

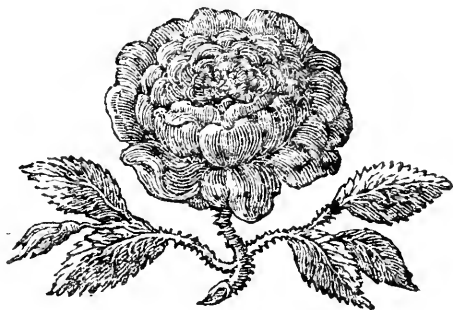
SCC
3043
v. 3

T W E L V E
S E R M O N S
U P O N S E V E R A L
S U B J E C T S
A N D
O C C A S I O N S.

By *ROBERT SOUTH*, D.D.

V O L. III.

The S I X T H E D I T I O N.



L O N D O N :

Printed by *J. Bettenham*, for *JONAH BOWYER*,
at the *Rose* in *Pater-noster Row*.

M. DCC. XXVII.

SCC
3043
43



TO THE

Most Reverend Father in GOD

N A R C I S S U S

Lord Archbishop of DUBLIN,

His G R A C E.

My LORD,

THE particular Acquaintance
and Friendship which your Grace
was pleased to honour me with while you
lived at Oxford have emboldened me to
address myself to your Lordship at this

A 2

great

Epistle Dedicatory.

distance of Place, and greater of Condition; in hopes that by your Grace's Advancement to so high a Station in the Church, That, which before was only Friendship, may now improve into Patronage and Protection. And yet, as ambitious as I am of so ennobling a Patronage, and as singular a Value as I have for your Grace's Favour, I must needs own, that the Design of my present Application to your Grace, is not so much to crave a Favour, as to pay a Debt: and, in answer to the many Obligations I lie under, to congratulate your Grace on that height of Dignity and Greatness, to which Providence has so happily raised you, and your own Worth so justly entituled you; and so, without your seeking (and much less sneaking) for it, made you, to your great Honour, to be sought for by it: There being (as from my Heart I believe) few Examples

Epistle Dedicatory.

in the World, of so much Merit, and so much Modesty in Conjunction.

It is indeed no small Infelicity to the Church of England, to have parted with so extraordinary a Member; but none at all I conceive to your Grace, that you are placed where you are; Especially, if your Grace shall consider, the present estate of our Church here, as through the Arts of Her Enemies she stands divided against Her self: and that only by two or three odd new Terms of Distinction maliciously invented, and studiously made use of for that base Purpose; such a Sovereign, or at least such a peculiar Method, have some found out for preserving our Church, if the best way to preserve a Body, be by cutting it asunder. For those of the ancients Members of Her Communion who have all along owned and contend-

Epistle Dedicatory.

ed for a strict Conformity to her Rules and Sanctions, as the surest Course to establish her, have been of late represented, or rather reprobated under the in-odiating Character of High Church-men, and thereby stand marked out for all the Discouragement that Spight and Power together can pass upon them, while those of the contrary Way and Principle are distinguished, or rather sanctified, by the fashionable endearing Name of Low Church-men, not from their affecting (we may be sure) a lower Condition in the Church than others (since none lie so low but they can look as high) but from the low Condition which the Authors of this Distinction would vain bring the Church it self into, a Work in which they have made no small Progress already; and thus by these un-generous, as well as unconscionable Practices, a fatal Rent and Division is
made

Epistle Dedicatory.

made amongst us: and, being so, I think, those of the Concision who made it, would do well to consider, whether that, which our Saviour assures us, will destroy a Kingdom, be the likeliest way to settle and support a Church. But I question not, but these Dividers will very shortly receive Thanks from the Papists for the good Services they have done them; and in the mean time they may be sure of their Scoffs.

Never certainly were the Fundamental Articles of our Faith so boldly impugned, nor the Honour of our Church so foully blemished, as they have been of late Years; while the Socinians have had their full uncontrolled Fling at Both; and the Tritheists have injured and exposed them more by pretending to defend them against the Socinians, than the Socinians themselves did, or could do by

Epistle Dedicatory.

opposing them. For surely it would be thought a very odd way of ridding a Man of the Plague by running him through with a Sword; or of Curing him of a Lethargy by casting him into a Calenture; a Disease of a contrary Nature indeed, but no less fatal to the Patient; who equally dies whether his Sickness or his Physick, the Malignity of his Distempers, or the Method of his Cure dispatches him. And in like manner must it fare with a Church, which feeling it self struck with the Poyson of Socinianism, flies to Tritheism for an Antidote.

But at length happily steps in the Royal Authority to the Church's Relief with several healing Injunctions in its Hands, for the composing and ending the Disputes about the Trinity then on foot; and those indeed so wisely framed, so seasonably timed, (and by the King at least) so graciously intended, that they
must

Epistle Dedicatory.

must in all Likelihood (without any Other Irenicon) have restored Peace to the Church, had it not been for the Importunity and Partiality of some, who having by the Awe of these Injunctions endeavoured to silence the opposite Party (which by their Arguments they could not do,) and withal looking upon themselves as privileged Persons, and so^r above those Ordinances, which others were to be subject to, resolved not to be silent themselves; but renewing the Contest, partly by throwing Muggleton, and Rigaltius, with some other foul stuff in their Adversaries Faces; and partly by a shameless Reprinting (without the least Re-inforcing) the same exploded Tritheistick Notions again and again, they quite broke through the Royal Prohibitions, and soon after began to take as great a Liberty in venting their Innovations and Invectives, as ever they had

Epistle Dedicatory.

had done before ; so that he, who shall impartially consider the Course taken by these Men with reference to those engaged on the other side of this Controversy about the Trinity, will find that their whole Proceeding in it resembles nothing so much, as a Thief's binding the hands of an honest Man with a Cord, much fitter for his own Neck.

But, Blessed be God, matters stand not so with you in Ireland; the Climate there being not more impatient of poysonous Animals, than the Church of poysonous Opinions : An universal concurrent Orthodoxy shining all over it, from the superior Clergy who preside, to the inferior placed under them: so that we never hear from thence of any Presbtyer, and much less of any Dean, who dares innovate upon the Faith received: and least of all (should such a Wretch chance to start up among you)
can

Epistle Dedicatory.

can I bear of any Bishop likely to debase his Style and Character so low, as either to defend the Man, or colour over his Opinions. Nor lastly, do we find, that in the Judgment of the Clergy there, a Man's having wrote against one sort of Heresy or Heterodoxy, ought to justify or excuse him in writing for another, and much less for a worse.

*The Truth is, such things as these make the Case with us here in England come too near that of Poland about 120 or 130 Years ago, * where the Doctrine of three distinct infinite Spirits began and led the Dance, and was quickly followed (as the Design was laid) by Sociianism, whereupon their old Popery got a firmer Establishment and more rigorous Imposition than before (the Government preferring a less pure and perfect*

* See a learned Tract in 8vo, entitled, *The growth of Error*, &c. Sect. 8. printed in the Year 1697.

Epistle Dedicatory.

tianity before the most refin'd Turcism.) This was the method taken there, and I wish it may not have the like Issue here.

But on the contrary amongst You, when a certain Mahometan Christian (no new thing of late,) notorious for his blasphemous Denyal of the Mysteries of our Religion, and his insufferable Virulence against the whole Christian Priesthood, thought to have found Shelter amongst you, the Parliament, to their Immortal Honour, presently sent him packing, and without the help of a Faggot soon made the Kingdom too hot for him: A sufficient Argument doubtless, how far we are from needing those savage Executions, used by the Papists to rid the Church of Hereticks and Blasphemers, where Authority animated with due Zeal will attempt that worthy Work, by other more humane, but not less effectual

Epistle Dedicatory.

fectual Means. *Nothing certainly but Power, as the World now goes, can keep the Church in Peace.*

And now, My Lord, may that God by whom Princes and Prelates govern, and Churches stand, long preserve Your Grace, and that Excellent Church which you are so eminent a Pillar of, and Ornament to; and which by Her incomparable Courage and Faithfulness lately shewn in preserving that great Depositem, the Holy Religion committed to her Trust, has gotten herself a Name, which will never die; and such a solid well founded Reputation, as no bending this way or that way, no trimming or tricking it, ever could or can give so ample and so considerable a Body: For it is Lead only that bends to almost every thing, which the nobler Metals cannot do, and the nobler sort of Minds will not.

But

Epistle Dedicatory.

But I fear I trespass too far upon your Grace's Time and Business, and therefore humbly imploring your Grace's Blessing, I lay these poor Papers at your Feet, infinitely unworthy, I confess, of the Acceptance of so great a Person, and the Perusal of so judicious an Eye, but yet at present the best Pledges I can give your Grace of those sincere Respects and Services, which your Grace ought always to claim, and shall never fail to receive from,

My LORD,

Your Grace's ever faithful

and most obedient Servant,

*Westminster, April
30, 1698.*

Robert South.

T H E

Contents of the S E R M O N S.

S E R M O N I.

J O B XXII. 2. former part. *Can a Man be profitable to God?* Page 1

S E R M O N II.

Luke XI. 35. *Take heed therefore that the Light which is in thee be not Darkness.* P. 44

S E R M O N III.

Matth. V. 44. former Part. *But I say unto you, Love your Enemies.* p. 89

S E R M O N IV.

Matth. VII. 26, 27. *And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish Man, who built his House upon the Sand.*

And the Rain descended, and the Floods came, and the Winds blew, and beat upon that House, and it fell, and great was the Fall of it. P. 133

S E R M O N V.

1 Cor. VIII. 12. *But when ye sin so against the Brethren, and wound their weak Conscience, ye sin against Christ.* p. 154

S E R-

S E R M O N VI.

I Cor. II. 7. former Part. *But we speak the Wisdom of God in a Mystery.* p. 193

S E R M O N VII.

Revel. XXII. 16. latter Part. *I am the Root and the Off-spring of David, and the Bright and Morning-star.* p. 239

S E R M O N VIII.

John I. 11. *He came to his own, and his own received him not.* p. 277

S E R M O N IX.

Isaiah LIII. 8. latter Part. *For the Transgression of my People was he stricken.* p. 322

S E R M O N X.

Acts II. 24. *Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the Pains of Death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.* p. 362

S E R M O N XI.

I Cor. XII. 4. *Now there are Diversities of Gifts, but the same Spirit.* p. 394

S E R M O N XII.

Psalms CXLIV. 10. former Part. *It is he that giveth Salvation unto Kings.* p. 435

T H E

*The Doctrine of Merit stated, and
the Impossibility of Man's Meri-
ting of GOD,*

Asserted in a

DISCOURSE

UPON

The 22d of *Job*, and the 2d *Verse*.

Preach'd at

WESTMINSTER-ABBAY,

On *December* the 5th 1697.

J O B XXII. 2.

Can a Man be profitable to GOD?

IT is a Matter of no small Moment certainly
for a Man to be rightly informed, upon
what *Terms*, and *Conditions*, he is to transact
with God, and God with him, in the great Busi-

ness of his Salvation. For by knowing *upon what Terms* he must obtain Eternal Happiness hereafter, he will know also, *upon what Grounds* he is to hope for, and expect it here; and so be able to govern both his Actions and Expectations according to the Nature of the Thing he is in Pursuit of; Lest, otherwise, he should chance to fail of the *Prize* he runs for, by mistaking the *Way* he should run in.

St. *Paul*, as plainly as Words can express a Thing, tells us, That *Eternal Life is the Gift of God*; and Consequently to be expected by us only as such: nay, He asserts it to be a *Gift* in the very same *verse* in which He affirms *Death* to be as *due to a Sinner, as Wages are to a Workman*, *Romans vi. 23*. Than which Words nothing certainly can be more full and conclusive, That *Salvation* proceeds wholly upon *Free-Gift*, though *Damnation* upon strict *Desert*.

Nevertheless, such is the Extreme Folly, or rather Sottishness of Man's Corrupt Nature, That this does by no Means satisfy him. For though indeed he would fain be Happy, yet fain would He also Thank none for it but Himself. And though He finds, that, not only *His Duty* but *His Necessity* brings him every day *upon His Knees* to Almighty God
for

for the very *Bread* he eats; yet when he comes to deal with Him about Spiritual (Things of infinitely greater Value) he appears, and acts, not as a *Suppliant*, but as a *Merchant*; not as One, who comes *to be Relieved*, but *to Traffick*. For something he would *receive of God*, and something he would *Give Him*; and nothing will content this *Insolent*, yet *Impotent* Creature, unless he may seem to *Buy* the very Thing he *Begs*. *Such* being the *Pride and Baseness* of some Spirits, that where they Receive a Benefit too big for them to requite, they will even *Deny* the Kindness, and *disown* the Obligation.

Now this great Self-delusion, so prevalent upon most Minds, is the Thing here encountered in the Text. The words of which (by an usual way of Speech) under an *Interrogation* couching a *Positive Assertion*, are a *Declaration* of the Impossibility of Man's being *Profitable to God*, or (which is all one) *of his meriting of God*; according to the true, proper, and strict Sense of Merit. Nor does this *Interrogative way* of Expression import only a bare *Negation* of the Thing, as, in it self, Impossible, but also a manifest, Undeniable Evidence of the said Impossibility; As if it had been said, That nothing can be more

plainly Impossible, than for a Man to be Profitable to God; for God to receive any Advantage by Man's Righteousness; or to gain any Thing by his making his Ways perfect: and consequently, That nothing can be more absurd, and contrary to all Sense and Reason, than for a Man to entertain, and cherish so irrational a Conceit, or to affirm so gross a Paradox.

And that *no other Thing* is here meant by a Man's being *profitable to God*, but his *meriting of God*, will appear from a true State and Account of the Nature of Merit; Which we may not improperly define, *A Right to receive some good upon the Score of some good done, together with an Equivalence or Parity of worth between the Good to be Received, and the Good Done.* So that although according to the Common Division of *Justice* into *Commutative* and *Distributive*, that, which is called *Commutative* be employed only about the strict Value of Things, according to an *Arithmetical Proportion*, (as the Schools speak) which admits of no Degrees; and the other Species of *Justice*, call'd *Distributive* (as consisting in the Distribution of *Rewards and Punishments*) admits of some *Latitude* and Degrees in the Dispensation of it; yet, in Truth, even *this Distribution it self*
 must

must so far follow the Rules of Commutation, That the Good to be *dispensed* by way of *Reward*, ought in *Justice* to be *Equivalent* to the *Work*, or *Action*, which it is design'd as a Compensation of; So as by no means to sink below it, or fall short of the full Value of it. From all which (upon a just Estimate of the matter) it follows, That, in true Philosophy, *Merit* is nothing else, but an *Instance*, or *Exemplification* of that noted Saying, or Maxim, *That one Benefaction, or good Turn requires another*; and imports neither more nor less than a *Man's Claim, or Title to Receive as much Good from another, as he had done for him.*

Thus much therefore being premised, as an Explication of the Drift, or Design of the Words (the Words themselves being too plain and easy to need any further Exposition) we shall observe, and draw from them these Four Particulars.

First, Something *supposed, or implied in them*, viz. That Men are naturally very Prone to entertain an Opinion, or Persuasion, That they are able to merit of God, or be *Profitable to Him.*

Secondly, Something *expressed*, namely, That such an *Opinion or Persuasion* is utter-

ly false and absurd ; and that it is impossible for Man to merit of God, or to be *Profitable to him*.

Thirdly, Something *Inferred* from both the former, to wit, That the forementioned *Opinion, or Persuasion* is the very Source or Foundation of two of the greatest *Corruptions*, that have infested the Christian Church and Religion. And,

Fourthly, and Lastly, Something objected against the Particulars discoursed of, which I shall endeavour to answer, and remove ; and so Conclude this Discourse.

Of Each of which in their Order : And,

First, For the first of them. *The Thing supposed or implied in the Words*, namely, *That Men are naturally very Prone to entertain an Opinion or Persuasion, That they are able to merit of God, or be Profitable to Him*.

The Truth of which will appear from these two Considerations.

First, That it is Natural for them to place too High a Value both upon themselves, and their own Performances. And that this is so, is evident from that *Universal Experience*, which proves it no less Natural to them, to bear a more than ordinary *Love* to themselves,
and

and all Love (we know) is founded in, and results from a Proportionable Esteem of the Object Loved : So that, look in what Degree any Man loves himself, in the same Degree it will follow, that he must esteem himself too. Upon which Account it is, that every Man will be sure to set his *own Price* upon what he is, and what *he does*, whether the World will come up to it or no ; as it seldom does.

That Speech of St. *Peter* to our Saviour is very remarkable, in *Mat. xix. 27.* *Master* (says he) *we have forsook all and followed Thee, what shall we have therefore ?* In which Words, he seems to be upon Equal Terms with his Lord, and to expect no more of him (as he thought) but what he strictly had deserved from him ; and all this from a Conceit that he had done an Act so exceedingly *Meritorious*, that it must even *Non-plus* his Master's Bounty, to quit Scores with him by a just Requit. Nay, so far had the same proud *Ferment* got into the Minds of all the Disciples, that neither could their own low Condition, nor the constant Sermons of that great Example of *Self-Denial and Humility*, whom they daily conversed with ; nor, lastly, the Correctives of a Peculiar Grace totally clear, and cure them of it. And therefore, no Wonder,

if a Principle so deeply rooted in Nature, works with the whole Power of Nature, and considering also the Corruption of Nature, as little wonder is it, if it runs out with an *Extravagance* equal to its Power, making the Minds of Men even *Drunk* with a false intoxicating conceit of their own Worth, and Abilities. From whence it is, That as Man is, of all Creatures in the World, both the most *Desirous*, and the most *Unable* to advance himself: So *through Pride and Indigence*, (Qualities which usually concur in Beggars) none is so unwilling to own the Banefactions he lives by, and has no claim to, as this weak and worthless Self-Admirer, who has nothing to be admired in him, but that he can, upon such Terms, admire Himself. For *Naked came I into the World, and Naked shall I go out again*, ought to be the Motto of every Man when born, the History of his Life, and his Epitaph when Dead: His Emptiness and *Self-consciousness* together, cannot but make him *feel* in himself (which is the surest way of knowing) that He has indeed Nothing, and yet he bears himself as if he could command all things; at the same time *low* in condition, and yet *lofty* in opinion; *boasting* and yet *depending*; nay, *boasting* against Him, whom he depends

pends upon. Which certainly is the foulest *Solecism* in Behaviour, and two of the worst Qualities, that can be, in Conjunction. But,

Secondly, A second Consideration, from whence we infer *this Proneness in Men to think themselves able to Merit of God, or to be profitable to him*, is their natural Aptness to form and measure their apprehensions of the *Supreme Lord of all Things*, by what they apprehend, and observe of the *Princes and Potentates of this World*, with reference to such as are under their Dominion. And this is certainly, a very prevailing Fallacy, and steals too easily upon Mens Minds as being founded in the unhappy Predominance of *Sense* over *Reason*; which in the Present Condition of Man's Nature, does but too frequently, and fatally take Place. For Men naturally have but faint Notions of Things *Spiritual*, and such as incur not into *they Senses*; but *their Eyes, their Ears, and their Hands* are too often made by them the *Rule of their Faith*, but almost always the *Reason of their Practice*. And therefore no marvel, if they blunder in their Notions about *God*; a Being, so vastly above the Apprehensions of *Sense*; while they conceive no otherwise of Him at best, but as some great *King, or Prince, ruling*

ling with a *Worldly Majesty*, and Grandeur over such puny Mortals as themselves: Whereupon, as they frame to themselves no other *Idea* of Him, but such as they borrow from the *Royal Estate* of an *Earthly Sovereign*, so they conceive also of their own *Relation* to him, and *Dependance upon him*, just as they do of that which passes between such a *Sovereign* and *His Subjects*; and consequently, since they find, that there is *no Prince* upon Earth so *Absolute*, but that he stands in as much need of his *Subjects* for many Things, as they do, or can stand in need of Him for His *Government and Protection*; (by Reason whereof there must needs follow a reciprocal *Exchange of Offices*, and a mutual *supply of Wants* between them, rendring both Parties Equally Necessary to one Another). I say, from these misapplied Premises, the Low, Gross, Undistinguishing Reason of the Generality of Mankind, presently infers, That the *Creature also* may, on some Accounts, be as Beneficial to His *Creator*, as such a *Subject* is to his *Prince*; and that there may be the like *Circulation* of good Turns between them; they being (as they think) within their Compass, as really Useful to *God*, as *God for his Part* is *Beneficial to them*; which is the True No-
tion

tion of *Merit*, or of being profitable to God. A Conceit, that sticks so close to *Humane Nature*, that neither *Philosophy*, nor *Religion* can wholly remove it: and yet if we consider the *limited Right*, which the Greatest Prince upon Earth has over his meanest Slave, and that *Absolute, Boundless, Paramount Right*, which *God* has over the very same Things, and Persons, which such Princes avow a Claim to, and by virtue of which *Transcendent Right* something is *God's* which can never be *Theirs*: And even what is *Theirs* is still by much Higher Title *His*: I say, if we consider this, the *Absurdity*, and *Inconsequence* of all such Discourses about the *Relation* between *God and Men*, as are taken from what we see, and observe between Man and Man, as *Governing* and *governed*, is hereby more than sufficiently proved; and yet as *Absurd*, as *Fallacious* and *Inconsequent* as this Way of Discourfing is, it is one of the Chief Foundations of the *Doctrin*e of *Merit*, and consequently of the Religion of too great a Part of the World: A Religion tending only to defraud Men of their *true Saviour*, by persuading them that they may be *their Own*. And thus much for the first Particular, the *Thing supposed* in the Words, to wit, *That Men are*
Natu-

Naturally very prone to persuade themselves, that they are able to Merit of God, or be Profitable to him.

I proceed now to the

Second Particular, In which we have something expressed, namely, That such a Persuasion is utterly false and absurd, and that it is impossible for Men to Merit of God, or be Profitable to Him. And this I shall evince by shewing the several Ingredients of *Merit*, and the *Conditions* necessary to render an Action *Meritorious*. Such as are these four that follow; as,

First, That an Action be not due; that is to say, it must not be such as a Man stands obliged to the doing of, but such as he is free either to do, or not to do, without being chargeable with the Guilt of any sinful Omission, in case he does it not. It being no ill Account given of *Merit* by * *Spanhemius* (the Elder,) That it is *Opus bonum Indebitum faciens premium debitum ex Indebito*. For otherwise, if that which is *Due*, may also *Merit*, then, by paying what I owe, I may make my *Creditors* my *Debtors*; and every Payment would not only *clear*, but also *transfer* the Debt.

* *Dub. Evang. Parte 34. pag. 782.*

Besides, that in all the *Benefactions* passing from Almighty God upon such as serve him the best they can, there could be no such Thing as *Liberality*; which can never take Place but where something is given, which the Receiver cannot Challenge: Nay, very hardly could there be any such Thing as *Gift*. For if there be first a *Claim*, then, in Strictness of Speech, it is not so properly *Gift*, as *Payment*. Yea, so vast would be the Comprehension of Justice, that it would scarce leave any Object for Favour. But *God's Grace and Bounty*, being so prevented by *Merit*, would be *Spectators* rather than *Actors* in the whole Work of Man's Salvation. Nor would our Obedience to God's *Positive* Precepts only, but also to his *Negative* sometimes strike in for their Share of *Merit*, and Claim to a *Reward*. And any one, who could plead such a *Negative* Righteousness, might come and demand a Recompence of God for *not Drinking or Whoring, Swearing or Blaspheming*; just as the *Pharisee* did, for not Being as the very Dregs of Sinners; and so vouch himself meritorious (fortooth) for being a Degree or Two short of Scandalous. Moreover, amongst Men, it would pass for an Obligation between Neighbours, that one of them did not *rob* or *murder* the other;

other; and a sufficient Plea for *Preferment* before Kings and Governours, not to have deserv'd the *Gibbet* and the *Halter*; which is a poor Plea indeed, when *to have deserv'd* them proves oftentimes a better. In short, upon these Terms, he, who is not the very worst of Villains, must commence Presently a Person of a peculiar Worth; and bare *Indemnity* will be too low a *Privilege* for the *Merit of not being a Clamorous, Overgrown Malefactor*.

But now, that All that any Man alive is Capable of Doing, is but an *Indispensable Homage* to God, and not a *free Oblation*; and that also such an *Homage*, as makes his *Obligation* to what he does much earlier than his Doing of it, will appear both from *the Law of Nature, and that of God's Positive Command*: Of each of which a Word or two, and

First, For the Law of Nature. There is Nothing that Nature proclaims with a louder, and more intelligible Voice, Than, *that He, who gives a being, and afterwards preserves and supports it*, has an Indefeasible claim to whatsoever the said *Being so given, and Supported by Him*, either *is* or *has* or *can* Possibly do. But this is a Point, *which I must be more particular* upon, and thereby lay a

Foun-

Foundation for what I shall argue, *a Fortiori*, concerning God Himself, from what is to be observed amongst Men. Now the *Right, which One Man has to the Actions of Another*, is generally derived from *One* or *Both* of these *two Great Originals, Production, or Possession*. The first of which gives a *Parent Right* over the Actions of his Child; and the other gives a *Master a Title* to whatsoever can be done by his Servant. Which two are certainly the Principal, and most Undoubted Rights, that take Place in the World. And both of them are *eminently* and *transcendently* in God, as he stands related to Men: and,

First, For Production. By the purest and most entire Communication of *Being*, God did not only *Produce*, but *Create* Man. He gave him an *Existence* out of *Nothing*, and while he was yet but a meer *Idea* or *Possibility* in the Mind of his Eternal Maker. That one Expression to the Psalmist, *It is He who hath made us, and not we our selves*, being both a *full Account*, and an *irrefragable Demonstration* of His Absolute Sovereignty over our Persons, and incontestable Claim to all Our Services: Nor is this the Utmost Measure of our Obligation to Him, but as he first drew us *out of Nothing* and *Non-Existence*,

so He ever since keeps us from Relapsing *into it*; *His Power brought us forth*; and *His Providence maintains us*. And thus has this poor impotent Creature been perpetually hanging upon the Bounty of his great Creator, and by a daily Preservation of his Precarious Being, stands obliged to Him under the growing renewed Title of a *Continual Creation*. But this is not all. There is yet,

Secondly, Another Title; whereby *One Person obtains a Right to all that another Can do*; and that is *Possession*. A Title, every whit as transcendently in God as the former; as being founded in, and resulting from His forementioned Prerogative of a *Creator*. Nothing being more unquestionable, than *that the Earth is the Lord's, and the Fullness thereof*: as the *Psalmist* declares, *Psalms xxiv. 1*. He is the *Sole Proprietor*, and *Grand Landlord of the Universe*. And moreover, as all Things were made *by Him*, so they were made *for Him* also; *He made all Things for Himself*, says the wisest of Men, *Prov. xvi. 4*. He is the *Original Efficient* by which, and the *Great and Last End* for which, they are: For *by Him they Begun, and in Him they Terminate*, after which two *Essential Relations* born by God to Man on the one side,
and

and obliging Man to God on the other, can there be any Thing that is Good, either in the *Being* or *Actions* of the latter, which can be call'd perfectly his own? any Thing which is not entirely due to God, and that by a *Complication* of the most binding and Indispensable Titles? And if so, *How* and *where* can there be any Room for such a Thing, as *Merit*.

The Civil Law tells us, that *Servants* have not properly a *Jus*, a *Right* or *Title*, to any Thing, by Virtue whereof they can implead, or bring an Action against their Lord, upon any account whatsoever; every such Servant, as the Law here speaks of, being *not only his Master's Vassal*, but also part of his *Possessions*. And this Right our Saviour Himself owns, and sets forth to Us by an Elegant *Parable*, couching under it as strong an *Argument*, Luke xvii. 7, 8, 9. *Which of You* (saith he) *having a Servant plowing, or feeding Cattle, will say unto him by and by, when he is come from the Field, Go, and sit down to Meat? And will not rather say unto him, make ready wherewith I may sup; and Gird thyself and serve me, till I have eaten and drank; and afterwards thou shall Eat and drink. Doth he thank that Servant, because he did the Things*

that were Commanded him; I trow not. Where we see, upon what Terms of *Right*, even the most diligent, and faithful Servant stands with his Master; who after he had been Toyling all Day in his Master's Business, dressing and manuring his Grounds, and *Watering* them with the *Drops* of his *Brow*, comes home at length *hungry* and *tired*, (where if he could find no reward for his hard service, yet one would think, that he might at least expect a discharge from any further *Work*, and receive the *present* Refreshments of his natural Food,) yet even then his Master renews his Employment, delays his Repast, and Commands him to *serve* and attend him at his Table, and with weary Limbs, and an empty Stomach, to expect a dismissal at his Pleasure; and, all this, without so much as any Thanks for his Pains. In which neither is the Master *unjust*, nor the Servant injured. For he did no more than what his Condition obliged him to; he did but his *Duty*; and *Duty* certainly neither is, nor can be *Meritorious*. Thus, I say, stands the Case amongst Men according to the Difference of their respective Conditions in this World. And if so, must not the same Obligation, as it passes between God and Man, rise *as much higher*, as the

the

the Condition of a *Creature* founds an Obligation incomparably Greater, than that of a bare *Servant* possibly can? And therefore since *Man* stands bound to *God* under Both these *Titles*, to wit, of *Production*, and *Possession*, How can there be a greater Paradox, than for such a Contemptible, forlorn piece of living Dirt, to claim any thing upon the stock of *Merit* from Him, who is both his *Master* and his *Maker* too? No, the very best of Men, upon the very best of their Service, have no other *Plea* before God but *Prayer*; they indeed may beg an Alms, but must not think to stand upon their Terms. But,

Secondly, Not only the *Law of Nature*, and *the Reason of the Thing* itself, (as we have sufficiently shewn) Excludes a Man from all *Plea of Merit*, but also that further Obligation lying upon *him*, and *all his Services* from the *positive Law, and Command of God*, equally cuts him off from the same. The known Voice of that Law being, *Thou shalt Worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve, Matth. iv. 10.* And then for the *measure and extent* of that service, it is to be *with all the Heart, and all the Strength, and all the Soul, Mark xii. 30.* Which one Comprehensive Injunction grasping in it all

that humane Nature is able to do, and by Consequence *bringing* all that can be done by Man within the Compass and Verge of Duty, has left no Vacancy or Possibility for Merit to take place; till it be proved, That a Man may actually do more, than *with all his Heart*, and *all his Strength* and *all his Soul*, he is able to do: *than which*, it is impossible, even for common Sense, to conceive any Thing more senseless and contradictory. And so I proceed to the

II. *Condition required to render an Action meritorious*; and that is, *That it should really add to, and better the State of the Person of whom it is to Merit*. The reason of which is, because *all Merit* (as we have shewn before) consists properly *in a Right to receive some Benefit, on the account of some Benefit first done*: The natural Order of Things requiring, that where a considerable Advantage has been received, something of the like Nature should be returned. For that otherwise, if one Part of the World should be always upon the *Receiving hand*, and never upon the *Restoring*, that *Part* would be a kind of monstrous *Dead Weight* upon the other, and all that was good and useful to Mankind would by an enormous Disparity lean wholly on one side.

But

But to bring the forementioned Condition of Merit home to our present Purpose. And thereby to shew how far *God is capable of Receiving from Man, and Man of giving to God*, it may not be amiss briefly to represent to ourselves, *What God is, and what Man is*, and by Consequence how the Case of *Giving and Receiving* must stand on *God's Part*, and how on *Man's*. And here in the

1st. Place. God offers Himself to our Consideration as a Being *infinitely Perfect, infinitely Happy, and Self-sufficient*; depending upon no Supply, or Revenue from abroad, but (as I may so express it) retreating wholly into Himself, and there living for ever upon the Inexhaustible stock of His Own Essential fulness; And, as a Fountain owes not its Streams to any Poor, Adventitious Infusions from without, but to the Internal, Unfailing Plenties of its own Springs; So this Mighty, All-comprehending Being which we call *God*, needs no other Happiness, but to Contemplate upon that which he actually is, and ever was, and shall be possessed of. From all which it follows, That the Divine *Nature and Beatitude*, can no more admit of any Addition to it, than we can add Degrees to *Infinity*, new measures to *Immensity*, and further Improve-

ments to a *boundless, absolute, unimproveable* Perfection : For such a Being is the *Great God*, who is one of the Parties whom we are now discoursing of. Nevertheless, to carry the Case a little further ; supposing for the Present, That the Divine Nature and Felicity were capable of some further Addition and Encrease, Let us in the

2d Place, cast our Eye upon the other Party concern'd, and consider, whether Man be a *Being* fit, and able to make this Addition ; Man, I say, that poor, slight, inconsiderable Nothing ; or at best a pitiful *Something beholden* to every one of the Elements, as well as *compounded* of them, and living as an Eleemosynary upon a perpetual Contribution from all, and every Part of the Creation ; This Creature clothing him, another feeding him, a third curing him when *sick*, and a fourth comforting and refreshing him when *well*. In a word, he subsists by the joint Alms of Heaven and Earth ; and stands at the Mercy of every Thing in Nature, which is able either to help, or hurt him.

And is this now the Person who is to oblige *his Maker* ? to indent and drive Bargains with the *Almighty* ? Those, I am sure, who in their several Ages, have been reputed most
Eminent

Eminent for their Knowledge of God and of themselves too, used to speak at much another Rate concerning both. *My Goodness* (says *David*) *extendeth not to Thee*, Ps. xvi. 2. And again, *If Thou be righteous* (says *Elihu* to *Job*) *what givest thou Him? or what does He receive at thy Hands?* Job xxxv. 7. So that *St. Paul* might well make that Challenge without expecting ever to see it answered in *Rom. xi. 35. Who hath first given to him and it shall be recompenced to him again?* For let Man but first prove the Debt, and the Almighty will be sure to pay it. But most fully of all does our Saviour himself determine this Point in that *remarkable* Conclusion of the forecited Parable, in *Luke xvii. 10.* where he instructs his Disciples, *After they had done all that was commanded them, to acknowledge themselves unprofitable Servants*; that is to say, such as God, upon no account whatsoever, was, or could be at all the better for. And a *clearer* Text certainly, and *more direct* and *home* against all Pretence of *Merit*, neither *Law* nor *Gospel* can afford.

Nevertheless, it must be confessed, That some have found out such an Exposition of it as (if admitted) renders it of no force at all against this Doctrine of *Merit*. For first, they

absolutely Cashier the Literal, Express sense of the Words, and in the room of it Introduce a Figure called by the *Greeks* μειωσις, which to diminish, or degrade a thing, expresses it in Terms representing it *much less* than indeed it is; as when we say, a thing is *smaller than an Atom, less than Nothing*, and the like; Such Words are not to be understood Literally, but import only, that the thing spoken of is very Inconsiderable. *Accordingly*, when Christ bids his Disciples after their best and most exact Performances acknowledge themselves *Unprofitable Servants*, we are not (says these Expositors) to conclude from hence, that really they were so, but that Christ only read them a Lecture of Humility, and Self-abasement towards God, in speaking but meanly and lowly of their own Piety, how differently soever it might deserve to be Valued, according to the strict Estimate of the Thing itself. *So that* by all this (it seems) our Saviour was only teaching those about him, how to pass Compliments upon Almighty God, Their professing of themselves *Unprofitable Servants*, amounting to no more than if they had told him, *they were his humble Servants* The meaning of which Words (if they have any meaning at all) the Fashionable Custom of *Gentle*

teel Lying will much better account for, than the Language of Scripture (*the Word of Truth*) is able to do. But in the mean time, what an insufferable perversion of the *Written Word* is it, to affix such a sense to any Text of it, as this forced Exposition here does? which manifestly turns a most Devout Confession to Almighty God into a piece of *Courtship*; a Principal Truth into a *mere Trope* or Figure; and, in a word, one of the highest Duties of a Christian into a *false, fulsome* and (at best) an *Empty Expression*. And so I pass to the

III. *Condition* required to render an Action *meritorious*; and that is, *That there be an Equal Proportion of Value between the Action, and the Reward*. This being evident from the foundation already laid by us; to wit, *That the Nature of Merit consists properly in Exchange*; and that, we know must proceed according to a *Parity of Worth* on both sides; *Commutation* being most properly between things *Equivalent*. But now the *Prize we run for*, in all our Religious Performances, is no less a thing than *Life Eternal*, and a *Beatifick Enjoyment* of God Himself for ever; And can any Man, not quite abandoned by his Reason, imagine a few, weak, broken Actions, a *Competent Price* for *Heaven* and
Immor-

Immortality? and fit to be laid in the Balance with an *exceeding* and *eternal Weight of Glory?* Is there any thing in *Dust* and *Ashes*, that can deserve to dwell with God, and to converse with Angels? Or can we, who *live* by *Sense*, and act by *Sense*, do any thing worthy of those Joys which not only exceed our *Senses*, but also transcend our *Intellectuals?* Can we *do* beyond what we can *think*, and *deserve* beyond what we can *do*? For let us rate our best, and most exact Services according to the strict Rules of *Morality*, and what Man is able to carry so steady an hand in any religious Performance, as to observe all those Conditions, that are absolutely necessary to answer the full Measures of the Law? No, this is such a pitch of Acting as the present strength of Nature must not pretend to. And if not, how can an Action, short of *complete Morality*, set up for *Meritorious?*

The Papists, we know, in their Disputes upon this Subject, distinguish *Merit* into that which is *de Condigno*, which merits a *Reward* upon Terms of *Justice*, and by reason of the inherent *Worth* and *Value* of the *Work done*; and that on the other Side to be *de Congruo*, which, tho' it cannot claim a Reward upon those Terms, and from the precise Worth,
and

and Value of the *Work itself*, yet is such, that God would not act suitably, and *congruously*, to the *Equity and Goodness of his Nature*, if He should not reward it. These two sorts of *Merit*, I say, they hold, but are not yet agreed, which of the two they should state the *Merit* of their good Works upon. For *some* boldly assert, that they merit the former way, to wit, by their own inherent *Worth and Value*; And *some*, that they merit only the latter way, that is by being such, as *the Equity and Goodness of God* cannot but Reward; And lastly, *Others*, (as particularly *Bellarmino*) hold that they merit both ways; to wit, partly by *Condignity*, and partly by *Congruity*.

