of Glory, might
 “ give unto them the Spirit of Wisdom and
 “ Revelation in the Knowledge of Him,
 “ that the Eyes of their Understanding
 “ being enlightened, they might know
 “ what was the Hope of their Calling, and
 “ what the Riches of the Glory of his In-
 “ heritance in the Saints.” For want of turning to God in Prayer, and an humble teachable Disposition for this Manifestation of his Spirit, it was, that the *Jews* stuck in all the perplexing Uncertainty of a literal Knowledge concerning the Messiah,
 for

for tho' they had the Words that spake of Him, yet they knew not Him of whom they spake, the Vail being upon their Hearts when they read the Law and the Prophets, and therefore their Eyes were blinded; and the same Vail remaineth until this Day untaken away, in the reading of the New Testament, from the Hearts of all who read the Scriptures as they did, and such Knowledge, be it of a *Christ* to come, or of a *Christ* already come, availeth not to the saving of the Soul: But what the same Apostle says concerning *Israel*, *Nevertheless, when it shall turn to the Lord, the Vail shall be taken away*, is equally applicable to us: If we turn to Him who is the true Light, then in his Light shall we see Light, and He will open our Understanding that we may understand the Scriptures: Now, adds the Apostle, *the Lord is that Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is Liberty*: that is, *Jesus Christ* is the Source and Giver of this Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation, and all they that are fitly prepared to receive it, are thereby set at Liberty from every Bondage that keeps the Mind in Darkness, whether they be vain Reasonings, doubtful Disputations,

2 Cor. iii.
16.



the learned Criticisms of Man's Wisdom, or other unprofitable Speculations concerning Truth; for being *Christ's* Disciples indeed, they have that Promise fulfilled in them, that "they shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall make them free." And as the Spirit of the Lord enlarges the Capacity of the Soul by bringing it into a glorious Freedom for the Contemplation of Divine Truth, so does it by an assimilating Power, bring us into spiritual Union with Him who is Truth itself, and so we become joined to the Lord in one and the same Spirit: And therefore the Apostle, speaking of the Consequence of this Liberty, saith in the following Verse: *We all with open Face beholding as in a Glass the Glory of the Lord, are changed into the same Image from Glory to Glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.*

This Divine Light opening to the Understanding the Knowledge of the Scriptures; and this spiritual Union with the Light shining in our Hearts to give us "the Knowledge of the Glory of God in the Face of *Jesus Christ*;" are set forth by St. *Peter* in the following Words: *We have also a more sure Word of Prophecy,*
where-

whereunto ye do well that ye take Heed, as unto a Light that shineth in a dark Place, until the Day dawn, and the Day-Star arise in your Hearts.

SERMON
IX.

2 Pct. i.
19.

That by *the more sure Word of Prophecy* in this Place we are not to understand the bare Letter or literal Sense of the Prophecy, but the Interpretation of it as given by the Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation, appears from the two following Verses: *Knowing this first, that no Prophecy of the Scripture is of any private Interpretation, for the Prophecy came not in old Time by the Will of Man, but holy Men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost*: Giving us hereby to understand, that the Knowledge of the Scriptures stands not in Man's Will or Wisdom, and that no less than the same Divine Teacher who gave the Prophecies, could give unerring Clearness and Application in the Knowledge of them; and consequently, that no Man's private Opinion or Judgment, however eminent for his Learning and Sagacity, is of sufficient Authority in this Matter; for without this Heavenly Instructor we may read the Law and the Prophets to as little Purpose as those *Jews* and their Rulers are said to have done,

SERMON
IX.A&S xiii.
27.

done, who knew not him who was the Subject of those Writings, “ nor yet the “ Voices of the Prophets which were read “ every Sabbath Day.”

But then this *more sure Word of Prophecy*, tho’ it be an inward Divine Testimony to the Truth of the sacred Writings, and, as such, a more convincing Evidence than an audible Voice, or any other Report of the Senses, yet as the Seat of its Operations is Man’s natural Understanding, therefore the Apostle speaks of it, *as a Light shining in a dark Place*, especially when compared to that far more glorious Manifestation of *Christ* in the Soul, which he describes by the *Day-dawn, and the Day-Star arising in the Heart*, and so shining more and more unto the perfect Day. Here the Word of God’s Truth co-operates with the Word of his Power, and with the Word of his Grace, both to the Illumination and the Sanctification of the Soul. The former may be considered as a Divine Light reflected to us from the Testimony of the inspired Writers; this, as an Emanation of Glory direct and immediate from the Fountain of Light within us, insomuch that they who are brought into this happy Expe-

Experience can say, as the Men of *Samaria* did to the Woman of their City: “ Now “ we believe, not because of thy Saying, “ for we have heard Him ourselves, and “ know that this is indeed the *Christ*, the “ Saviour of the World.”

SERMON

IX.

John iv.

22.

To conclude: Great and glorious to the spiritual Eye (tho' a Stumbling Block and Foolishness to that which is carnal, both then and to this very Day) was the Opening of the Great Mystery of our Salvation by *Jesus Christ*, in the Assumption of our Human into his Divine Nature, that He might fulfil the Law, as the Substance of its Shadows, the Accomplishment of its Prophecies, and the full Satisfaction of all its Demands, both as to Sin and Obedience: Yet, if we consider this Mystery in all its Parts, this was but the Middle of it; for, He who appeared under the Law as the Angel of the Covenant, and was figured under its various mystical Representations: He who in the Fullness of Time appeared in a Body of Flesh to fulfil all Righteousness, and to perfect that which before was but in Part, having finished all that the Father had given him to do in his Ministry here on Earth, when He gave up the Ghost, He was thenceforward to be manifested



manifested in Spirit and Power; and accordingly our Lord told his Disciples just before his Departure, that it was expedient for them, that He should go away, that as the Bridegroom had been present with them in the Flesh, He might for the future abide with them in Spirit—"At that Day ye shall know, that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you." Thus, as the Lord had a Work to do for us in the Day of his Humiliation; so had He a Work likewise to do in us after his Glorification, to manifest Himself to us in and by the Spirit, to enlighten, comfort, and sanctify our Hearts, that we might be a holy Temple in the Lord, an Habitation of God thro' the Spirit: And this Administration of the Spirit and Power of the Gospel was first manifested in the Way of a publick Dispensation, on the Day of Pentecost, when the Disciples were filled with the Holy Ghost. This is that spiritual Marriage or Union betwixt *Christ* and his Church, that Fellowship of the Mystery to which we are now called, even *Christ* in us the Hope of Glory; not that it first took Place after our Saviour's Ascension, for Salvation was always spiritual, and could



not otherwise be, but in other Ages it was a hidden Mystery, not made known unto the Sons of Men as it is now revealed by the Spirit. But to whom is it revealed? Not unto the World, not unto those that live in the Wickedness, Vices, and Vanities of it; not to Mockers and Scoffers, who speak evil of the Things they know not, and corrupt themselves in those Things which they naturally do know; nor yet to those that hold the Truth in Unrighteousness, or who having a Form of Godliness, deny the Power thereof; to these it is not given to know the Mysteries of the Kingdom, for their Eyes are blinded, that the Light of the glorious Gospel of *Christ*, who is the Image of God, cannot shine unto them: But this great Mystery of Godliness is made manifest to the Saints, to them who *have an Unction from the holy One, and therefore know all Things* needful, and are sanctified thro' the Word of his Truth: To these it is given to hold the *Mystery of Faith* in a *pure Conscience*: for they have Fellowship with the Father of Lights, with whom is no Darkness at all: And as they abide in the Grace and Love of *Christ*, He doth love them, and manifest Himself unto them; and

1 John ii.
29.

John xvii.
17.
1 Tim. iii.
9.

John xiv.
21.



1 John i.
7.

and so they have Fellowship with the Son :
And forasmuch as they all walk together in
the Light and have the same Spirit of Peace
and Love ruling in their Hearts, they *have*
Fellowship one with another, and the Blood of
Christ cleanseth them from all Sin.

*To this Fellowship of the Mystery, even
the Blessed Communion of Saints, begun
in Grace on Earth, and perfected in
Glory for ever in Heaven, may God of his
infinite Love in Christ Jesus, thro' the
Power of the Holy Ghost, bring us all—
Amen.*



S E R M O N X.

The Nature and Distinction of the
Two Covenants.



J E R E M. xxxi. 33.

*This shall be the Covenant that I will make
with the House of Israel after those Days,
saith the Lord; I will put my Law in
their inward Parts, and write it in their
Hearts, and will be their God, and they
shall be my People.*

G O D'S Dealings with Mankind in re-
ference to their Salvation are set
forth to us in the sacred Writings
under the Name of Covenants. The Law
delivered to the *Israelites* by the Hand of
Moses, as it was an external Rule and Di-
rectory, is called the Covenant of Works:
the Gospel Dispensation, as it is the Free
Gift of God in *Jesus Christ*, and the Mi-
nistration of his Spirit operating by an in-
ward

SERMON
X.



SERMON

X.

Eph. ii.
8.

John i. 17.

Heb. viii.
8.

ward Divine Power on the Soul, is called the Covenant of Grace: "By Grace are we saved thro' Faith, and that not of ourselves, it is the Gift of God." Thus, as the outward "Law was given by *Moses*, so "Grace and Truth [in the inward Parts] "came by *Jesus Christ*." This Covenant of Grace which bringeth Salvation is spoken of by the Prophet in the Text, as a Dispensation then future; and St. *Paul* calls it the New Covenant: But both the one and the other speak thus only with regard to its Accomplishment and Ratification by the Blood of *Christ* the Mediator of it, and as it was not made known in other Ages to the Sons of Men as it is now made known, either in Clearness of Revelation, Extent of Promulgation, or the Measure of its Vouchsafements: But with respect to its Virtue and Efficacy it was not new at the Time they spake of, but more ancient than the Law, nay prior to the Expulsion of our first Parents from the Garden of *Eden*: And therefore it will be needful to go back to this early Period, in order to form a right Judgment of the Covenant of Grace, and so to consider it in its threefold Dispensation.

of the two Covenants.

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SERMON
X.



First, As it was given to *Adam* and *Eve* :

Secondly, As it was confirmed with *Abraham* :

Thirdly, As it received its full Accomplishment under the Gospel.

To the Divine Prohibition given to *Adam* concerning the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil was annexed the Denunciation of the fatal Consequence of Disobedience—*In the Day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.* But *Adam* and *Eve* did eat thereof, and in that Day they did surely die; for they not only became mortal or subject to a bodily Death, but they actually suffered a spiritual Death, by the Loss of that holy, heavenly Life and Nature, in which consisted the Happiness and Perfection of their State. *In the Image of God created He Man*, as a creatural Representation of the glorious and ever blessed Deity: But Man divided his Will from God, cast his Imagination and Desire into a State of Self-dependence, and led by a fatal Curiosity became miserably wise, thro' a distinct Knowledge of the Good he had lost, and a sad Experience of that Evil into which he had plunged himself. Nor

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was



was it only in a dreadful Separation from God that the human Nature stood in the Hour of its Apostacy, but the wicked seducing Spirit also entered into it, and infected it with the Poison of his own hellish Nature, and so it became Enmity against God. From the Time of this woful Covenant entered into by our first Parents with Sin and Death; from this unnatural Agreement with Hell and Hostility against Heaven, we date the Origin of Satan's Access to the Souls of Men, and lament, among other dismal Effects of the Fall, the many deplorable Instances of Persons possessed of Devils instead of being Temples of the Holy Ghost, an Habitation of God thro' the Spirit.