In Answer to which, without disputing any thing against their *Merit of Condignity* (since it more than sufficiently confutes it self) I utterly deny the whole foundation of their *Merit de Congruo*, as to any *Obligation* on God's Part *to reward our* religious Service upon the score of *Equity*; since upon that account God can be under no *Obligation* to do any thing: Forasmuch as there is no such thing, as *Equity* in God, distinct from his *Justice* and *Mercy*; and the Exercise of his *Mercy* must on all hands needs be granted to be *free*; how
much

much soever *that of his Justice* may, by some, be thought otherwise.

Amongst Men, I confess, there is such an *Obligation*, as that of *Equity*; and the reason is, because Men stand obliged by a *Superior Law* to exercise *Mercy*, as well as *Justice*; which God does not: and therefore though there may be such a thing as a *Meritum de Congruo* between *Man and Man*, yet between *God and Man*, (since God is under *no Obligation to shew Mercy*, where His own Word has not first obliged Him) no such *Merit* can take place.

But, besides, this is not the Point, *Whether or no it be Congruous to the Goodness of God, for Him to reward such or such Actions?* For there be many Thousands of *Things and Actions very Congruous for God to do*, which yet by his Nature, He his not obliged to *do*, nor ever *will do*; So that the bare *Congruity* of any *Thing*, or *Action* to the Divine Nature, lays no obligation upon God to do it at all. But the Point lies here; to wit, whether it be *so Congruous to God to reward the Obedience, and good Actions of Men, that it is incongruous to his Nature not to do it*: And this I utterly deny. For if it were *Incongruous* to his Nature *not to reward them*, it would be necessary

ecessary for him *to reward* them; and then indeed *Merit* must upon Equal necessity take Place. But if God be *not bound* to reward every Act, which it may be *suitable* or *Congruous* for him *to reward* (as we have shewn that he is not) then *Meritum de Congruo*, is but *Merit* equivocally so called; and the fore-mentioned *Division* of *Merit* is not a *Division* of a *Genus* into two several *Species*, but only a *Distribution* of an *Equivocal Term* into its several *Significations*; and Consequently to give the Name of *Merit* with respect to God, to that which is so only *de Congruo*, is a mere trifling about Words, without any regard had to the sense of them. Nor let any one here Object the frequent use of the Terms *mereri* and *meritum* by the Fathers and other Ancient Church-Writers; for they use them not in a Sense importing *Claim* upon the score of strict *Justice*, but only as they signify the *Actual obtainment* of any Thing from God, upon the Stock of *Free Promise*, by coming up to the Conditions of it: which by no means reaches that *sence* of the Word which we have been hitherto disputing against. In short therefore the Question stands thus: Does this *Meritum de Congruo*, from the Nature of the Thing it self, oblige God to reward it, or does it

not? If it does, then I am sure that *Merit of Condignity does the same*, and can do no more; and so the Distinction between them is but verbal, and superfluous. But if, on the other hand, *it does not oblige God*, then I affirm, that it is not so much as *Merit*; for where there is no *Obligation* on one side, there can be no *Merit* on the other. To which we may add this further Consideration, that the asserting of such a *Merit of Congruity*, is altogether as Arrogant, as to assert that of *Condignity*; forasmuch as it equally *binds* God, and brings him under as great a *necessity of Rewarding*, as the other can; and that not by Reason of his own *Free-Word*, and Promise obliging him to it, (of which more anon) but because of a certain *Worth* and *Value* inherent in the Work itself; which makes it *incongruous*, and consequently *Impossible*, for God *not to reward it*; Since it must needs be *impossible* for him to do any thing *Incongruous* to himself, or to any of his Attributes.

For all which it follows, That *the Third Condition required to make an Action meritorious*, is here failing also. Which is, *That the Excellency of the Work be commensurate to the Value of the Reward*. And so I am come at length to the

Fourth and Last Condition, or Ingredient of Merit. And that is, That he who does a Work, whereby he would merit of another, does it solely by his own Strength, and not by the Strength or Power of him, from whom he is to merit. The Reason of which is, because otherwise the Work would not be entirely a *Man's own*. And where there is no *Property*, there can be no *Exchange*, and *Exchange* being the Alienation of one *Property or Title* for another. And I have all along shewn, that the Nature of *Merit* is founded in *Comutation*.

But now, *how great* an Hand, or rather *what a total* Influence God has in all our Actions, that known Maxim jointly received both by Heathens and Christians, sufficiently demonstrates; namely, *That in him we live, and move, and have our Being*. And so intimately and inseparably does this Influence joyn itself with all the Motions of the Creature, that it puzzles the deepest and most acute Philosophers to distinguish between the Actions of *second Causes*, and the Concurrence of the first, so as to rescue them from a downright Identity. Accordingly in *Philip. ii. 13.* the Apostle tells us, *That it is God who worketh in us not only to do, but also to will according to his good Pleasure*. And if in every
good.

good *Inclination*, as well as *Action*, God be the *Worker*, we must needs be the *Recipient* Subjects of what is wrought: and to be *Recipient* certainly is not *Meritorious*.

In all the *Actions* of Men, though we naturally fix our Eye only upon some *Visible Agent*; yet still there is a secret *Invisible Spring* which is the *first mover* of and conveys an *Activity* to every Power and Faculty both of *Soul* and *Body*, though it be discerned by neither. Upon which account it is, that St. *Austin* says, *That in all that God does for us, He only Crowns His own Works in us*; the same *Hand* still enabling us to *do*, which shall hereafter reward us for what *we have done*. And if, according to these Terms, and those Words also of the *Spouse* to the same purpose, *Cantic. 1. 4. Draw me and I will follow Thee*; our *Coming to God* be from nothing else, but from His *Drawing us to himself*, how can we merit of him *by our following Him, or coming to Him*? For can any one oblige me by a Present bought with my own Money? or by giving me that which I first gave Him? And yet the Case here is much the same. For as apt as we are to flatter ourselves, and to Think and Speak big upon this Subject, yet in Truth by all that we do or can do, we do but

but *return* God something of his own. Much like the Rivers, which come rolling with a mighty Noise, and pour themselves into the Sea, and yet as high as they swell, and as loud as they roar, they only restore the Sea her own Waters: That which flows into her in one Place, having been first *drawn from her* in another. In a Word, can the *Earth* repay the *Heavens* for their Influences, and the Clouds for that Verdure, and Fertility which they bestow upon it? or, can *Dirt* and *Dung-hills* requite the *Sun* and the *Light* for shining upon them? No certainly; and yet what poor Shadows, and faint Representations are these of that infinitely greater Inability, even of the noblest of God's Creatures to present him with any thing, which they were not first *beholden* to him for! It is clear therefore, that since Man, in all his Duties and Services, never had any thing of *his own* to set up with, but has trafficked all along upon a *borrowed* Stock, the *fourth and last Condition* required to make his *Performances meritorious* utterly fails him.

And thus I have distinctly gone over the several *Conditions* of Merit. As *First*, That the *meritorious* Act be not *due*. *Secondly*, That it really *add to*, and *better* the Condi-

tion of him from whom it merits. *Thirdly, That there be a Parity of Value between the Work and the Reward.* And *Fourthly and Lastly, That it be done by the sole Strength of him who merits, and not by the Help and Strength of him, from whom he merits.* These four, I say, are the *essential Ingredients, and indispensable Conditions of Merit.* And yet, not one of them all agrees to the very best of Man's Actions, with Reference to Almighty God. Nevertheless, in Despight of all these deplorable Impotences, *we see what a towering Principle of Pride works in the Hearts of Men, and how mightily it makes them affect to be their own Saviours, and even while they live upon God, to depend upon themselves: To be poor and proud being the truest Character of Man ever since the Pride of our first Parents threw us into this forlorn Condition.* And thus I have finished the second and main Particular proposed from these Words, and *expressed in them, namely, That it is impossible for Men by their best Services to merit of God, or be profitable to him.* I proceed now to the

Third Particular, *which exhibits to us something by way of Inference from the two former; to wit, That this Persuasion of Man's being*

being able to merit of God, is the Source, and Foundation of two of the greatest Corruptions of Religion that have infested the Christian Church; and those are Pelagianism and Popery. And,

First, For Pelagianism. It chiefly springs from, and is resolvable into this one Point, namely, That a Man contributes something of his own, which he had not from God, towards his own Salvation: And that not a bare something only, but such a something also, as is the principal and most effectual Cause of his Salvation. Forasmuch as that which he receives from God, (according to Pelagius) is only a Power to will and to do; which a Man may very well have, and carry to Hell with him, as those who go to Hell, no Doubt, do. But that which obtains Heaven, and actually saves a Man, is the right Use of that Power, and the free Determination of his Will; which (as the same Pelagius teaches) a Man has wholly from himself, and accordingly may wholly thank himself for. So that in Answer to that Question of the Apostle, 1 Cor. iv. 7. Quis te discrevit? Who made thee to differ from another? and that as to the grand Discrimination of Saint and Reprobate? The Pelagian must reply, if he will speak pertinently and

D 2

consistently

consistently with himself; Why; *I made myself to differ, by using the Powers, which God gave me, as I should do;* which my Neighbour did not; and for that Reason I go to *Heaven*, and he to *Hell*; and as he can blame none but himself for the one, so I am beholden to none but myself for the other. This, I say, is the main of the *Pelagian Divinity*, though much more compendiously delivered in that known but lewd Aphorism of theirs. *A Deo habemus quòd sumus Homines, a nobis autem ipsis quòd sumus Justi.* To which we may add another of their Principles, to wit, *That if a Man does all that naturally he can do* (still understanding hereby the present State of Nature) *God is bound in Justice to supply, whatsoever more shall be necessary to Salvation.* Which Premises if they do not directly, and unavoidably infer in Man a Power of *meriting* of God, the World is yet to seek, what the *Nature and Notion of Merit is.* Accordingly, both *Gelasius*, and *St. Austin*, in setting down the Points wherein the *Catholick Church* differed from the *Pelagians*, assign this for one of the chief, That the *Pelagians* held *Gratiam Dei secundum Hominum merita conferri.* And, the Truth is, upon their Principles a Man may even merit
the

the Incarnation of Christ: For if there be no *saving Grace* without it, and a Man may do that which shall oblige God in *Justice* to vouchsafe him such *Grace*, (as with no small Self-Contradiction these Men use to speak) then let them qualify and soften the Matter with what Words they please. I affirm, that upon these Terms, a Man really *merits his Salvation*, and by Consequence all that is, or can be necessary thereunto.

In the mean Time, throughout all this *Pelagian* Scheme, we have not so much as one Word of Man's *natural Impotency to spiritual Things*, (though inculcated and wrote in both Testaments with a Sun-beam) nor consequently of the Necessity of some *powerful, Divine Energy to bend, encline and effectually draw* Man's Will, to such Objects, as it naturally resists, and is averse to: Not a Word, I say, of this, or any thing like it; (for those Men used to explode, and deny it all; as their modern Off-spring amongst us also do :) And yet this passed for sound, and good Divinity in the Church in St. *Austin's* time; and within less than an hundred Years since, *in our Church* too: 'till Pelagianism, and Socinianism, Deism, Tritheism, Atheism, and a Spirit of Innovation, the Root of all, and

worse than all, broke in upon us, and by false Schemes and Models countenanced and encouraged, have given quite a new Face to things: though a new Face is certainly the worst and most unbecoming that can be set upon an old Religion. But

Secondly, To proceed to another Sort of Men famous for corrupting Christianity more Ways than one; to wit, those of the Church of *Rome*. We shall find, that *this Doctrine of Man's being able to merit of God* is one of the chief Foundations of *Popery* also. Even the Great *Diana*, which some of the most *experienced Crafts-men* in the World do with so much Zeal *sacrifice to, and make Shrines for; and, by so doing, get their Living*, and that a very plentiful, and splendid one too; as knowing full well, that without it the Grandeur of their Church (which is all their Religion) would quickly fall to the Ground. For if there be no *Merit of good Works*, then no *Supererrogation*, and if no *Supererrogation*, no *Indulgences*, and if no *Indulgences*, then it is to be feared, that the *Silversmiths Trade* will run low, and the Credit of the Pontifical *Bank* begin to fail. So that the very *Marrow, the Life, and Spirit of Popery* lies in a stiff Adherence to this Doctrine: The grand Question still in-

fisted

sifted upon by these Merchants being *Quid dabitur*, and the great Commodity set to Sale by them being *Merit*. For can any one think that the *Pope*, and his *Cardinals*, and the rest of their *Ecclesiastical Grandees*, care a Rush whether *the Will of Man be free, or no*, (as the Jesuits state the *Freedom* of it on the one side, and Dominicans and Jansenists on the other) or that they at all concern themselves about Justification and *Free Grace*, but only as the artificial stating of such Points may sometimes *serve* them in their Spiritual Traffick, and now and then *help* them to *turn the Penny*. No; they value not their *Schools* any further, than they furnish their Markets; nor regard any *Gospel* but that of Cardinal *Pallavicini*; which professedly owns it for the main Design of Christianity, to make Man as *Rich*, as *Great*, and as *Happy*, as they can be in this World. And the grand Instrument to compass all this by, is the Doctrine of Merit. For how else could it be, that so many in that Communion should be able to satisfy themselves in doing so much less, than they know they are required to do, for the saving of their Souls, but that they are taught to believe, that there are some again in the World who *do a great deal more* than they are bound to do,

and so may very well *keep their Neighbour's Lamp from going out*, by having *Oil enough* both to supply their own, and a comfortable *Overplus* besides, to *lend*, or (which is much better) to *sell*, in such a Case. In a Word, take away the *Foundation*, and the House must fall; and, in like Manner, beat down *Merit*, and down goes *Popery* too. And so at length (that I may not trespass upon your Patience too much) I descend to the

Fourth and Last Particular, proposed at first from the Words. *Which was to remove an Objection, naturally apt to issue from the foregoing Particulars.* The Objection is obvious, and the Answer to it needs not be long. It proceeds thus.

If the *Doctrine* hitherto advanced, be *true*, can there be a greater Discouragement to Men in their Christian Course, than to consider, that *all* their Obedience, *all* their Duties and choicest Performances *are nothing worth, in the Sight* of God? and that they themselves, after they have done *their Best, their Utmost*, and *their very All* in his Service, are still, for all that, *useless and unprofitable*, and such as can plead *no Recompence at all* at his Hands? This you will say is very hard; but to it I answer.

First, That it neither ought, nor uses to be any Discouragement *to a Beggar* (as we all are in respect of Almighty God) to continue asking an Alms, and doing all that he can *to obtain it*, though he knows he can do nothing *to claim it*. But,

Secondly, I deny, That our disavowing *this Doctrine of Merit*, cuts us off from *all Plea to a Recompence* for our Christian Obedience at the Hands of God. It cuts us off indeed from all Plea to it upon the Score of *Condignity and strict Justice*: But then should we not on the other side consider, whether *God's Justice* be the only Thing that can oblige him in his Transactings with Men? For does not his *Veracity*, and his *Promise* oblige him as much as *his Justice can*? And has he not positively *promised to reward* our sincere *Obedience*? Which *Promise*, though his mere *Grace and Goodness* induced him to make, yet his *essential Truth* stands obliged to see performed. For tho' some have ventur'd so far as to declare God under no Obligation to inflict the Eternal Torments of Hell (how peremptorily soever threatned by him) upon Men dying in their Sins; yet I suppose, none will be so *hardy*, or rather *shameless*, as to affirm it free for God, to perform, or not perform

form *his Promise*; the Obligation of which being so *absolute*, and *unalterable*, I do here further affirm, that upon the truest, and most assured Principles of *practical Reason* there is as strong, and as enforcing a Motive from the *immutable Truth of God's Promise* to raise Men to the highest, and most heroick Acts, of a Christian Life, as if every such single Act could by its own intrinsic Worth merit a glorious Eternity. For to speak the real Truth, and Nature of Things, that which excites Endeavour, and sets Obedience on Work, *is not properly a Belief, or Persuasion of the Merit of our Works, but the Assurance of our Reward*. And can we have a greater Assurance of this, than that *Truth itself*, which cannot break its Word, has promised it? For the Most High, and Holy One (as we have shewn, and may with Reverence speak,) has *pawned* his *Word*, his *Name*, and his *Honour* to reward the stedfast, finally persevering Obedience of every one within the Covenant of Grace, notwithstanding its legal Imperfection.

And therefore, tho' we have all the Reason in the World to blush at the worthless emptiness of our best Duties, and to be ashamed of the Poorness, and Shortness of our most compleat Actions, and, in a Word, to think

as meanly of them and of ourselves for them, as God himself does, yet still let us build both *our Practice*, and *our Comfort* upon this one Conclusion, *as upon a Rock*; that, though *after we have done All*, we are still *unprofitable Servants*, yet *because we have done All*, God has engaged himself to be a *gracious Master*.

To whom therefore be rendred, and ascribed, as is most due, all Praise, Might, Majesty, and Dominion, both now and for evermore. Amen.



A
S E R M O N

Preached at

CHRIST-CHURCH, *Oxon,*

Before the

UNIVERSITY,

OCTOBER 29, 1693.

LUKE xi. 35.

*Take Heed therefore, that the Light
which is in thee be not Darknes.*

AS *Light* is certainly one of the most glorious, and useful Creatures that ever issued from the Wisdom, and Power of the great Creator of the World ; so were the Eye of the Soul as little weakned by the *Fall*, as the
Eye

Eye of the Body, no Doubt the *Light within us* would appear as much more glorious than the *Light without us*, as the spiritual, intellectual Part of the Creation exceeds the Glories of the sensible, and corporeal. As to the Nature of which *Light*, to give some Account of it before I proceed further, and that without entering into those various Notions of it, which some have amused the World with; it is, in short, that which Philosophers in their Discourses about the Mind of Man, and the first Origins of Knowledge, do so much magnify by the Name of *recta Ratio*; that great Source and Principle, (as they would have it) both of their *Philosophy*, and *Religion*.

For the better Explication of which I must, according to a common but necessary Distinction, (and elsewhere made use of by me) observe that this *recta Ratio* may be taken in a double Sense.

First, For those Maxims, or *general Truths*; which, being collected by the Observations of Reason, and formed thereby into certain Propositions, are the Grounds and Principles, by which Men govern both their *Discourse* and *Practise*, according to the Nature of the Objects that come before them: or,

Secondly,

Secondly, It may be taken for that *Faculty*, or *Power of the Soul*, by which it forms these *Maxims or Propositions*, and afterwards discourses upon them. And so no Doubt it is to be taken here.

For *Propositions* themselves, as to the Truth of them, are neither capable of Increase, or Decrease, Improvement, or Diminution; but the *Powers and Faculties* of the Soul are capable of both; that is, of becoming stronger or weaker, according as Men shall use, or abuse, cultivate, or neglect them. Upon which Account this *Recta Ratio* can be nothing else, but that intellectual Power or Faculty of the Soul, which every one is naturally endowed with.

To which Faculty, as there belong two Grand, and Principal Offices; to wit, one to *inform* or *direct*, and the other to *command* or *oblige*; so the said Faculty sustains a different *αἰεσις* or Denomination according to each of them. For as it serves to *inform* the Soul, by discovering Things to it, so it is called the *Light of Nature*; but as it *obliges* the Soul, to *do this*, or *forbear that* (which it does, as it is actuated, or informed with those forementioned *general Truths or Maxims*;) so it is called the *Law of Nature*:

which two Offices, though belonging to one and the same Faculty, are very different. For the former of them, to wit, *its enlightning or informing Quality*, extends much further than its *obliging Virtue* does; even to all Things knowable in the Mind of Man; but the latter only to such Things, as are Matter of Practice, and so fall under a *Moral Consideration*. Besides, that this *obliging Quality* must needs also *presuppose the enlightning Quality* as essentially going before it. For, as no Law can bind, 'till it be notified or promulged; so neither can this Faculty of the Soul *oblige* a Man, 'till it has first *informed him*. By which we see, that the *Light of Nature*, according to the essential Order of Things, precedes the *Law of Nature*, and consequently in Strictness of Speech, ought to be distinguished from it, how much soever some have thought fit to confound them. And I doubt not, but it is *This*, which the Text here principally intends by *the Light within us*.

Nevertheless, since the Word *Conscience* takes in both, and signifies as well a *Light to inform*, as it imports and carries with it also a *Law to oblige* us, I shall indifferently express this *Light* by the Name of *Conscience* (as a Term equivalent to it) in all the following

ing

ing Particulars; but still this shall be, with respect to its *informing*, rather than to its *obliging* Office. Forasmuch as it is the former of these only which is the proper Effect of *Light*, and not the latter. For tho' *Conscience* be both a *Light*, and (as it commands under God) a *Law* too; yet as it is a *Light*, it is not formally a *Law*. For if it were, then whatsoever it discovered to us, it would also oblige us to. But this is not so; since it both may, and does discover to us the *indifferent Nature* of many Things and Actions without obliging us either to the Practice or Forbearance of them; which one Consideration alone is sufficient to set the Difference between the *enlightning and the obliging Office* of Conscience, clear beyond all Objection.

And thus much I thought fit to premise, concerning the nature of the *Light* here spoken of by our *Saviour*, and intended for the Subject of the present Discourse. Which *Light*, as it is certainly the great and sovereign Gift of God to Mankind for the Guidance and Government of their Actions, in all that concerns them, with Reference to this Life, or a better; so it is also as certain, that it is capable of being turned into *Darkness*, and thereby made wholly useless for so noble a Purpose.

For

For so much the Words of the *Text* import; nor do they import only a bare *Possibility*, that it may be so, but also a very high *Probability*, that, without an extraordinary *Prevention*, it will be so. For as much as all *Warning*, in the very Reason of the Thing, and according to the natural Force of such Expressions, implies in it these two Things. *First*, Some very considerable Evil, or Mischief *warned* against; and *Secondly*, an equal Danger of falling into it: Without which all *Warning* would be not only superfluous, but ridiculous.

Now, both these, in the present Case, are very great; as will appear by a distinct Consideration of each of them. And

First, For the *Evil which we are warned or caution'd against*; to wit, *the turning of this Light within us into Darkness*. An Evil so unconceivably great, and comprehensive, that, to give an account of the utmost extent of it, would *pose* our Thoughts, as well as *nonplus* our Expressions. But yet to help our Apprehensions of it the best we can, let us but consider with ourselves those intolerable Evils which *bodily Blindness, Deafness, Stupefaction*, and an *utter Deprivation of all Sense* must unavoidably subject the outward

Man to. For what is one, in such a Condition, *able to do*? And what is he not *lyable to suffer*? and yet *Doing* and *Suffering*, upon the matter, comprehend all that concerns a Man in this World. If such an one's Enemy seeks his Life (as he may be sure, that some or other will, and possibly such an one as he takes for his Truest Friend) in this forlorn Case, he can neither *see* nor *hear*, nor *perceive* his Approach, till he finds himself actually in his murdering Hands. He can neither encounter, nor escape him, neither in his own Defence give, nor ward off a Blow: For whatsoever blinds a Man, *ipso facto* disarms him; so that being thus bereft both of his *Sight* and of all his *Senses* besides, what such an one can be fit for, unless it be to set up for Prophecy, or *believe Transubstantiation*, I cannot imagine.

These, I say, are some of those fatal Mischiefs, which corporal Blindness and Insensibility expose the Body to; and are not those of a *spiritual Blindness* unexpressibly greater? For must not a Man, labouring under this, be utterly at a loss, how to distinguish between the two grand governing Concerns of Life, *Good* and *Evil*? and may not the Ignorance of these cost us as dear as the *Knowledge* of them

them did our first Parents? *Life and Death*; Vice and Virtue come alike to such an one; As all things are of the same Colour to Him who cannot see. His whole Soul is nothing but Night, and Confusion, Darknes, and Indistinction. He can neither see the way to Happiness; and how then should he choose it? Nor yet to Destruction, and how then should he avoid it? For where there is no *Sense of things*, there can be no *Distinction*, and where there is no Distinction there can be no Choice.

A Man destitute of this directing and distinguishing *Light within* him, is and must be at the Mercy of every thing in Nature, that would impose or serve a Turn upon him. So that whatsoever the Devil will have him do, that he must do. Whithersoever any exorbitant Desire or Design hurries him, thither he must go. Whatsoever any base Interest shall prescribe, that he must set his Hand to, whether his Heart goes along with it, or no. If he be a Statesman, he must be as willing to *sell*, as the Enemy of his Country can be to *buy*. If a Churchman, he must be ready to surrender, and give up the Church, and make a *Sacrifice* of the *Altar* itself though he lives by it; and (in a Word) take that for a full

discharge from all his *Subscriptions* and Obligations to it, to *do as he is bid*. Which being the Case of such as steer by a false Light, certainly no Slave in the Gallies is or can be in such a wretched Condition of Slavery as a Man thus abandoned by Conscience, and bereft of all *inward Principles*, that should either guide or controul him in the Course of his Conversation. So that we see here the transcendent *Greatness of the Evil which we stand caution'd against*. But then,

Secondly, If it were an Evil that *seldom happened*, that very hardly and rarely befel a Man, this might in a great measure supersede the Strictness of the *Caution*; but on the contrary, we shall find, that *as great as the Evil is*, which we are to fence against (and that is *as great* as the Capacities of an immortal Soul) the *Greatness* of the Danger is still commensurate: For it is a Case that usually happens; it is a Mischiefe as frequent in the *Event*, as it is, or can be fatal *in the Effect*. It is, as in a common Plague, in which, the Infection is as hard to be *escaped*, as the Distemper to be *cured*: For that which brings this Darkness upon the Soul is Sin. And as the state of Nature now is, the *Soul* is not so close united to the *Body*, as Sin is to the Soul; indeed so close

close is the Union between them, that one would even think, the Soul itself (as much a *Spirit* as it is) were the *Matter*, and Sin the *Form* in our present Constitution. In a word, there is a set Combination of all *without a Man*, and all *within him*, of all *above ground*, and all *under* it, (if Hell be so) first to put out his Eyes, and then to draw or drive him headlong into Perdition. From all which, I suppose, we must needs see Reason more than sufficient for this Admonition of our Saviour, *take heed that the Light which is in thee be not Darkness*. An Admonition founded upon no less a Concern, than all that a Man can save; and all that he can lose to Eternity. And thus having shewn both the *Vastness of the Evil itself*, and the *extreme Danger* we are in of it; Since no Man can be at all the wiser, or the safer barely for knowing his *Danger* without a vigorous Application to prevent it; and since the surest and most rational Preventive of it, is to know by what Arts, and Methods, our Enemy will encounter us, and by which he is most likely to prevail over us, we will enquire into, and consider those *Ways* and *Means* by which he commonly attempts, and too frequently effects this so dismal a Change upon us, as to strip us even of the poor

Remains of our fallen Nature, by turning the last surviving Spark of it, this *Light within us*, into Darkness.

For this must be acknowledged, that no Man living, in respect of Conscience, is *born Blind*, but makes himself so. None can strike out *the Eye of his Conscience* but himself: For *nothing* can put it out, but that which *sins* it out. And upon this Account, it must be confessed, that a Man may love his Sin so enormously much, as by a very ill Application of the Apostle's Expression, even to *pluck out his own Eyes and give them to it*; as indeed every obstinate Sinner in the World does.

Our present Business therefore shall be (and that as a Completion of what I discoursed formerly upon Conscience in this Place) to shew *how* and by what *Courses, this Divine Light, this Candle of the Lord*, comes first to burn faint and dim, and so by a gradual Decay fainter and fainter, till at length by a total Extinction it quite sinks to nothing, and so dies away. And this I shall do, *First*, in General, and *Secondly*, in Particular.

And first in *General*, I shall lay down these two Observations.

First, that whatsoever *defiles* the Conscience, in the same Degree also *darkens* it.

As to the Philosophy of which, *how and by what way* this is done, it is hard to conceive, and much harder to explain. Our great Unacquaintance with the Nature of Spiritual, Immaterial Beings leaving us wholly in the Dark as to any explicite Knowledge, either how *they Work*, or how they *are worked upon*. So that in discoursing of these things we are forced to take up with Analogy, and Allusion, instead of Evidence and Demonstration. Nevertheless the Thing itself is certain, be the manner of effecting it never so unaccountable.

Yet thus much we find, that there is something in Sin analogous to *Blackness*, as *Innocence* is frequently in Scripture, expressed, and set forth to us by *Whiteness*. All Guilt *blackens*, (or does something equivalent to the blackening of) the Soul; as where Pitch cleaves to any thing, it is sure to leave upon it both its *Foulness* and its *Blackness* together: and then we know, that *Blackness* and *Darkness* are inseparable.

Some of the ablest of the *Peripatetick* School (not without countenance from *Aristotle* himself, in the fifth Chapter of his third Book, περὶ ψυχῆς) hold, that besides the *Native, inherent Light* of the Intellect (which is essential

to it, as it is a Faculty made to apprehend, and take in its Object after a spiritual way) there is also another Light, in the Nature of a *Medium*, beaming in upon it by a continual Efflux and Emanation from the *great Fountain of Light*, and irradiating this intellectual Faculty, together with the Species or Representations of Things imprinted thereupon. According to which Doctrine it seems with great Reason to follow, that whatsoever interposes between the *Mind* and those *Irradiations* from God, (as all Sin more or less certainly does) must needs hinder the Entrance and Admission of them into the Mind; and then Darkeness must by necessary Consequence ensue, as being nothing else but the *Absence*, or *Privation* of Life.

For the further Illustration of which Notion, we may observe, that the *Understanding*, the *Mind*, or *Conscience* of Man (which we shall here take for the same Thing) seem to bear much the same respect to God, which *Glass* or *Crystal* does to the *Light* or *Sun*: which appears indeed to the Eye a bright and a shining Thing; Nevertheless this shining is not *so much* from any essential Light or Brightness existing in the Glass it self (supposing that there be any such in it) as it is from the *Po-*
rousness

roufness of its Body, rendring it *diaphonous*, and thereby fit to receive and transmit those Rays of Light, which falling upon it, and passing through it, represent it to common View as a *luminous* Body. But now let any Thing of Dirt or Foulness fully this *Glass*, and so much of the *Shine* or *Brightness* of it is presently gone, because so much of the Light is thereby hindred from entring into it, and making its Way through it. But if, besides all this, you should also draw some black Colour, or deep Dic upon it, either by Paint or otherwise; why then no *Brightness* could be seen in it at all, but the *Light* being hereby utterly shut out, the *Glass* or *Crystal* would *shine* or *glister* no more than a Piece of Wood, or a Clod of Earth.

In like manner every Act of Sin, every Degree of Guilt, does in its Proportion cast a kind of *Soil* or *Foulness* upon the intellectual Part of the Soul, and thereby intercepts those blessed Irradiations, which the Divine Nature is continually darting in upon it. Nor is this all, but there are also some certain Sorts and Degrees of Guilt, so very black and foul, that they fall like an *huge thick Blot* upon this Faculty; and so sinking into it, and settling within it, utterly exclude all those *Illuminations*

tions, which would otherwise flow into it, and rest upon it from the great *Father of Lights*; and this not from any Failure, or Defect in the *Illumination* itself, but from the Indisposition of the Object, which being thus *blacken'd*, can neither let in, nor *transmit* the Beams, that are cast upon it.

I will not affirm this to be a perfect Exemplification of the Case before us, but I am sure it is a lively Illustration of it, and may be of no small Use to such as shall thoroughly consider it. But however (as I shew'd before) the thing itself is certain and unquestionable, *Guilt* and *Darkness* being always so united, that you shall never find *Darkness* mentioned in Scripture in a *Moral Sense*, but you shall also find it deriv'd from *Sin*, as its *direct Cause*, and joined with it as its *constant Companion*: For, by a mutual Production, Sin both causes *Darkness*, and is caused by it. Let this therefore be our first General Observation; *That whatsoever pollutes or fouls the Conscience, in the same Degree also darkens it.*

Secondly, Our other general Observation shall be this; *That whatsoever puts a Byass upon the Judging Faculty of Conscience, weakens, and, by Consequence, darkens the Light of it.* A clear and a right judging Conscience
must

must be always *impartial*; and that it may be so, it must be perfectly *indifferent*: That is to say, it must be free and disencumbered from every Thing, which may in the *least* sway, or incline it one Way, rather than another, beyond what the *sole and meer Evidence* of Things would naturally lead it to. In a Word, it must judge all by *Evidence*, and nothing by *Inclination*.

And this our Blessed Saviour with admirable Emphasis and Significance of Expression calls the *Singleness of the Eye*, in the Verse immediately before the Text. *If thy Eye* (says he) *be single, thy whole Body shall be full of Light*. That is, nothing *extraneous* must cleave to, or join with *the Eye* in the Act of Seeing, but it must be left solely, and entirely to itself, and its bare Object, as *naked as Truth*, as pure, simple, and unmixed as *Sincerity*. Otherwise the whole Operation of it unavoidably passes into Cheat, Fallacy, and Delusion. *As*, to make the Case yet more particular; if you put a Muffler before the Eye, it cannot see, if any Mote or Dust falls into it, it can hardly see; and if there be any Soreness or Pain in it, it shuns the *Light*, and will not see. And all this by a very easy, but yet certain, and true Analogy, is applicable to the *Eye of the Soul*,
the

the Conscience ; and the Instance is verifiable upon it; in every one of the alledged Particulars.

In short, whatsoever *bends*, or *puts a Bias* upon the Judging Faculty of Conscience, represents Things to it by a false Light ; and whatsoever does so, causes in it a false and erroneous judgment of Things. And all Error or Falshood is, in the very Nature of it, a real intellectual *Darkness* ; and consequently must diffuse a *Darkness* upon the Mind, so far as it is affected and possessed with it. And thus much for our *Second* General Observation.

From whence we shall now pass to Particulars. In the assigning and stating of which, as I shew'd before, that *Sin in general* was the *general Cause* of this *Darkness*, so the *particular Causes* of it must be fetched from the *particular Kinds and Degrees of Sin*.

Now Sin may be considered Three Ways.

First, In the Act.

Secondly, In the Habit or Custom.

Thirdly, In the Affection, or productive Principle of it.

In all which we shall shew what a *darkening* and *malign* Influence Sin has upon the *Conscience* or Mind of Man ; and consequently
with

with what extreme Care and severe Vigilance the Conscience ought to be guarded, and watched over in all these Respects. And,

First, For Sin considered in the single Act. Every particular Commission of any great Sin, such as are, for Instance, the Sins of *Perjury*, of *Murder*, of *Uncleanness*, of *Drunkennes*, of *Theft*; and, above all, of *Undutifulness to Parents*, (which being a Thing so much *against Nature*, nothing *in Nature* can be said for it :) These I say, and the like *Capital, Soul-Wasting Sins*, even in any one single Act or Commission of them, have a strangely efficacious Power to cloud and darken the Conscience. Some of the *School-Men* are of Opinion, that one *single Act*, if great, and extraordinary, has in it the Force of many ordinary and lesser Acts, and so may produce a Habit: Which Opinion, how true soever it may be of an Act of *Demonstration* producing a *Habit of Science* in the Intellect, yet I cannot think it true of any *Moral Habits* whatsoever. For it is not to be thought, that *St. Peter's denying and forswearing* his Lord, left behind it a Habit of Unbelief; nor that *David's Murder and Adultery* rendred him habitually *murderous and adulterous*. For no doubt it was not so.