In order to rescue the human Race from this infernal Bondage, this Dominion of Sin and Satan, the second Person in the sacred Trinity gave Himself into our Nature to be the Redeemer and Regenerator of it, "that as in *Adam* all died, even so in *Christ* " should all be made alive." He that gave the Promise of the Covenant—That *the Seed of the Woman should bruise the Serpent's Head*, did at that Instant inspeak the Grace of the Covenant into the Hearts of
Adam



Adam and *Eve*, and it became in them the “ingrafted Word, able to save their Souls.” Here, O Man! commenced the hidden Mystery of thy Salvation, to be revealed outwardly afterwards in the Fullness of Time: Now the declared Enmity betwixt the Seed of the Woman and that of the Serpent began to shew itself, each striving for thy Soul and to erect its Kingdom within thee: These are the two Masters which solicit thy Obedience, and one of them thou must serve, both of them thou canst not—Look well then to thy Choice, for thou chusest for Eternity; and look well to thy Recompence, “for the Wages of Sin is Death, but the Gift of God is eternal Life thro’ *Jesus Christ* our Lord.” Behold! Thou standest betwixt Heaven and Hell, as the great important Prize for which the Powers of both contend; the whole Creation is the Scene of this wonderful Dispute, the Universe is in Suspence, and Time only lasts till it is finished. And canst thou, O Man! who art the Subject of this mighty Transaction, be alone indifferent about the Event? For is it not for thy Life, even the Life of thy Soul? Canst thou be content to cast away this precious



Gift of Grace, in which is contained thy Glory, thy Blessedness, and that for Trifles light as Air, nay, for that which will prove thine everlasting Shame and Torment? Hear a God exclaiming at such unnatural Stupidity: “ My People have
 “ changed their Glory for that which doth
 “ not profit: They have committed two
 “ Evils: They have forsaken me the
 “ Fountain of living Waters, and hewed
 “ them out Cisterns, broken Cisterns that
 “ can hold no Water: Be astonished, O ye
 “ Heavens, at this!”

Jer. ii. 11,
&c.

After what has been observed concerning *Christ* the Seed that should bruise the Serpent's Head, even that incorruptible Seed or Divine Nature which is also called the Eternal Word or Son of God, who was afterwards “ made of a Woman made under the Law, to redeem them that were
 “ under the Law,” it is in our Way to offer to your Consideration the following Particulars relating to the Nature of the Covenant of Grace.

And first, it was the free Gift of God, and therefore, as such, does not answer to the Nature of those Covenants or Stipulations betwixt Man and Man, which suppose
 a Power

a Power in the Party that is to receive Benefit from the Covenant to qualify himself for such Benefit by the Performance of certain Conditions on his Part, for Man was no such capable Subject; he had lost all Power to Good, was in the Condition of an insolvent Debtor who had nothing to pay; in the Hands of his deadly Enemies, and so without Liberty; and upon the whole, emphatically poor, and miserable, and blind and naked: all that remained to him was the Power of being a Receiver, but such a one is ill qualified to be a Covenanter, for what we commonly term the Conditions of the Covenant, *viz.* Repentance and Faith, easy as they may seem, they are, if considered in an Evangelical Sense, the Gift of God, and Graces of it; and therefore of Necessity it was, that fallen Man must be apprehended of *Christ* before he could in any Sense apprehend Him*.

* If it be objected here, that all the Applications to Man in Scripture, to repent, believe, turn, &c. do suppose a Power in Man to correspond thereto: Be it answered; That we believe there is such a Power in every Man, but not of Man, not belonging to his own fallen Nature, but the Gift of God in *Jesus Christ*, a Portion of his Spirit of Grace, a Seed of Faith: To this every Call, Appeal, and Application is directed, as to that Power whereby the Man is enabled to receive and obey it; but that where, by long and obstinate Resistance to the Strivings of this good Spirit,



Secondly, As Salvation is a free Gift, so is it free to all, for the Promise was made to our first Parents, and in them to all their Seed to perpetual Generations, without Limitation or Restriction: And the Covenant was established in *Christ* the second *Adam*, as another Parent of the human Race, in whom all the Nations of the Earth should be blessed, and who should be a quickening Spirit to regenerate in them that Divine Life and Nature which was lost by the Fall, to give to as many as would receive Him Power to become the Sons of God. And to this End Grace was given to all, that all should come unto Him that they might have Life, and to receive Grace for Grace. The Covenant being thus established with Man in *Christ*, it has sure Foundations, for all the Promises of God in Him are *Yea* and *Amen*, even the sure Mercies of *David*, confirmed by that solemn Oath of the Great *Jehovah*, when He swore by his Holiness, that He would not fail

Pf. lxxxix.

54.

the Grace is sinned away, and this Power of Faith entirely lost (which seems to be the Sin against the Holy Ghost—Lord keep us from it!) in this Case the Day of Visitation is past and gone with respect to such unhappy Persons, the Gospel is hid from them that are so lost, and the Word preached cannot profit, not being mixed with Faith in them that hear it.

David:



David: Now what other *David* [Beloved] was this than the Son of his Love in whom He was well pleased? Who but *David's* Lord, the Subject of his Song, and the God of his Salvation? To him he swore, that his "Covenant should stand fast with Him, and that his Seed should endure for ever."

And *Thirdly*, as this Covenant is both free and sure, so is it exceeding precious; for the Son of God who is its fœderal Head and Mediator, is also the Sum and Substance of it, concerning whose fuller Manifestation afterwards is that Promise of the Eternal Father by the Prophet—"I will give thee for a Covenant of the People," and to denote both his Ordination to it and the Stability of it, He is called "the Foundation, the chief corner Stone laid in *Zion*, elect and precious, on which the redeemed ones are built up a spiritual House, an holy Priesthood, to offer up spiritual Sacrifices acceptable to God in *Jesus Christ*." And as *Jesus Christ*, the same Yesterday, to Day, and for Ever, is the Virtue and Grace, the Foundation and Consummation of the Covenant, so in Him is the Election, He being, in this his Of-

Isa. xxviii.
16.

1 Pet. ii.
5, 6.

SERMON

X.

Isa. xlii. 1.

fice for Man's sake, styled of God, His
 "Elect in whom his Soul delighteth:" And
 all his Servants who thro' the Obedience
 of Grace and Faith are brought into Union
 with him, are, by Virtue of that Union
 styled the Elect also: And no Wonder that
 they are honoured with so high a Title,
 who are dignified by so near a Relation to
 the Son of God; for by the Spirit of Adop-
 tion they can call God Father, and *Jesus* is
 "not ashamed to call them Brethren."
 Now so long as they continue to be of that
 Seed wherein is the Election, and to which
 appertaineth the Predestination to Eternal
 Life, so long are they dear Children, Heirs
 of the Covenant, and joint Heirs with *Christ*,
 theirs is the Mercy and Grace, theirs is the
 Pardon and Peace, theirs is the Filiation
 and the Inheritance: So long as they con-
 tinue joined to the Lord in one Spirit, so
 long is He made unto them Wisdom, and
 Righteousness, and Sanctification, and Re-
 demption. But then to put them in mind
 of the Possibility of their falling in this
 their probationary State*, as Man and An-

Heb. ii.

11.

* That there is a possible Degree of our Union with *Christ* here beyond the prevailing Power of Temptation, and all Danger of falling away, seems confirmed by many



gels had done before, and that they be not high minded, but walk humbly with their God, they are bid to make their Calling and Election sure, by abiding in Him who is the Root of their Election and of all their Graces; for “ unless a Man abide in me, says our Lord, “ he is cast forth as a Branch, “ and is withered;” and therefore He commands us to be “ faithful unto Death, that “ he may give us a Crown of Life.” Thro’ neglect of this Caution some who had attained to great Gifts and Graces, not standing fast in the Liberty wherewith *Christ* had made them free, have been entangled again with the Yoke of Bondage. If then we have obtained the like precious Faith, be it our Care, under Grace, that we be not of them who draw back unto Perdition, but of them who believe to the saving of the Soul; setting before our Eyes both “ the “ Goodness and Severity of God; on them “ that fall away, Severity; but towards us “ Goodness, if we continue in his Goodness; otherwise, we also shall be cut “ off.”

John xv.
6.

Rev. ii. 10.

Rom. xi.
22.

Scriptures: But that this high Distinction of Grace is the Blessedness but of Few, and those among the most humble *Christians*, is very credible.

Having



Having thus glanced at some Particulars relating to the Nature and Origin of the Covenant of Grace, proceed we,

Secondly, To consider it as an opening to a clearer Discovery of itself in the Call of *Abraham*, after observing by the Way, that altho' its Virtue and Power to Salvation co-extended with the whole Race of *Adam*, (for as the Judgment passed upon All because of Sin, so did the free Gift unto Justification, in the Offer of it) yet its Manifestation as to the Flesh, was continued on in one Line, down from *Adam* till the Word became incorporate in the Humanity of *Christ*, the Genealogy of which is given us by *St. Luke*, and may properly be called the Line of the manifested Covenant. *St. Matthew* traces it back no farther than to *Abraham*, as the second remarkable Period of its Manifestation, it being renewed with him and revealed to him with peculiar Distinction, on which Account he was dignified with the honourable Appellation of Father of the Faithful: And as the Character of this Man of Renown is so intimately connected with the History of this Covenant, and so explanative of it, it justly challenges our particular Attention.

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The Excellency of *Abraham's* Faith is the Glory of his Character, and this is too strongly supported by well known Divine Testimony to need either Argument or Quotation from Scripture to evince it. It may suffice therefore to observe, that his Faith was more than a Belief of Assent to *Christ's* distant Incarnation, for the mercenary *Balaam* did foresee and prophecy of that ; but it was in *Abraham* the Substance of Things hoped for, an Energy of the Divine Spirit, or what *St. Paul* calls “ The Faith of the Operation of God,” by which very *Christ* was manifested in his very Soul : He beheld with his inward Eye the Brightness of his Glory : *Abraham saw my Day and was glad* — is the Testimony of our Lord to the *Jews* concerning him ; and had no more been meant by these Words than a remote View of his Humiliation and Sufferings, the Explanation of his Assertion in answer to their Query had not been pertinent — *Before Abraham was I am.* That *Abraham's* Faith therefore was as truly a Gospel, justifying Faith, under the Seal of Circumcision, as ours can be under that of Baptism, will admit of no Doubt : It was counted to him for Righteousness,

Coloss. ii.
12.

as much as if it had been his own, for thro' his Union with Him who is the true Righteousness, by Faith, *Christ* was made such unto him, and being a Branch grafted into the good Olive Tree, he became Partaker of its Root and Fatness. In the Power of this Divine Faith, as its proper Principle, we see the Foundation of *Abraham's* exemplary Obedience: He staggered not thro' Unbelief under the most trying Exercise of it, but "was strong in Faith giving Glory to God." Had he consulted the fallacious Oracle of his Reason, it would much sooner have taught him to disbelieve the Truth of the Command than to obey it. What Arguments would it have supplied from the Pleadings of Nature and the Soundings of Bowels? What wise Distinctions, what subtle Subterfuges, what artful Evasions would it have suggested in favour of Disobedience! What, shed the Blood, the Blood of my Son, my Son *Isaac!* Can the God of Mercy and Goodness enjoin an Act of Cruelty? Can the God of Truth give a Promise, and confirm it by the Birth of a miraculous Child, and then command me, the Father of that Child,