But

But this I say, That every single *gross* Act of Sin, is much the same thing to the Conscience, that a great Blow or Fall is to the Head, it stuns and bereaves it of all Use of its Senses for a time. Thus in the two fore-mentioned Sins of *David*, they so *mazed and even stupified his Conscience*, that it lay as it were in a *Swoon*, and void of all Spiritual Sense for almost a whole Year. For we do not find, that he came to himself or to any true *Sight* or *Sense* of his horrid Guilt, till *Nathan* the Prophet came and roused him up with a Message from God; nor did *Nathan* come to him, till after the Child, begotten in that Adultery, was born. Such a terrible Deadness and Stupefaction did those two Sins bring upon his Soul for so many Months together, during which time whatsoever Notion of *Murder* and *Adultery* *David* might have in general; yet no doubt, he had but very slight, and superficial Thoughts of the Heinousness of his own in particular. And what was the Reason of this? Why, his Conscience was cast into a *dead Sleep*, and could not so much as open its Eyes, so as to be able to look either *upwards* or *inwards*. This was his sad and forlorn Estate, notwithstanding that long Course of Piety and Converse with God, which he was now grown
old

old in. For he had been an early Practiser, and an eminent Proficient in the Ways of God, and was now past the 50th Year of his Age; and yet, we see, that one or two such gross Sins dulled and deadned the Spiritual Principle within him to such a Degree, that they left him for a long Time (as it were) dozed and benumbed, blind and insensible; and, no doubt, had not a *peculiar Grace* from God raised him up and recovered him, he had continued so to his Life's End.

For this is most certain, and worth our best Observation; that whatsoever carries a Man off from God, will in the natural Course, and Tendency of it, carry him still further and further: 'till at length it leaves him neither Will nor Power to return. For Repentance is neither the *Design*, nor *Work* of meer Nature, which immediately after the Commission of Sin never puts a Man upon disowning or bewailing it; but upon studying and casting about him how to palliate and extenuate, and rather than fail, how to plead for and defend it. This was the Course, which *Adam* took upon the first Sin, that ever Man committed: And the same Course in the same Case will be taken by all the Sons of *Adam* (if left to themselves) *as long as the World stands.*

Secondly, The frequent and *repeated Practice of Sin* has also a mighty Power in it to obscure and darken the natural Light of Conscience. Nothing being more certainly true, nor more universally acknowledg'd than that *Custom of Sinning* takes away the *Sense* of Sin; and, we may add, the *Sight* of it too. For tho' the Darknes consequent upon any *one gross Act* of Sin, be (as we have shew'd) very great, yet that which is caused by *Custom of Sinning*, is much greater and more hardly curable. Particular Acts of Sin do (as it were) cast a Mist before the Eye of Conscience, but *customary Sinning* brings a Kind of Film upon it, and it is not an ordinary Skill which can take off that. The former only closes the Eye, but this latter *puts it out*; as leaving upon the Soul a wretched Impotence, either to *judge*, or to *do* well; much like the *Spots of the Leopard not to be changed*, or the *Blackness of an Æthiopian not to be washed off*. For by these very Things the Spirit of God in *Jer. xiii. 23.* expresses the *Iron* invincible Force of a wicked Custom.

Now the Reason, I conceive, that such a *Custom* brings such a *Darkness* upon the *Mind* or *Conscience*, is this: *That a Man naturally designs to please himself in all that he does,*
and

and that it is impossible for him to find any Action really *pleasurable*, while he judges it absolutely *unlawful*; since the *Sting* of this must needs take off the *Relish* of the other, and it would be and intolerable Torment to any Man's Mind, to be always *doing*, and always condemning himself for what he *does*. And for this Cause, a Man *shuts his Eyes*, and *stops his Ears* against all that his Reason would tell him of the Sinfulness of that Practice, which long Custom, and Frequency has endeared to him. So that he becomes studiously, and affectedly ignorant of the *Illness* of the Course he takes, that he may the more sensibly taste the Pleasure of it. And thus, when an inveterate, imperious Custom has so overruled all a Man's Faculties, as neither to suffer his *Eyes to see*, nor his *Ears to hear*, nor his *Mind to think* of the *Evil* of what he does; that is, when all the Instruments of Knowledge are forbid to do their Office, *Ignorance* and *Obscurity* must needs be upon the whole Soul. For when the *Windows* are stopped up, no wonder if the whole *Room* be dark.

The Truth is, such an *habitual Frequency* of Sinning, does (as it were) *bar* and *bolt* up the Conscience against the sharpest Reproofs, and the most convincing Instructions; so that

when God by the *Thunder* of his Judgments, and the Voice of his Ministers has been ringing *Hell* and *Vengeance* into the Ears of such a Sinner, perhaps, like *Felix*, he may *tremble* a little for the present, and seem to yield, and fall down before the over-powering Evidence of the Conviction; but after a while, *Custom* overcoming Conscience, the Man goes his Way, and though he is convinced, and satisfied what *he ought to do*, yet he actually does *what he uses to do*: And all this, because through the Darkneſs of his Intellect he judges the *present Pleaſure* of ſuch a ſinful Courſe, an *over-balance* to the Evil of it.

For this is certain, That Nature has placed all *Humane Choice* in ſuch an eſſential Dependance upon the *Judgment*, that no Man does any Thing, tho' never ſo vile, wicked, and inexcusable, but all Circumſtances conſider'd, he judges it, *Pro hic & nunc*, abſolutely better for him to do it, than not to do it. And what a *Darkneſs* and *Deluſion* muſt *Conſcience* needs be under, while it makes a Man judge that really beſt for him, which directly tends to, and generally ends in, his utter *Ruin* and *Damnation*! *Custom* is ſaid to be a *ſecond Nature*, and if by the *firſt* we are already ſo

bad,

bad, by the second (to be sure) we shall be much worse.

Thirdly, Every corrupt Passion, or Affection of the Mind, will certainly pervert the judging, and obscure and darken the discerning Power of Conscience. The Affections which the Greeks call πάθη and the Latines Affectus Animi, are of much the same use to the Soul, which the Members are of to the Body; serving as the proper Instruments of most of its Actions; and are always attended with a certain preternatural Motion of the Blood and Spirits peculiar to each Passion, or Affection. And as for the Seat or Fountain of them, Philosophers both place them in and derive them from the Heart. But not to insist upon mere Speculations: The Passions or Affections are (as I may so call them) the mighty Flights and Sallyings out of the Soul upon such Objects as come before it; and are generally accompanied with such Vehemence, that the Stoicks reckoned them, in their very Nature and Essence, as to many Irregularities, and Deviations from right Reason, and by no means incident to a wise or good Man.

But though better Philosophy has long since exploded this Opinion, and Christianity, which is the greatest and the best, has taught us, that

we may *be angry, and yet not Sin*, Eph. iv. 26. *And that godly Sorrow* is neither a Paradox nor a Contradiction, 2 Cor. vii. 10. and consequently, that in every Passion or Affection there is something purely natural, which may both be *distinguished* and *divided* too from what is sinful and irregular; yet notwithstanding all this, it must be confessed, that the Nature of the Passions is such, that they are extremely prone and apt to pass into *Excess*, and that when they do so, nothing in the World is a greater hinderance to the *Mind* or *Reason* of Man, from making a true, clear, and exact Judgment of Things, than the Passions thus wrought up to any thing of Ferment, or Agitation. It being as impossible to keep the *judging* Faculty steady in such a Case, as it would be to view a Thing *distinctly* and *perfectly* through a Perspective Glass, held by a shaking, paralytick Hand.

When the *Affections* are once engaged, the *Judgment* is always partial, and concerned. There is a strong Bent, or Byass upon it, it is possessed and gained over, and as it were see'd and retained in their Cause, and thereby made utterly unable to carry such an equal regard to the Object, as to consider Truth *nakedly*, and stripped of all foreign Respects; and as *such*

to make it the rigid inflexible Rule, which it is to *judge by*; especially where Duty is the Thing to be *judged of*. For a Man will hardly be brought to judge *right*, and *true*, when by such a Judgment he is sure to *condemn* himself.

But this being a Point of such high and practical Importance, I will be yet more particular about it, and shew severally, in several corrupt and vitious Affections, how impossible it is for a Man to keep his Conscience *rightly informed*, and fit to guide and direct him in all the arduous perplexing Cases of *Sin*, and *Duty*, while he is actually under the Power of any of them. This I know Men, generally are not apt to believe, or to think that the Flaws or Failures of their *Morals* can at all affect their *Intellectuals*. But I doubt not but to make it not only credible, but undeniable.

Now the vitious Affections which I shall single, and cull out of those vast Numbers, which the *Heart of Man*, that great Store-house of the Devil, abounds with, as some of the Principal, which thus *darken* and *debauch* the Conscience, shall be these three.

First, Sensuality. *Secondly*, Covetousness. *Thirdly*, Ambition.

Of each of which I shall speak particularly :
And

First, For *Sensuality*, or a vehement delight in, and pursuit of bodily Pleasures. We may truly say of the *Body*, with Reference to the *Soul*, what was said by the Poet of an ill Neighbour, *Nemo tam propè tam proculque*: None so nearly joined in point of Vicinity, and yet so widely distant in point of Interest and Inclinations.

The antient Philosophers generally holding the *Soul* of Man to be a *spiritual immaterial* Substance, could give no Account of the several Failures and Defects in the Operations of it, (which they were sufficiently sensible of) but from its *Immersion* into, and intimate Conjunction with *Matter*, called by the *Greeks* ὕλη. And accordingly all their Complaints and Accusations were still levelled at this ὕλη as the only Cause of all that they found amiss in the whole Frame and Constitution of Man's Nature. In a word, whatsoever was observed by them, either *irregular* or *defective* in the workings of the *Mind*, was all charged upon the *Body*, as its great Clog and Impediment. As the skilfullest Artist in the World would make but sorry work of it, should he be forced to make use of Tools no way fit for his Purpose.

But

But whether the Fault be in the *spiritual* or *corporeal* Part of our Nature, or rather in *both*, certain it is, that no two Things in the World do more *rise* and grow upon the *fall* of each other, than the *Flesh and the Spirit*: They being like a kind of *Balance* in the Hand of Nature, so that as one mounts up, the other still sinks down; and the high Estate of the *Body* seldom or never fails to be the low, declining Estate of the *Soul*. Which great Contrariety and Discord between them, the Apostle describes, as well as Words can do, *Gal. v. 7. The Flesh* (says he) *lusteth againgst the Spirit, and the Spirit lusteth against the Flesh, and these two are contrary*, like two mighty Princes, whose Territories join, they are always encroaching, and warring upon one another. And, as it most commonly falls out, that the *worse Cause* has the *best Success*; so when the *Flesh* and the *Spirit* come to a Battle, it is seldom but the *Flesh* comes off victorious. And therefore the same great *Apostle*, who so *constantly exercised himself to keep a Conscience void of Offence*, did as constantly and severely exercise himself *to keep under his Body, and bring it into Subjection*, *1 Cor. ix. 27*. And the same, in all Ages, has been the Judgment and Practice of all such as have had

any Experience in the ways of God, and the true Methods of Religion. For all bodily Pleasure dulls and weakens the Operations of the Mind, even upon a natural Account, and much more upon a Spiritual. Now the *Pleasures* which chiefly affect, or rather bewitch the Body, and by so doing become the Pest, and Poyson, of the *nobler and intellectual Part of Man*, are those *false and fallacious Pleasures of Lust and Intemperance* :

Of each of which severally : And

First, For Lust. Nothing does, or can darken the Mind, or Conscience of Man more : Nay, it has a peculiar Efficacy this way, and for that Cause may justly be ranked amongst the very *Powers of Darkness* : It being that which, (as Naturalists observe) strikes at the proper Seat of the Understanding, the *Brain*. Something of that *Blackness of Darkness* mentioned in the 13th of *St. Jude*, seeming to be of the very *Nature*, as well as *Punishment* of this Vice.

Nor does only the *Reason* of the thing itself, but also the *Examples* of such as have been possessed with it, demonstrate as much.

For had not *Sampson* (think we) an intolerable Darkness and Confusion upon his Understanding, while he ran roving after every Strumpet

pet in that brutish Manner that he did? Was it not the Eye of his Conscience which his *Dalilah* first put out, and so of a Judge of *Israel* rendred himself really a Judgment upon them? And when the two Angels (as we read in *Gen. xix.*) struck those Monsters, the Men of *Sodom*, with *Blindness*, had not their own detestable Lust first stricken them with a greater? Or could *Herod* have ever thought himself obliged by the Religion of an *Oath*, to have murdered the *Baptist*, had not his *Lust*, and his *Herodias imprisoned and murdered* his Conscience first? For, surely, the *common Light of Nature*, could not but teach him that no *Oath* or *Vow* whatsoever could warrant the greatest Prince upon Earth to take away the Life of an innocent Person. But it seems his besotted Conscience having broken through the *seventh Commandment*, the *sixth* stood too near it to be safe long: And therefore his two great Caluists, the *Devil* and his *Herodias* (the worse Devil of the two) having allowed him to lie, and wallow in *Aduletry* so long, easily perswaded him that the same *Salvo* might be found out for *Murder* also. So that it was *his Lust* obstinately continued in, which thus darken'd, and deluded his Conscience; and the same will, no doubt, *darken,*

and *delude*, and, in the End, *extinguish* the Conscience of any Man breathing, who shall surrender himself up to it. The *Light within him* shall grow every Day less and less, and at length totally and finally go out, and that in a *stink* too. So hard, or rather utterly unfeasible is it for Men to be zealous Votaries of the *blind God*, without losing *their Eyes* in his Service, and it is well if their Noses do not follow. From all which it appears, what a *Paradox* it is in *Morals*, for any one under the Dominion of his Lust, to think to have a right Judgment in Things relating to the State of his Soul: And the same, in the

Second Place, holds equally in that other Branch of *Sensuality, Intemperance*; whereupon we find them both joined together by the Prophet, *Hosea* iv. 11. *Whoredom* (says he) *and Wine take away the Heart*; that is, according to the Language of *Holy Writ*, a Man's *judging* and *discerning* Abilities. And therefore, whosoever would preserve these Faculties (especially as to their Discernment of *spiritual* Objects) quick and vigorous, must be sure to keep the *upper Region* of his Soul clear and *serene*; which the Fumes of Meat and Drink luxuriously taken in, will never suffer it to be. We know the Method, which
this

this high and exact Pattern of spiritual Prudence, *St. Paul*, took to keep the great *Centinel* of his Soul, his Conscience, always vigilant and circumspect. It was by a constant and severe Temperance, heighten'd with frequent *Watchings* and *Fastings*, as he himself tells us, *2 Cor. xi. 27. In watchings often, in fastings often, &c.* This was the Discipline which kept his *Senses exercised* to a sure and exquisite Discrimination of *Good and Evil*; and made the *Lamp* within him *shine* always with a bright and a triumphant Flame.

But *Gluttony* and all Excess, either in eating or drinking, strangely clouds and dulls the intellectual Powers; and then, it is not to be expected that the *Conscience* should bear up, when the *Understanding* is drunk down. An *Epicure's Practice* naturally disposes a Man to an *Epicure's Principles*; that is, to an equal Looseness and Dissolution in both: And he who makes his *Belly* his Business, will quickly come to have a *Conscience* of as large a Swallow as his *Throat*; of which there wants not several scandalous and deplorable Instances. Loads of Meat and Drink are fit for none but a *Beast of Burden to bear*; and he is much the greater *Beast* of the two, who carries his Burden in his *Belly*, than he
 who

who carries it upon his *Back*. On the contrary, nothing is so great a Friend to the Mind of Man, as *Abstinence*; it strengthens the *Memory*, clears the *Apprehension*, and sharpens the *Judgment*, and in a word, gives Reason its full Scope of Acting; and when Reason has that, it is always a diligent, and faithful Handmaid to *Conscience*. *And therefore*, where Men look no further than mere Nature, (as many do not) let no Man expect to keep his *Gluttony* and his *Parts*, his *Drunkenness* and his *Wit*, his *Revellings* and his *Judgment*, and much less his *Conscience* together. For neither *Grace*, nor *Nature*, will have it so. It is an utter Contradiction to the Methods of both, *Who hath Woe? who hath Sorrow? who hath Contentions? who hath Babbling? who hath Wounds without Cause? who hath redness of Eyes?* says Solomon, *Prov. xxiii. 29.* Which Question he himself presently answers in the next Verse, *They who tarry long at the Wine, they who seek after mixt Wine.* So say I, who has a stupid Intellect, a broken Memory, and a blasted Wit, and (which is worse than all) a *blind and benighted Conscience*, but the *intemperate* and *luxurious*, the *Epicure* and the *Smell-feast*? So impossible is it for a Man to turn *Sott*, without making him-

himself a *Blockhead* too. I know, this is not always the present Effect of these Courses, but, at long run, it will infallibly be so; and *Time* and *Luxury* together will as certainly change the *Inside*, as it does the *Outside* of the best *Heads* whatsoever; and much more of such Heads as are *strong* for nothing but to *bear Drink*: Concerning which, it ever was, and is, and will be a sure Observation, that such as are *ablest at the Barrel*, are generally *weakest at the Book*. And thus much for the first great *darkner of Man's Mind*, *Sensuality*, and that, in both the Branches of it, *Lust* and *Intemperance*.

Secondly, Another vicious Affection, which *clouds* and *darkens* the Conscience, is *Covetousness*. Concerning which it may truly be affirmed, that of all the Vices incident to humane Nature, none so powerfully and peculiarly carries the Soul downwards as Covetousness does. It makes it all Earth and Dirt, *burying* that noble Thing which can never *die*. So that while the Body is *above Ground*, the Soul is *under it*; and therefore must needs be in a State of *Darkness*, while it converses in the *Regions of it*.

How mightily this Vice *darkens* and *debases* the Mind, Scripture-Instances do abundantly shew.

shew. When *Moses* would assign the proper Qualifications of a Judge, (which Office certainly calls for the quickest Apprehension, and the solideſt Judgment that the Mind of Man is well capable of) *Deut. xvi. 9. Thou shalt not* (ſays he) *take a Gift.* But why? He preſently adds the Reason; *Because a Gift* (ſays he) *blinds the Eyes of the Wiſe.* And no wonder, for it perverts their Will; and then, *who ſo blind as the Man who reſolves not to ſee? Gold,* it ſeems, being but a very bad Help, and *Cure of the Eyes* in ſuch Caſes. In like Manner, when *Samuel* would ſet the Credit of his Integrity clear above all the Aſperſions of Envy and Calumny itſelf, *1 Sam. xii. 3. Of whoſe Hands* (ſays he) *have I received a Bribe to blind my Eyes therewith?* Implying thereby, that for a Man to be *gripe-handed* and *clear-ſighted* too was impoſſible. And again, *Eccl. vii. 7. A Gift* (ſays the wiſe Man) *deſtroyeth the Heart:* That is, (as we have ſhewn already) the *judging* and *discerning* Powers of the Soul. By all which we ſee, that in the Judgment of ſome of the wiſeſt and greateſt Men that ever lived, ſuch as *Moses, Samuel, Solomon* himſelf, *Covetouſneſs* baffles and befools the Mind, blinds and confounds the reaſoning Faculty, and that,

not only in ordinary Persons, but even in the ablest, the wisest, and most sagacious. And to give you one Proof, above all, of the peculiar *blinding Power* of this Vice, there is not the most covetous Wretch breathing, who does so much as see or perceive, that he is covetous.

For, the Truth is, preach to the *Conscience* of a covetous Person (if he may be said to have any) with the *Tongue of Men and Angels*, and tell him of the *Vanity of the World*, of *Treasure in Heaven*, and of the Necessity of being *rich toward God*, and liberal to his poor Brother; and 'tis all but flat, insipid, and ridiculous Stuff to him, who neither sees, nor feels, nor suffers any Thing to pass into *his Heart*, but thro' his *Hands*. You must preach to such an one of *Bargain and Sale*, *Profits and Perquisites*, *Principal and Interest*, *Use upon Use*; and if you can persuade him that *Godliness is Gain* in his own Sense, perhaps you may do something with him; otherwise, though you edge every Word you speak with Reason and Religion, Evidence and Demonstration, you shall never affect, nor touch, nor so much as reach his Conscience; for it is kept sealed up in a *Bag* under Lock and Key, and you cannot come at it.

And

And thus much for the second base Affection, that blinds the Mind of Man, which is *Covetousness*. A thing directly contrary to the very Spirit of Christianity; which is a free, a large, and an open Spirit; A Spirit open to God and Man, and always carrying Charity in one Hand, and Generosity in the other.

Thirdly, The third and last vile Affection, which I shall mention (as having the same *darkening Effect* upon the Mind or Conscience) is Ambition. For as *Covetousness* dulls the Mind by pressing it down too much below itself, so Ambition *dazzles it* by lifting it up as much above itself; but both of them are sure to darken the *Light* of it. For if you either look too intently down a deep Precipice upon a thing at an extreme distance below you, or with the same Earnestness fix your Eye upon something at too great an *Height* above you; in both Cases you will find a *Vertigo* or *Giddiness*. And where there is a *Giddiness* in the Head, there will be always a *Mist before the Eyes*. And thus, no doubt, it was only an ambitious aspiring after high Things, which not long since caused such a woful, scandalous *Giddiness* in some Mens Consciences, and made them turn *round and round from this to that*, and *from that to this*, till at length they
knew

knew not what Bottom to fix upon. And this, in my Opinion, is a *Case* that admits of no *Vindication*.

Pride, we know, (which is always Cousin-German to *Ambition*) is commonly reckoned the *Fore-runner of a Fall*. It was the *Devil's Sin* and the *Devil's Ruin*, and has been ever since the *Devil's Stratagem*; who like an expert *Wrestler* usually gives a Man a *Lift* before he gives him a *Throw*. But how does he do this? Why; by first blinding him with *Ambition*; and when a Man either cannot, or will not mind the *Ground he stands upon*, as a Thing (forsooth,) *too much below him*, he is then easily jostled down, and thrust head-long into the next Ditch. The Truth is, in this *Case* Men seem to ascend to an *high Station*, just as they use to leap down a very great Steep: In both *Cases* they shut their Eyes first, for in both the Danger is very dreadful, and the Way to venture upon it is *not to see it*.

Yea, so fatally does this touring, aspiring Humour intoxicate and impose upon Men's Minds, that when the Devil stands *bobbing* and *tantalizing* their gaping Hopes with some Preferment in *Church* or *State*, they shall do the basest, the vilest, and most odious things

imaginable ; and that, not only in Defiance of Conscience, but, which is yet more impudent and intolerable, shall even alledge Conscience itself as the very Reason for the doing them : So that such Wretches shall out of *meer Conscience* (forsooth) betray the Country that bred, and the Church that baptized them, and having first practised a *dispensing Power* upon all *Law within them*, shall help to let the same loose upon all *Laws without them* too. And when they have done, shall wipe their Mouths, and with as *boon a Grace* and as *bold a Front* look the World in the Face, as if they expected *Thanks* for such Villanies, as a modest Malefactor would scarce presume to expect a *Pardon* for.

But as for these ambitious Animals, who could thus *sell* their Credit, and their *Conscience*, wade through *thick* and *thin*, and break through all that is *Sacred* and *Civil*, only to make themselves High and Great, I shall say no more of them but this, that instead of being *advanced* to what they so much *desired*, it is well for them, that they have not been *advanced* to what they so highly *deserved*. For this, I am sure of, that neither *Papists*, nor *Fanaticks* (both of them our mortal, implacable Enemies) can conceive a Prayer more fully

and effectually for their own Interest, than this, *That the Church of England may never want store of ambitious, Time-serving Men.* And if God should in his Anger to this poor Church, and Nation, grant them this, they doubt not, but in a little Time, to *grant*, or *give* themselves the rest. Let this therefore be fixed upon as a *certain Maxim*, that *Ambition first blinds the Conscience*, and then leads the Man whether it will, and that is in the direct Course of it, to the Devil.

I know, there are many more, irregular and corrupt Affections belonging to the Mind of Man, and all of them in their Degree apt to darken and obscure the *Light of Conscience*. Such as are Wrath and Revenge, Envy and Malice, Fear and Despair, with many such others, even too many a great deal, to be croud-ed into one Hour's Discourse. But the three forementioned, (which we have been treating of) are, doubtless, the most predominant, the most *potent* in their Influence, and most *per-nicious* in their Effect: As answering to those three principal Objects, which, of all others, do the most absolutely *command* and *domineer* over the Desires of Men; to wit, the *Pleasures* of the World working upon their *Sensuality*; the *Profits* of the World upon their *Covetous-*

ness; and lastly the *Honours* of it upon their *Ambition*. Which three powerful *Incentives*, meeting with these three violent *Affections*, are (as it were) the great *Trident* in the Tempter's Hand, by which he strikes through the very Hearts and Souls of Men; or as a mighty *threefold Cord*, by which he first hampers, and then draws the whole World after him, and that with such a rapid Swing, such an irresistible Fascination upon the Understandings, as well as Appetites of Men, that as God said heretofore, *Let there be Light, and there was Light*; so this proud Rival of his Creator, and Over-turner of the Creation, is still saying in Defiance of him, *Let there be Darkness*, and accordingly *there is Darkness*; *Darkness*, upon the Mind and Reason; *Darkness*, upon the Judgment and Conscience of all Mankind. So that *Hell* itself seems to be nothing else, but the Devil's finishing this his great Work, and the Consummation of that *Darkness* in another World, which he had so fatally begun in this.

And now, to sum up briefly the foregoing Particulars, you have heard, of what vast and infinite Moment it is to have a *clear, impartial, and right-judging Conscience*: Such an one as a Man may reckon himself safe in
the

the Directions of, as of a Guide, that will always tell him Truth, and Truth with Authority ; and that the *Eye of Conscience* may be always thus quick and lively, let constant *Use* be sure to keep it constantly open ; and thereby ready and prepared to admit and let in those *Heavenly Beams*, which are always streaming *forth from God* upon Minds fitted to receive them.

And to this Purpose, let a Man fly from every thing, which may leave either a *Foulness*, or a *Byass* upon it ; for the first will *blacken*, and the other will *distort* it, and both be sure to darken it. Particularly let him dread every *gross Act of Sin* ; for one great *Stab* may as certainly and speedily destroy Life as forty lesser Wounds. Let him also carry a jealous Eye over every growing *Habit* of Sin ; for *Custom* is an Over-match to *Nature*, and seldom conquered by *Grace* ; and, above all, let him keep aloof from all Commerce or Fellowship with any vicious and base *Affection* ; especially from all *Sensuality*, which is not only the Dirt, but the *black Dirt*, which the Devil throws upon the Souls of Men ; *accordingly* let him keep himself untouched with the hellish, unhallowed Heats of *Lust*, and the noisome Steams and Exhalations of *Intemperance*,

rance, which never fail to leave a brutish *Dulness* and *Infatuation* behind them. Likewise, let him bear himself above that sordid and low Thing, that utter Contradiction to all Greatness of Mind, *Covetousness*; let him disenflave himself from the Pelf of the World, from that *Amor sceleratus habendi*; for all *Love* has something of *Blindness* attending it; but the *Love of Money* especially. And, lastly, let him learn so to *look upon* the Honours, the Pomp, and Greatness of the World, as to *look through* them too. Fools indeed are apt to be blown up by them, and to sacrifice all for them; sometimes venturing their very *Heads*, only to get a *Feather in their Caps*. But wise Men instead of looking *above* them, chuse rather to look *about them* and *within them*, and by so doing, keep their *Eyes* always in their Heads: And maintain a noble *Clearness* in one, and *Steadiness* in the other. These, I say, are some of those Ways, and Methods, by which this great and *internal Light*, the judging Faculty of Conscience, may be preserved in its native Vigour and Quickness. And to compleat the foregoing Directions by the Addition of one Word more; *That* we may the more surely prevent our *Affections* from
work-

working too much upon our *Judgment*, let us wisely beware of all such Things as may work too strongly upon our *Affections*.

If the Light, that is in thee, be Darknes, (says our Saviour) *how great must that Darknes needs be.* That is, how fatal, how destructive! And therefore I shall close up all with those other Words of our Saviour, John xii. *While you have the Light walk in the Light;* so that the Way to *have it* (we see) *is to walk in it.* That is, by the Actions of a pious, innocent, well-govern'd Life, to cherish, heighten, and improve it; for still so much *Innocence*, so much *Light*: And on the other Side to abhor, and loath whatsoever may any Ways discourage, and eclipse it; as every Degree of Vice assuredly will. And thus by continual feeding and trimming *our Lamps*, we shall find that this Blessed *Light within us*, will grow every Day stronger and stronger, and flame out brighter and brighter, 'till at length having led us through this Vale of *Darknes* and *Mortality*, it shall bring us to those happy Mansions where there is *Light* and *Life* for evermore.

Which God (the great Author of both) of his infinite Mercy vouchsafe to us all; To whom be ascribed, as is most due, all Praise, Might, Majesty, and Dominion, both now, and for evermore. Amen.



A

S E R M O N

Preach'd at

WESTMINSTER-ABBAY,

MAY 29. 1670.

MATTH. V. 44.

But I say unto you, Love your Enemies.

BEFORE we descend to the Prosecution of the Duty enjoin'd in these Words; It is requisite that we consider the Scheme and Form of them as they stand in Relation to the Context. They are usher'd in with the adverbative Particle [*But*] which stands as a
Note

Note of Opposition to something going before: And that we have in the immediately preceding Verse, *Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy Neighbour, and hate thy Enemy. But I say unto you, love your Enemies.* Which Way of Speaking has given Occasion to an Enquiry, whether the Duty here enjoined by Christ be opposed to the *Mosaick Law*, or only to the Doctrine of the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, and their corrupt Glosses thereupon: Some having made this and the next Chapter, not only a fuller Explication and Vindication of the *Mosaick Law*, but an *Addition* of higher and perfecter Rules of Piety and Morality to it.

For the better clearing of which Point, I conceive that the Matter of all the *Commandments* (the *Fourth* only, as it determines the time of God's solemn Worship to the seventh Day, excepted,) is of *Natural, Moral* Right, and by consequence carries with it a necessary and eternal Obligation; as rising from the unalterable Relation, that a rational Creature bears either to God, his Neighbour, or himself. For there are certain Rules of Deportment suggested by Nature to each of these, which to deviate from, or not come up to, would be irrational, and consequently sinful.

So that such Duties can by no Means owe their first Obligation to any new Precept given by Christ, but springing from an earlier Stock, obliged Men in all Ages and Places, since the World began. Forasmuch as that *general* Habitude or Relation (upon which all *particular* Instances of Duty are founded) which Men bore to *God*, their *Neighbour*, and *themselves*, upon Account of their being rational Creatures, was universally and equally the same in all. So that for a Man to *hate his Enemy*, or to be *revengeful*, or to be *angry without a Cause*, or to *swear rashly*, or by Looks, Words, or Actions, to behave himself *lasciviously*, were, without Question, always Aberrations from the Dictates of rightly improved Reason; and consequently in the very Nature of the things themselves unlawful. For if there were not a natural Evil and Immorality in the aforesaid Acts, nor a Goodness in the contrary, but that all this issued from a *positive* Injunction of the one, and Prohibition of the other; what Reason can be assigned, but that God might have commanded the said Acts, and made them *Duties* instead of forbidding them; which yet certainly would be a very strange, or rather monstrous Assertion, but nevertheless, by a Necessity of Sequel, unavoidable.

From

From whence I conceive it to be very clear, that, if the several Particulars commanded or forbidden by *Christ*, in that his great Sermon upon the Mount, had a *natural* Good or Evil respectively belonging to them; *Christ* thereby added no new Precept to the Moral Law, which eternally was, and will be the same, as being the unalterable Standard or Measure of the Behaviour of a rational Creature in all its Relations and Capacities.

For we must not think, that when the *Law*, either by Precept, or Prohibition, takes notice only of the *outward Act*, and the Gospel afterwards directs itself to the *Thoughts* and *Desires*, the *Motives* and *Causes* of the said Act, or Gain, when the Law gives only a *general* Precept, and the Gospel assigns several *particular* Instances reducible to the same general Injunction, that therefore the Gospel gives so many *new Precepts* corrective, or perfective of the aforesaid Precepts, of the *Law*. No, by no Means; for it is a Rule which ever was, and ever ought to be allowed in interpreting the Divine Precepts, that every such Precept does *virtually*, and *implicitly*, and by a parity of Reason, contain in it more than it expressly declares; which is so true, that those Persons, who impugn the
Per-

Perfection of the old Moral Precepts, and upon that Account oppose the Precepts of Christ to them, do yet find it necessary to maintain, that even the Precepts of our Saviour himself ought to extend their Obligation to many more Particulars than are mentioned in them, and yet are not to be look'd upon, as at all the less perfect upon that Account. Which Rule of Interpreting being admitted, and made Use of as to the Precepts of the *New Testament*, why ought it not to take Place in those of the *Old* also? And if it ought (as there can be no Shadow of Reason to the contrary) I dare undertake, that there will be no Need of multiplying of *New Precepts* in the Gospel, as often as the *Papists* and *Socinians* have a *Turn* to serve by them. For surely every *new Instance* of Obedience does not of Necessity infer a *new Precept*; and for that Reason we may and do admit of several of the former without any need of asserting the latter. The Unity of a Precept is founded in the *general* Unity of its *Object*, and every such *General* comprehends many *Particulars*. The very Institution of the Two Christian Sacraments, is rather the Assignment of Two *new Instances of Obedience than of Two new Precepts*. For Christ having once authentically declared that God would be worshipped by

by those two solemn Acts, the antecedent *general* Precept of worshipping God according to his own Will, was sufficient to oblige us to these two *particular* Branches of it being thus declared; and indeed to as many more as should from Time to Time be suggested to our Practice. For otherwise, if the Multiplication of new particular *Instances* of Duty, should multiply *Precepts* too, it would render them innumerable, which would be extremely absurd and ridiculous.

And now, all that has been here alledged by us against the Necessity of holding any new Precepts added to the *Old Moral Law*, as it obliged all Mankind, (whether notified to them by the *Light of Nature* only, or by *Revelation* too) I reckon may as truly be affirmed of the Law of *Moses* also, (still *supposing* it a true and perfect *Transcript* of the said *Moral Law*, as we have all the Reason in the World to believe it was;) for were it otherwise, it would be hard to shew, what Advantage it could be to the *Jewish Church* to have that Law delivered to them; but on the contrary it must needs have been rather a Snare than a Privilege or Help to them, as naturally giving them Occasion to look upon that as the most perfect Draught of their Duty, when yet it required

quired of them a lower Degree of Obedience than Nature had before obliged them to; it being a Thing in itself most rational, to suppose the *latter* Declaration of a Legislator's Mind, to be still the fuller and more authentic. And therefore if other Duties had been incumbent upon the *Jewish* Church by the Law of Nature, besides what were contained in the Law of *Moses*; it is not imaginable how they could avoid the Omission of those Duties while they acquiesced in the Directions of *Moses* as a full and sufficient Rule of Obedience, and had so much Reason so to do. Which yet surely must have rendred the whole *Mosaick* Dispensation by no Means agreeable either to the Wisdom or Goodness of God towards his chosen People.

For though indeed the *Moral Law* as a *Covenant* promising Life upon Condition of absolute indefective Obedience, be now of no Use to *justify*, (Sin having disabled it for that Use through the Incapacity of the Subject) yet as it is a *Rule directing* our Obedience, and a *Law binding* to it, it still continues in full Force, and will do as long as humane Nature endures. And as for the absolute Perfection of it in the Quality of a *Rule directing*, and a *Law obliging*, can that be more amply declared, and irre-

irrefragably proved than as it stands stated and represented to us, in the vast Latitude of that Injunction, Deut. vi. 5. and Levit. xix. 18. *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, with all thy Soul, and with all thy Strength, and with all thy Mind, and thy Neighbour as thyself.* I say, is there any higher Degree of Obedience which the Nature of Man is capable of yielding to his Maker than this?