to defeat the Design of the Promise, by sheathing my Knife in his Bowels? Can the God of Faithfulness establish his Covenant with *Isaac*, and his Seed after him, and compel me to slay that *Isaac*, and so cut off all Possibility of Issue from him? It cannot be — Reason pronounces it absurd, impossible—Nature loudly exclaims against the horrid Act—All God's Attributes oppose the Execution—The Command therefore must have a figurative Meaning—I will substitute a Ram for a Sacrifice, and that shall be called *Isaac*. Thus ingenious is Reason to elude the Force of the Divine Commands when they cross the Bent of our Nature and Inclinations. What Salvo's, what Shiftings, what Composition, what Commutation will this crafty Casuist invent to bring us off, when some ruling Passion, some darling *Isaac* stands in the Way of our Obedience! We all know it, we have all experienced it. But when it pleases God to reveal his Son in us as He did in *Abraham* and *Paul*, we no longer confer with Flesh and Blood, for Faith then becomes sufficient for Evidence, and sufficient for Obedience; it puts to Silence the



the Cavils and Objections of our vain Reasonings, dissipates our Doubts and Fears, animates our Hope, invigorates our Love, and overcomes the World, the Flesh, and the Devil: Thus thro' *Christ* strengthening us we can do all Things: In Him we are Conquerors, yea more than Conquerors, for he addeth Triumph to Victory—Evermore, Lord, give us this Faith!

In this eminent Example of *Abraham* we see how Faith is the best Support and Security of good Works, and that these, in a Gospel Sense, are not to be estimated from the Matter of them, but from the Principle whence they flow: Accordingly the Wisdom of our Church has rightly declared them to be the Effect and not the Cause of our Justification; as likewise, that a true saving Faith is founded in Grace, for that Man of his own natural Strength cannot prepare himself thereto: which well agrees with the Apostle's Doctrine, where, speaking of the promised Inheritance, he saith, "it is of Faith, that it might be by Grace." Were a saving Faith nothing more than a bare Assent of the natural Understanding to outwardly revealed Truths, it would be difficult to distinguish it from a common Exercise



Exercise of the rational Faculties, and consequently difficult to justify St. *Paul's* Assertion, that we “are saved, *not* of ourselves,” &c. But when we deduce Faith, with the same Apostle, from a Divine Operation in the Souls of them to whom it is given to believe, and so own it to be the Gift of God, a Grace of his Spirit purifying the Heart, enlightening the Understanding, and bringing us into a Covenant of Peace with God, thro' Him who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, we no longer marvel at the many excellent Things spoken of Faith in the Sacred Writings, but view it as that Instrument or Medium by which is ministred unto us an Earnest of those great and good Things wherewith all “they that be of Faith are blessed with faithful *Abraham.*”

But was this Covenant, given to *Adam* and confirmed with *Abraham*, so excelling in Dignity, so exceeding in Glory? How came it then that God entered into another Covenant with the Posterity of *Abraham*? Could any other be given which should surpass the Former, whether we consider it in its Ministration, its Mediator, or its Promises? For, what Ministration so rich



as Grace? What Mediator so honourable and faithful as *Christ*? What Promises so precious as those of Eternal Life and all spiritual Blessings in heavenly Places in Him? Is it God's Method of dealing with his Children, to give them his best Things first, and afterwards those that are of lesser Value? Or is it not his Way to abound in all Increase of Goodness and Loving Kindness towards them, giving them Grace for Grace, and leading them from Glory to Glory? What then shall we say of the Covenant of Works given by *Moses*? Of a Law which, in the Ministration of the Letter, was established on no better Promises than of temporal good Things; and Man's Title to these built on so hopeless a Foundation as that of his unfinning Obedience? If human Nature stood not in the Day of its perfect Strength, how shall Self-ability be Man's Security when his Strength is departed from him? These Questions will be satisfied by opening the Nature and Intent of the Covenant of Works, which falls in as an Article of necessary Consideration in this Place.

The Law given by *Moses* does not argue any Defect in the foregoing Covenant con-

firmed with *Abraham*, for the Perfection of the *Jew* is frequently affirmed by *St. Paul*, to stand in his being an Heir of *Abraham's* Faith, his spiritual Seed, and as such a Child of Promise; and therefore the Law given four hundred and thirty Years after could not be intended to disannul the Covenant confirmed before of God in *Christ*: But here lay the Matter. The *Israelites*, tho' they were the People which God had chosen whereby to manifest his Wonders, and to answer many Purposes of the Divine Wisdom and Goodness to Mankind, yet they were in general greatly depraved and corrupted, had lost Sight of the Covenant made with their Forefathers, and departed from the Faith of their great Ancestor *Abraham*: Being thus become earthly and sensual in their Apprehensions and Affections, they could not be dealt with as spiritual; and as they no longer stood in that Faith whereby the Benefits and Blessings of that Covenant were to be received, they could no longer be treated with as proper Subjects of it: Therefore it pleased God, of his great Condescension, to communicate himself to them in a Way more level to their Capacity, and better suited to their Condition; to give

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them

Gal. iii.

17.

them an outward Directory for the Rule of their Actions who no longer walked in the Obedience of Faith; and to instruct their childish Minds in Divine Truths by the Rudiments of this World, till by this Pædagogy of the Law they should be led to *Christ* who is the End of the Law to them that believe, and so be fitted for the immediate Teachings of his Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation.

Gal. iii.
19.

The Apostle tells us, that “ the Law
“ was added because of Transgressions;” giving us hereby to understand, that this Addition only became necessary thro’ Sin, and the Departure of the *Israelites* from the Obedience of Faith, for “ the Law is not
“ made for the Righteous but for the Dis-
“ obedient.” Had they continued stedfast in the Covenant made with *Abraham* in *Christ*, they had received *Christ* in their Faith, and would not have needed to be taught of the Law, for, says the same Apostle, “ After that Faith is come, we are no
“ longer under a School-master.” Besides, *Abraham’s* Faith in the Covenant received the Virtue of the Covenant, the Love of God; on which Account he has the high Honour of being called, the Friend of God; now Charity or Divine Love is the End of the Commandment, the fulfilling of the
Law;

Gal. iii.
25.

Law; he therefore who hath attained to the End, no longer wanteth the Means leading to it, for the Love of God being written in his Heart, it giveth Alacrity and Perfection to Obedience.

As to the spiritual *Jews* under the Law, *Abraham's* true Seed, who drank of the Rock *Christ* that followed them all the Way, they remained in Covenant with God in *Abraham's* Faith; they saw and used all Things spiritually, and the same Law which was a Pillar of a Cloud to the carnal *Jew*, was a Pillar of Fire to give Light to them: The Law passed upon them indeed externally, and they paid Obedience to it, but they were not under the Bondage and Condemnation of it, being justified by Faith. And therefore this spiritual and better Covenant, with respect to the outward Legal Dispensation, may be compared to a River running Part of its Course under Ground, and then opening itself a free Passage; even so the Mystery of Godliness continued hidden for a Time under the Letter (tho' manifested to such as were spiritual) till its full and glorious Display by the Gospel of *Christ*: The Law was not designed to interrupt the Progress of it, but was only an occasional Dis-



penation given because of the general Transgression of, the *Israelites*, as *Saul* was afterwards given them for a King when they were no longer content with Theocracy: Nay, there was a friendly Agreement betwixt the Law and the Covenant that was by Faith in the two following Respects; first, as the Law on one hand condemned Sin, and all Imperfection in Obedience, that so the Sinner finding no help in himself might renounce all Trust in his own Works, seek for Justification thro' Faith, and so accept Salvation as the free Gift of God in *Jesus Christ*: Secondly, as Faith on the other hand was the Law's best Security for Obedience to it, and the true Interpreter of all its Services, Figures, and Promises, looking thro' its temporal Things that were seen, at those better unseen Things that are eternal. But considered independently of these its principal Uses, and only as it is in itself, the Law is no better than a State of spiritual Bondage and Death, the flaming Minister of God's Wrath, the dreadful Executioner of his Vengeance: But as these Points have been occasionally spoken to in the foregoing Discourses, it shall suffice to observe from the Allegory explained by the Apostle, that
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the Law, as signified by its Female Type *Hagar*, was a State of Bondage to those that were under it in the following Particulars; First, as it enjoined the Observance of many cumbersome Rites and Ceremonies that had no intrinsick Goodness [Statutes that were not good.] Secondly as it exacted a perfect Obedience under the Penalty of a Curse without supplying any Strength for the Work, and so became weak (thro' Man's Inability) to secure its own Honour from Violation, or to help Man to receive any Benefit from it. Thirdly, as it freed not from the Guilt of Sin, "could not
" make him that did the Service perfect as
" pertaining to the Conscience," and consequently left him under Wrath and obnoxious to Punishment. Fourthly, as it gave no Freedom to Righteousness, and consequently left its Subjects under the same Vassalage to their Corruptions in which it found them, nay, indirectly gave Strength to Sin, by manifesting both its Power and Condemnation, and so discouraging and disabling the Sinner to resist it thro' Despair to overcome it. This Weakness and Misery of Man under so unfriendly a Dispensation may be conceived as figured to us

under *Hagar's* Distress in the Wilderness of *Beer-sheba*—Her Bottle of Water could not hold out, her natural Strength failed, and she must have perished, had not God opened her Eyes to discover a Well of Water: But what else was signified by this Well of Water than *Christ* the Well of Life, out of whose Abundance we must draw to fill our empty Bottles, that we faint not. Thus, what the Law could not do, thro' the Weakness and Unprofitableness thereof to Man's Salvation, that “the bringing in
“ of a better Hope did, by the which we
“ draw nigh unto God:” By so much was *Jesus* made a Surety of a better Covenant. And this brings us to the last general Head, which is briefly to shew the Nature of that Covenant which the Lord by the Prophet promises to make with his People in the latter Days: *I will put my Law in their inward Parts, and write it in their Hearts, and will be their God, and they shall be my People.*

And this is no other than the Covenant of Grace, or the Whole of our Redemption by *Jesus Christ*. He was the Horn of Salvation raised up by the God of *Israel* for us in the House of his Servant *David*; the
Substance



Substance of the Mercy which He promised, the Accomplishment of the Oath which He swore unto *Abraham*; the Seed in which all the Nations of the Earth should be blessed; that free Gift of God which is our spiritual Life, delivering us out of the Hands of our Enemies, and enabling us to serve Him without slavish Fear, not in the Oldness of the Letter, but in Newness of Spirit, in Righteousness and Holiness all the Days of our Life. The former Covenant, tho' containing a perfect Rule of Righteousness, yet being in itself but a dead Letter, it could not give Life and Power for Obedience: "Had there been a Law given which could have given Life, verily Righteousness should have been by the Law:" But as that could not be, the Covenant of Grace, as a Life-giving Dispensation, was necessary, that we might be justified by Faith thro' Sanctification of the Spirit unto Obedience.

It has been observed and shewed before, that the Epithet *New*, as applied to this Covenant in the Text, respects not its Origin but its Ratification and Difference of Administration only, and therefore is to be understood in the same qualified Sense as



used by our Lord where he says, “ A new
 “ Commandment I give unto you that ye
 “ love one another :” The Command to
 love one another was old, but the Love here
 commanded, under the Measure and Ex-
 tent of Christian Charity, was new.