Nevertheless there are some Artists, I must confess, who can draw any Thing out of any Thing, who answer, that these Words are not to be understood of *absolutely all*, that a Man can do; but of all that he can be engaged to do by the Law as proposed under such an Oeconomy, namely, as enforced with *temporal Promises and Threatnings*; so that upon these Terms, *to love God with all thy Heart, &c.* is to love him with the utmost of such an Obedience, as Laws seconded with *temporal Blessings and Curses* are able to produce. But to this I answer;

First, That the Argument bears upon a Supposition, by no Means to be admitted, to wit, that the Law of *Moses* proceeded only upon *temporal* Rewards and Punishments: Which is most false, and contrary to the
constant

constantly received Doctrine of the Christian Church ; and particularly of the Church of *England*, as it is declared in the sixth of her Articles. But

Secondly, I add further; That the *obliging* Power of the Law is neither founded in, nor to be measured by the *Rewards* and *Punishments* annexed to it; but by the sole *Authority* of the Law-giver springing from the Relation (which he bears) of a Creator and Governour, to Mankind, and consequently of the entire dependance of Mankind upon him; by virtue whereof they owe him the utmost Service, that their Nature renders them capable of doing him. And that, I am sure, is capable of serving him at an higher rate, than the Consideration of any Temporal Rewards or Punishments can raise it to; since oftentimes the bare love of Virtue itself will carry a Man further than these can: But however it is certain that Eternal Rewards can do so; which yet add nothing to our natural Powers of obeying, tho' they draw them forth to an higher pitch of Obedience. And can we then imagine that God would sink his Law below these Powers, by leaving some Degree of Love and Service to himself absolutely within the Strength and Power of Man, which he did

not think fit by the *Mosaick* Law to oblige him to (when yet our Saviour himself promised eternal Life to one, upon supposal of his Performance of this Law.) *Luke* x. 28. This certainly is very strange Divinity. But after all, some may possibly reply, does not the Gospel enjoin us that Perfection and height of *Charity*, which the Law never did, in commanding us *to lay down our Life for our Brother?* 1 *John* iii. 16.

To which I answer, That this is a Precept by no means *absolute* and *universal*, but always to be limited by these two Conditions, *viz.* *First*, That the Glory of God, and *Secondly*, That the eternal Welfare of the Soul of our Brother indispensably requires this of us; upon the supposal of either of which I affirm, it was as really a *Duty* from the Beginning of the World, as it was from that very time, that the Apostle wrote these Words; the very common Voice of Reason upon these Terms, and under these Circumstances, dictating and enjoining no less, as founding itself upon these two self-evident and undeniable Principles, *viz.* That the Life of the Creature ought, when Necessity calls, to be sacrificed to the Glory of him who gave it; and *Secondly*, that we ought to prefer the eternal Good of our

our

our Neighbour or Brother, before the highest temporal Good of ourselves. Which manifestly shews, that this high Instance of Charity (as extraordinary as it appears) did not at length begin to be a Duty by any Evangelical Sanction, but was so ever since there was such Creatures in the World as Men, and consequently that all, both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, (whether they actually knew so much or no) would have sinned against this Duty of Charity, should they have refused to promote the Glory of their Maker, or prevent the Destruction of their Brother's immortal Soul, being called thereto, by quitting this temporal Life for the sake of either. And consequently that this is no such new Precept to be reckoned by *Anno Domini*, but as old as the Obligations of Charity, and of Right Reason, discoursing and acting upon the Dictates of that Noble Principle.

And now to apply this general Discourse to the Particulars mentioned in this Chapter: I affirm that Christ does by no means here set himself against the Law of *Moses* as a Law either *faulty* or *imperfect*, and upon those Accounts needing either *Correction*, or *Addition*, but only opposed the corrupt Comments of the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* upon the Law, as re-

ally *Contradictions to it*, rather than *Expositions of it*; and that for these following Reasons.

First, Because the Words in this Sermon mentioned and opposed by Christ, are manifestly, for the most part, not the Words of the Law itself, but of the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*. As for instance, *Whosoever shall kill, shall be in danger of the Judgment*. And again in the next Verse, *He shall be in danger of the Council*. They all refer to the *Pharisees* way of expressing themselves; which manifestly shews, that it was their Doctrine and Words which he was now disputing against, and not the Law itself; which this is by no means the Language of.

Secondly, That Expression, *That it was said † by those of old Time*, was not uttered by Christ in his own Person, but by way of *Prosopopæia*, in the Person of the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, whose Custom it was to preface and authorize their Lectures and Glosses to the People, with the pompous plea of Antiquity and Tradition. As if Christ has bespoken them thus. You have been accustomed indeed to hear the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* tell you, that *This* and *This* was said by *those of old Time*, but not,

† Some render it [to those.]

withstanding

withstanding all these Pretences I tell you that the Case is much otherwise, and that the true Account and Sense of the Law is *Thus* and *Thus*. This I say is the natural purport and meaning of our Saviour's Words, throughout this Chapter.

Thirdly, That Passage in the 43d Verse of the same: *Ye have heard that it hath been said, ye shall love your Neighbour and hate your Enemy*, is so far from being the Words of the *Mosaick* Law, that *Moses* commands the clean contrary to the latter Clause; *Exod. xxiii. 24. If thou seest thine Enemy's Ox going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again; and if thou see the Ass of him who hateth the lying under his Burthen, thou shalt surely help him.* And if this was the Voice of the Law then, can we imagine that it would make it a Man's Duty to relieve his Enemies Ox, or his Ass, and at the same time allow him to hate or malign his Person? This certainly is unaccountable and incredible.

Fourthly, If Christ opposed his Precepts to those of the *Mosaick* Law, then God speaking by Christ must contradict himself as speaking by *Moses*. For whatsoever *Moses* spoke, he spoke as the immediate Dictates of God, from

whom he received the Law. But this is absurd, and by no means consistent with the Divine Holiness and Veracity.

Fifthly, and lastly, Christ in all this Discourse never calls any one of the Doctrines opposed by him the *Words of Moses*, or of *the Law*, but only the *Righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees*, which shews that they, and they only, were the Persons with whom he managed this whole Contest.

Let this therefore rest with us as a firm Conclusion; That *Moses* and *Christ* were at perfect Agreement, whatever the Controversy was between him and the *Pharisees*. And so from the Scheme and Context of the Words, I pass to the Duty enjoined in them, which is *to love our Enemies*: The Discussion of which I shall cast under these three general Heads.

First, I shall shew negatively what is not that *Love*, which we are here commanded to shew our Enemies.

Secondly, I shall shew positively wherein it does consist.

Thirdly, I shall produce Arguments to enforce it.

And first, for the *First* of these; what is *not* that *Love*, which we must shew our Enemies: this we shall find to exclude several

veral Things which would fain wear this Name.

1. As first to treat an Enemy with a fair Deportment and amicable Language, is not the *Love* here enjoined by Christ. Love is a thing that scorns to dwell any where but in the Heart. The Tongue is a thing made for Words, but what Reality is there in a Voice, what Substance in a Sound? and Words are no more. The Kindness of the Heart never kills, but that of the Tongue often does. And in an ill Sense a *soft Answer* may sometimes *break the Bones*. He who speaks me well, proves himself a Rhetorician or a Courtier; but that is not to be a Friend.

Was ever the Hungry fed, or the Naked cloathed with good Looks or fair Speeches? these are but thin Garments, to keep out the Cold, and but a slender Repast to conjure down the Rage of a craving Appetite. My Enemy perhaps is ready to starve or perish through Poverty, and I tell him I am heartily glad to see him, and should be *very ready to serve him*, but still my Hand is close, and my Purse shut; I neither bring him to my Table, nor lodge him under my Roof; he asks for Bread, and I give him a Complement, a thing indeed not so *hard* as a *Stone*, but altogether

as *dry*. I treat him with Art and Out-side : and lastly at parting, with all the Ceremonies of Dearness, I shake him by the Hand, but put nothing into it. In a word, I play with his Distress, and dally with that which will not be dallied with, Want and Misery, and a clamorous Necessity.

For will fair Words and a courtly Behaviour pay Debts and discharge Scores? If they could, there is a sort of Men that would not be so much in debt as they are. Can a Man look and speak himself out of his Creditors Hands? Surely then, if my Words cannot do this for myself, neither can they do it for my Enemy. And therefore this has nothing of the Love spoken of in the Text. It is but a Scene and a meer Mockery, for the receiving that cannot make my Enemy at all the richer, the giving of which makes me not one peny the poorer. It is indeed the Fashion of the World thus to amuse Men with empty Carresses, and to feast them with Words and Air, Looks and Legs; nay, and it has this peculiar Privilege above all other Fashions, that it never alters; but certainly no Man ever yet quenched his Thirst with looking upon a golden Cup, nor made a Meal with the outside of a Lordly Dish.

But

But we are not to rest here ; fair Speeches and Looks are not only very insignificant as to the real Effects of Love, but are for the most part the Instruments of Hatred in the Execution of the greatest Mischiefs. Few Men are to be ruined till they are made confident of the contrary : and this cannot be done by Threats and Roughness, and owning the Mischief that a Man designs; but the Pit-fall must be covered to invite the Man to venture over it ; all things must be sweetned with Professions of Love, friendly Looks, and Embraces. For it is Oyl that whets the Razor, and the smoothest Edge is still the sharpest : they are the Complacencies of an Enemy that kill, the closest Hugs that stifle, and Love must be pretended before Malice can be effectually practised. In a word, he must get into his Heart with fair *Speeches* and *Promises*, before he can come at it with his *Dagger*. For surely no Man fishes with a bare Hook, or thinks that the Net itself can be any Enticement to the Bird.

But now, if these outward shews of Fairness are short of the Love which we owe to our Enemies ; What can we say of those, who have not arrived so far as these, and yet pretend to be Friends ? Disdain and Distance, sour Looks and sharp Words are all the Expressions of
Friendship

Friendship that some Natures can manifest. I confess, where real Kindnesses are done, these circumstantial Garnitures of Love (as I may so call them) may be dispensed with; and it is better to have a rough Friend than a fawning Enemy: but those who neither do good turns, nor give good looks, nor speak good words, have a Love strangely subtil and metaphysical: for other poor Mortals of an ordinary Capacity are forced to be ignorant of that which they can neither *see, hear, feel,* nor *understand*. And thus much for the first Negative. *The Love that we are to shew to Enemies, is not a fair external courtly Deportment*; it is not such a thing as may be learnt in a Dancing School, nor in those Shops of Fallacy and Dissimulation, the Courts and Palaces of great Men, where Mens Thoughts and Words stand at an infinite distance; and their Tongues and Minds hold no Correspondence or Intercourse with one another.

2. Fair *Promises* are not the Love, that our Saviour here commands us to shew our Enemies. And yet these are one Step and Advance above the former: for many fair Speeches may be given, many courteous Harangues uttered, and yet no Promise made. And it is worth observing how some great Ones often delude,

delude, and simple ones suffer themselves to be deluded, by general Discourses and Expressions of Courtesy. “ As, take you no Care, I will “ provide for you. I will never see you want. “ Leave your Business in my Hands, and I will “ manage it with as much or more Concern “ than you could yourself. What need you “ insist so much upon this or that in particu- “ lar. I design better things for you.” But all this while there is no particular determinate thing promised, so as to hold such an one by any real solid Engagement (supposing that his Promises were such) but perhaps when the next Advantage comes in the way, the Man is forgot, and balked: Yet still those general Speeches hold as true as ever they did, and so will continue notwithstanding all particular Defeats; as indeed being never calculated for any thing else but to keep up the Expectation of easy Persons; to feed them for the present, and to fail them in the issue.

But now as these empty glossing Words are short of *Promises*, so *Promises* are equally short of *Performances*. Concerning both which I shall say this, that there is no wise Man, but had rather have had one Promise than a thousand fair Words, and one Performance than ten thousand Promises. For what
 Trouble

Trouble is it to promise, what Charge is it to spend a little Breath, for a Man to give one his Word, who never intends to give him any thing else? and yet according to the Measures of the World this must sometimes pass for an high piece of Love; and many poor unexperienced believing Souls, who have more Honesty than Wit, think themselves wrapt up into the third Heaven, and actually possessed of some notable Preferment, when they can say, *I have such a great Person's Promise, for such or such a thing.* Have they so? Let them see if such a Promise will pay Rent, buy Land, and maintain them like Gentlemen. It is at the best but a future Contingent; for either the Man may die, or his Interest may fail, or his Mind may change, or ten thousand Accidents may intervene. Promises are a Dye which none ever yet thrived by, and a Man may feed upon them heartily, and never break his Fast. In a word, I may say of human Promises, what Expositors say of divine Prophecies, *That they are never understood till they come to be fulfilled.*

But how speaks the Scripture of these Matters? Why in *Rom. xii. 20.* *If thine Enemy hunger feed him, if he thirst give him drink.* It is not, promise him Meat and Drink a

Week hence, that is perhaps two Days after he is dead with *Thirst* and *Hunger*. He who lives only upon Reverfions, and maintains himself with Hope, and has nothing to cover him but the *Cloaths of dead Men*, and the *Promises of the Living*, will find juft as much Relief from them, as a Man in the depth of Winter feels the Heat of the following Summer.

But bare Promises are fo far from answering Chriff's Precept of loving our Enemies, that if they are not realiz'd in Deeds, they become a Plague and a great Calamity. For they raife an Expectation, which, unsatisfied or defeated, is the greateft of Torments, they betray a Man to a fallacious Dependance, which bereaves him of the Succours of his other Endeavours, and in the iffue leaves him to inherit the fhame and misery of a Difappointment, and unable to fay any thing elfe for himfelf, but that he was credulous, and the Promifor falfe.

3. But thirdly and laftly, to advance a degree yet higher, to do one or two kind Offices for an Enemy, is not to fulfil the Precept of *loving* him. He who clothes a naked Man with a Pair of Gloves, and adminifters to one perishing with Thirft, a drop or two of Water, reaches not the Measure of his Neceffity,
but

but instead of relieving, only upbraids his Want, and passes a Jest upon his Condition. It is like pardoning a Man the Debt of a Penny, and in the mean Time fucing him fiercely for a Talent. Love is then only of reality and value when it deals forth Benefits in a full proportion to ones need: and when it shews itself both in Universality and Constancy. Otherwise it is only a Trick to serve a Turn, and carry on a Design.

For he who would take a cleanly, unsuspected way to ruin his Adversary, must pave the way to his Destruction with some Courtships of a lighter sort, the Sense of which shall take him off from his Guard, his Wariness, and Suspicion, and so lay him open to such a Blow, as shall destroy him at once. The skilful Rider strokes and pleases the unruly Horse, only that he may come so near him, as to get the Bit into his Mouth, and then he rides, and rules, and domineers over him at his Pleasure. So he who hates his Enemy with a Cunning equal to his Malice, will not strain to do this or that good Turn for him, so long as it does not thwart, but rather promote the main Design of his utter Subversion. For all this is but like the helping a Man over the Stile, who is going to be hanged, which
surely

surely is no very great or difficult piece of Civility.

In the Reign of Queen *Elizabeth*, we read of one whom the Grandees of the Court procured to be made Secretary of State, only to break his Back in the Business of the Queen of *Scots*, whose Death they were then projecting. Like true Courtiers they first engage him in that fatal Scene, and then desert him in it, using him only as a Tool to do a present State-Job, and then to be reproach'd and ruin'd for what he had done. And a little Observation of the World may shew us, there is not only a Course of Beheading, or Hanging, but also of *Preferring Men out of the Way*. But this is not to *love an Enemy*, but to hate him more artificially. He is ruined more speciously indeed, but not less efficaciously than if he had been laid fast in a Dungeon, or banished his Country, or by a *Packt Jury* dispatched into another World.

2. And thus having done with the *Negative*; I come now to the second General Thing proposed: Namely, to shew *positively* what is included in the Duty of loving our Enemies.

It includes these Three Things.

1. A discharging the Mind of all Rancour and Virulence towards an Adversary. The Scripture most significantly calls it the *Leaven of Malice*, and we know, that is of a spreading and fermenting Nature, and will in Time diffuse a Sourness upon a Man's whole Behaviour: But we will suppose (which is yet seldom found) that a Man has such an absolute Empire and Command over his Heart, as for ever to stifle his Disgusts, and to manage his Actions in a constant Contradiction to his Affections, and to maintain a friendly Converse, while he is hot with the Rancour of an Enemy; yet all this is but the Mystery of Dissimulation, and to *act a Part*, instead of acting a Friend.

Besides the Trouble and Anxiety to the very Person who thus behaves himself. For Enmity is a restless Thing, and not to be dissimulated without some Torment to the Mind that entertains it. It is more easily removed than covered. It is as if a Man should endeavour to keep the Sparks from flying out of a Furnace, or as if a Birth should be stopped when it is ripe and ready for Delivery, which surely would be a Pain greater than that of bringing forth.

He

He who is resolved to hate his Enemy, and yet resolves not to shew it, has turned the Edge of his Hatred inwards, and becomes a Tyrant and an Enemy to himself, he could not wish his mortal Adversary a greater Misery, than thus to carry a Mind always big and swelling, and ever ready to burst, and yet never to give it vent.

But on the other side, it is no Pain for a Man to appear what he is, and to declare a real Principle of Love insensible Demonstrations: Does a Man therefore find that both his Duty and his Interest require, that he should deport himself with all signs of Love to his Enemies? Let him but take this easy Course as to entertain the Thing in his Heart, which he would manifest in his Converse, and then he will find that his Work is as natural an easy, as it is for Fire to cast abroad a Flame. Art is difficult, but whatsoever is natural is *easy* too.

2. To love an Enemy is to do him all the real Offices of Kindness, that Opportunity shall lay in our Way. Love is of too substantial a Nature to be made up of mere Negatives, and withall too operative to terminate in bare Desires. Does Providence cast any of my Enemies Concernments under my Power?

As his Health, his Estate, Preferment, or any thing conducing to the Conveniencies of his Life? Why, in all this it gives me an Opportunity to manifest, whether or no I can reach the Sublimity of this Precept of *loving my Enemies*.

Is my Enemy sick and languishing, and it is in my Power to *cure him as easily*, or *to kill him as safely*, as if I were his Physician? Christianity here commands me to be concerned for his Weakness, to shew him a Remedy, and to rescue him from the Grave; and in a word, to preserve that Life, which perhaps, would have once destroyed mine.

Do I see my Enemy defrauded and circumvented, and like to be undone in his Estate? I must not sit still and see him ruined, and tell him *I wish him well*; which is a Contradiction in Practice, and an impudent Ill-natured Sarcasm: But I must contribute my hearty Assistance to discover the Fraud, and to repel the Force: And as readily keep him from being poor, as relieve him if he were. I must be as forward in the Pursuit of the Thief who stole his Goods, who once plundered mine, as if the Injury had light upon my Friend, my Kinsman, or myself.

And lastly, does it lie in my way to put in a Word to dash or promote my Enemy's Business or Interest? To give him a *secret Blow*, such a one as shall strike his Interest to the Ground for ever, and he never know the Hand from whence it came? Can I by my Power obstruct his lawful Advantage, and Preferments, and so reap the diabolical Satisfaction of a close Revenge? Can I do him all the Mischief imaginable, and that easily, safely, and successfully; and so applaud myself in my Power, my Wit, and my subtle Contrivances, for which the World shall court me as formidable and considerable? Yet all these wretched Practices and accursed Methods of growing great, and rising by the Fall of an Enemy, are to be detested as infinitely opposite to that innocence and clearness of Spirit, that openness and freedom from Design that becomes a Professor of Christianity.

On the contrary, amidst all these Opportunities of doing Mischief, I must espouse my Enemy's just Cause, as his Advocate or Solicitor. I must help it forward by favourable Speeches of his Person, Acknowledgment of his Worth and Merit by a fair Construction of doubtful Passages: And all this, if Need be, in secret, where my Enemy neither sees nor

hears me do him these Services, and consequently where I have all the Advantages and Temptations to do otherwise. In short the Gospel enjoins a greater Love to our Enemies, than Men, for the most Part, now a-days shew their Friends.

3. The last and crowning Instance of our Love to our Enemies, is to *pray* for them. For by this a Man, as it were, acknowledges himself unable to do enough for his Enemy; and therefore he calls in the Assistance of Heaven, and engages Omnipotence to compleat the Kindness. He would fain out-do himself, and therefore finding his own Stores short and dry, he repairs to Infinity. Prayer for a Man's self is indeed a choice Duty, yet it is but a kind of lawful and pious Selfishness. For who would not solicit for his own Happiness, and be importunate for his own Concerns? But when I pray as heartily for my Enemy, as I do for my *daily Bread*; when I strive with Prayers and Tears to make God his Friend, who himself will not be mine; when I reckon his Felicity amongst my own Necessities: Surely this is such a Love as, in a literal Sense, may be said to reach up to Heaven. For nobody judges that a small and a trivial Thing, for which he dares to pray: No Man comes
into

into the Presence of a King to beg Pains. And therefore if a Man did not look upon the Good of his Enemy, as a Thing that nearly affected himself, he could not own it as a matter of a Petition, and endeavour to concern God about that, with which he will not concern himself. And upon the same Ground also is inferred the Necessity of Man's personal endeavouring the Good and Happiness of his Enemy: For Prayer without Endeavour is but an Affront to the Throne of Grace, and a lazy throwing that, which is our own Duty, upon God. As if a Man should say, *God forgive you, God relieve and comfort you, for I will not.* But if to pray for an Enemy be a Duty, surely the *Manner* in which we do it ought to be so too: And not such as shall turn a Supplication for him into a Satyr against him, by representing him in our Prayers under the Character of one void of all *Grace and Goodness*, and consequently a much fitter Object for God's Vengeance than his Mercy. And yet there was a Time in which this Way of Praying was in no small Vogue with a certain sort of Men, who would allow neither the *Gift nor Spirit* of Prayer to any but themselves. For if at any time they prayed for those whom they accounted their *Enemies*

(and that only because they had done so much to make them so) it could not be properly called an *interceding* with God for them, but a downright *inditing and arraigning them before God* as a Pack of graceless Wretches and Villains, and avowed Enemies to the *Power and Purity* of the *Gospel*. This and the like, I say, was the devout Language of their Prayers, sometimes by *Intimation*, and sometimes by direct *Expression*: And thus under the Colour and Cover of some plausible artificial Words, it was but for them to call those whom they malign'd *Antichrist*, and themselves the *Kingdom of Christ*, and then they might very laudably pray for the *pulling down* of the one, and the *setting up* of the other, and thereby no doubt answer all the Measures of a *sanctified, self-denying* Petition. But as those Days are at an End, so it were to be wished * that such kind of Praying were so too; especially since our Church, I am sure, has so much Charity, as to teach all of her Communion to pray for those, who are not only Enemies to our *Persons*, but also to our very *Prayers*.

And thus I have endeavoured to shew, what it is to *Love our Enemies*; though I will not say that I have recounted all the Instances in

* See something upon the like Subject. *Vol. 2. p. 118.*
which

which this Duty may exert itself. For Love is infinite, and the Methods of its acting various and innumerable. But I suppose that I have marked out those Generals which all Particulars may be fairly reduced to.

And now, before I proceed to the *Motives* and Arguments to enforce the Duty, I shall, to prevent some Abuses of this Doctrine, shew what is not inconsistent with this loving our Enemies: And that is to defend and secure ourselves against them. I am to *love* my Enemy, but not so as to *hate* myself: If my love to him be a *Copy*, I am sure the Love to myself ought to be the *Original*. Charity is indeed to diffuse itself *abroad*, but yet it may lawfully *begin at home*: For the Precept surely is not unnatural and irrational; nor can it state the Duty of Christians in Opposition to the Privileges of Men, and command us tamely to surrender up our Lives and Estates as often as the Hands of Violence would wrest them from us. We may love our Enemies, but we are not therefore to be fond of their Enmity. And though I am commanded when my Enemy *thirsts to give him Drink*, yet it is not when he thirsts for my *Blood*. It is my Duty to give him an Alms, but not to let him take my Estate. Princes

and Governours may very well secure themselves with Laws and Arms against implacable Enemies for all this Precept: They are not bound to leave the State defenceless, against the Projects, Plots, and Insurrections of those who are pleased to think themselves *persecuted* if they are not permitted to *reign*. We may with a very fair Comportment with this Precept love our Enemies Persons, while we hate their Principles and counterplot their Designs.

I come now to the third and last Thing, *viz.* to assign Motives and Arguments to enforce this Love to our Enemy; and they shall be taken,

1. From the Condition of our Enemy's Person.

2. From the Excellency of the Duty.

3. From the great Examples that recommend it; and

For the first of these, if we consider our Enemy, we shall find that he sustains several Capacities, which may give him a just Claim to our charitable Affection.

1. As first he is joined with us in the Society and Community of the same Nature. He is a *Man*. And so far bears the Image and Superscription of our heavenly Father. He may

cease to be our Friend, but he cannot cease to be our Brother. For we all descended from the same Loins, and though *Esau* hates *Jacob*, and *Jacob* supplants *Esau*, yet they once lay in the same Womb: And therefore the Saying of *Moses* may be extended to all Men at Variance; *Why do ye wrong one another, for ye are Brethren?* If my Enemy were a Snake or a Viper, I could do no more than hate and trample upon him: But shall I hate the *Seed of the Woman* as much as I do that of the *Serpent*? We hold that God loves the most sinful of his Creatures so far as they are his Creatures; and the very Devils could not sin themselves out of an excellent Nature, though out of an happy Condition.

Even *War*, which is the Rage of Mankind, and observes no *Laws* but its own, yet offers Quarter to an Enemy; I suppose, because Enmity does not obliterate Humanity, nor wholly cancel the Sympathies of Nature. For every Man does, or (I am sure) he may, see something of himself in his Enemy, and a Transcript of those Perfections for which he values himself.

And therefore those inhuman Butcheries which some Men have acted upon others, stand upon Record not only as the Crimes of
Persons,

Persons, but also as the Reproach of our very Nature, and excusable upon no other Colour or Account whatsoever, but that the Persons who acted such Cruelties upon other Men first ceased to be Men themselves; and were indeed to be reckoned as so many Anomalies and Exceptions from Mankind; Persons of another Make or Mold from the rest of the Sons of *Adam*, and deriving their Original not from the *Dust*, but rather from the *Stones of the Earth*.

2. An Enemy notwithstanding his Enmity may be yet the proper Object of our Love, because it sometimes so falls out, that he is of the same *Religion* with us; and the very Business and Design of Religion is to unite, and to put (as it were) a spiritual Cognation and Kindred between Souls. I am sure, this is the great Purpose of the Christian Religion; which never joins Men to Christ but by first joining them amongst themselves: And making them *Members one of another*, as well as knitting them all to the *same Head*. By how much the more intolerable were our late Zealots, in their Pretences to a more refined Strain of Purity and Converse with God; while in the mean time their Hearts could serve them to plunder, worry, and undo their poor Brethren, only for their loyal Adherence to their Sovereign;

vereign; sequeſtring and caſting whole Families out of their Houſes and Livings to ſtarve abroad in the wide World, againſt all the Laws of God and Man; and who, to this Day, breath the ſame Rage towards all Diſſenters from them, ſhould they once more get the *reforming Sword* into their Hands. What theſe Mens *Religion* may teach them, I know not, but I am ſure, it is ſo far from teaching them to love their Enemies, that they found their bittereſt Enmities, and moſt inveterate Hatreds only upon *Religion*; which has taught them firſt to call their Malice Zeal, and then to think it their Duty to be *malicious* and *implacable*.

3. An Enemy may be the proper Object of our Love, becauſe, though perhaps he is not capable of being changed and made a Friend by it, (which, for any thing I know, is next to impoſſible) yet he is capable of being ſhamed and rendred *inexcusable*. And Shame may ſmooth over his Behaviour, though no Kindneſs can change his Diſpoſition: Upon which account it is, that ſo far as a Man ſhames his Enemy, ſo far he alſo diſarms him. For he leaves him ſtript of the Aſſiſtance and good Opinion of the World round about him; without which it is impoſſible for any Man living

living to be considerable, either in his Friendship or Enmities.

Love is the *Fire* that must both heap and kindle *those Coals upon our Enemies Head*, that shall either melt or consume him. For that Man I account as good as consumed and ruined, whom all People, even upon the common Concern of Mankind, abhor for his Ingratitude, as a Pest and a publick Enemy. So that if my Enemy is resolved to treat me spitefully, notwithstanding all my Endeavours to befriend and oblige him; and if he will still revile and rail at me, after I have employed both Tongue and Hand to serve and promote him, surely I shall by this means at least make his virulent Words recoil upon his bold Face, and his foul Mouth; and so turn that Stream of publick Hatred and Detestation justly upon himself, which he was endeavouring to bring upon me. And if I do no more, it is yet worth while, even upon a temporal Account, to obey this Precept of *Christ*, of *loving my Enemy*. And thus much for the first general Argument to enforce this Duty, grounded upon the *Condition of my Enemy's Person*.

2. A *second* Motive or Argument to the same shall be taken from the Excellency of the Duty itself. It is the highest Perfection that

that humane Nature can reach unto. It is an Imitation of the Divine Goodness, which shines upon the Heads, and rains upon the Fields of the sinful and unjust; and heaps Blessings upon those, who are busy only to *heap up Wrath* to themselves. To *love an Enemy* is to stretch Humanity as far as it will go. It is an heroick Action, and such an one as grows not upon any ordinary Plebeian Spirit.

The Excellency of the Duty is sufficiently proclaimed by the Difficulty of its Practice. For how hard is it, when the Passions are high, and the Sense of an Injury quick, and Power ready, for a Man to deny himself in that luscious Morfel of Revenge! To do Violence to himself, instead of doing it to his Enemy! and to command down the strongest Principles, and the greatest Heats, that usually act the Soul when it exerts itself upon such Objects.

And the Difficulty of such a Behaviour is no less declared by its being so rarely and seldom observed in Men. For whom almost can we see, who opens his Arms to his Enemies, or puts any other Bounds to his Hatred of him but Satiety or Disability; either because it is even glutted with having done so much against him already, or wants Power to do more? Indeed
where

where such a pitch of Love is found, it appears glorious and glistering in the Eyes of all, and much admired and commended it is, but yet for the most part no otherwise than as we see Men admiring and commending some rare Piece of Art, which they never intend to imitate, nor so much as to attempt an Imitation of. Nothing certainly but an excellent Disposition improved by a mighty Grace, can bear a Man *up to this Perfection*.

3. The third Motive or Argument, shall be drawn from the great *Examples* which recommend this Duty to us. And first of all from that of our Blessed Saviour, whose *Foot-steps* in the Paths of Love we may trace out and follow by his own *Blood*. He gave his Life for Sinners. That is for Enemies, yea, and Enemies, with the highest Aggravation, for nothing can make one Man so much an Enemy to another, as Sin makes him an Enemy to God.

I say unto you, love your Enemies, (says Christ) That is, I emphatically, I who say it by my Example as much as by my Precept. For Christ *went about doing Good*, *Acts* x. 38. Yea, and he did it still in a Miracle. Every Work that he did, was equally beneficial and miraculous. And the Place where he did such

Wonder

Wonders of Charity was *Jerusalem*, a City red with the Blood of God's Messengers, and paved with the Skulls of Prophets. A City which he knew, would shortly compleat all its Cruelty and Impiety in his own Murder, though he was the promised and long expected Messias. And in the Prologue to this Murder, his violent Attachment, when one of his Enemies was wounded he bestowed a Miracle upon his Cure: So tender was he of his mortal Enemies. Like a Lamb that affords wherewithal, both to feed and cloath its very Butcher; nay, and while he was actually hanging upon the Cross, he uttered a passionate Prayer for the Forgiveness of his Murderers: So desirous was he, that though they had the sole acting, yet that he himself should have the whole feeling of their Sin. In fine, now that he sits at the right Hand of his Father triumphant, and governing the World, from whence he could with much more ease confound his most daring Enemies, than the most potent Grandee can crush his meanest and most servile Dependants; yet he treats them with all the Methods of Patience and Arts of Reconcilement, and in a word endures *with much Long-suffering*, those *Vessels of Wrath* who seem even resolved to
perish,

perish, and obstinately set to *fit themselves for Destruction*.

And now, though after such an Example, this sort of Argument for the *loving our Enemies* can be carried no *higher*, yet blessed be God, that is not so wholly exhausted by any one Example, but that it may be carried *further*; and that by several Instances, which though they do by no Means come up to a just Comparison with it, yet ought to be owned for noble Imitations of it. And such an one this happy Day affords us, a Day Consecrated to the solemn Commemoration of the *Nativity* and *Return* of a Prince, who having been most barbarously driven out of his Kingdoms, and afterwards as miraculously restored to them, brought with him the greatest, the brightest and most stupendous Instance of this Virtue, that, next to what has been observed of our Saviour himself, was ever yet shewn by Man. Providence seeming to have raised up this Prince, as it had done his Father before him, to give the World a glorious Demonstration, that the most *injured* of Men, might be the most *merciful* of Men too. For after the highest of Wrongs and Contumelies that a Sovereign could suffer from his Subjects; scorning all Revenge as more below him than the
very

very Persons whom he might have been revenged upon, he gloried in nothing so much as in giving *Mercy* the upper-hand of *Majesty* itself, making *Amnesty* his Symbol or Motto, and *Forgiveness* the peculiar signaling Character of his Reign; herein resembling the Almighty Himself (as far as Mortality can) who seems to claim a greater Glory for *sparing* and redeeming Man, than for *creating* him. So that in a Word, as our Saviour has made *Love to our Enemies* one of the chiefest Badges of our Religion, so our King has almost made it the very Mark of our *Allegiance*.

Thus even to a Prodigy *merciful* has he shewn himself; *merciful* by *Inclination*, and *merciful* by *Extraction*; *merciful* in his *Example*, and *merciful* in his *Laws*, and thereby expressing the utmost *Dutifulness* of a Son, as well as the highest *Magnanimity* and *Clemency* of a Prince; while he is still making that good upon the *Throne* which the Royal Martyr his Father had enjoined upon the *Scaffold*; where he dyed pardoning and praying for those, whose Malice he was then falling a Victim to: [And this with a Charity so unparallel'd, and a Devotion so fervent, that the *Voice of his Prayers*, 'tis to be hoped, drown-

ed the very *Cry of his Blood*. But I love not to dwell upon such Tragedies, save only to illustrate the Height of one contrary by the Height of another; and therefore as an humble Follower of the Princely Pattern here set before us, I shall draw a Veil of Silence over all; especially since it surpasses the Power of Words sufficiently to set forth, either the Greatness of the Crimes *forgiven*, or of the Mercy that *forgave* them.

But to draw to a Close: We have here had the highest and the hardest Duty perhaps belonging to a Christian, both recommended to our Judgment by *Argument*, and to our Practice by *Example*; and what remains, but that we submit our *Judgment* to the one, and govern our *Practice* by the other? And for that Purpose, that we beg of God an Assistance equal to the Difficulty of the Duty enjoined; for certainly it is not an ordinary Measure of Grace that can conquer the Opposition, that *Flesh* and *Blood* and corrupt Reason itself, after all its Convictions, will be sure to make to it. The greatest Miseries that befall us in this World are from *Enemies*, and so long as Men naturally desire to be happy, it will be naturally as hard to them to love those

those who, they know, are the grand Obstacles to their being so. The Light of Nature will convince a Man of many Duties, which it will never enable him to perform. And if we should look no further than bare Nature, this seems to be one cut out rather for our Admiration than our Practice. It being not more difficult (where Grace does not interpose) to *cut off a Right-hand*, than to reach it heartily to the Relief of an inveterate implacable Adversary. And yet God expects this from us, and that so *peremptorily*, that he has made the Pardon of our Enemies the indispensable Condition of our own. And therefore that Wretch (whosoever he was) who being pressed hard upon his Death-Bed to pardon a notable Enemy, which he had, answered, *That if he died indeed, he pardoned him, but if he lived he would be revenged on him*: That Wretch, I say, and every other such Image of the Devil, no doubt, went out of the World so, that he had better never have come into it. In fine, after we have said the utmost upon this Subject that we can, I believe we shall find this the Result of all, That he is an happy Man *who has no Enemies*, and he a much happier, who has never so many, and *can pardon them*.

God preserve us from the one, or enable us to do the other. To whom be rendred, and ascribed, as is most due, all Praise, Might, Majesty, and Dominion, both now, and for evermore. Amen.



*False Foundations removed, and true
ones laid for such wise Builders as
design to build for Eternity.*

I N A

S E R M O N

Preached at

St. MARY'S, Oxon,

Before the

UNIVERSITY,

DECEMBER 10. 1661.

MATTH. vii. 26, 27.

*And every one that heareth these
Sayings of mine, and doth them*

K 3

not

not, shall be likened unto a foolish Man which built his House upon the Sand.

And the Rain descended, and the Floods came, and the Winds blew, and beat upon that House and it fell, and great was the fall of it.