But it is Time to proceed to the Consi-
 deration of that Distinction whereby the
 Covenant of Grace stands differenced from
 the Covenant of Works, as it is a *Law put
 into the inward Parts and written in the
 Heart*. How low a Sense of so high a
 Promise is that given to these Words by
 some Interpreters, who expound them only
 of outward *Laws agreeable to the rational
 Soul*. The rational Soul of Man is the
 Soul of Man as he is fallen into Weakness,
 Sin, and Misery, and not to be helped by
 any outward Applications proposed objec-
 tively to the Understanding, without Light
 and Strength communicated from Above to
 render them efficacious. Man’s chief Malady
 is spiritual, and such must be his Remedy ;
 and to direct him to any other is no better
 than saying to the Naked and Destitute—
 “ Be ye warmed and filled, whilst we give
 “ them not those Things that be needful.”
 Let it not here be objected, that God gave
 to

to Man an outward Law which, according to this Doctrine, could not profit him; for He gave it him to make him sensible of his Misery, that it might drive him to seek the Remedy He had provided for it.—The Law was his School-master to lead him to *Christ*. Nor, Secondly, let it be objected, that the New Testament contains many Rules and Precepts for Life and Practice, which are so many outward Laws, for these, considered independently of the Grace of the Covenant, can make no Part of the Covenant of Grace; they are only the subject Matter of that Obedience which issues from the Spirit of Life, and on which it is exercised, for all the Promises have respect to the Righteousness of Faith, in which alone the external Obedience finds Acceptance, the Latter being, with regard to the Former, but as the Body to the Soul, the Letter to the Spirit, the Form to the Power: But as we read of the inward and the outward *Jew* under the Law, so under the Gospel the same Distinction takes Place betwixt the spiritual and the literal *Chriſt*-ian: The latter keeps his Eye fixt on the preceptive Parts of the New Testament only, and so endeavouring to frame an Obedience thereto



thereto in his own Strength, turns Gospel into Law, and brings himself under Bondage to it as a Covenant of Works : Hence such and so frequent mistaken Representations of Gospel Salvation, as if it were little better than a more complete System of Duties and good moral Rules *agreeable to the rational Soul of Man* : Hence such common Ignorance concerning the great Mystery of Godliness, *Christ in us the Hope of Glory* : And hence such learned Pains to explain away that most fundamental Doctrine, Regeneration, which is the Excellency, the Glory, the Substance of true *Christianity*. Let it here be noted, that as we have much of the Gospel in the Books of the Old Testament, so have we much of the Law in the Writings of the New, for both our Lord and his Apostles declare the Obligations, Threatnings, and Condemnation of the Law to the Impenitent, the Unbeliever, and to such as put themselves under the Law for Justification, as well as the Promises, Comforts, and Grace of the Gospel to all such as received it, or were in the Disposition to embrace it : But that the whole of our Salvation is by the free Grace of that Covenant which is the Gift of God in *Christ*,
and

and not by virtue of any Obedience that we can pay to the written Law, is the very Basis of Christian Faith: “ The Law of “ the Spirit of Life in *Christ Jesus*, says the Apostle, “ hath made me free from the “ Law of Sin and Death ;” and he teaches his *Corinthian* Profelytes to ascribe their Conversion likewise, not to any outward Law or Teaching, as the efficient Cause, but to the same Divine Power working thro’ his Ministry on their Hearts—“ Ye are the “ Epistle of *Christ* ministred by us, not “ written with Ink, but with the Spirit of “ the living God ; not in Tables of Stone, “ but in the fleshly Tables of the Heart.” These, and a thousand other Testimonies of Divine Authority, added to that of the Text, evince Gospel Salvation to be the Effect of a Divine Energy working in us both to will and to do, a Covenant of Peace betwixt God and the Soul established in *Christ*, a spiritual Kingdom founded in Grace, a Law of Faith working by Love, written in the Heart by the Finger of the living God. King *David* was an inward and spiritual Man ; he well knew that an outward Law could not change a corrupt Nature, and that no Knowledge and Obedi-



ence of a poor fallen Creature, conceived in Sin, and shapen in Wickedness, could justify him before that holy God who requireth Righteousness and Truth in the inward Parts; and therefore it was the Matter of his earnest Supplication, that the Lord would stablish him with his free Spirit: And God granted that which he requested, for He put his Law into his Heart, and made him to understand Wisdom secretly: Hence he was enabled to declare from Experience, that the Law of God was perfect, converting the Soul; that the Statutes of the Lord rejoice the Heart, and that his Commandment is pure and giveth Light unto the Eyes. But what Law doth he here speak of? The outward Law? That cannot be, for it is not the Office of that Law to convert the Soul, nor by it can any Man living be justified: And what were those Statutes that rejoiced the Heart, and those Judgments that were more to be desired than fine Gold? They could not be those that were outward in the Letter, for in these were written the Condemnation of his Sins, and therefore as concerning them he saith in another Psalm, "My Flesh trembleth for fear of thee, and I am afraid of

Psal. xix.

Psal. cxix.



“ of thy Judgments.” The Law therefore thus spoken of was no other than the spiritual Law of Liberty and Love within his Heart, the Law of that Covenant in which were established the sure Mercies of *David*: And they were the Statutes of Life, the Word of God’s Grace and Truth (in the inward Ministration of it) that rejoiced his Heart, and made him wiser than his Teachers, *i. e.* such as were appointed to be the Instructors of others in the written Law. Thus hath the God and Father of all, whose Name and Nature is Love, manifested his Light and Salvation to his Children in every Dispensation, inviting them to *Shiloh’s* Streams, to drink of the Water of Life freely; and all who in Obedience to the Leadings of his Grace accept this Invitation of Love, are converted thereby from Darkness to Light, and from the Power of Satan unto God: He filleth their hungry Souls with good Things, giveth them to drink of the Brook in their Way thro’ this Vale of Misery, and refresheth them with the Consolations of his Spirit.

Ezek.

xxiii. 15.