IT seems to have been all along the prime Art and Method of the great Enemy of Souls, not being able to root the Sense of Religion out of *Mens Hearts*, yet by his Sophistries and Delusions to defeat the Design of it upon *their Lives*; and either by empty Notions, or false Persuasions to take them off from the main Business of Religion, which is Duty and Obedience, by bribing the Conscience to rest satisfied with something less. A Project extremely suitable to the corrupt Nature of Man; whose chief, or rather sole Quarrel to Religion is the Severity of its *Precepts*, and the Difficulty of their *Practice*. So that although it is as natural for him to desire to be happy, as to breathe, yet he had rather lose and miss of

Happiness

Happiness than seek it in the Way of Holiness. Upon which Account nothing speaks so full and home to the very inmost Desires of his Soul, as those Doctrines and Opinions, which would persuade him, that it may, and shall be well with him hereafter, without any Necessity of his living well here. Which great *Mystery of Iniquity* being carefully managed by the utmost Skill of the Tempter, and greedily embraced by a Man's own treacherous Affections lies at the Bottom of all *false Religions*, and eats out the very Heart and Vitals of *the true*. For in the Strength of this, some hope to be saved by *believing well*; some by *meaning well*; some by *paying well*; and some by shedding a few insipid Tears, and uttering a few hard Words against those Sins which they have no other Controversy with, but that they were so unkind as to leave the Sinner before he was willing to leave them. For all this Men can well enough submit to, as not forcing them to abandon any one of their beloved Lusts. And therefore they will not think themselves hardly dealt with, tho' you require *Faith* of them, if you will but dispense with *good Works*: They will abound, and even overflow with good *Intentions*,

if you will allow them in quite contrary *Actions*. And you shall not want for *Sacrifice*, if that may *compound* for *Obedience*; nor Lastly, will they grudge to find *Money*, if some-body else will find *Merit*. But to *live well*, and to do *well*, are Things of too hard a Digestion.

Accordingly our Saviour, who well knew all these false Hopes and fallacious Reasonings of the Heart of Man (which is never so subtle as when it would deceive itself) tells his Hearers, that all these little, trifling Inventions will avaii them nothing, and that in the Business of *Religion*, and the great Concern of *Souls*; all that is short of *Obedience* and a *good Life*, is nothing but Trick and Evasion, Froth and Folly; and consequently that if they build upon such deceitful Grounds, and with such slight Materials, they must and can expect no other, than after all their Cost and Pains, to have their House fall upon their Heads, and so perish in the Ruin. And with this terrible Application in these two last Verses, which I have pitched upon for my *Text*, he concludes his Divine Sermon, and Discourse from the Mount.

The Words of the Text being too plain and easy to need any nice or large Explication, I shall manage the Discussion of them in these four Particulars.

First, In shewing the *Reasons* upon which I conclude *Practice* or *Obedience*, in the *great Business* of a Man's Eternal Happiness, to be the best and surest *Foundation* for him to build upon.

Secondly, In shewing the *false Foundations* upon which many build, and accordingly in Time of Tryal, miscarry.

Thirdly, In shewing the *Causes*, why such miscarry, and fall away in Time of Tryal or Temptation.

Fourthly, and *Lastly*, In shewing wherein the fatal *Greatness of their Fall* consists.

And First for the first of these, *viz.* to shew the Reasons why *Practice* or *Obedience* is the *best and surest Foundation*, (still supposing it bottomed upon the Merits of Christ) *for a Man to build his Designs for Heaven and the Hopes of his Salvation upon*; I shall mention Three.

First, Because, according to the ordinary Way, and Oeconomy of God's working upon the Hearts of Men, nothing but Practice can change our corrupt Nature; and Practice
continued,

continued, and persevered in, by the Grace of God, will. We all acknowledge (that is, all who are not wise above the Articles of our Church) that there is an universal Stain and Depravation upon Man's Nature, that does incapacitate him for the Fruition, and infinitely pure Converse of God. The Removal of which cannot be effected, but by introducing the contrary Habit of Holiness, which shall by Degrees expel, and purge out the other. And the only Way to produce an Habit, is by the frequent Repetition of congenial Actions, Every pious Action leaves a certain Tincture, or Disposition upon the Soul, which being seconded by Actions of the same Nature, whether by the Superaddition of new Degrees, or a more radicate Fixation of the same, grows at length into an Habit, or Quality, of the Force and Energy of a second Nature.

I confess the Habit of Holiness, finding no Principle of Production in a Nature wholly corrupt, must needs be produced by supernatural Infusion, and consequently proceed, not from *Acquisition*, but *Gift*. It must be *brought into the Soul*, it cannot *grow*, or *spring out of it*. But then we must remember that most excellent, and true Rule of the Schools, that *Habitus infusi obtinentur per modum acquiritorum.*

torum. It is indeed a supernatural Effect, but (as I may so speak) wrought in a natural Way. The Spirit of God imitating the Course of Nature, even then, when it works something above it.

A Person in the State of Nature or Unregeneracy cannot by the sole Strength of his most improved Performances, acquire an Habit of true Grace or Holiness. But, as in the Rain, it is not the bare Water that fructifies, but a secret Spirit, or Nitre descending with it, and joined to it, that has this Virtue, and produces this Effect: So in the Duties of a meer natural Man, there is sometimes an hidden, Divine Influence, that keeps Pace with those Actions, and together with each Performance, imprints a holy Disposition upon the Soul; which after a long Series of the like Actions influenced by the same Divine Principle, comes at length to be of that Force and Firmness as to out-grow, and work out the contrary Qualities of inherent Corruption.

We have an Illustration of this, tho' not a parallel Instance, in natural Actions, which by Frequency imprint an Habit, or permanent Facility of acting, upon the Agent. Godliness is in some Sense an Art or Mystery, and we all know that it is Practice chiefly, that makes the Artist.

Secondly,

Secondly, A second Reason for our Assertion, is, because *Action* is the highest Perfection, and drawing forth the utmost of Power, Vigor, and Activity of Man's Nature. God is pleased to vouchsafe the best that *he can give*, only to the best that *we can do*. And Action is undoubtedly our best, because the most difficult; for in such Cases, Worth, and Difficulty are inseparable Companions. The properest and most raised Conception that we have of God, is, that he is *a pure Act*, a perpetual, incessant Motion. And next to him, in the Rank of Beings, are the Angels, as approaching nearest to him in this Perfection; being all Flame, and Agility, ministering Spirits, always busy and upon the Wing, for the Execution of his great Commands about the Government of the World. And indeed *Doing* is nothing else but the noblest Improvement of *Being*. It is not (as some nice Speculators make it) an airy, diminutive Entity, or Accident distinct from the Substance of the Soul; but to define it more suitably to itself, and to the Soul too, Action is properly *the Soul in its best Posture*.

Thirdly, A third Reason is, because the main *End, Drift and Design* of Religion is the active Part of it. Profession is only the
Badge

Badge of a Christian, Belief the Beginning, but Practice is the Nature, and Custom the Perfection. For it is this, which translates Christianity from a bare Notion into a real Business; from uselefs Speculations into substantial Duties; and from an Idea in the Brain into an Existence in the Life. An upright Conversation is the bringing of the general Theorems of Religion into the particular Instances of solid Experience; and if it were not for this, Religion would exist no where, but in the Bible. The grand deciding Question at the last Day will be, not *What have you said?* or *What have you believ'd?* but *What have you done more than others?*

But that the very Life of Religion consists in Practice, will appear yet further from those subordinate Ends to which it is designed in this World, and which are as really, though not as principally, the Purpose of it, as the utmost Attainment of the Beatifick Vision, and the very last Period of our Salvation; and these are two.

First, The honouring of God before the World. God will not have his Worship, like his Nature, invisible. Next to Authority itself is the Pomp, and Manifestation of it; And to be *acknowledged* is something more than

to be *obeyed*. For what is Sovereignty unknown, or Majesty unobserved? What Glory were it for the Sun to direct the Affairs, if he did not also attract the Eyes of the World? It is his open and universal Light, more than his occult Influence, that we love and admire him for. Religion, if confined to the Heart, is not so much entertain'd, as imprisoned: That indeed is to be its Fountain, but not its Channel. The Water arises in one Place, but it streams in another; and Fountains would not be so much valued if they did not produce Rivers.

One great End of Religion is to proclaim and publish God's Sovereignty, and there is no such way to cause Men to *glorify our Heavenly Father*, as by *causing our Light to shine before them*; which I am sure, it cannot do, but as it beams through our good *Works*. When a Man leads a pious and good Life, every Hour he lives is virtually an Act of Worship. But if inward Grace is not exerted, and drawn forth into outward Practice, Men have no Inspection into our Hearts, to discern it there. And let this be fixed upon as a standing Principle, that it is not possible for us to honour God *before Men*, but only by those Acts of Worship, that are observable *by Men*. It is
our

our Faith indeed that recognizes *Him for our God*, but it is our Obedience only, that declares Him to be *our Lord*.

Secondly, The other End of Religion in this World, is the good and mutual Advantage of Mankind in the way of *Society*. And herein did the admirable Wisdom and Goodness of God appear, that he was pleased to calculate and contrive such an Instrument to *govern*, as might also *benefit*, the World. God planted Religion amongst Men as a *Tree of Life*; which, though it was to spring *upwards* directly to himself, yet it was to spread its Branches to the Benefit of *all below*.

There is hardly any Necessity, or Convenience of Mankind, but what is in a large Measure serv'd and provided for by this great *Blessing* (as well as *Business*) of the World, *Religion*. And he who is a Christian, is not only a better Man, but also a better Neighbour, a better Subject, and a truer Friend, than he that is not so. For was ever any Thing more for the Good of Mankind, than to forgive Injuries, to love and care for our mortal Adversaries, and instead of our *Enemy*, to hate only our *Revenge*?

Of such a double, yet benign Aspect is Christianity both to God and Man; like Incense, while it ascends to Heaven it perfumes
all

all about it; at the same Time both instrumental to God's Worship, and the Worshipers Refreshment: As it holds up one Hand in Supplication, so it reaches forth the other in Benefaction.

But now, if it be one great End of Religion, thus to contribute to the Support and Benefit of Society, surely it must needs consist in the active Piety of our Lives, not in empty Thoughts and fruitless Persuasions. For what can one Man be the better for what another thinks or believes? When a poor Man begs an Alms of me, can *I believe* my Bread into his Mouth, or my Money into his Hand? believing without doing is a very cheap, and easy, but withal a very worthless Way of being religious.

And thus having given the *Reasons, why the active Part of Religion is the only sure Bottom for us to build upon*, I now proceed to the *second* Thing proposed, namely to shew, *those false and sandy Foundations, which many venture to build upon, and are accordingly deceived by.* Which tho' they are exceedingly various, and, according to the Multiplicity of Mens Tempers, Businesses, and Occasions, almost infinite, and like the Sand mentioned in my Text, not only *infirm*, but

numberless also ; yet according to the best of my poor Judgment and Observation, I shall reduce them to these three Heads. The

First of which is a *naked, unoperative Faith*: ask but some upon what grounds they look to be saved, and they will answer, *because they firmly believe, that through the Merits of Christ their Sins are forgiven them.* But since it is hard for a Man in his right Wits to be confident of a Thing, which he does not at all know ; such as are more cautious will tell you further, *That to desire to believe is to believe, and to desire to repent is to repent.* But as this is absurd and impossible, since no *Act* can be its own *Object* without being not itself ; forasmuch as the *Act* and the *Object* are distinct things ; and consequently a *desire to believe*, can no more be *Belief*, than a *desire to be saved* can be *Salvation* ; so it is further intolerable upon this Account, that it quite dispirits Religion, by placing it in languid, abortive Velleities, and so cuts the Nerves of all Endeavour, by rating Glory at a *bare Desire*, and Eternity at a *Wish*.

But because the Poyson of this opinion does so easily enter, and so strangely intoxicate, I shall presume to give an Antidote against it in this one Observation, namely, that all along

the Scripture, *where* Justification is ascribed to Faith alone, *there* the word *Faith* is still used by a *Metonymy* of the *Antecedent* for the *Consequent*, and does not signify abstractedly a meer Persuasion, but the *Obedience of an holy Life performed in the Strength and Virtue of such a Persuasion*. Not that this justifies *meritoriously* by any inherent Worth or Value in itself, but *instrumentally* as a Condition appointed by God, upon the Performance of which, He freely imputes to us Christ's Righteousness, which is the sole, proper, and formal Cause of our Justification. So that, that Instrumentality, which some, in the Business of Justification, attribute to one *single Act of Credence*, is by this ascribed to the whole aggregate Series of *Gospel Obedience*, as being that which gives us a Title to a perfect Righteousness without us, by which alone we stand justified before God. And this seems with full accord both to Scripture and Reason to state the Business of Justification by an equal Poise both against the arrogant Assertions of *Self-Justiciaries* on the one Hand, and the wild Opinions of the *Antinomians* on the other.

But whether the *Obedience of a pious Life*, performed out of a *Belief*, or *Persuasion of*
the

the Truth of the Gospel, ought to pass for that *Faith* which justifies, or only for the *Effect* or Consequent of it, yet certainly it is such an *Effect* as issues by a Kind of con-natural, constant Efficiency and Result from it. So that how much soever they are distinguishable by their respective Actions from one another, they are absolutely inseparable by a mutual and a necessary Connexion: It belonging no less to the Faith which justifies to be *Operative*, than to justify: Indeed upon an essential Account, more; forasmuch as it is operative *by its Nature*, but justifies only by *Institution*.

Secondly; The second false Ground which some build upon, is a fond *Reliance upon the Goodness of their Heart, and the Honesty of their Intention*. A profitable, and therefore a very prevailing Fallacy; and such an one as the Devil seldom uses, but with Success; it being one of his old and long experimented Fetches, by the Pretences of a *good Heart*, to supplant the Necessity of a *good Life*. But to alledge the Honesty of the Mind against the Charge of an evil Course, is a *Protestation against the Fact*, which does not excuse, but enhance its Guilt. As it would look like a very strange and odd Commendation of a Tree

to apologize for the *Sourness* of its Fruit, by pleading that all its *Goodness* lay *in the Root*.

But in the Discourses of Reason, such is the Weakness, and Shortness of its Reach, that it seldom suggests Arguments *à priori* for any Thing, but by a low and humble Gradation creeps from the Effects up to the Cause, because these first strike and alarm the Senses; and therefore St. *James* speaks as good Philosophy as Divinity when he says, *James ii. 18. Shew me thy Faith by thy Works*. Every Action being the most lively Pourtraiture, and impartial Expression of its efficient Principle, as the *Complexion* is the best Comment upon the *Constitution*: For in natural Productions there is no Hypocrisy.

Only we must observe here, that *good and evil* Actions bear a very different Relation to their respective Principles. As it is between Truth and falshood in Argumentation, so it is between Good and Evil in Matters of Practice. For though from an artificial Contrivance of *false* Principles or *Premises* may emerge a *true* Conclusion, yet from true Premises cannot ensue a false: So, though an evil Heart may frame itself to the doing of an Action in its Kind or Nature good, yet a renewed, sanctified Principle cannot of itself design

design Actions really vicious. The Reason of which is, because the former, in such a Case, acts upon a Principle of Dissimulation; and no Man by dissembling affect to appear worse than he is, but better. But all this while, I speak not of a single Action, but of a Conversation, or Course of acting: For a pious Man may do an evil Action upon Temptation or Surprize, but not by the Tenour of his standing Principles and Resolutions. But when a Man's Sin is his Business and the formed Purpose of his Life; and his Piety shrinks only into *Meaning* and *Intention*; when he tells me *his Heart* is right with God, while his *Hand is in my Pocket*, he upbraids my Reason, and outfaces the common Principles of natural Discourse with an Impudence equal to the Absurdity.

This therefore, I affirm, that he who places his Christianity only in his Heart, and his Religion in his Meaning, has fairly secured himself against a Discovery in case he should have none, but yet, for all that, shall at the last find his Portion with those who indeed have none. And the Truth is, those who are thus intentionally pious, do in a very ill and untoward Sense verify that Philosophical Maxim, that what they so much pretend to

be chief and *First* in their *Intention*, is always *Last* (if at all) in the *Execution*.

Thirdly, The third and last false Ground, that I shall mention, upon which some Men build to their Confusion, is *Party and Singularity*. If an *implicit Faith* be (as some say) the Property of a *Roman Catholick*, then, I am sure, Popery may be found, where the Name of Papist is abhorred. For what account can some give of their Religion, or of *that Assurance of their Salvation* (which they so much boast of) but that they have wholly resigned themselves up to the Guidance and Dictates of those, who have the Front and Boldness to usurp the Title of the *Godly*. To be of such a Party, of such a Name, nay, of such a sneaking Look, is to some the very Spirit, and Characteristick Mark of Christianity.

See what *St. Paul* himself built upon before his Conversion to Christ, *Acts xxvi. 5. I was* (says he) *after the strictest Sect of our Religion a Pharisee*. So that it was the Reputation of the *Sect*, upon which *St. Paul* then embarked his Salvation. Now the Nature of this Fraternity or *Sect* we may learn from the Origination of their Name *Pharisee*; it being derived from *שׁבַּר פְּרָשִׁי* *Parasch, separavit, discrevit,*
whence

whence in *Greek* they were called * ἄφωρισμένοι, *separati*. So that the Words amount to this, That St *Paul* before he was a *Christian*, was a rigid *Separatist*.

But Singularity is not Sincerity, tho' too often and mischievously mistaken for it; and as an House built upon the Sand is likely to be ruined by Storms; so an House built out of the Road is exposed to the Invasion of Robbers, and wants both the Convenience and Assistance of Society: Christ is not therefore called the *Corner Stone in the Spiritual Building*, as if he intended that his Church should consist only of *Corners* or be driven into them. There is a *By-Path* as well as a *Broad-Way* to Destruction. And it both argues the Nature, and portends the Doom of *Chaff*, upon Agitation to separate and divide from the Wheat. But to such as venture their eternal Interest upon such a Bottom I shall only suggest these two Words.

First, That admitting, but not granting, that the Party which they adhere to, may be truly pious; yet the Piety of the Party cannot

* Φαρισαῖοι οἱ ἐρμηνεύμενοι ἄφωρισμένοι, παρὰ τὸ μερίζειν καὶ ἀφορίζειν ἑαυτοὺς ἵ' ἄλλων ἀπάντων, *Suidas*. Again, Φαρισαῖος ἄφωρισμένος μεμερισμένῳ, καθαρός. *Hesych*. So that the *Pharisees* properly were, and might be called the Jewish *Cathari* or *Puritans*.

sanctify its Profelytes. A Church may be properly called Holy, when yet that Holiness does not diffuse itself to each particular Member : the Reason of which is because the whole may receive Denomination from a Quality inherent only in some of its Parts. Company may occasion, but it cannot transfuse Holiness.

No Man's *Righteousness* but Christ's alone can be imputed to another. To rate a Man by the Nature of his Companions, is a Rule frequent indeed, but not infallible. *Judas* was as much a Wretch amongst the Apostles, as amongst the Priests : And therefore it is but a poor Argument for a Man to derive his Saintship from the Virtues of the Society he belongs to, and to conclude himself no *Weed*, only because he grows amongst the *Corn*.

Secondly, Such an Adhesion to a Party carries in it a strong Suspicion and Tang of the rankest of all ill Qualities, *Spiritual Pride*. There are two things natural almost to all Men.

First, A desire of Preheminence in any Perfection, but especially Religious. *Secondly*, A Spirit of Opposition or Contradiction to such as are not of their own Mind or Way. Now both these are eminently gratified by a Man's lifting himself of a Party in Religion.

And

And I doubt not but some are more really proud of the affected Sordidness of a pretended Mortification, than others are of the greatest Affluence and Splendor of Life: And that many who call the Execution of Law and Justice *Persecution*, do yet suffer it with an higher and more pleasing Relish of Pride, than others can inflict it. For it is not true Zeal rising from an hearty Concernment for Religion, but an ill, restless, cross Humour, which is provoked with Smart, and quickned with Opposition. The *Godly Party* is little better than a Contradiction in the Adjunct; for he who is truly godly, is humble and peaceable, and will neither make, nor be of a *Party*, according to the common Sense of that Word. Let such Pretenders therefore suspect the *Sandiness* and *Hollowness* of their Foundation; and know, that such Imitators of *Corah*, *Dathan*, and *Abiram* build upon the same *Ground* upon which they stood, and into which they sunk. And certainly that Man's Condition is very unsafe, who accounts his Sin his Perfection, and so makes the Object of his Repentance, the Ground of his Salvation?

And thus I have discover'd some of those false and deceiving grounds upon which many bottom their eternal State, and by which they

think themselves in the direct Way to Life and Happiness, while God knows they are in the high and broad Road to Perdition.

Pass we now to the Third Thing proposed, which is to shew *whence it is that such ill founded Structures are, upon Tryal, sure to fall.* For the Demonstration of which we must observe, that to the violent Dissolution of any Thing two Things concur, *First*, an Assault or Impression from without. *Secondly*, an inherent Weakness within. One is the active, the other the passive Principle of every Change. For so much as there is of Weakness, there is of Non-Resistance, and so far as any Thing yields or not resists, the contrary Impression enters, and by Degrees weakens, and at length destroys the Subsistence of the Thing opposed.

As for the first of these, *the Force and Opposition from without*: It comes from the ἐπαινετός the true *common Enemy*, the implacable, insatiable Devourer of Souls, the Devil; who will be sure to plant his Engines of Battery against every Spiritual Building which does but look towards Heaven. The Opposition he makes, our Saviour here emphatically describes by the *Winds blowing*, the *Rain descending*, and the *Floods coming*, which is not

an insignificant Rhetorication of the same thing by several Expressions (like some Pulpet Bombast made only to measure an Hour-Glass) but an exact Description of those three Methods, by which this Assault of the Devil prevails and becomes victorious.

First, The first is, that it is *suddain* and *unexpected*. The Devil usually comes upon the Soul as he fell from Heaven, like *Lightning*. And he shews no small Art and Policy by his so doing: For Quickness prevents Preparation, and so enervates Opposition. It is observed of *Cæsar*, that he did *Plurima & maxima bella solâ celeritate conficere*: So that almost in all his Expeditions he seldom came to any place, but his coming was before the Report of it. And we shall find, that the *Roman Eagles* owed most of their great Conquests as much to their *Swiftness* as to their Force. And the same is here the Devil's Method in his Warfare against Souls. Upon which account also the same Character that *Tully* gave the forementioned *Cæsar* in his Epistles to *Atticus*, may much more fitly agree to him, that he is *Monstrum horribile Celeritatis & Vigilantiæ*. He flies to his Prey, he fetches his Blow quick and sure. He can shoot a Temptation in a Glance, and convey the Poyson

Poyson of his Suggestions quicker than the Agitation of Thought, or the Strictures of Fancy. It is the suddain Trip in Wrestling that fetches a Man to the Ground.

Thus St. *Peter*, that Giant in Faith, was shamefully foiled by a suddain though weak Assault. While he sits in 'the High Priest's Hall warming himself and thinking nothing, one confounds him with this quick unexpected Charge, Matth. xxvi. 69. *Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee.* The Surprize of the Onset prevented his deliberating Powers from rallying together those Succours of habitual Grace, which, being alarm'd by a more gradual Approach of the Temptation, would have easily repulsed it. But the Devil will never caution the Soul into a Posture of Defence by presenting the Temptation at a Distance. He bites and shews his Teeth at the same Instant; and so prevents the *Foresight* of the *Eye*, by exceeding it in *Quickness*.

Secondly, His Assaults are *furios* and *impetuous*. Temptations come very often, as the Devil himself is said to do, in a *Storm*. And a Gust of Wind, as it rises on a suddain, so it rushes with Vehemence. And if the Similitude does not yet speak high enough; to the Violence of the Storm, the Text adds the prevailing

vailing Rage of a Flood. And we know the Tyranny of this Element when it once embodies into a Torrent, and runs with the united Force of many Waters; it scorns all Confinement, and tears down the proudest Opposition, as *Virgil* fully describes it:

“ — *Rapidus montano flumine torrens,*
 “ *Sternit agros, sternit sata læta, boùmq;*
labores.
 “ *Præcipitesq; trahit Sylvas—*

With a parallel Encounter does the Devil draw upon the poor Fortifications of *outward Civility, good Desires, imperfect Resolutions,* and the like, which are no more able to abide the Shock of such Batteries, than a *Morning Dew* is able to bear the scorching Fury of the Sun; or than such little Banks as Children use to raise in Sport, are able to stem or stand against the outrageous breaking in of the Sea. Every Temptation has this Property of Water, either *to insinuate,* or *to force its Way.*

Thirdly, The Devil in his Assaults is *restless and importunate.* The *Wind* is here said not only to *blow,* but emphatically to *beat* upon the House. And as in a Tempest the *Blasts* are both *suddain and violent* in their
 Onset

Onset, so they are frequent in their Returns. Importunity is the only Coaction that the Will knows. Where the Devil cannot persuade, he will if he can, even weary into a Consent. It is often charging that wins the Field. The Tempter, if he is repulsed in a Battel, will lengthen his Assault into a Siege. For the Mind may have often a suddain Heat of Valour to repel the one, and yet not Constancy to endure the other. A rejected Proposal shall be reinforced with continual fresh Supplies of more urgent and repeated Persuasions.

See him thrice renewing the Combat with our Saviour; and indeed after he has had the Impudence to begin a Temptation, it is always his Prudence to pursue it. Otherwise, Opposition only attempted serves not for Conquest, but Admonition. His Assaults are here said to come like *the Rain*, and the Rain never falls in one single Drop; and yet if it did, even a *Drop* would *hollow* and dig its Way by Frequency and Assiduity.

It is observed by the learned *Verulam*, what Advantage bold and importunate Men have over others, nay, even so as to prevail upon Men of Wisdom and Resolution, because, as he excellently notes, *The wisest Men have their weak Times*: And then I infer, that he

he who is importunate at all times, must needs catch them at those.

So when the Tempter continues his Importunity and Siege about a Soul, he has all these Advantages over it; as to view its strong Holds, and to spy where they are least fortified. To observe the Intervals and Cessations of Duty. When Devotion ebbs, and the Spiritual Guards draw off: When the Affections revel, and slide into a Posture of Security; and then to renew, and bring on the Assault afresh, and so to force a victorious Entrance for his Temptations.

It is here, as with the *Greeks* before *Troy*; it was not their Armies, nor their *Achilles*, but their *ten Years Siege* that got the Conquest. What a violent Flame cannot presently melt down, a constant, tho' a gentle Heat will at length exhale. It is our known Duty to fight *and resist the Devil*; and we shall find that scarce any Temptation ever encounters the Soul without its *Second*.

So then, you see here the first Cause of this great Overthrow, namely, the *Assault* and *Impression* made *from without* by the Tempter; which in the next Place is rendred effectual by the *Impotence* and *Non-Resistance* of the Soul, that is so opposed; which peculiarly answers

his threefold Opposition with three contrary Qualifications. .

First, As First, That it is frequently *unprepared*. The Soul (God knows) is but seldom upon the Watch ; its Spiritual Armour is seldom buckled on. The Business, the Cares, and the Pleasures of the World, draw it off from its own Defence : Business employs, Care distracts, and Pleasure lulls it asleep. And is this a Posture to receive an Enemy in ? An Enemy cunning, watchful, and malicious ! An Enemy who never sleeps, nor loyers, nor overlooks an Advantage !

Secondly, As it is *unprepared*, so it is also *weak* and *feeble*. *The Spirit* (says our Saviour) *is willing, but the Flesh is weak*. And such is the Condition of Men in this World, that much more of *Flesh* than *Spirit* goes to his Constitution. Nay, is not Grace itself described under the Weakness of *smoking Flax*, or *a bruised Reed* ? Of which how quickly is one extinguished, and how easily is the other broke !

Thirdly, As it is both *unprepared*, and *weak* ; so it is also *inconstant*. Peter *will* die for his Master at one time, and not many Hours after deny, and forswear him. Steadfastness is the Result of Strength, and how
then

then can Constancy dwell with Weakness? The greatest Strength of the Mind is in its Resolutions, and yet how often do they change! Even in the weightiest Concerns Men too frequently *put them on and off* with their *Cloaths*. They deceive, when they are most trusted: suddainly starting, and flying in pieces like a *broken Bow*; and like a Bow again, even when strongest, they can hardly be kept always *bent*. We see what fair and promising Beginnings some made, *Luke viii. 13. They heard the Word, they received it with joy, but having not Root, they believed only for a while, and so in time of Temptation fell away.*

Constancy is the crowning Virtue. *Mat. x. 22. He who endureth to the End shall be saved.* But then Constancy and Perseverance are the Gift of God, and above the Production of meer Nature; it being no small Paradox to imagine that where the Stock itself is slight and infirm, any thing which grows out of it should be strong.

And thus having shewn, the *threefold Impotence* of the Soul answerable to the *threefold Opposition* made against it by the Devil; what can we conclude? But that where *Unpreparedness* is encountred with *unexpected Force*, *Weakness* with *Violence*, *Inconstancy* with *Im-*

portunity, There Destruction must needs be, not the effect of Chance, but Nature, and, by the closest Connexion of Causes, unavoidable.

It now remains that in the last place we shew, wherein the *greatness* of this *Fall* consists. *The House fell and great was the Fall thereof.* In short, it may appear upon these two Accounts.

First, That it is *scandalous*, and diffuses a Contagion to others, and a Blot upon Religion. A falling House is a bad Neighbour. It is the Property of Evil as well as Good to be *communicative*. We still suppose the Building here mentioned in the Text to have had all the Advantages of visible Representation, all the Pomp and Flourish of external Ornament, a stately Superstructure, and a beautiful Appearance; and therefore such an one must needs perish as remarkably as it stood. That which is seen afar off while it *stands*, is heard of much further when it *falls*.

An eminent Professor is the Concern of a whole Profession. As to Nonplus an *Aristotle* would look, not only like a Slur to a particular Philosopher, but like a Baffle to Philosophy itself.

The Devil will let a Man build and practise high, that he may at length fetch him down with the greater Shame ; and so make even a Christian an Argument against Christianity. The subduing of any Soul is a Conquest, but of such an one a Triumph. A signal Professor cannot perish without a Train, and in his very *Destruction* his Example is authentick.

Secondly, The Greatness of the *Fall* here spoken of appears also in this, that such an one is hardly and very rarely recovered. He whose House falls, has not usually either Riches or Heart to build another. It is the Business of a Life once to build.

God indeed can cement the Ruins, and heal the Breaches of an apostate Soul, but usually a ship-wrack'd Faith and a deflour'd Conscience admit of no Repair. Like the present Time, which, when once gone, never returns.

What may be within the Compass of Omnipotence, the Secret of a Decree, or the unlimited Strains of extraordinary Grace, is not here disputed : But as it would be Arrogance for us Men to define the *Power* of Grace ; so is it the height of spiritual Prudence to observe its *Methods*. And upon such Observation we shall find, that the Recovery of such Apostates is not the Custom but the *Prerogative* of Mercy.

A Man is ruined but once. A Miscarriage in the New-Birth is dangerous; and very fatal it generally proves to pass the Critical Seasons of a defeated Conversion.

And thus I have at length dispatched, what I at first propos'd. Now the Words themselves being (as I said before) Christ's Application of his own Sermon, cannot be improved into a better, and consequently need not into another; except what their own natural Consequence does suggest; and that is, what our Saviour himself intimates elsewhere, namely, that he who is about to build, *would first sit down and consider what it is like to cost him*. For Building is chargeable, especially if a Man lays out his Money like a Fool. Would a Man build for Eternity, that is, in other Words, would he be saved? Let him consider with himself, what Charges he is willing to be at, that he may be so. Nothing under an universal, sincere Obedience to all the Precepts of the Gospel, can entitle him to the Benefits of it; and thus *far* and *deep* he must go, if he will lay his Foundation true. It is an hard and a rocky Work, I confess, but the Difficulty of laying it will be abundantly recompenced by the Firmness of it when it is laid.

But

But it is a sad and mortifying Consideration to think upon what false and sinking Grounds, or rather upon what *Whirlpools* and *Quick-sands* many venture to build. Some you shall have amusing their Consciences with a Set of fantastical new-coin'd Phrases, such as *Laying hold on Christ, getting into Christ, and rolling themselves upon Christ*, and the like; by which if they mean any Thing else but obeying the Precepts of Christ, and a rational Hope of Salvation thereupon, (which, it is certain, that generally they do not mean) it is all but a *Jargon* of empty, senseless Metaphors; and though many venture their Souls upon them, despising *good Works* and *strict Living* as meer *Morality*, and perhaps as *Popery*, yet being throughly look'd into and examined, after all their Noise, they are really nothing but *Words* and *Wind*.

Another flatters himself that he has lived in full *Assurance of his Salvation* for ten, or twenty, or perhaps thirty Years; that is, in other Words, the Man has been *ignorant*, and *confident* very long.

Ay, but says another, I am a great *Hearer* and *Lover* of Sermons, (especially of *Lectures*.) And it is this which is the very Delight of my *Righteous Soul*, and the main Business of my Life; and tho' indeed according to the good

old *Puritan Custom*, I use to walk, and talk out the Prayers before the Church-Door, or without *the Choir*, yet I am sure to be always in *at Sermon*. Nay, I have so entirely devoted my whole Time to the *hearing* of Sermons, that I must confess, I have hardly any left to *practise* them. And will not all this set me Right for Heaven? Yes, no doubt, if a Man were to be *pulled up to Heaven by the Ears*; or the Gospel would but reverse its Rule, and declare, *That not the Doers of the Word, but the Hearers only should be justified*.

But then in comes a fourth, and tells us, That he is a Saint of yet an higher Class, as having got far above all their *mean, beggarly, Steeple-House Dispensations*, by an happy Exchange of them for the purer and more refined Ordinances of the Conventicle; where he is sure to meet with *powerful Teaching* indeed, and to hear *Will-Worship and Superstition* run down, and the *Priests of Baal* paid off, and the *Follies and Fopperies* of their *great Idol the Common-Prayer* laid open with a Witness, (not without some *edifying Flings* at the King and Court too, sometimes) by all which his *Faith* is now grown so *strong*, that he can no more doubt of his going to Heaven, than that there is such a Place as Heaven to go to.

So that if the Conscience of such an one should at any Time offer to grumble at him, he would presently stop its Mouth with this, *That he is of such an One's Congregation*; and then *Conscience say thy worst*: Or if the Guilt of some old Perjuries or Extortions should begin to look stern upon him, why then all those old Scores shall be cleared off with a comfortable Persuasion, *That such as he cannot fall from Grace*, tho' it is shrewdly to be feared, that his only way of proving this must be, *That there can be no losing or falling from that which a Man never had*.

But ah! thou poor, blind, *self-deluding, and deluded Soul!* Are these the best Evidences thou hast for Heaven? These the Grounds upon which thou hopest for Salvation? Assure thyself that God will deal with thee upon very different Terms.

For he absolutely enjoins thee to do whatsoever Christ has commanded; and to avoid whatsoever he has forbidden. And Christ has commanded thee to *be poor in Spirit, and pure in Heart*. To subdue thy unruly Appetites, to curb thy Lust, to restrain thy Anger, and to suppress thy Revenge. And if any Thing proves an Hindrance to thee in thy Duty, tho' it be as dear to thee as *thy Right*

Eye, to pluck it out; and as useful to thee as thy Right-Hand, to cut it off and cast it from thee, he will have thee ready to endure Persecutions, Revilings, and all manner of Slanders, not only patiently, but also chearfully for the Truth's Sake. He calls upon thee to love thine Enemies, and to do Good for Evil: To bless those that curse thee, and to pray for those that despitefully use thee. He commands thee in all Things, strictly to do as thou wouldst be done by; and not to cheat, lye, or overreach thy Neighbour; and then call it a fetching over the wicked, the better to enable thee to relieve the godly. He will not allow thee to resist Evil, and much less to resist thy Governour. He commands thee to be charitable without Vain-glory, and devout without Ostentation. In short, he requires thee to be meek and lowly, chaste and temperate, just and merciful; and in a Word, (so far as the poor Measures of Humanity will reach) perfect as thy heavenly Father is perfect.

This is the Sum of those Divine Sayings of our Saviour, which he himself refers to in my Text, and which if a Man *bears and does*, all the Powers of Hell shall never shake him. And nothing but a constant, impartial, universal Practice of these will or can speak Peace to thy

thy Conscience here, and stand between thee and the Wrath of God hereafter. As for all other Pretences, they are nothing but *Death and Damnation*, dressed up in fair Words and false Shews; nothing but Gins, and Snares, and Trapans for Souls; contrived by the Devil, and managed by such as the Devil sets on Work.

But I have done, and the Result of all that I have said, or can say is, that every spiritual Builder would be persuaded to translate his Foundation from the *Sand* to the *Rock*: And not presume upon Christ as his *Saviour*, till by a full Obedience to his Laws, he has owned him for his *Sovereign*. And this is properly to *believe in him*: This is truly to build upon *a Rock*; even that *Rock of Ages*, upon which, every one that wears the Name of Christ, must by an inevitable Dilemma either *build*, or *split*.

Now to God, who is able to build us up in our most holy Faith, to establish us here, and to save us hereafter, be rendred and ascribed, as is most due, all Praise, Might, Majesty, and Dominion, both now for evermore. Amen.

(170)

*A True State and Account of the Plea
of a Tender Conscience :*

I N A

S E R M O N

Preached at

Christ-Church, *Oxon.*

Before the

U N I V E R S I T Y,

In Michaelmas Term, 1672.

I C O R. viii. 12.

*But when ye sin so against the Brethren, and
wound their weak Conscience, ye sin a-
gainst Christ.*

I SHALL by God's Assistance from these
Words debate the Case of a *weak*, or
(as some improperly enough call it) a *tender
Conscience* : And with what Evidence I can
shew

shew both what it is, and what Privileges it may justly claim from this and such other Places of Scripture. One great one we have here set down, and that indeed so great, that it looks more like a Prerogative than a Privilege; namely, That to *wound or sin against it*, is no less a Crime than to *sin against Christ himself*.

Our Apostle in two Places of his Epistles treats professedly of this Argument: To wit, the *xivth of the Rom.* and in this *viiith of the 1 Cor.* For the better understanding of his Design and Meaning in both which Places, it will be requisite to give some brief Account of the Subject Matter, and Occasion of them. In the *xivth Chapter of the Rom.* he speaks of such as had been converted from Judaism to Christianity; some of which being but new Converts, were not yet so perfectly and entirely Christians, but that they still observed the Ordinances of the Mosaical Law, as supposing it still in Force. Others, on the contrary, being more confirmed and grown up in the Knowledge of their Christian Liberty, and thereby being fully satisfied, that the ceremonial Part of the Mosaick Law was abolish'd and took away, *observed* not that Difference of *Days* and *Meats* which was prescribed in that Law, but

but look'd upon one Day as another, and indifferently eat any kind of Meats, being persuaded in their Conscience, that Christ had took away all such Distinction, and made the Use of all lawful. Nevertheless, the former Sort of Converts not understanding, that it was the Design of Christianity to abrogate any Thing once established by *Moses*, had their Consciences still in Bondage to a Religious Observation of whatsoever had been enjoyned in his Law. And thereupon, though they owned Christ, yet if any Meat prohibited by *Moses* was set before them, they held themselves bound rather to fast, or to eat only Herbs, than by eating such Meat, to break the Law (as they thought) and thereby to defile themselves. This was their Case.

But in this *viiith Chapter of 1 Cor.* St. *Paul* speaks of *Persons* newly converted from *Idolatry*, and that touching the Lawfulness or Unlawfulness of eating Meats offered to Idols. Concerning which Offerings we must know, that besides what was eaten of them in the Idol's Temple, (which eating was an Act of Religious Worship and Communion with the Idol, as our eating the Bread in the Sacrament is a Communion with Christ;) besides this say, there was a certain Portion of those Sa-
crifices

crifices which fell to the Priests, and which they having no use of, sold to those who afterwards exposed it to Sale promiscuously amongst other Meat upon the Shambles ; from whence it was accordingly bought up and spent in private Families, without any Distinction whether it had, or had not been offered to Idols. Now, as for the former way of eating Meats thus offered, namely, in the Idol's Temple, this the Apostle utterly disallows as absolutely unlawful ; but the latter only under some Circumstances: For he allows that it might be lawfully bought amongst other Meat in the Market, and being so bought, might be eaten in any private House without the least Sin: Only with this Caution, that whereas there were some, who well understood, that Meat could have no defiling Quality imprinted upon it by its Consecration to an Idol ; and others, on the contrary, having not so much Knowledge, supposed that the Consecration of it to the Idol, left upon it such a polluting Quality and near Relation to the Idol, as defiled the Eater: The former sort might freely and innocently eat such Meats in private Families, provided it was not before those of the latter sort ; who through Weakness having an Opinion of the Unlawfulness of such Meats, might

nevertheless be induced to use the same Liberty, though their Consciences, in the mean time, having quite another Judgment in this Matter, esteemed the eating them little better than Idolatry. Now the Argument by which the Apostle abridges the Liberty of the former sort of Converts in Condescension to those of the latter sort, proceeds upon the Strength of this Assertion; That the Lawfulness of Mens Actions depends not solely either upon the Lawfulness of their Subject Matter, nor yet upon the Conscience of the Doers of them considered in itself, but as considered with reference to the Consciences of others; to whom by the Law of Charity they stand bound so to behave themselves, as by none of their Actions to give them Occasion of Sin. And this was the Case of the Persons here treated of by the Apostle in this Chapter. Which historical Account of the Subject Matter of the Words being thus premised, I shall cast the Prosecution of them under these *three Heads*.

1. I shall shew you what a *weak Conscience is*.

2. What it is to *wound or sin against it*.

3. I shall lay down some Conclusions or Assertions, naturally resulting from the foregoing Particulars.

And

And First for the first of these, *what a weak Conscience is*. I said at first that such a Conscience was improperly called *tender*: which in the Sense it commonly bears, is an Expression of our own framing, and no where to be met with in the Scriptures; *Tenderness* applied to the Conscience, properly imports quickness and exactness of Sense, which is the Perfection of this Faculty, whose Duty it is to be a Spiritual Watch to give us warning of whatsoever concerns us. It is indeed the Eye of the Soul; and though the Eye is naturally the most tender and delicate part of the Body, yet it is not therefore called *weak*, so long as its Sight is *quick* and strong. Conscience, the more sensible it is to *accuse or excuse* (which is its Office) and to spy out every little thing which may annoy or defile the Soul, so much the more *tender* it is to be accounted, but not therefore so much the more *weak*: which sufficiently shews, *Weakness* and *Tenderness of Conscience*, to be in Strictness of Speech two different things. And the same appears yet further from those Contraries, to which they stand respectively opposed. A *tender Conscience* being opposed to a *hard or seared Conscience*: Such an one as either wholly or in a great measure has lost the di-

stinguishing Sense of Good and Evil, Honest and Dishonest. But a *weak Conscience* is opposed to a *strong*: Which very *Strength* (we shew) consisted in the *Tenderness* or Quickness of its discerning or perceptive Power; whereupon we read of *strong Men and Babes* in Christ; which Denominations take their Rise from the *Strength* or *Weakness* of the Conscience: For such as the Conscience is, such must be the Christian.

And here, let none think my insisting upon the Distinction of these Terms either nice or needless: For it is no small Artifice of Fraud to prepossess the Minds of Men, by representing a bad thing under a good Name, and calling *Weakness* of Conscience which is a Defect, by the Name of *Tenderness* which is a Perfection. Words govern the Generality of the World, who seldom go so deep as to look into Things: And Impostors well know how likely their *Cause* is to succeed, if their *Terms* can but once be admitted.

As for the Place now before us, it is evident that the *Weakness of Conscience* here spoken of is opposed to *Faith*: So that in *Rom. xiv.* such an one is said to be *weak in the Faith*, and *v. 2.* one [*believeth*] *that he may eat all things*; another who is (*weak*)
eateth

eateth Herbs. Where observe that He *who believeth*, is opposed to him who is *weak*. Now by *Faith* here is not meant that Act or Quality by which a Man is justified, but signifies the same with Knowledge. As 1 Cor. viii. 10. *If any Man see thee who hast [Knowledge] sit at Meat in the Idol's Temple, shall not the Conscience of him who is weak be emboldened do so too?* And in Ver. 7. *Howbeit there is not in every Man this [Knowledge] for some with Conscience of the Idol eat it as a Thing offered to an Idol, and their Conscience being [weak] is defiled.* So that, as in that Chapter to the Romans, *Weakness of Conscience* is opposed to *Faith*: Here, in this Chapter to the Corinthians, the same *Weakness* is opposed to *Knowledge*. Which from the Identity of the Case treated of in both Places, together with other Circumstances, evidently demonstrate *Faith* and *Knowledge* to be here taken for the same Thing. In short therefore the *Faith* here spoken of is a clear Knowledge of what is *unlawful*, and what only *indifferent*, together with a firm Persuasion of the lawful Use of such Indifferent Things, all Circumstances being duly observed in the using of them. And therefore on the other side, the weak Conscience is such an one, as

judges otherwise of the Nature of Things, than indeed it is, supposing that to be unlawful in itself, which really is not so, and thereupon abstaining from the Use of it, as of a Thing unlawful.

From whence it follows, That *Weakness of Conscience* implies in it these Three Things.

First, An Ignorance of the *Lawfulness* of some certain Thing or Action.

Secondly, A Suspicion ensuing thereupon of its *Unlawfulness*.

Thirdly, A Religious Fear to use or practise it, grounded upon that Ignorance or Suspicion.

And First, for the first of these Ingredients, *Ignorance*. Which is indeed the chief and principal of all the Three, as being the Original of the other Two. Concerning this we must (as the Ground-work of all) observe, that it ought by all means to be such an Ignorance, as may in Propriety of Speech and Sense bear the Denomination of *Weakness*: Which it is certain that every Sort of Ignorance neither does nor can. For since Weakness is properly the Privation or Absence of Power, That Ignorance only can receive this Name, which is not founded upon any vicious *Action* or *Omission* of the Will. I say *Action* or *Omission*: For a Man may either positively design

sign and will the Ignorance of a Thing, by studiously avoiding all means to inform himself of it; much like the shutting of one's Eyes against the Light, or refusing to come to Church. Or it may be founded upon some Omission; as when the Will, though it does not designedly avoid and put from it the means of Knowledge, yet neglects to look after them. Now the Ignorance which is occasioned either of these Ways is *willing*, and consequently *sinful*: Though usually for Distinction Sake the former is with more Emphasis termed not only *willing* but *willful*; as being the direct Object of an Act of *Volition*, and upon that Account stamp'd with an higher Aggravation.

That Ignorance therefore that renders and denominates the Conscience *weak*, must be such an one as is not *willing*; which is evident upon a double Account.

First, Because it must be such an one, as renders it in some Degree *excusable*; but so far as any Defect is resolved into the *Will*, it is in that Degree *inexcusable*.

Secondly, Because it must be such an Ignorance as renders the Person having it, the Object of *Pity and Compassion*. But no Man pities another for any Evil lying upon him, which he *would not* help, but which he *could*

not. One is his Burden, the other his Choice ; virtually at least, since he might have chosen its Prevention. So that it must be such an Ignorance, as is not (all Circumstances considered) under the present Power of a Man's Will to remedy. And consequently it must be resolved into one of these Two Causes.

First, The natural Weakness of the understanding Faculty.

Secondly, The Want of Opportunities or Means of Knowledge.

Either of which makes Ignorance necessary ; as it is impossible for him to see who *wants* Eyes, and equally impossible for him who *wants* Light ; the former being the *Organ*, the other the *Means* of Seeing. But as touching the natural Weakness or Disability of the understanding Faculty, we must observe, that this may be either *total*, as in Case of Idiocy, Phrensy, or the like ; which wholly deprives a Man of the Use of his Reason : But Persons in this Condition fall not under the present Consideration. Or, *Secondly, this Disability of the Understanding* may be only in Part, and as to a certain degree of its Exercise. From whence it is, that one Man apprehends the same Thing under the same Advantages of Proposal much more slowly and difficulty than another.

another. Which Defect being in no Man's Power to prevent, but coming with him into the World ; all that Ignorance, which is inevitably caused by it, neither can, nor ever shall be charged upon the Will. But then withal, as this Defect does not wholly deprive a Man of the Power of Knowing, but only of the Readiness, Easiness, and Quickness of it ; (upon which account Knowledge becomes more difficult to him in the Acquisition) ; So this Weakness, Dulness, or Slowness of a Man's, intellectual Powers, can never totally excuse him for being ignorant of what it was his Duty to know ; since it was in the Power of his Will by Labour and Industry to have supplied and (as it were) to have pieced up these Failures in his Apprehension ; and so at length, to have acquired the Knowledge of that by Study and Pains, which he could not by the Slowness of his Understanding take in at first.

But then, this must be also confessed, that by reason of this diversity in the Quickness or Slowness of Men's Understandings ; one Man may be sooner inexcusable for his Ignorance of the same thing than another. For God will allow a Man of slower Parts to be ignorant of a thing longer than a Person endued with more quick and pregnant Sense. He expects

from Men only according to the Proportions of his giving to them ; still making an Equality and Commensuration between a Man's Obligations and his Powers. And thus much for the first and grand Ingredient of Weakness of Conscience which is *Ignorance*.

Secondly, The second is a *Suspicion* of the Unlawfulness of any Thing or Action : And this is manifestly something more than a bare Ignorance of its Lawfulness. Though indeed such an Ignorance is of itself enough to make the Forbearance of any Thing or Action necessary : Forasmuch as nothing ought to be done but *in Faith* ; that is, in a *full Persuasion* of the Lawfulness of what we do. Which he can be no more said to do, who is ignorant of the Lawfulness of what he goes about, than he who suspects it to be unlawful. Howbeit this Suspicion adds to the Guilt of the Action, in case it be done during its continuance : Because all Suspicion is grounded upon some Arguments, which leave not the Opinion of the Lawfulness or Unlawfulness of a Thing equal, as in case of meer Ignorance, but rather encline us to a Belief that it is unlawful. For it is one thing not to know whether a Thing be lawful, another to doubt shrewdly to suspect that it is not so.

so. Now this indeed is the usual Concomitant of *Weakness of Conscience*, as being the natural product of *Ignorance*, which seldom stops in itself: Men in the dark being generally fearful and apt to suspect the worst. But yet this Suspicion is not essentially requisite to make a *Conscience weak*; tho' where it is so, it makes that Weakness greater and more troublesome. For *Ignorance* is properly that in which this *Weakness* consists: Ignorance makes the Sore, Suspicion inflames it.

Thirdly, The Third and Last Thing that goes to the making up of this Weakness of Conscience, is a *Religious Abstinence* from the use of that Thing of the Lawfulness whereof it is thus ignorant or suspicious. It brings a Man to that Condition in the iid. of *Coloss.* and the 21st v. of *Touch not, Taste not, Handle not*. It lays a Tie and a Restraint upon his Practice, and enslaves him to the Prejudice of a mistaking Conscience, under no less a Penalty than that of the Divine Wrath and Eternal Damnation; Bonds not to be shook off, and Fences not to be broke through by any one who values the Eternal Welfare of his Soul.

Now from these three things put together, I conceive, we may collect this full Description of a weak Conscience; namely, that it

is such an one, as obliges a Man to forbear any Thing or Action, from a Suspicion that it is unlawful, or at least an Ignorance that it is lawful; which Suspicion or Ignorance was not caused or occasioned by his own Will, but either by the natural Weakness of his Understanding, or the want of such means of Knowledge, as were absolutely necessary to inform him.

This Description ought well to be observed and remembered in the several Parts of it; as being that which must give Light into all the following Particulars.

And thus much for the first thing proposed, which was to shew, *what this weak Conscience is.* I proceed now to the

Second, Which is to shew, *what it is to wound or sin against it.* It implies I conceive these two Things.

First, To grieve, afflict, or discompose it; or, in a Word, to rob it of its Peace. For there is that Concernment for God's Honour dwelling in every truly pious Heart, which makes it troubled at the Sight of any Action by which it supposes God to be dishonoured. *Rivers of Tears* (says David) *run down my Eyes, because Men keep not thy Statutes; and am I not grieved with those who rise up against Thee?*

Thee? Every Sin directly strikes at God, but collaterally the Scandal of it reaches all about us. And as Piety commands us not to offend God, so Charity enjoins us not to grieve our Neighbour.

Secondly, The other Thing implied in the wounding of a weak Conscience, is to encourage or embolden it to act something against its present Judgment or Persuasion: which is in other terms, *to offend, or cast a Stumbling-block before it*. That is, to do something, which may administer to it an occasion of falling, or bringing itself under the guilt of Sin. So that as the former was a Breach upon the *Peace*, this is properly a Wound upon the *Purity* of the Conscience.

Now the Conscience may be induced to Act counter to its present Persuasion two ways.

1st, By Example. 2^d, By Command.

First, And first for Example; which is the Case here expressly mentioned, and principally intended. According to that of the Apostle in the 10th v. of this 8th of 1 Cor. where he says, *that the Conscience of him who is weak is embolden'd to eat things offer'd to Idols, by seeing him who has Knowledge sit at Meat in the Idol's Temple*: So that it is
the

the seeing of another do so. which makes the weak Person conclude that he may do so too. Now the Reason of that persuasive Force which is in Example, is from a kind of implicit Faith in the Goodness and Lawfulness of another's Actings grounded upon a supposal of his Piety and Judgment, which in the weak Conscience of one, who beholds him, naturally frames such a kind of Ratiocination as this. “ I, for my Part, by the
 “ best of my Understanding, can be no way
 “ satisfied of the Lawfulness of my doing
 “ such an Action, nevertheless such an one,
 “ whom I esteem a Person truly pious and
 “ more judicious than myself, makes no
 “ scruple of doing it at all, which surely he
 “ would, if it were indeed unlawful: And
 “ therefore if it be lawful for him to do thus
 “ and thus, why may it not be so likewise for
 “ me, albeit my own Reason, I confess, would
 “ persuade me otherwise ?

So that here is the Force of the Example to *persuade*, and thereby in this Case to *wound*: in that it induces a Man to act by an *implicit Faith*, in the private Judgment of another-against the express Dictates and *Persuasions* of his own. A thing directly against the Law of God and Nature, which has appointed

every Man's Reason or Conscience to be the immediate Guide or Governor of his Actions.

Secondly, The second way by which the Conscience may be induced to act contrary to its present Persuasion, is by *Command*; as when a Person in Power enjoins the doing something, of the Lawfulness of which a Man is not persuaded: But concerning this, these two things are to be observed.

First, That it is not so clear that a meer Command can *wound the Conscience* this way; that is, by emboldening it to act against its present Persuasion: for so to embolden it, is to make it *willing to act* in this manner; but a Command as such, makes not a Man willing to do the Thing commanded, but lays only an Obligation upon the Action that is to be done. Nevertheless since a Command seldom comes proposed naked in itself, but with the Conjunction of Reward upon Performance of the thing commanded, or of Penalties upon the Omission; one whereof works upon a Man's *Hopes*, the other upon his *Fears*; by both of which Ways the Will of Man is apt to be prevailed upon; therefore in this sense a Command enjoining a Man to do something against his Judgment, may be said to *wound* his Conscience: not as a bare *Command*

mand (for so it has nothing to allure or gain the Will, and it is certain that it cannot force it) but as a Command attended with those Things which are apt to entice and gain upon it. Add to this also, that a Command coming from a Person *noted* for his Piety and Knowledge has the Force of an Example: Forasmuch as the Reputation of the *Person* derives the same Credit upon his *Law*.

Secondly, The other Thing here to be observed, is that a Command may be considered two ways.

First, As descending from one *private* Person upon another, as from a Father upon^a Son, from a Master upon his Servant, from a Guardian upon his Pupil, or the like. And I question not but the principal Design of the Apostle in this *Chapter* extends not beyond *private Persons*; but directly proposes rules only for the charitable and inoffensive Deportment of one *private Person* towards another. Nevertheless, since by manifest Analogy of Reason, the Case of Magistrates or publick Persons may here come into Consideration; Therefore in the,

Second Place, a Command may be considered as descending from a *Magistrate* or *Publick Person* upon Persons under his Jurisdiction,
And

And so I affirm that the Supreme Magistrate in the making of Laws, or giving out Commands, stands not under any Obligation from his Office to frame those Laws to the Good or Advantage of any particular Persons, but only of the Community or Majority of the People, which are properly the Trust committed to him. So that if his Reason or Conscience, upon the best Information he can get, tells him that the making of such or such a Law tends to the Good of these, and that so apparently that without it they would be unavoidably hurt in Matters of the greatest Moment: If this Law now becomes an Occasion of Sin to some particular Persons, its being so is wholly accidental and extrinsick to the Design of the Law, and consequently concerns not the Civil Magistrate, nor makes him chargeable with those Sins in the least. For surely where the *Publick Good* of all or most of the People, comes into Competition with the *Private Good* of some Particulars, so that both cannot possibly be served by the same Means, there Charity, as well as bare Reason, will teach, that the *Private* must stoop to the *Publick*, rather than the Publick be made a Sacrifice to the Private. In God's Government of the World it is the Publick Concern

of Mankind, that there should be Summer and Winter in their respective Seasons, and yet there are Millions of sick and weak Persons to whose Distempers the Approach of either of those Seasons will prove certainly mortal. Is it now think we rational that God should suspend a Summer or a Winter only to comply with the Distemper of those crazy, *bodily-weak Brethren*, and thereby to incommode all the World besides?

The Case is much alike here, however this indeed must be confessed, That if the Magistrate or Supreme Power, should make a Law which he knew would be a direct Occasion of Sin to the Generality or Majority of his People, the making of such a Law would be in him a Sin and a Breach of his Trust: But still I affirm that his Office obliges him only to provide for the Good of the main Body of his People; and if it so falls out, that Particulars come to have an Interest distinct from, or opposite to that, he is not, during such its Opposition, at all bound to regard or provide for it: Nor to answer for the Inconveniences which may attend such Persons either in their *Civil* or *Spiritual* Concerns.

And thus much concerning the second Thing proposed, which was to shew *what it is*

to wound or sin against a weak Conscience, namely, that it is either to grieve it, or to embolden it to Sin. And if it be now objected against this, That the Text calls a *sinning against a weak Conscience, a sinning against Christ*, to whom we can no ways properly be said to administer any Occasion, or Inducement to Sin; I answer, That this Expression of [*sinning against*] being applied to Christ, imports only a grieving or disobeying him: Though, as it is applied to the *weak Conscience*, it signifies the other Thing too. It being not unusual in Scripture for the same Word to be repeated in the very same Sentence under a diverse Signification. Having thus finished the Two first Things, I come now to the

Third and Last, which is set down those Conclusions, which, by way of Consequence and Deduction, naturally result from the foregoing Particulars. Which Conclusions are these.

I.

That no Man having been brought up, or for any length of Time continued in the Communion of a Church, teaching and professing the true Religion; if he have but also the common Use of his Reason, can justly plead

Weakness

Weakness of Conscience in the Sense in which it was here used by the Apostle.

2.

That as such *Weakness of Conscience* can upon no sufficient Ground be actually pleaded, so upon much less can it be continued in.

3.

That supposing it might be both pleaded and continued in, yet the Plea of it ought by no Means to be admitted by the Civil Magistrate in Prejudice of any Laws either actually made or to be made by him, for the general Good of his People. Of each of which in their Order.

First. And First, for the first of these, *That no Man, &c.* This Conclusion is of so much Force and Use rightly applied, that it is a Wonder it has not been more insisted upon, against those who disturb the Church with this Plea, forasmuch as it would wholly cashier and pluck it up by the very Roots. And Men mistake the Method of disputing with these Pretenders to weak Consciences now a-days; not considering that the very Supposition that they either have or can have a *weak Conscience* ought by no Means to be granted them; nor are we to debate with them, how far and to what Degree this
their

their Weakness ought to be yielded to, but absolutely to deny, that amongst us, and under our Circumstances there is any such thing.

St. *Paul* indeed speaks of such a Conscience in those first times of Preaching the Gospel, and accordingly urges a compliance with it, but where the Cases are wholly different, there the Privileges applicable to both cannot be the same. In both these places in which this Apostle treats of this matter, I shew that the Persons to whom he addresses Himself were but *new Converts*. Some of which were just converted and come off from Judaism, whose Reverence to the Law of *Moses* had been sucked in by them with their very Milk, and been still kept up in the Minds of all that People, to that strange height almost of Adoration, that it is no wonder if their Opinion of the continuance of that Law even after Christ's Death, and their Ignorance of its Abrogation, were for a time invincible. And for the other sort of *new Converts*, they were such as had been converted from *Heathenism* and *Idolatry*, and consequently looked upon every thing in use amongst those Heathens with a Suspicion and a Jealousy so strong, that considering the Weakness of Human Nature,

it was impossible presently to remove it; and therefore they were in Charity for some time to be complied with. For as the prejudices and Prepossessions of Education are exceeding hardly removed and broke, so being once broke, the Aversions of the Mind from them, running into the other extreme, are altogether as impetuous and as hardly governable by impartial Reason; whereupon shadows are oftentimes mistook for Substances, whilst Men through immoderate fearfulness first create to themselves *Appearances of Evil*, and then *fly from them*.

But what is all this to the Case of those now a-days amongst us? who from their Cradle have, or might have had the Principles of true Religion instilled into them; who have still grown up in a Church which protests against *Idolatry* and *Superstition*; and enjoins nothing that has any just Appearance of such things upon it, but offers to vindicate every thing practised and enjoyed by it from any such Imputation: These Men surely can have no Reason to entertain those Jealousies and Prejudices which possessed Men, who had been bred up all their days in *Judaism* or *Idolatry*, and were but newly converted from it. Especially if we add this also, that the
 Goodness

Goodness of God makes nothing our Duty either to believe or practise, but what lies plain and obvious to any common Apprehension, which will not be wanting to itself. Which Things since the Church inculcates to all within it, teaching them to know by all the ordinary Means of Knowledge whatsoever it is their Duty to know; it is evident, that no Man amongst us can justifiably plead *Weakness of Conscience* in that Sense, in which their Consciences were *weak*, whom St. *Paul* deals with either in that Epistle of his to the *Romans*, or in this to the *Corinthians*. For can any Man living in the Church alledge any tolerable Cause why he should be ignorant of his Catechism, a Thing so short and plain, and yet so full as to all Things necessary to be believ'd or practis'd by a Christian, that common Sense, and common Industry may make any one a Master of it?

The Sum of all therefore is this, That he only can plead *Weakness of Conscience* upon Scripture Grounds, who is *excusably* ignorant of some Point of Duty or Privilege. He only is *excusably* ignorant, whose Ignorance is not the Effect of his Will. That Ignorance only is not so, which is caused either by Want of Ability, of Understanding, or of Opportu-

nities and Means of Knowledge. But he who has the common Use of Reason has *sufficient Ability*, and he who lives in a Church professing the true Religion, has *sufficient Opportunity* and Means of knowing, whatsoever concerns him either to know or do.

From a joint Connexion and unavoidable Coherence of which Propositions one with another, it clearly appears, that is it not *Weakness* but *Want* of Conscience, which is the true Distemper of those Persons who at this Day disturb the Church.

Secondly, The second Assertion or Conclusion was this. *That as such Weakness of Conscience can upon no sufficient Ground be actually pleaded, so upon much less can it be continued in.* This must needs be confessed by all, that a *weak Conscience* in the Apostle's Sense is an Imperfection, and consequently ought by all means to be removed or laid down. For as certainly as Growth and Proficiency in Knowledge under the means of Grace is a Duty; so certainly is it a Duty not to persist in this *Weakness of Conscience*, which has its Foundation only in the Defect of such Knowledge. So that St. *Paul* himself, who is here willing, that for the present it should be complied with, elsewhere upbraids and reprehends

Men

Men sharply for continuing under it. As in the 1st of *Cor.* the 3^d *Chap.* and the 1, 2, and 3^d *Verses.* he calls such *Babes*, and such as were to be fed with *Milk*, and not with *Meat*. And to shew yet further the Imperfection of this Estate, he says, that upon this Account he could not treat them as *spiritual Persons*, but as *carnal*. The same Repréhension he repeats in *Heb.* v. 12. Where he again upbraids them with his Appellation of *Babes*, telling them, that *whereas for the Time they ought to have been Teachers of others, they continued in their spiritual Childhood so long, that they had need, that one taught them again which were the first Principles of the Oracles of God.* And to shew that these were such *weak Consciences* as we are here discoursing of, in the 14th *Vers*e he opposes them to such as were of full Age, and that by Reason of Use, had their Senses exercised to discern both *Good and Evil*. That want of which Discernment is properly that thing wherein this *Weakness of Conscience* does consist. Whereupon the Apostle in the next Chapter calls upon *such to go on to Perfection*; which surely implies, that this their present Condition was not the Perfection which they were to rest in.

And it were worth the while, in our Contest with the Pretenders to *weak* or *tender Consciences* amongst us, to enquire of them, how long they think it fit for them to continue *weak*? And whether they look upon their *Weakness* and *Ignorance* as their *Freehold*, and as that which they resolve to keep for term of Life, and to live and die *Babes* in the Knowledge of the Religion they profess to grow up into *Childhood*, and at length go out of the World *Infants* and *Weaklings* of *Threescore or Fourscore Years Old*?

This certainly they must intend; for so far are they from looking upon that *Weakness* or *Tenderness* of *Conscience* which they plead, as an Imperfection, and consequently to be outgrown or removed by them, that they own it as a Badge of a more *refined* and *advanced Piety*, and of such a Growth and Attainment in the Ways of God, that they look down upon all others as Christians of a lower Form, as *moral Men*, and ignorant of the Mystery of the Gospel: Words which I have often heard from these Impostors, and which infallibly shew, that the Persons whom St. *Paul* dealt with, and those whom we contend with, are not the same Kind of Men; forasmuch as they own not the same Duty. But that (it seems)

seems) which was the Infancy and Defect of those Persons, must pass for the Perfection, and really is the Design of these. And whereas St. *Paul* said to the former, *that if they doubted they were damned if they eat*, these (for ought appears) account it *Damnation not to doubt*; where *doubting of their Duty* may prove a *servicing of their Interest*.

I proceed now to the third and last Conclusion. Which is this: “ That supposing this
 “ Weakness of Conscience might be both
 “ pleaded and continued, yet the Plea of it
 “ ought by no means to be admitted by the
 “ Civil Magistrate in prejudice to any Laws,
 “ either actually made or to be made by
 “ him for the general *Good of his People*. This was sufficiently manifest in what I laid down before: To wit, that the Magistrate is no ways obliged to frame his Laws to the Good of any particular Persons, where it stands separate from the Good of the Community or Majority of the People. Which Consideration alone, though it be sufficient to discharge the Magistrate from any Obligation to admit of such Pleas, yet there are other and more forcible Reasons why they are by no means to be admitted. I shall assign two in general.

First, The first taken from the ill and fatal Consequences which inevitably ensue upon their Admission.

Secondly, The other taken from the Qualification and Temper of the Persons who make these Pleas.

As for the ill Consequences springing from the Admission of them, (though according to the fertile Nature of every absurd Principle they are indeed innumerable) yet I shall insist only upon these three.

First, The first is, That there can be no Bounds or Limits put to this Plea, nor any possibility of defining the just number of Particulars to which it may extend. For it being founded in Ignorance and Error (as has been shown) it is evident that it may reach to all those things of which Men may be ignorant, and about which they may err: So that there is no Duty, but Men may doubt and scruple the doing of it, pretending that their *Consciences* are not satisfied that it is a *Duty* or ought *to be done*. Nor is there any Action almost so wicked and unjust, but they may pretend, that their Consciences either prompt them to it as necessary, or allow them in it as lawful. As there was one in the late blessed Times of Rebellion and Reformation, who
murdered

murdered his own Mother for kneeling at the Sacrament, alledging that it was Idolatry, and that his Conscience told him it was his Duty to destroy Idolaters. And let any Man living (if he can) state exactly how far Conscience will doubt and be unsatisfied; and give me any Reason, I say, any solid Reason, why if it may plead Dissatisfaction in this or that thing, it may not upon the same Principle plead it in any other thing whatsoever. And so, if the Obligation of our Laws must then only begin, when this Plea shall *end*, I fear, we shall never see either the *End* of one, or the *Beginning* of the other.

Secondly, The second ill Consequence is this; that as there can be no bounding of this Plea in respect of the Particulars about which it may be made; so when it is made there can be no possible Evidence of the Sincerity of it. For all the Evidence producible must be the Word of him who makes this Plea; forasmuch as he only can be judge of his own Thoughts and Conscience, and tell whether they be really under such a Persuasion and Dissatisfaction or no. But where Men may pretend *Conscience* in the Behalf of *Interest*, I see no reason why their Word should be taken in behalf of *their Conscience*. And yet, if we

hold to the Principle, upon which this Plea relies, no other Proof of it can be had. Which if it be admitted, I suppose there needs no other Argument to demonstrate, that this and the former Consequence together are of that absurd Nature, and malign Influence, that they must forthwith open the Flood-gates to all Confusion, and like a mighty Torrent bear down before them all Law, Right, Justice, and whatsoever else the Societies of Mankind are settled by and supported with. But to proceed to yet a further and more destructive Consequence. In the

Third Place, The Admission of this Plea absolutely binds the Hands of the Magistrate, and *subjects* him to the Conscience of those whose Duty it is to *be subject* to him. For let the Civil Power make what Laws it will, if Conscience shall come and put in its Exception against them, it must be heard, and exempt the Person who makes the Exception, from the binding Power of those Laws. For since Conscience commands in the Name of God, the Issue of the Question must be, whether *God*, or the *Magistrate* is to be obeyed, and then the Decision is like to be very easy. This Consequence is so direct, and withal so strong, that there is no Bar against it. So that

whereas heretofore the *Magistrate* passed for God's Vicegerent here on Earth, the *weak Conscience* is now resolved to keep that Office for itself, and to prefer the Magistrate to the Dignity of being its *under Officer* : For the Magistrate must make oniy such Laws, as such Consciences will have made, and such Laws only must be obeyed, as these Consciences shall judge fit to be obeyed. So that upon these Terms it is not the King, but the tender Conscience that has got the *Negative Voice*, upon the making of all our Laws, and which is more, upon the observing them too, when they are made.

I dare affirm that it is as impossible for any Government or Politick Body without a standing Force, to subsist or support it self in the Allowance of this Principle, as it is for the Natural Body to live and thrive with a Dagger sticking in its Vitals. Nor can any thing be fuller of Contradiction and ridiculous Paradox, than to think to reconcile the Sovereignty of the Magistrate, and the Safety of Government, with the sturdy Pleas of *dissenting Consciences*. It being all one, as if the *Scepter* should be put into the *Subject's* Hand, in order to his being governed by it.

I could add yet further, that, considering Things and Persons barely in themselves, it is ten to one but God rather speaks in the Conscience of a lawful Christian Magistrate making a Law, than in the Conscience of any private Persons whatsoever dissenting from it.

And thus much for the first general Reason against admitting the Pleas of *weak* or (as some falsely call them) *tender Consciences*: the

Second general Reason shall be taken from those Qualities which usually accompany the said Pleas; of which there are two,

First, Partiality. *Secondly*, Hypocrisy.

First, And first for Partiality. Few make this Plea themselves, who being once got into Power will endure it in others. Consult History for the Practices of such in *Germany*, and your own Memories for the Practices of the late Saints in *England*. In their general comprehensive Toleration, you know, *Pre-lacy* stood always joined with *Popery*, and both were excepted together. Nor was there any Toleration allowed for the Liturgy, and established Worship of the Church of *England*, though the Users of it pleaded Conscience never so much for its use; and the known Laws of God and Man, for the Rule of that their Conscience.

But

But those Zealots were above that legal Ordinance of *doing as they would be done by*; Nor were their Consciences any longer *spiritually* weak, when their Interest was once grown *temporally* strong. And then, notwithstanding all their Pleas of *Tenderness* and Out-cries against *Persecution*, whoever came under them and closed not with them, found them to be Men whose *Bowels* were Brasses, and whose *Hearts* were as hard as their *Foreheads*.

Secondly, The other Qualification which generally goes along with this Plea, and so renders it not fit to be admitted, is Hypocrisie. Divines generally agree upon this as a certain Evidence of the Sincerity of the Heart, when it has an equal *Respect unto all God's Commands*, and makes Duty as Duty one of the principal Reasons of its Obedience; the Consequence of which is, that its Obedience must needs be universal. Now upon the same Ground, if Conscience be really, even in their own Sense, *tender*, and doubts of the Lawfulness of such or such a Practice, because it carries in it some Appearance and Semblance of Evil, though yet it dare not positively affirm that it is so; surely it must, and will be equally afraid of every other
Practice

Practice which carries in it the same Appearance of Evil; and utterly abhor and fly from those Practices which the universal Consent of all Nations and Religions condemns as evidently wicked and unjust.

But the *Tenderness*, we have to deal with, is quite of another Nature, being such an one as makes Men scruple at the Lawfulness of a Set Form of Divine Worship, at the Use of some Solemn Rites and Ceremonies in the Service of God; but makes them not stick at all at *Sacrilege*, which *St. Paul* equals to *Idolatry*; nor at *Rebellion*, which the Prophet makes as bad as *Witchcraft*; nor at the *Murder* of their King, and the robbing and undoing their Fellow-Subjects; Villanies, which not only Christianity proscribes, but the common Reason of Mankind rises up against, and by the very Light of Nature condemns. And did not those, who plead *Tenderness of Conscience* amongst us, do all these Things? Nay did they not do them in the very Strength of this Plea?