To conclude with a farther Observation or two on the Difference betwixt the two
Cove-



Covenants. Tho' the Way of Salvation by Grace thro' Faith is the same in both, yet the Revelation of this Grace by *Jesus Christ* in these two Dispensations is very different: Under the Law it was figured by mysterious Hieroglyphics and obscure Representations; whereas under the Gospel it is fully opened and clearly explained; add also, that in the latter we have greater Assistances, more useful Means of Grace, and that inestimable Benefit vouchsafed us in the heavenly Pattern of the Holy *Jesus*. But tho' these be precious Advantages of eminent Distinction, yet they constitute not the main essential Difference betwixt the Law and Gospel State; but they are opposed to each other as that which is inward and spiritual to that which is outward and natural; as God's Grace to Man's Self-ability; as a divine operative Faith to Works done in Man's own Will; as a new Creation in *Christ Jesus* to the old corrupt Nature derived from fallen *Adam*: And for want of making this Distinction it is so common to confound Law and Gospel in reading the Books of the Old and New Testament, and that Men do not see how the spiritual *Jew* in the Time of the Law



was a Child of Grace and a Son of the Free Woman, and that the literal, carnal *Christian*, not led by the Spirit, is under the Law and a Son of the Bond Woman: Thro' attending to the outward Dispensation only, and not being subject to the inward Ministration also, so many read in the History all that *Christ* did, taught, and suffered, without any real Benefit to their Souls, or knowing any thing of the Mystery of Godliness, for all historical, nay and doctrinal Knowledge too, retained in Minds un sanctified, and without that Love of *Christ* which passeth Knowledge, profiteth nothing.

Lastly, This Law of the Spirit of Life put into the inward Parts and written in the Heart, is the surest Foundation of Obedience to all the Precepts and Rules of Holy Living laid down in the Gospel, as well as the best Interpreter and most faithful Applier of them, for it begets in the Soul a Conformity to the Nature of the Thing commanded, which makes Performance both easy and pleasant: It sets the Soul at Liberty, not by freeing it from Obedience, but by making Obedience free: We are made willing in the Day of God's Power
who

who were unwilling in the Day of our own Weakness and Backwardness. The Prophet *Ezekiel*, on the Subject of *Christ's* Kingdom, pronounces the following gracious Promise of God: "A new Heart
 " will I give you, and I will put my Spirit
 " within you, and cause you to walk in
 " my Statutes, and ye shall keep my Judg-
 " ments and do them." Plainly shewing hereby, that the Renovation of a Gospel Spirit is the only Security of a Gospel Obedience; and that in all Things where we are commanded to fulfil the Will of God, we can then most truly say, we are content to do it, when his Law is within our Heart. This will be illustrated by considering the Legalist (whether he be called *Jew* or *Christian*) and the Man of Grace, in their Religious Characters respectively. The former applies himself to the Work of Religion as to a Business, as to a System of Duties that must be performed in his own Strength, and self-armed with his Reason, Resolution, and Free-will, he sets out as *Goliath* did to meet *David*, in full Confidence of Victory: But when he comes to the Trial, that which he before thought himself sufficient for, he now finds too hard for him:



him: The Sin of his Nature takes Occasion from the Holiness of the Commandment to shew its Rebellion and Enmity against God, and here he meets with an Opposition from within that he was not aware of: He returns to the Charge and renews his Efforts, but with no better Success, for the Weapons of his Warfare are but carnal, and therefore alike insufficient both for Victory and Defence; and the Law which he before considered as only commanding and forbidding outward Things, upon a nearer View makes manifest the Corruptions of his Heart, and condemns Sin inwardly in the Flesh, and this slays his Confidence, and causes his Spirit to fail within him: His best Obedience therefore being only external, and both unequal to the Task and contrary to the Bent of unmortified Nature, he doth his Work not willingly, but of Constraint, and is in Bondage to his very Duties; for where the Form of Godliness is not enlivened by the Spirit of it, the Religion of such a one is either Hypocrisy on the one hand or Slavery on the other.

But with such as walk in the Way of Gospel Salvation, and go not about to estab-



blish their own Righteousness, but stand fast in that Righteousness which is of God by Faith, it is far otherwise; for these having their Hearts principled with Grace, they go forth, like *David*, in the Name and Strength of the Lord, and He subdueth all their Enemies under their Feet: They toil not at their Duties as at a Task, but walk in the Ways of God freely and cheerfully: They keep not his Commandments only because they are written in the Bible, but they delight in them, because they are written in their Hearts: They worship the Lord, not thro' Fear, as Bond Slaves, because they dare not do otherwise, but as Sons, with a filial Affection: The Love of *Christ*, and not the Dread of Punishment, constraineth them, for they are led by his Spirit to pay a willing Obedience, and enabled by the same Spirit for the Performance of it: They do not single out such Duties as are most easy to Flesh and Blood, or make the most splendid Appearance in the Eyes of Men, but have an equal Respect unto all God's Commandments, and so serve Him without Partiality and without Hypocrisy: And they complain not that their Work is too hard, or the Yoke of Religion too heavy,

for

for they are not under the Law which gives no Strength, but under that Grace which is sufficient for them : In a word, a Faith working by Love animates the Whole of their Obedience, and their Hearts go along with it, and so they find of a Truth, that the Service of God is perfect Freedom.

Happy are the People that are in such a Case, for they are the true Children of the Covenant, and have this sure Word of Promise from the Lord, that he will be *to them a God, and they shall be to him a People* : And such indeed He is to them in an emphatical Sense of the Blessing ; for He is to them a reconciled God in the Son of his Love, forgiving all their Sin, and healing all their Infirmities ; the God by whom they escape Death, and the God of whom cometh their Salvation : He is the never-failing Spring of their Comforts, their Defence in Danger, and their Refuge in Trouble : And as He is to them a God, so are they to Him a People, a willing and faithful People, a loving and obedient People ; a People in whom He doth all his Works, fulfils all his Will, and makes good all his Promises : In this so near and endearing a Relation how happy are they ! God's Friends



are their Friends, and they have no Enemies but such as are Enemies unto Him: His Angels minister unto them, his Providence protects them, his Grace supports them, his Spirit guides them. What then have they to fear? Seeing that all Things thus ordered must work together for their Good, whether the World, or Life, or Death, or things present, or Things to come: Behold! All are theirs, and they are *Christ's*, and *Christ* is God's. Such Honour and Blessedness have all his Saints!
Hallelujah.

T H E E N D.