In a Word, are the Particulars alledged true, or are they not? If not, then let Shame and Confusion, and a Just Judgment from God light upon those, who make such Charges, where they are not due. But if all which has been alledged be *true*, then in the Name of the

the *God of Truth*, let not those pass for *weak*, and much less for *tender Consciences*, which can digest such horrid clamorous Impieties. Nor let them abuse the World, nor disturb the Church by a false Cry of *Superstition*, and a causeless *Separation* from Her thereupon? Especially if they will but calmly and seriously consider, whose *Ends* by all this they certainly serve, whose *Work* they do, and whose *Wages* they have so much Cause to dread.

In fine, the Result of the whole Discourse is this: That since the *Weakness of Conscience*, spoken of by *St. Paul*, is grounded upon some *Ignorance* for the present *excusable*; and since none amongst us enjoying the means of Knowledge daily held forth by the Church, together with the common Use of his Reason, can be excusably ignorant of any Thing which he is concerned to know, the Plea of such *Weakness* can have no Place amongst us, much less can it be allowably continued in, and least of all can it be suffered to controul the Civil Magistrate either in the making, or the Execution of Laws: But ought wholly to be rejected, as well for its pernicious Consequences, to wit, that it is *boundless*, and that the *Truth* of it is no *Ways discoverable*, and withal that it subjects the Sovereign Power to those,

those, who are to be subject to it, and governed by it : As also for the *Partiality* and Cruelty of its Pleaders, who deny that to others which they claim to themselves ; together with their *Hypocrisy* in stopping at Mole-Hills and leaping over Mountains, in practising Things notoriously *unjust*, while they stick at Things *indifferent*, and at the most but *doubtful*.

From all which it follows, That how much soever such Pretenders may beguile factious and *unstable Minds*, *deceiving* others and *being deceived* themselves ; and how much soever they may *mock* the Powers of this World, yet *God is not mocked*, who *searches the Heart*, and looks through the Pretence, and will reward every Man according to *his Work*, whatsoever may be his *Profession*.

To which God be rendred and ascribed, as is most due, all Praise, Might, Majesty, and Dominion, both now and for evermore. Amen.

Christianity mysterious, and the Wisdom of God in making it so,

Proved in a

S E R M O N

Preach'd at

WESTMINSTER-ABBAY,

APRIL 29. 1694.

I COR. II. 7.

But we speak the Wisdom of God in a Mystery, &c.

THE two great Works, which God has been pleas'd to signalize his *infinite Wisdom and Power* by, were the *Creation of the World* and the *Redemption of Mankind*; the first of them declared by *Moses*, and the other by *Christ himself bringing Life and*

Immortality to light through the Gospel. But yet so, that, as in the opening of the Day, the Appearance of *Light* does not presently, and totally drive away all *Darkness*, but that some Degrees remain and mingle with it: So neither has this glorious *Revelation* of the Gospel quite cleared off the Obscurity of many great Things revealed in it; but that, as God has hereby vouchsafed us *Light* enough to inform and *guide* our Faith; so he has left *Darkness* enough to *exercise* it too. Upon which account the Apostle here designing to set forth the transcendent Worth of the Gospel above all other Doctrines whatsoever, recommends it to our Esteem, by these two Qualifications and Properties eminently belonging to it, as

First, That it is the *Wisdom of God*; and *secondly*, that it is *the Wisdom of God in a Mystery*.

As to the first of which, namely, the Gospel's being the *Wisdom of God*, that is to say, the grand Instance and Product of it; if we would take a Survey of the Nature of *Wisdom* according to the Sense of the ancient Philosophers, we shall find *Aristotle* in the sixth of his *Ethicks* and the seventh Chapter defining it, Νῆς ἢ ἐπιστήμη τιμιωτάτων τῆ φύσει: That is,

The

The Understanding and Knowledge of Things in their Nature the most excellent and valuable. Where, though it ought to be supposed, that *Aristotle* carried his Notion no higher, nor farther than the Things of *Nature*, and that *St. Paul* pointed chiefly at Things *revealed and supernatural*; yet I cannot see, but that the Terms made use of by that great Philosopher in the Definition, or rather Description of *Wisdom* laid down by him, do with full Propriety and Fitness fall in with the Account here given of this *Divine Wisdom* by our Apostle in the Text; and that, whether we take it for a *Wisdom* respecting *Speculation*, or relating to *Practice*; the Things treated of in the Gospel (about which the said *Wisdom* is employed) being certainly *the noblest and most excellent* that can be, upon both Accounts: And though it be hard to determine whether of the two ought to have the Pre-eminence; yet, I think, we may rationally enough conclude, that the *Wisdom* here spoken of is principally of a *practical* Import; as denoting to us God's admirable and steady bringing about his great Ends and Purposes, by Means most suitable and proper to them, and particularly his accomplishing his grand Design of *Mercy* upon the World by the Pro-

mulgation of the *Gospel*; A Doctrine containing in it all the Treasures of Divine *Wisdom*, so far as the same *Wisdom* has thought fit to reveal them. And yet such has been the Blindness and Baseness of Men's Minds even from the Apostles time down along to ours (as bad as any) that this very *Wisdom* has not failed to meet with a Sect of Men, who voting themselves the *only Wits* and *wise Men* of the World (as the greatest *Sots* may easily do) have made it their Business to ridicule and reproach it as downright *Foolishness*; but yet such a sort of *Foolishness* (if the Testimony of an *Apostle* may outweigh the *Scoffs* of a *Buffoon*) as is *infinitely wiser than all the Wisdom of Men*. For the very wisest of Men do not always compass what they design, but this certainly and effectually does, as being not only the *Wisdom*; but

Secondly, The *Power* of God too, the first *infallible*, the other *irresistible*. In a word, the *Wisdom* here spoken of, is a Messenger which always goes as far as sent; an Instrument which never fails or lurches the great Agent who employs it, either in reaching the End he directs it to, or in finishing the Work he intends it for. So that, in short, there could not be an higher and a nobler

Elogy to express the Gospel by, than by representing it to us *as the Wisdom of God*. For as *Wisdom* in general is the noblest and most sublime Perfection of an intellectual Nature, and particularly in God himself is the leading, ruling Attribute prescribing to all the rest; so a Commendation drawn from thence must needs be the most glorious that can possibly pass, upon any Action or Design proceeding from such an one. And the Apostle seems here most peculiarly to have directed this Encomium of the Gospel, as a Defiance to the Philosophers of his Time, the flustering vain-glorious *Greeks*, who pretended so much to magnify, and even adore the Wisdom they professed, and, with great Modesty (no doubt) confin'd wholly to themselves: A *Wisdom*, I think, little to be envyed them; being such, as none, who had it, could be the *better*, nor consequently the *wiser* for.

And thus much for the first Thing contained in the Words, and proposed from them; namely, that the Gospel *is the Wisdom of God*. I proceed now to the second, which we shall chiefly insist upon, and that is concerning the Mysteriousness of it; as *that it is the Wisdom of God in a Mystery*. For the Prosecution of which we shall enquire into, and endeavour

to give some account of the Reasons (so far as we may presume to judge of them) why God should deliver to Mankind a Religion so full of Mysteries as the Christian Religion certainly is, and was ever accounted to be. Now the Reasons of this in general I conceive may be stated upon these two Grounds.

First, The Nature and Quality of the Things treated of in the Christian Religion. And

Secondly, The Ends to which all Religion (both as to the general, and particular Nature of it) is designed, with relation to the Influence which it ought to have upon the Minds of Men.

And first of all; *For the Nature of the Things themselves*, which are the subject Matter of the Christian Religion; there are in them these *three Qualifications and Properties*, which do and must of necessity render them *mysterious*, obscure, and of difficult Apprehension. As,

First, Their surpassing *Greatness and Inequality to the Mind of Man*. The Christian Religion, as to a great part of it, is but a kind of Comment upon the *Divine Nature*; an Instrument to convey right Conceptions of *God* into the Soul of Man, so far as it is capable

pable of receiving them. But now *God* (we know) is an *infinite* Being, without any Bounds or Limitations of his Essence, wonderful in his *Actings*, *inconceivable* in his *Purposes*, and *inexpressible* in his *Attributes*; which yet, as great as they are, if severally taken, give us but an *incomplete* Representation of *him*. He is another *World* in himself, too high for our *Speculations*, and too great for our *Descriptions*. For how can such vast and mighty Things be crowded into a little, finite Understanding! *Heaven*, I confess, enters into us, as we must into that, by a very *narrow* Passage. But how shall the *King of Glory*, whom the *Heavens themselves cannot contain*, enter in by these *Doors*? by a weak Imagination, a slender Notion, and a contracted Intellect? How shall these poor short Faculties measure the *Lengths* of his Eternity, the *Breadth* and *Expansions* of his Immensity, and the *Heights* of his Prescience, and the *Depths* of his Decrees? and last of all, that unutterable, incomprehensible Mystery of two Natures united into one Person, and again of one and the same Nature diffused into a triple Personality? All which being some of the *prime, fundamental* Matters treated of in our Religion, how can it be otherwise

than a System of *Mysteries*, and a Knot of dark, inexplicable Propositions? Since it exhibits to us such Things as the very Condition of our Nature renders us incapable of clearly understanding.

The *Socinians* indeed, who would obtrude upon the World, (and of late more daringly than ever) a new Christianity of their own inventing, will admit of nothing *mysterious* in this Religion, nothing, which the natural Reason of Man cannot have a clear and comprehensive Perception of: And this not only in Defiance of the express Words of *Scripture* so frequently and fully affirming the contrary, but also of the constant, universal Sense of all Antiquity unanimously confessing an Incomprehensibility in many of the Articles of the *Christian Faith*. So that these bold Persons stand alone by themselves, upon a new Bottom, and an upstart Principle, not much above an hundred Years old, spitting upon all Antiquity before them; and (as some, who have wrote against them, have well observed of them) are the only Sect of Men in the World, who ever pretended to set up, or own a Religion without either a *Mystery* or a *Sacrifice* belonging to it. For, as we have shewn, that they deny the *first*, so they equally ex-
plode

plode the *latter*, by denying Christ to be properly a *Priest*, or his *Death* to have been a *propitiatory Oblation* for the Sins of the World. And now are not these blessed *New Lights* (think we) fit to be encouraged, courted, and have Panegyricks made upon their wonderful Abilities, forsooth? Whilst they on the other Side are employing the utmost of those Abilities (such as they are) in blaspheming our Saviour, and overturning our Religion? But *this is their Hour, and the Power of Darkness*. For it is a Truth too manifest to be denied, *that* there have been more *Innovations* upon, and *Blasphemies* against the chief Articles of our *Faith* published in this Kingdom, and that after a more audacious and scandalous Manner, within these *several Years last past*, than have been known here for some Centuries of Years before (even those Times of Confusion both in Church and State betwixt *Forty One* and *Sixty* not excepted :) And what this may produce and end in, God only at present knows, and I with the whole Nation *may not at length feel*.

Secondly, A second *Qualification* of the *chief Things* treated of in our Religion (and which must needs render them *mysterious*) is *their Spirituality and Abstraction from all Sensible*

sensible and corporeal Matter. Of which sort of Things it is impossible for the Understanding of Man to form to itself an exact *Idea*, or *Representation*. So that when we hear, or read that *God is a Spirit, and that Angels and the Souls of Men are Spirits*, our Apprehensions are utterly at a loss how to frame any *Notion* or *Resemblance* of them, but are put to float and wander in an endless Maze of Guesses and Conjectures, and know not certainly what to fix upon. For in this Case we can fetch in no Information, or Relief to our Understandings from our *Senses*; no Picture or Draught of these Things from the Reports of the Eye; but we are left entirely to the Uncertainties of *Fancy*, to the Flights and Ventures of a bold Imagination. And here to illustrate the Case a little, let us imagine a Man, who was born Blind, able upon bare Hear-say, to conceive in his Mind all the Varieties and Curiosities of Colour, to draw an exact Scheme of *Constantinople*, or a Map of *France*; to describe the Towns, point out the Rivers, and distinguish the Situations of these, and the like great and extraordinary Places: And when such an one is able to do all this, and not before, then perhaps may we also apprehend what a *Spirit*, an *Angel*,

Angel, or an *immaterial Being* is. The Difficulty of understanding which sufficiently appears from this one Consideration : That in all the Descriptions which we make of *God*, *Angels*, and *Spirits*, we still describe them by such Things as we *see*, and when we have done, we profess that they are *invisible*. But then to do this Argument right again on the other Side ; as it would be extremely sottish and irrational for a *blind Man* to conclude, and affirm positively, that *there neither are, nor can be* any such Things, as *Colours*, *Pictures*, or *Landskips*, because he finds, that he cannot form to himself any true *Notion*, *Idea*, or *mental Perception* of them : So would it be equally, or rather superlatively more unreasonable, for us to deny the great Articles of our Christianity, because we cannot frame *in our Minds* any clear, explicit, and exact Representation of them. And yet this is the true State of the whole Matter, and of the Ratiocination of some Men about it, how absurd and inconsequent soever we see it is. *Let this* therefore be another, and a *second Cause*, why the Christian Religion which *treats of*, and is *conversant* about such Things, must of necessity be *mysterious*.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, A third Property of Matters belonging to *Christianity*, and which also renders them mysterious, is their *Strangeness and Un-reducibleness to the common Methods and Observations of Nature*. I for my Part cannot look upon any thing (whatsoever others can) as a more fundamental Article of the Christian Religion, than *Christ's Satisfaction for Sin*; by which alone the lost Sons of *Adam* are reconciled to their offended God, and so put into new Capacities of Salvation; and yet perhaps there is nothing more surprizing, strange, and out of the Road of common Reason than this, if compared with the general Course and Way of Men's acting. For that he who was the *offended* Person should project and provide a Satisfaction to himself in the behalf of him who had *offended* him, and with so much Zeal concern himself to solicit a Reconciliation with those whom he had no need of being reconciled unto, but might with equal Justice and Honour have destroyed them, was a thing quite beside the common course of the World; and much more was it so, that a *Father* should deliver up an innocent and infinitely beloved *Son* to be sacrificed for the Redemption of his justly *hated* and abhorred *Enemies*, and on the other
hand,

hand, that a Son who loved his Father as much as he could be loved by him, should lay down his Life for the declared Rebels and Enemies of him whom he so transcendently loved, and of himself too: This, I say, was such a Transaction, as we can find nothing like, or analogous to in all the Dealings of Men, and cannot but be owned as wholly beside, if not also directly contrary to all human Methods. And so true is this, that several Things expressly affirmed of God in Scripture relating to the prime Articles of our Faith are denied, or eluded by the *Arians* and *Socinians*, because they cross and contradict the Notions taken up by them from what they have observed in created Beings, and particularly in Men; which yet is a gross Fallacy and Inconsequence concluding *ab imparibus tanquam paribus*, and more than sufficiently confuted and blown off, by that one Passage of the Prophet concerning Almighty God; that *his Thoughts are not as our Thoughts, nor his Ways as our Ways, Isa. lv. 8.* To which we may add, that neither is his *Nature* as our *Nature*, nor his *Divine Person* as our *Persons*. And if so, where is the *Socinian* Logick in arguing from one to the other? And yet 'tis manifest, that they hardly make use

of

of any other Way of arguing concerning the main Points in Controversy between them and the Church but this.

But there are also *two* other principal *Articles of the Christian Religion*, which do as much transcend the common *Notice and Observation* of Mankind as the former. One of which is the *Conversion* and Change of a Man's sinful Nature, commonly called the Work of *Regeneration* or the *New-Birth*; concerning which Men are apt to wonder (and deservedly too) by what strange Power and Efficacy it should come to pass, that ever any one should be brought to conquer, and shake off those inveterate Appetites and Desires which are both so violent in their Actings, and so early in their Original, (as being born with him;) and to have other new ones, and those absolutely contrary to the former planted in their Room. *So that when our Saviour in John iii. discoursed of these Things to Nicodemus, a great Rabbi amongst the Jews,* and told him that *he must be born again*; he was presently amazed, and non-plus'd at it, as at a great Paradox and Impossibility; and forthwith began to Question, *How can these Things be?* In which indeed, he said no more, than what the Hearts of most Men living are

apt to say concerning most of the Articles of our Christian Religion.

But above all, the Article of the *Resurrection* seems to lye marvelously cross to the common Experience of Mankind. For who ever was yet seen by them after a total Consumption into *Dust and Ashes to rise again*, and to resume the same *numerical* Body? This is a Thing which amongst all the rare Occurrences of the World, all the Wonders, and Anomalies of Nature, was never yet met with in any one single Instance; and consequently Men must needs be apt to startle, and to be full of *Thought* and Scruple upon the Proposal of so strange a Thing to their Understandings. And if any one should think, that he can make this out by bare Reason, (as possibly some Opiniators may) let him by all means in the next Place try the Strength of his doubty Reason about *Transubstantiation*, or turn *Knight-Errant* in Divinity, encounter Giants and Windmills, and adventure to *explain* Things impossible to be *explained*. This therefore is a third Cause of the unavoidable *Mysteriousness* of the chief Articles of the *Christian Religion*; namely, that most of them fall, neither within the common course
of

of Men's actions, nor the Compass of their Observation.

And thus much for the *first Ground* of the *Gospel's* being delivered to the World in a *Mystery*; namely, the *Nature and Quality of the Things treated of in the Gospel*. I come now to the

Second Ground, which is stated upon *some of the principal Ends and Designs of Religion*. But before I enter upon the Discussion of this, may it not be objected, That the grand Design of *Religion* is to engage Men in the *Practice of such Things*, as it commands? And that this must needs be so much the more easily effected, by how much the more clearly such Things are represented to Men's Understandings, without any *Mystery* or *Obscurity* in them. Forasmuch as the Way to *obey a Law*, is to *know* it; and the Way to know it, is to have it plainly and clearly propounded to such as are concerned about it.

Now to this I answer, First, That it is as much the *Design* of Religion to oblige Men to believe the *Credenda*, as to practise the *Agenda* of it: And Secondly, That notwithstanding the *Obscurity and Mysteriousness* of the

the

the *Credenda* considered in themselves, there is yet as clear a Reason for the Belief of these, as for the Practice of the other. They exceed indeed the natural Force of human Reason to *comprehend* them *scientifically*, and are therefore proposed, not to our *Knowledge*, but to our *Belief*; forasmuch as *Belief* supplies the want of *Knowledge*, where *Knowledge* is not to be had; and is properly the Mind's Assent to a thing upon the Credit of his Testimony, who shall report it to us. And thus we *assent* to the great and mysterious Points of our Faith: For *know and understand* them thoroughly we cannot; but since God has *revealed* and *affirmed* them *to be true*, we may with the highest Reason, upon his bare Word, believe and assent to them as such.

But then as for those Things, that concern our *Practice* (upon which only the Objection proceeds) they indeed are of that *Clearness*, that innate *Evidence* and *Perspicuity*, even in themselves, that they do (as it were) meet our Understandings half way, and being once proposed to us, need not our *Study*, but only our *Acceptance*; as presenting themselves to our first, our easiest, and most early Apprehensions. So that, in some Things, it is much

more difficult for a Man, upon a very ordinary use of his *Judgment*, to be *ignorant* of his Duty than to *learn* it; as it would be much harder for him, while he is awake, to keep his Eyes *always shut*, than *open*.

In summ, the *Articles* of our *Faith* are those *Depths*, in which the *Elephant* may *swim*; and the *Rules* of our *Practice* those *Shallows* in which the *Lamb* may *wade*. But as both *Light* and *Darkness* make but one natural Day; so here, both the *Clearness* of the *Agenda*, and the *Obscurity* or *Mystery* of the *Credenda* of the Gospel, constitute but one entire Religion. And so much in Answer to this Objection; which being thus removed, I come now to shew, that the *Mysteriousness* of those Parts of the Gospel, called the *Credenda*, or *Matters of our Faith*, is most subservient to the great, important *Ends* of Religion; and that upon these following Accounts.

First, Because Religion in the *prime Institution* of it was designed to make Impressions of Awe and reverential Fear upon Men's Minds. The Mind of Man is naturally licentious, and there is nothing, which it is more averse from, than Duty. Nothing which it more abhors than Restraint. It would, if let alone,

alone, launch out, and wantonize in a boundless Enjoyment and Gratification of all its Appetites and Inclinations. And therefore God, who designed Men to a *supernatural* End, thought fit also to engage him to a way of living above the bare Course of Nature; and for that Purpose to oblige him to a severe Abridgment and Controul of his mere *natural Desires*. And this can never be done, but by imprinting upon his Judgment such Apprehensions of *Dread* and *Terror*, as may stave off an eager and *luxurious* Appetite from its desired Satisfactions, which the infinite Wisdom of God has thought fit in some measure to do, by *non-plussing* the World with certain new and unaccountable Revelations of himself and the Divine Methods of a mysterious Religion.

To protect which from the sawcy Encroachments of bold Minds, he has hedged it in with a sacred and majestick Obscurity, in some of the principal Parts of it: Which, that it is the most effectual Way to secure a Reverence to it from such Minds, is as certain, as the universal Experience of Mankind can make it; it being an Observation too frequent and common to be at all doubted of, *That Familiarity breeds Contempt*; and it holds not

more in point of *Converse*, than in point of Knowledge. For as easiness of Access, frankness and openness of Behaviour does by Degrees lay a Man open to Scorn and Contempt, especially from some Dispositions; so a full inspection and penetration into all the Difficulties and Secrets of any Object is apt to make the Mind insult over it, as over a conquered Thing; for all Knowledge is a kind of Conquest over the Thing we know.

Distance preserves Respect, and we still imagine some transcendent Worth in Things above our Reach. *Moses* was never more revered than when he wore his *Veil*. Nay, the very *Sanctum Sanctorum* would not have had such a Veneration from the *Jews* had they been permitted to enter into it, and to gaze and stare upon it, as often as they did upon the other Parts of the Temple. The *High-Priest* himself, who alone was suffered to enter into it, yet was to do so *but once a Year*; lest the frequency of the sight might insensibly lessen *that Adoration*, which so sacred a Thing was still to maintain upon his Thoughts.

Many Men, who in their *Absence* have been great and admirable for their Fame, find a diminution of that Respect upon their personal *Presence*: Even the great Apostle *St. Paul* himself

himself found it so; as he himself tells us 2 *Cor.* x. 10. And upon the same Account it is, that the Kings of some Nations, to keep up a living and a constant Awe of themselves in the Minds of their Subjects, shew themselves to them but once a Year: And even that perhaps may be something with the oftencst, considering, that Persons, whose Greatness generally consists rather in the *Height* of their Condition, than in the *Depth of their Understanding*, seldom appear freely and openly, but they *expose* themselves in more Senses than one.

In all great Respect, or Honour shewn, there is something of *Wonder*; but a Thing often seen (we know) be it never so excellent, yet ceasing thereby to be *new*, it ceases also to be wonder'd at. Forasmuch as it is not the *Worth or Excellency*, but the *Strangeness* of a Thing which draws the Eyes and Admiration of Men after it; For can any Thing in Nature be imagined more glorious and beautiful than the *Sun* shining in his full Might, and yet how many more Spectators and Wonderers does the same *Sun* find under an Eclipse?

But to pursue this Notion and Observation yet further, I conceive it will not be amiss to

consider, how it has been the Custom of all the sober and wise Nations of the World still to *reserve* the *great Rites* of their Religion *in Occulto*: Thus, how studiously did the *Egyptians*, those great Masters of all *Learning*, lock up their sacred Things from all Access and Knowledge of the Vulgar! Whereupon their Gods were pictured, and represented with their *Finger* upon their *Mouth*, thereby (as it were) enjoining *Silence* to their Votaries, and forbidding all Publication of their *Mysteries*. Nor was this all, but for the better concealing of the *Sacra Arcana* of their Religion, they used also a *peculiar Character* unknown to the common People, and understood only by themselves; and last of all, that they might *yet the more surely* keep off all others from any Acquaintance with *these Secrets*, the *Priesthood* was made *Hereditary* amongst them, by which Means they easily secured and confined the Knowledge of their *sacerdotal Rites* wholly within their own Family. The like also is reported of the *Phœnicians*, the *Babylonians*, and the *Græcians*, that they had their *ἱερὰ γράμματα*, and their *ἰδίαις χαρακτῆρσι*, their *sacred* and *peculiar Way* of Writing, by which they rescued the *reverend Mysteries* of their Religion from the rude Inspection of the

the

the Rout. And Lastly, that the same Course of Secrecy and Concealment was also followed by the *Romans*, though in a different Way, and not by the Use of such peculiar Characters, is sufficiently evident, from that known *Introduction* and *Prologue* to their *sacred Rites*. *Procul este profani*; by which they drove far away the *Profane*, and *such* were all these accounted, who were not actually engaged in the said religious Performances. *And now to what Purpose* do these several Instances serve, but to shew us, That, as in the *Jewish Church* the People were not suffered to enter into the *Holy of Holies*, nor to pry or look *into the Ark*, no nor so much as to *touch* it; and all this by the particular, express Prohibition of God himself; so amongst the *Heathens*, the most *civiliz'd*, *learned*, and best *reputed* Nations for Wisdom have, by the bare *Light* and *Conduct* of their natural *Reason*, still taken the same Way to establish in Men's Minds a Veneration for their *Religion*? That is, by keeping the chief Parts and *Mysteries* of it *shut up* from the promiscuous View and Notice of that sort of Men, who are but too quickly brought (God knows) to *sight* and nauseate, what they once think they *understand*.

Now that the several Religions of the fore-mentioned Nations of the *Gentiles* were false and idolatrous, I readily own; but that their Method of preserving the Reverence of them (which is all that I here insist upon) was founded upon any Persuasion they had of the *Falseness* and Idolatry of the said Religions, this I absolutely deny; since it is not imaginable that any sort of Men whatsoever, could *heartily own and profess* any sort of Religion, which they themselves fully believed to be *false*; and therefore since it could not be but that they believed their several Religions *true*, (though really and indeed they were not so) yet the way which they took to keep up an awful Esteem of them in the Hearts of such as professed them, was no doubt founded upon an excellent Philosophy and Knowledge of the Temper of Man's Mind, in relation to *sacred* Matters. So that, although their *Subject* was bad, yet, their *Argumentation* and *Discourse* upon it was highly *rational*.

Secondly, A second Ground of the *Mysteriousness of Religion* (as it is delivered by God to Mankind) is his most wise Purpose thereby to humble the Pride and Haughtiness of Man's Reason. A quality so peculiarly odious to God, that it may be said, not so much

to imprint upon Men the *Image*, as to communicate to them the very *Essence of Lucifer*. The way by which Man first fell from his original Integrity and Happiness was by *Pride*, founded upon an irregular *Desire of Knowledge*; and therefore it seems to be a Course most agreeable to the Divine Wisdom to contrive Man's *Recovery* by such a Method as should abase and nonplus him in that very Perfection, whereof the ambitious Improvement first cast him down from that glorious Condition. In short, *Man would be like God in Knowledge*, and so he fell; and now if he will be like *him in Happiness* too, God will effect it in such a way, as shall convince him to his Face, that he *knows nothing*. The whole course of his Salvation shall be all *Riddle and Mystery* to him; he shall (as I may so express it) *be carried up to Heaven in a Cloud*. Instead of *Evidence* springing from Things themselves, and clear Knowledge growing from such an *Evidence*, his Understanding must now be contented with the poor, dim *Light of Faith*; which (as I have shewn) guides only in the *Strength and Light* of another's Knowledge, and is properly a *seeing with another's Eyes*; as being otherwise wholly unable to inform us about the great *Things*

of

of our Peace, by an immediate Inspection of those Things themselves.

Whereupon we find the Gospel set up (as it were) in Triumph over all that *Wisdom* and *Philosophy* which the learned and more refined Parts of the World so much boasted of, and valued themselves upon; as we have it in the 1 *Cor.* i. from the 17th to the end of the Chap. *Where is the Wise, where is the Scribe, and where is the Disputer of this World?* God is there said to have *made foolish the very Wisdom of it.* So that when *the World by Wisdom knew not God*; that is, by all their *Philosophy* could not find out, either how he was to be served, or by what Means to be enjoyed, this grand Discovery was made to them *by the Foolishness of Preaching* (as the World then esteemed it; nay, and of *preaching the Cross* too; a thing utterly exploded *both by Jew and Greck*, as the greatest Absurdity imaginable, and contrary to all their received Principles and Reasonings about the way of Man's attaining *to true Happiness.* And yet, as high as they bore themselves, their *strongest Reasonings* were to bend to *this Weakness of God*, (as the Apostle in Derision of those, who thought it so, there calls it) and their sublimest *Wisdom* to stoop to this

Foolishness,

Foolishness, if so be they were not resolved to be too strong, and too wise (forsooth) to be saved. For as the primitive Effect of Knowledge was first *to puff up, and then to throw down*; so the contrary Method of *Grace and Faith* is first to *depress*, and then to *advance*.

The Difficulty and Strangeness of some of the chief Articles of our Religion, such as are those of the *Trinity*, and of the *Incarnation* and *Satisfaction of Christ*, are notable Instruments in the Hand of God to keep the Soul *low and humble*, and to check those Self-complacencies which it is apt to grow into by an over-weening Conceit of its own Opinions, more than by any other Thing whatsoever. For Man naturally is scarce so fond of the Offspring of his *Body*, as of that of his *Soul*. His Notions are his Darlings; so that neither Children nor Self are half so dear to him, as the *only begotten* of his Mind. And therefore in the Dispensations of Religion God will have this *only begotten, this best-beloved, this Isaac of our Souls* (above all other Offerings that a Man can bring him) *to be sacrificed, and given up to him*.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, God in *great Wisdom* has been pleased to put a *Mysteriousness* into the *greatest Articles of our Religion*, thereby to engage us in a *closer, and more diligent Search into them*. He would have them the *Objects of our Study*, and for that Purpose has render'd them hard and *difficult*. For no Man studies Things plain and evident, and such as by their native Clearness do even prevent our Search, and of their own Accord offer themselves to our Understandings. The Foundation of all Enquiry is the *Obscurity* as well as *Worth* of the Thing enquired after. And God has thought good to make the *Constitution and Complexion* of our Religion such, as may fit it to be our Business and our Task; to require, and take up all our intellectual Strengths, and, in a word, to try the Force of our best, our noblest, and most active Faculties. For if it were not so, then surely human Literature could no ways promote the Study of Divinity, nor could Skill in the liberal Arts and Sciences be any Step to raise us to those higher Speculations. But so the Experience of the World (maugre all Fanatick Pretences, *all naked Truths, and naked Gospels*, or rather *shameful Nakedness* instead of either *Truth or Gospel*) has ever yet found it to be. For
still

still the Schools are and must be the standing Nurseries of the Church: And all the Cultivation and Refinement they can bestow upon the best Wits in the Use of the most unwearied Industry, are but a Means to facilitate their Advance higher, and to let them in more easily at the *strait Gate* of those more hidden and involved Propositions, which Christianity would employ and exercise the Mind of Man with. *For suppose*, that we could grasp in the whole Compass of Nature, as to all the Particulars and Varieties of *Being* and *Motion*, yet shall we find it a vast, if not an impossible Leap from thence to ascend to the full Comprehension of any one of *God's Attributes*; and much more from thence to the mysterious OEconomy of the *Divine Persons*; and lastly, to the astonishing Work of the World's Redemption by the *Blood of the Son of God himself, condescending to be a Man, that he might die for us*. All which were Things hidden from the *Wise* and *Prudent*, in spite of all their *Wisdom* and *Prudence*; as being *Heights* above the Reach, and *Depths* beyond the Fathom of any mortal Intellect.

We are commanded by Christ to *search the Scriptures* as the great Repository of all
the

the *Truth and Mysteries* of our Religion, and whosoever shall apply himself to a thorough Performance of this high Command, shall find Difficulty and Abstruseness enough in the Things *searched into* to perpetuate his *Search*. For they are a *rich Mine*, which the greatest Wit and Diligence may dig in for ever, and still find new Matter to entertain the busiest Contemplation with, even to the utmost Period of the most extended Life. *For* no Man can out-live the Reasons of Enquiry, so long as he carries any thing of Ignorance about him: And that every Man must, and shall do while he is in this State of Mortality. For he, who himself is but a *Part* of Nature, shall never compass, or comprehend it *all*.

Truth (we are told) *dwells low*, and in a *Bottom*; and the most valued Things of the Creation are conceal'd, and hidden by the great Creator of them from the common View of the World. *Gold* and *Diamonds*, with the most precious Stones and Metals lie couched and covered in the Bowels of the Earth; the very Condition of their *Being* giving them their *Burial* too. So that Violence must be done to Nature, before she will produce and bring them forth.

And

And then, as for what concerns the Mind of Man, God has in his wise Providence cast Things so, as to make the Business of Men in this World *Improvement*; that so the very *Work* of their Condition may still remind them of the *Imperfection* of it. For, surely, he who is still *pressing forward* has not yet obtain'd the *Prize*. Nor has he, who is only *growing in Knowledge*, yet arrived to the *full Stature* of it. *Growth* is *Progress*; and all *Progress* designs and tends to the Acquisition of something, which the *growing Person* is not yet possessed of.

Fourthly, The fourth and last Reason which I shall alledge of the mysterious Dispensation of the Gospel here, is, That the full, entire Knowledge of it may be one principal Part of our Felicity and Blessedness hereafter. All those Heights and Depths which we now stand so much amazed at, and which so confound and baffle the subtlest and most piercing Apprehension, shall then be made clear, open, and familiar to us. God shall then display the hidden Glories of his Nature, and withall fortify the Eye of the Soul so, that it shall be able to behold and take them in, so far as the Capacities of an human Intellect shall enable it to do. We shall then see the Mysteries
of

of the *Trinity*, and of the *Incarnation of Christ*, and of the *Resurrection of the Dead* unriddled and made plain to us; all the *Knots* of God's *Decrees* and *Providence* untyed and made fit for our *Understanding*, as well as our *Admiration*. We shall then be transported with a nobler kind of Wonder, not the effect of Ignorance, but the product of a clearer, and more advanced Knowledge. We shall admire and adore the *Works and Attributes* of the great God, because we shall see the glorious Excellency of the one, and the admirable Contrivances of the other, made evident to our *very Reason*; so as to inform and satisfy that, which before they could only astonish and amaze.

The Happiness of Heaven shall be an Happiness of *Vision* and of Knowledge; and we shall there pass from the *Darkness* of our native Ignorance, from the *Dusk and Twilight* of our former Notions into the broad Light of an *everlasting Day*: A Day, which shall leave nothing undiscovered to us, which can be fit for us to know: And therefore the *Apostle* comparing our present with our future Condition in respect of those different Measures of Knowledge allotted to each of them, 1 *Cor.* xiii. 12. tells us, *that here we see*
but

but darkly and in a Glass; and a Glass (we know) often gives a *false*, but always a *faint* Representation of the Object: but then, says he, *shall we see God Face to Face*. And again, *Here we know but in part, but there, we shall know as we are known, and that, which is perfect, being come, then that which is in part shall be done away*. Reason being then unclogged from the Body, shall have its full Flight, and a free, uncontrolled Passage into all things *intelligible*. We shall then *surmount* these *beggarly Rudiments*, and mean Helps of Knowledge, which now by many little Steps gradually raise us to some short Speculation of the Nature of Things. Our Knowledge shall be then *intuitive and above Discourse*; not proceeding by a long Circuit of *Antecedents* and *Consequents*, as now in this Vale of Imperfection, it is forced to do; but it shall then fully inform the whole Mind, and take in the whole Object, by one single, and substantial Act.

For as in that Condition, we shall enjoy the *Happiness*, so we shall also imitate the *Perfection* of *Angels*, who out-shine the rest of the Creation in nothing more than in a transcendent Ability of *Knowing* and *Judging*, which is the very Glory and crowning Excel-

lency of a created Nature. *Faith* itself shall be then accounted too mean a thing to accompany us in that Estate; for being only conversant about *Things not seen*, it can have no Admittance into that Place, the peculiar Privilege of which shall be to convey to us the Knowledge of those Things by *Sight*, which before we took wholly upon *Trust*. And thus I have given you some account, first of the *Mysteriousness of the Gospel*, and then of the *Reasons* of it; and that both from the *Nature of the Things themselves* which are treated of in it, as also from those *great Ends and Purposes*, which God in his infinite Wisdom has designed it to.

From all which Discourse several very weighty *Inferences* might be drawn, but I shall collect and *draw* from thence only these Three; As,

First, The high *Reasonableness* of Men's relying upon the *Judgment of the whole Church in general*, and of their *respective Teachers*, and *spiritual Guides* in particular, rather than upon their own *private Judgments*, in such important, and *mysterious* Points of Religion, as we have been hitherto discoursing of; I say, upon the Judgment of those, who have made it their *constant Business*, as well as their

their *avowed Profession* to acquaint themselves with these *Mysteries* (so far as Human Reason can attain to them) and that in Order to the Instruction and Information of others.

Certain it is, that there is no other Profession in the World, besides this of Divinity wherein Men do not own something of a *Mystery*, and accordingly reckon it both highly rational, and absolutely necessary in many Cases, to resign and submit their own Judgments to the Judgments of such as profess a Skill in any *Art* or *Science* whatsoever. For whose Judgment ought in all Reason to be followed about any Thing, his, who has made it his whole *Work* and *Calling* to understand that Thing; or his, who has bestowed his whole Time, Parts, and Labour upon something else, which is wholly foreign to it, and has no Cognation at all with it?

But there is not only *Reason* to persuade, but also *Authority* to oblige Men in the present Case. For see, in what notable Words the *Prophet* asserts this Privilege to the Priesthood under the Mosaick Oeconomy, *Mal. ii. 7.* *The Priests Lips* (says he) *should preserve Knowledge, and the People should seek the Law at his Mouth*; (adding this as a Reason

of the same) *Fox* (says he) *he is the Messenger of the Lord of Hosts.*

For which Words, no doubt, this Prophet would have passed for a *Man of Heat, or High-Church-Man*, now a-days: for, in good Earnest, they run very high, and look very severely upon our so much applauded, or rather doated upon *Liberty of Conscience*, and are so far from casting the least Eye of Favour upon it, that they are a more direct and mortal stab to it, than all the *Pleas, Arguments, and Apologies*, I could ever yet read or hear of, have been a Defence of it.

Nor does the same Privilege sink one jot lower under the Christian Constitution; For, as we have already shewn, that *the Gospel* is full of *Mysteries*, so *1 Cor. iv. 1.* the Ministers of the Gospel are declared the *Stewards of these Mysteries*; and whatsoever any one dispenses as a Steward, he dispenses with the Authority and in the strength of an *Office and Commission*; and I believe it will be hard to prove, that a *Minister* of the Gospel can be obliged to dispen-
pente or declare any Thing to the *People*, which the People are not upon his Declaration of it equally bound to believe and assent to.

An *implicit Faith* indeed in our spiritual Guides (such as the Church of *Rome* holds) I

own to be a great Absurdity, but a due Defe-
rence and Submission to the Judgment of the
said Guides in the Discharge of their *Mini-*
stry, I affirm to be as great a Duty. And I
state the Measures of this *Submission*, in a *Be-*
lief of, and an *Obedience to all* that a Man's
Spiritual Guide shall in that Capacity declare,
and enjoyn, provided that a Man does not
certainly know, or at least, upon very great
and just Grounds, doubt any thing to the con-
trary: (which two Conditions, I allow, ought
always to be supposed in this Case) and then,
if no Objection, from either of these, shall in-
terpose, I affirm, that every Man stands obli-
ged by the Duty he owes to his *Spiritual*
Pastor, to *believe and obey* whatsoever his said
Pastor shall by Virtue of his *Pastoral Office*
deliver to him. In a Word, if Men would
but seriously and impartially consider these
three Things; *First*, That the *Gospel* or
Christian Religion is, for the most part of it,
made up of *Mysteries*: *Secondly*, That God
has appointed a certain Order of Men to de-
clare, and dispense these *Mysteries*; And
Thirdly, and Lastly, That it was his *Wisdom*
thus to order both these; Certainly Men
would both treat the *Gospel* itself more like
a *Mystery*, and the Ministers of the *Gospel*

more like the *Dispensers* of so high and sacred a *Mystery* than the Guise and Fashion of our present Blessed Times disposes them to do; that is, in other Words, Men would be less confident of their own Understandings, and more apt to pay Reverence and Submission to the Understandings of those, who are both more conversant in these Matters than they can pretend to be, and whom the same *Wisdom* of God has thought fit to appoint over them as their *Guides*. For the contrary Practice can proceed from nothing but an high Self-Opinion, and a Man's being *Wise in his own Conceit*, which is a sure way to be so in no-body's else.

In fine, every one is apt to think himself able to be his own *Divine*, his own *Priest*, and his own *Teacher*, and he should do well to be his own *Physician*, and his own *Lawyer* too. And then, as upon such a Course, he finds himself speed in the Matters of this World, let him upon the same reckon of his *Success in the other*.

Secondly, We learn also from the foregoing *Particulars* the gross Unreasonableness, and the manifest Sophistry of Mens making whatsoever they find by themselves *not intelligible*, (that is to say, by *Human Reason not comprehensible*)

prehensible) the *Measure* whereby they would *conclude* the same also to be *impossible*. This I say is a meer Fallacy, and a wretched Inconsequence: And yet nothing occurs more commonly, (and that as a *Principle* taken for granted) in the late Writings of some *heterodox*, pert, unwary Men, and particularly, it is the main Hinge upon which all the *Socinian* Arguments against the *Mysteries* of our Religion turn, and depend; but withal so extremely remote is it from all Truth, that there is not the least shew or shadow of Reason assignable for it, but upon this one *Supposition*, namely, *That the Reason or Mind of Man is capable of comprehending, or thoroughly understanding whatsoever it is possible for an Infinite Divine Power to do.* This, I say, must be supposed, for no other Foundation can support the Truth of this Proposition, to wit, *That whatsoever is humanly not intelligible, is, and ought to be reckoned, upon the same Account, also impossible.* But then every one must needs see, and explode the horrible Falseness of the forementioned *Supposition*, upon which alone this Assertion is built; and consequently this *Assertion itself* must needs be altogether as false.

For who can comprehend, or throughly understand how *the Soul is united to, and how it acts by, and upon the Body?* Who can comprehend or give a full Account how *Sensation is performed?* Or who can lay open to us the *whole Mechanism of Motion* in all the Springs and Wheels of it? Nay, who can resolve and clear off all the Difficulties about *the Composition of a continued Quantity*, as whether it is compounded of parts *divisible* or *indivisible?* Both of which are attended with insuperable Objections: And yet all these Things are not only possible, but also actually existent in Nature. From all which therefore, and from a Thousand more such Instances (which might easily be produced) I conclude, That for any one to deny or reject the *Mysteries* of our Religion as *impossible*, because of the *Incomprehensibleness* of them, is upon all true Principles, both of *Divinity* and *Philosophy*, utterly *inconsequent* and *irrational*.

Thirdly, In the *Third and Last Place*, we learn also from what has been discoursed, the great *Vanity* and *extravagant Presumption* of such as *pretend to clear up all Mysteries, and determine all Controversies in Religion*. The Attempts of which sort of Men I can liken to nothing so properly as to those *Pre-*
tences

tences to *infallible Cures*, which we daily see posted up in every Corner of the Streets; and I think it is great pity, but that both these sort of Pretences were *posted up together*. For I know no universal, infallible Remedy, which certainly *cures*, or rather *carries* off all *Diseases*, and puts an end to all Disputes, but Death: Which yet, for all that, is a Remedy not much in request. Quacks and Mountebanks, are, doubtless, a very dangerous sort of Men in Physick, but much more so in Divinity: They are both of them always very large in Pretence and Promise, but short in Performance, and generally fatal in their Practice. For there are several Depths and Difficulties (as I noted before) both in *Philosophy* and *Divinity*, which Men of Parts and solid Learning, after all their Study, find they cannot come to the Bottom of, but are forced to give them over as Things unresolvable, and will by no means be brought to pronounce dogmatically on either side of the Question.

Amongst which said *Difficulties* perhaps there is hardly a greater, and more undecidable *Problem* in *Natural Theology*, and which has not only exercised but even crucified the greatest Wits of all Ages, than the

reconciling of the *immutable Certainty of God's Fore-knowledge* with the *Freedom and Contingency* of all Humam Acts, both Good and Evil, so *fore-known by him*. Both parts of which Problem are certainly true, but how to explain and make out the Accord between them without overthrowing one of them, has hitherto exceeded the Force of Man's Reason. And therefore *Socinus* very roundly, or rather indeed very profanely denies any such *Prescience of future Contingents* to be in God at all. But as *profane* as he was in thus cutting asunder this Knot, others have been as *ridiculous* in pretending to untie it. For do not some in their Discourses about the *Divine Attributes and Decrees*, promise the World such a clear Account, such an open explicit Scheme of those great Things, as should make them plain and *evident even to the meanest Capacities*? And the Truth is, if to any Capacities at all, it must be to the *meanest*; for to those of an higher Pitch, and a larger Compass, these Things neither are, nor will, nor ever can be made evident. And if such Persons could but obtain of Heaven a Continuance of Life, till they made good what they so confidently undertake, they would be in a sure way to out-live not
only

only *Methusalah*, but even the *World* itself. But then, in come some other *Undertakers*, and promise us the same or greater Wonders in *Christian Theology*, offering by some new whimsical Explications of their own to make the *deepest Mysteries* of our Christian Faith as *plain, easy, and intelligible* (forsooth) as that two and two make four; that is, in other Words, they will represent and render them such *Mysteries* as shall have nothing at all *mystical* in them.

And now is not this, think we, a most profound Invention, and much like the Discovery of some *New-found land*, some *O Brazil* in Divinity? with so much absurd Confidence do some discourse or rather *romance* upon the most *mysterious Points* of the *Christian Faith*; that any Man of Sense and Sobriety would be apt to think such Persons not only *beside* their *Subject*, but *beside themselves too*. And the like Censure we may justly pass upon all other such *idle Pretenders*; the true Character of which sort of Men is, That he who thinks and says he can understand all *Mysteries*, and resolve all *Controversies*, undeniably shews,

shews, that he really understands none.

In the mean time, we may here observe the true way, by which these great and adorable *Mysteries* of our Religion, come first to be *ridiculed*, and *blasphemed*, and at length totally laid aside by some; and that is, by their being first *innovated* upon, and *new-modelled* by the bold, senseless, and absurd Explications of others. For, first of all such *Innovators* break down those sacred Mounds which *Antiquity* had placed about these *Articles*, and then *Hereticks* and *Blasphemers* rush in upon them, trample them under foot, and quite throw them out of our *Creed*. This course we have seen taken amongst us, that the *Church* (God bless it, and those who are over it) has been hitherto profoundly silent at it; but how long God (whose Honour is most concerned) will be so too, none can tell. For if some Novelists may put what Sense they please upon the Writings of *Moses*, and others do the like with the *Articles* of the *Christian Church* also, (and the greatest Encouragement attend both) I cannot see, (unless some extraordinary Providence prevent it) but that both these Religions are in a direct way to be run
down

down amongst us, and that in a very short Time too.

Let every sober, humble, and discreet Christian therefore be advised to dread all tampering with the *Mysteries of our Faith*, either by any new, and unwarrantable Explications of them, or Descants upon them. The *great Apostle of the Gentiles*, who, I am sure, had as *clear a Knowledge of the whole Mystery of the Gospel*, as any in his Time, and a greater Plenty of *Revelations* than any one could pretend to since him, treated these Matters with much another kind of Reverence, crying out with Horror and Amazement, *O the Depth and Unsearchableness of the Things of God!* in *Rom. xi. 33.* And again, *Who is sufficient for these Things!* in *2 Cor. ii. 16.* This was his Judgment, these were his Thoughts of these *dreadful and mysterious Depths*; and the same, no doubt, will be the Thoughts and Judgment of all others concerning them, who have any thing of *Depth* themselves. For as the same Apostle again has it in that most noted Place in the *1 Tim. iii. 16. Without Controversy great is the Mystery of Godliness: God manifested in the Flesh, justified in the Spirit,*
seen

seen of Angels, believed on in the World, and received up into Glory.

To which God infinitely Wise, Holy, and Great, be rendred, and ascribed, as is most due, all Praise, Might, Majesty, and Dominion, both now, and for evermore. Amen.



*The Lineal Descent of J E S U S
of N A Z A R E T H from Da-
vid by his Blessed Mother the
Virgin Mary.*

Proved in a

D I S C O U R S E

On *R E V.* xxii. 16.

R E V. xxii. 16. latter part.

*I am the Root and the Offspring of David,
and the Bright and Morning Star.*

THE Words here pitched upon by me,
are the Words of Christ now glori-
fied in Heaven, and seem (as it were,) by
the Union of a double Festival, to represent
to us both the *Nativity* and *Epiphany*, while
they

they lead us to the *Birth* of Christ by the Direction of a Star: though with this Difference, I confess, that both the *Means* directing, and the *Term* directed to, do in this Place coincide; and Christ the Person speaking, as well as spoken of, is here the only *Star* to direct us to himself. The Nativity of Christ is certainly a Compendium of the whole Gospel, in that it thus both *begins* and *ends* it, reaching from the first Chapter of St. *Matthew*, to this last of the *Revelation*; which latter, though it be confessedly a Book of Mysteries and a System of occult Divinity, yet surely it can contain nothing more mysterious and stupendous than the Mystery here wrapt up in the Text; where we have Christ declaring himself both the *Root*, and the *Offspring of David*. For that any one should be both Father and Son to the same Person, produce himself, be Cause and Effect too, and so the Copy give Being to its Original, seems at first Sight so very strange and unaccountable, that were it not to be adored as a Mystery, it would be exploded as a Contradiction. But since the Gospel has lifted us above our Reason, and taught us one of the great *Arcana* of Heaven, by assuring us that *Divinity* and *Humanity* may cohabit in one Subsistence, that

that two Natures may concur in the same Person, and Heaven and Earth *mingle* without *Confusion*; we being thus taught and persuaded, shall here endeavour to exhibit the whole Oeconomy of Christ's glorious Person, and to shew what a *Miracle He was*, as well as what *Miracles He did*, by considering him under these three several Respects.

First, As the Root, Secondly, As the Offspring of David. And

Thirdly, As He is here termed, The Bright and Morning Star.

And First for the first of these:

Christ was the *Root of David*; but How? Certainly in respect of something in him which had a Being before *David*. But his Humanity had not so, being of a much later Date, and therefore, as a meer Man, he could not be the *Root of David*; whereupon it follows that he must have been so in respect of some other Nature: But what *that Nature was* will be the Question. The *Arians* who denied his *Divinity*, but granted his Pre-existence to his *Humanity* (which the *Socinians* absolutely deny) held him to be the *First-Born of the Creation*; the first, and most glorious Creature which God made, a spiritual Substance produced by him long before

the Foundation of the World, and afterwards in the Fulness of time sent *into a Body*, and so made *incarnate*. This is what they hold; whereby it appears how much they differ from the School of *Socinus*, though some with great Impertinence confound them. *Arius* taught that Christ had a spiritual Subsistence before the World began: *Socinus* held that he was a meer Man, and had no Subsistence or Being at all, till such time as he was conceived by the Holy Ghost in the Womb of the *Virgin Mary*. I shall not much concern myself about these two Opinions, as they stand in Opposition to one another; but only remark this of them, That *Socinus* asserts a thing considered barely in itself more agreeable to Reason, which can much better conceive of Christ as a Man naturally consisting of Soul and Body, than as such an heterogeneous Composition of a *Body* and (I know not what) strange *spiritual Substance* existing before the Creation, as the *Arians* represent him: But then on the other side, the Opinion of *Arius* is, of the two, much more difficult to be confuted by Scripture: For as to *Socinus*, the chief Arguments brought from thence against him, are not such as are taken from the *Name* or *Actions* of God, attributed to Christ;

Christ; which he thinks he easily answers by asserting that *God* is a Name not of *Nature*, but of *Power* and *Dominion*: and that Christ is called *God* because of the Power and Government of all things put into his Hands; as earthly Kings also, in their proportion, have in Scripture the same Title, upon the same account. But the Arguments which bear hardest upon *Socinus*, are such as are taken from those Scriptures, which beyond all possibility of rational Contradiction, declare the Pre-existence and precedent Being of Christ to his Conception, such as *Job. viii. 58. Before Abraham was, I am.* And in *Job. xvii. 5. Glorify me, O Father, with the Glory which I had with thee, before the World was*; which all the *Socinians* in the World could never yet give any clear, proper, and natural Exposition of; but unnaturally and illogically pervert and distort them in defiance of Sense and Reason; and all the received ways of Interpretation. But now as for *Arius*, the Allegation of these and the like Scriptures prejudice not his Hypothesis at all: who grants Christ to have been a Glorious Spiritual Substance of an Existence not only *before Abraham*, but also *before Adam*, and the Angels themselves, and the whole Host of the Creation. But what? Was Christ

then the *Root of David* only in respect of this spiritual, pre-existing, created Substance, first found out and set up by *Arius*? No, certainly; for the Scripture, and (the best Comment upon the Scripture) a general Council; and that also the first and most famous, even the Council of *Nice*, have condemned this. And all those Scriptures which make Christ either *One with*, or *equal to the Father*, clearly confute and overthrow so absurd, as well as blasphemous an Assertion. Let this therefore be fixed upon, that Christ was the *Root*, or *Original of David*, as he was of *all Mankind* besides; Namely, in respect of *His Divinity*; of that infinite, eternal Power, which displayed itself in the Works of the Creation. For *by him all things were made*, as the *Evangelist* tells us, *John* i. 3. But how ready natural Reason will be to rise up against this Assertion, I am not ignorant; and how [that *Jesus of Nazareth, a Man like ourselves, should be accounted by Nature God, the Creator of the World, Omniscient, Omnipotent, and Eternal*] is look'd upon by many as a Proposition not only *false*, but *foolish*, and fitter to be *laugh'd* than *disputed* out of the World, this also is no Surprize to us. But then on the other side, That this is a thing

thing not to be founded upon, or to take its Rise from the bare Discourses of *Reason*, he must be very much a *Stranger* to Reason himself, who shall venture to deny; for if it may be proved by Reason, (as I doubt not but it may) that *the Scripture is the Word of God, addressed to Men*; and consequently ought to be understood and interpreted according to the familiar natural way of Construction, proper to human Writings; then I affirm that to deny Christ to be *naturally God*, is irrational; when, his being so, is so frequently asserted throughout the whole *Scripture*, and that in as clear terms, as it is possible for one Man to express his Mind by to another, if it were his Purpose to declare this very Thing to him.

And therefore I have often wondred at the preposterous Tenets of *Socinus*, and that, not so much for his denying the *natural Deity* of our Saviour, as that he should do it after he had wrote a Book *for the Authority of the Scripture*. For upon the same Reasons that he and his Sect deny the Deity of Christ, I should rather deny the *Scripture to be of Divine Authority*. They say, for *Christ to be God* is a thing absurd and impossible; from which I should argue, that that Writing or Doctrine, which affirms a thing *absurd and impossible*,

cannot be true, and much less the Word of God. And that the Gospel affirms so much of Christ we may appeal to the Judgment of any impartial Heathen, who understands the Language in which it is written. But he who first denies the Deity of Christ as *absurd and impossible*, and thereupon rejects the Divine Authority of the Scripture for affirming it, may be presumed upon the Supposal of the former to do the latter very rationally. So that he who would take the most proper and direct way to convince such an one of his *Heresy* (if there be any convincing of one who first takes up his Opinion, and then seeks for Reasons for it) must not, I conceive, endeavour in the first place to convince him out of Scripture [*that Jesus Christ is God*] but turn the whole Force and Stress of his Disputation to the Proof of this [*that the Scripture is the Word of God to Mankind, and upon that account ought to be interpreted as the Writings of Men use, and ought to be*] and if so, he who will make Sense of them, must grant the Divinity of Christ to be clearly asserted in them, and irrefragably inferred from them. In short, if the Adversaries of Christ's Divinity can prove *Christ not to be God*, they must by consequence prove that the Scrip-
tures

tures naturally and grammatically interpreted, *are not the Word of God*: But on the contrary, the Church being assured that the Scriptures so interpreted *are the Word of God*, is consequently assured also, that *Christ is and must be God*. Nevertheless if, according to the unreasonable Demands of the Men of this Sect, this and all other Mysteries of our Religion should be put to answer for themselves at the Bar of Human Reason, I would fain know, wherein consists the Paradox of asserting Christ to be God? For no Man says that his Human Nature is his Divine, or that he is God as he is Man. But we assert that he who is God is also Man, by having two Natures united into one and the same Substance. And if the Soul which *is an immaterial Substance* is united to the Body, *which is a material*; though the case is not altogether the same, yet it is so very near, that we may well ask, what Repugnancy there is, but that the Divine Nature may as well be united to the Human? I believe if we reduce things to our way of Conception, we shall find it altogether as hard to conceive the Conjunction of the two former, as of the two latter: and this, notwithstanding that other Difference also of *finite* and *infinite* between them: for why a *finite* and an *infinite*

Being may not be united to one another by an intimate and inseparable Relation, and an Assumption of the *finite*, into the *personal Subsistence* of the *infinite*, I believe it will be hard for any one to give a solid and demonstrative Reason: for Scoffs and Raillery (the usual Arguments brought against it) I am sure, are not so. But I forget myself; for the Persons here disputed against believe not the Soul to be either immaterial or * naturally immortal; but are much the same with the *Sadduces*, and upon that account fitter to be crush'd by the Civil Magistrate, as destructive to Government and Society, than to be confuted as merely Hereticks in Religion.

I conclude therefore against the Scoffs of the Heathens, the Disputations of the Jews, the Impiety of *Arius*, and the bold, blasphemous Assertions of *Socinus*, that the Man Christ Jesus, born at *Bethlem*, of the *Virgin Mary*, is God, God by Nature, the Maker of all Things, the Fountain of Being, the

* *Tantum id mihi videtur statui posse, post hanc Vitam, Hominis Animam sive Animum non ita per se subsistere, ut ulla premia pœnasve sentiat, vel etiam illa sentiendi sit capax.*

And again. *In ipso primo homine totius immortalitatis rationem usi gratiæ Dei tribuo; nec in ipsa Creatione quicquam immortalis Vita in homine agnosco, Socin. Ep. 5. ad Joh. Volkeliu. See more of the like nature cited by the Learned Dr. Ashwell in his Dissertation de Socino & Socinianismo. Pag. 187, 188, 189, &c.*

Ancient of Days, the First and the Last, of whose Being there was no Beginning, and of whose Kingdom there shall be no End. And in this one Proposition the very Life and Heart of Christianity does consist. For as, *that there is a God*, is the grand Foundation of Religion *in general*: so, *that Jesus Christ is God*, is the Foundation of the *Christian Religion*: And, I believe it will one Day be found, that he who will not acknowledge *Christ for his Creator*, shall never *have him for his Redeemer*.

Having thus shewn how *Christ was the Root and Original of David*, pass we now to the next Thing proposed, which is to shew

Secondly, That he *was his Off-spring too*, and so, having asserted his *Divinity*, to clear also his *Humanity*. That the Christian Religion be true, is the eternal Concernment of all those who believe it, and look to be saved by it: And that it be so, depends upon Jesus Christ's being the true promised *Messias*, (the grand and chief Thing asserted by him in his Gospel;) and lastly, Christ's being the true *Messias* depends upon his being the *Son of David*, and *King of the Jews*. So that unless this be evinced, the whole Foundation of Christianity must totter and fall, as being a Cheat,

Cheat, and an Impostor upon the World. And therefore let us undertake to clear this great, important Truth, and to demonstrate that Jesus of *Nazareth* was the *true Seed of David*, and *rightful King of the Jews*.

His Pedigree is drawn down by two of the Evangelists, by St. *Matth.* in his *1st Chapter*, and by St. *Luke* in his *3d*, from whence our Adversaries oppose us with these two great Difficulties.

First, That these two Evangelists disagree in deducing of His Pedigree.

Secondly, That supposing they were proved to agree, both of their Pedigrees terminate in *Joseph*, and therefore belong not to *Jesus*, who was not indeed the Son of *Joseph*, but of *Mary*.

In answer to which we are to observe, that concerning this whole Matter there are two Opinions.

First, That both in St. *Matth.* and St. *Luke* only the Pedigree of *Joseph* is recounted, in the first his *Natural*, in the other his *Legal*: For it being a known Custom among the *Jews*, that, a Man dying without Issue, his Brother should marry his Widow, and *raise up Seed* to him, *Eli* hereupon dying without any Child, *Jacob* took his Wife and of her begat *Joseph*; who by this means was *naturally* the Son of
Jacob,

Jacob, as *St. Matth.* deduces it; and *legally* or *reputedly* the Son of *Eli*, as *St. Luke*. And then to make *Jacob* and *Eli* Brothers, who are there set down in different Lines, it is said that *Matthan* of the Line of *Solomon*, and *Melchi* of the Line of *Nathan*, successively married the same Woman (*Estha* by Name) of whom *Matthan* begat *Jacob*, and *Melchi* begat *Eli*: whereupon *Jacob* and *Eli* being Brothers by the Mother, though of different Fathers, *Eli* dying without Issue *Jacob* was obliged by Law to marry his Relict, and so to raise up Seed to his Brother *Eli*.

Now all this is grounded upon an ancient Story of one *Julius Africanus* recorded by *Eusebius*, in his first Book and seventh Chapter. And of late *Faustus Socinus*, (who having denied Christ's Divine Nature was resolved to cut him short both *Root* and *Branch*, and to deny his *Human* too; at least as to the most considerable Circumstance of it, which concerned the Credit of his being the true *Messias*) he, I say, catches at this forlorn Story, and ascribes much to it in that Book of his called his *Lectiões Sacræ*; and though generally a profest Despiser of Antiquity, yet when he thinks it may make any thing for his Purpose, he can catch at

at every fabulous Scrap of it, and thereupon vouches this as authentick, even for its Antiquity. From which Opinion it follows, that Christ was only the reputed Son of *David*, that is to say, because his *Mother* was married to one who was really of *David's Line*. And this the whole Sect of *Socinus* affirms to be sufficient to denominate and make Christ *the Son of David*, and accordingly allow him so to be upon no other or nearer Account.

But of the Authors and Assertors of this Opinion we may well demand, that admitting Christ might upon this Account be called *the Son of David* in the large and loose way of that Denomination, yet how could he for this only Reason be called *the Seed of David*? Nay, and what is yet more full and express, be said *to be made of the Seed of David*, as it is in *Rom. i. 3*. And further, *to be the Fruit of his Loins*, as it is in *Acts ii. 30*. I say, with what Propriety or Accord with the common use of Speaking, could one Man be said to be another *Man's Seed* and *the Fruit of his Loins*, when he had no other Relation to him in the World, than that his Mother only married with a Person who stood so related to that Other. I believe the *Jews* would desire no greater

greater a Concession from us than this, whereby to conclude and argue *Jesus of Nazareth* not to have been the true *Messias*. Let us therefore leave this Opinion to itself, as destructive to the main Foundation of our *Religion*, and fit to be owned by none but the mortal Enemies of *Christ* and *Christianity*, the *Jews* and the *Socinians*; and so pass to the

Second Opinion, which is, that both *Joseph* and *Mary* came from *David* by true and real Descent, and that, as *Joseph's* Genealogy and Pedigree is set down in that Line, which *St. Matth.* gives an account of; so the Virgin *Mary's* Lineage is recited in that which is recorded by *St. Luke*; which Opinion as it has been generally received by Divines of the greatest Note, and best answers those Difficulties and Objections which the other is beset with; so I shall endeavour fully to clear and set it down in these following Propositions.

I.

First, The first Proposition is this, That the Designs of the two *Evangelists* in their respective Deductions of our Saviour's Pedigree, are very different. For *St. Matthew* intends only to set down *His Political or*
I
Royal

Royal Pedigree, by which he had Right to the Crown of the *Jews*; but *St. Luke* shews his *natural Descent* through the several Successions of those from whom *He took Flesh and Blood*. And that this is so, besides that natural Reason taken from the Impossibility of one, and the same Person's having two several Fathers, as *St. Matth.* and *St. Luke* seem at first Sight to import: We have these farther Arguments for the said Assertion; as *First*, that *St. Matth.* begins his reckoning only from *Abraham*; to whom the *first Promise of the Kingdom was made*. Gen. xvii. 6. But *St. Luke* runs his Line up to *Adam* the first Head and Fountain of Human Nature; which fairly shews that one deduced only *His Title to the Crown*, the other the *natural Descent of his Humanity*. And then in the *second Place*, that *St. Matthew* used the word [*begat*] only in a *political* Sense is further clear from this, That he applies it to him *who had no Child*, even to *Jeconiah*, of whom it is expressly said in *Jeremiah* xxii. 23. *that God wrote him childless*. Whereupon, being deposed by the King of *Babylon*, *Zedekiah* his Uncle was made King, and afterwards upon the Removal of him also for his Rebellion, (there remaining no more of the Line of *Solomon*)

Salathiel

Salathiel being next of Kin was declared King of the *Jews*. Which *Salathiel*, upon that account, is said to be begot by *Jeconiah*, in *St. Matthew*; not because he was *naturally* his Son, but *legally and politically* so; as succeeding him in the Inheritance of the Crown. For though in *1 Chron. iii. 17.* there is mention of *Affir*, and of *Salathiel*, as it were of two Sons of *Jeconiah*; * yet in truth *Affir* there is not the proper name of a *Person*, nor of any Son of *Jeconiah*, but is only an *Appellative* of *Jeconiah* himself, signifying *one under Captivity, or in Bonds*, as *Jeconiah* then was in *Babylon*, when *Salathiel* was declared King. And that *Salathiel* is not there set down as his Son in a *natural* Sense, is evident from the *16. Verse* of the same *Chap.* where *Zedekiah* is likewise said to be his *Son*; though *naturally* he was his *Uncle*; yet because *Zedekiah* first succeeded him in the *Kingdom*, and *Salathiel* next, *Jeconiah* still surviving, therefore both of them in that *political* Sense, I spoke of, are said to be his *Sons*, whom, in the *natural* Sense, the *Prophet Jere-*

* As it stands rectified by Junius and Tremellius, who place the Comma after *Affir*, and not between *Jeconiah*, and *that*.

my (as has been shewn) declares to have been *childless*.

* The *second* Proposition is this. That as *David* had several Sons by former Wives, so by *Bathsheba* also he had three, besides *Solomon*, of which the eldest next to him was *Nathan*: And that Christ descended *naturally* from *David*, not by *Solomon*, but *Nathan*. And accordingly that *St. Luke* deduces only *Nathan's* Line; upon which account it is, that the *Jews* at this Day, in opposition to the *Christians*, make it one main Article of their Creed, that the *Messias* was to descend *naturally* from *Solomon*; and accordingly pronounce a Curse upon all those who assert the contrary: Though to this very Hour they have not been able to assign who was the Son of *Jeconiah*, whom God wrote *childless*; nor to shew any solid Reason, why, if *Jeconiah* had any natural Issue of his own, the Crown and Sceptre of *Judah* came to be devolved upon the Line of *Nathan*, as it

* Note that those four Sons of David by Bathsheba mentioned in 1 Chron. iii. 5. are not there set down according to the order of their Birth. For Solomon, though last named, was certainly born first; and Nathan (as he is generally reckoned) immediately next.

actually was in *Salathiel* and his Successors. Add to this (which is a thing well worth observing) that although it is frequently said in Scripture, that the *Messiah* should descend from *David*, yet it is never said that he should descend from *Solomon*. For though in 1 *Chron.* xxii. 10. it is said of *Solomon*, that God would establish the Throne of his Kingdom over Israel for ever, yet it is not said, that he would establish it in his Seed or Line; and besides, the Kingdom, here spoken of and intended, was the *Spiritual Kingdom* over the Church of God, typified in that *Temporal* one of *Solomon*: Which *Spiritual Kingdom* was establish'd only in the Person of the *Messias*, whom we believe to have been *Jesus* of *Nazareth*, the Great King and Head of the Church, *God blessed for ever*.

34.

The *Third Proposition* is this, That the Crown of *Judah* being now come into the *Line of Nathan* in *Salathiel*, (whose immediate Son was *Pedaiah* (though not mentioned in the Succession, because he died before his Father's Assumption to the Crown) and next to *Salathiel*, the great and renowned *Zorobabel*;) forasmuch as *St. Matthew* and *Luke* agree from *Jechoniah* to *Zorobabel*; (af-

ter whom they divide, each ascribing to him a different Successor, *viz.* one of them *Abiud*, and the other *Rhesa*) we are rationally to suppose, that these two were the Sons of *Zorobabel*: and that from *Abiud* the elder Brother (who only had a Right to the Crown and Kingdom) *lineally* descended *Joseph*, according to the Calculation of *St. Matthew*; and that from *Rhesa* the younger Brother, descended *Mary*, of whom *Jesus* was born, according to *St. Luke's* Description: For tho' in the above-mentioned third *Chap.* of *1 Chron.* (where there is an account given of *Zorobabel's* Sons) there occur not the Names of *Abiud* and *Rhesa*; yet it being common with the *Jews* for one Man sometimes to have *two Names*, there is Ground enough for us, without any Presumption, to believe and conclude that it so happened here.

4.

The *Fourth Proposition* is this, That it was the Custom of the *Jews* not to reckon the *Woman by Name* in her Pedigree, but to reckon the *Husband* in right of his *Wife*. For which Reason *Joseph* is twice reckoned, *viz.* *First* in his own Right by *St. Matthew*; and, *Secondly* in his *Wife Mary's* Right by *St. Luke*. For *Mary* was properly the Daughter of *Eli*; and

and *Joseph* who is there reckoned after him, is so reckoned not as his *Natural Son*, but as his *Son-in-Law*, instead of his Wife *Mary*, according to that Custom of the *Jews*: Whereupon it is noted by *Chemnitius*, that *St. Luke* doth not say that *Joseph* was the *Son of Eli*, or *Eli* begat *Joseph*, as *St. Matthew* precisely doth, that *Jacob* begat *Joseph*, but τῆ ἑλὶ, who was of *Eli*, that is, was related to him, and belonged to his Family, viz. as his *Son-in-Law*. Nor ought any to object against *Mary's* being the *Daughter of Eli*, that ancient and received Tradition, which reports her the *Daughter of Joachim* and *Anna*; for, as the Learned Bishop *Mountague* observes, *Eli* and *Joachim*, however they are two Words, (and very different) are yet but one Name, and signify but one Person; *Eli* being but ἑλιοκορησικόν, a diminutive of *Eliakim*, and *Eliakim* the same with *Jehojachim* or *Joachim*, as appears from 2 *Kings* xxiii. 34. and 2 *Chron.* xxxvi. 4. quoting withal two noted Jewish Rabbies, * viz. *Macana Ben Nehemie*, and Rabbi *Hacadosh*, in Confirmation of the same, and with particular Application of it to the Father of the *Blessed Virgin*, there

* *Acts and Monuments of the Church*, p. 522:

pointed out by them as the Mother of the *Messias*.

5.

The *fifth and last Proposition* is this, That although *Jesus* of *Nazareth* naturally descended only from *Mary*, yet he derives not his Title to the Crown and Kingdom of the Jews originally by the Line of *Mary*, (forasmuch as she sprang from the Line of *Rhesa* the younger Son of *Zorobabel*) but received that from *Joseph*, who was of the elder Line by *Abiud*; which Line of *Abiud* falling in *Joseph*, as having no Issue, the Right of Inheritance devolved upon one of the younger Line, viz. upon *Mary*, and consequently upon *Jesus* her Son and legal Heir. From whence there rises this unanswerable Argument, both against the Opinion of those who affirm *Joseph* to have had other Children by a former Wife; as also against that old *Heresy* of *Helvidius*, who against the general and constant Sense of the Church, denied the perpetual Virginity of *Mary*, affirming that *Joseph* had other Children by her after the Birth of *Jesus*. *Spanhemius* in his *Dubia Evangelica*, concludes against the Opinion of *Helvidius* (which I much marvel at) merely upon the account of Decency and Congruity, as judging

ing it more fuitable and agreeable to that honourable Esteem we ought to have of our Blessed Saviour's Mother, to hold that after his Birth she remained a perpetual Virgin. But I add, that to assert so, seems not only decent, but of as absolute Necessity, as that *Jesus Christ the Messias* was to be of right King of the *Jews*. For had *Joseph* had any Children either by *Mary*, or any other Wife, they as coming from the elder Line of *Abiud* by *Joseph* their Father, must have claimed the Inheritance of the Kingdom in his Right, and not *Jesus* the Son of *Mary*, who descended from a younger Line, and so could not legally inherit, but upon default of Issue from *Joseph* the only remaining Heir of the elder: For this was the Law of *Moses*, which in this case would have barr'd *Jesus* from a Title to the Kingdom of the *Jews*. But we know *Jesus* came to fulfil the Law in every Part and Tittle of it; and therefore would never have own'd himself King of the *Jews*, contrary to the express Injunctions and Tenour of it. For though it must be confessed that the Gospel makes mention of the *Brothers* and *Sisters* of *Jesus*, yet it is known to be most usual in the *Jewish* Language to call any collateral Kindred, as *Cousins* and *Cousin-germans* by

that Name. And Antiquity reports the Virgin *Mary* to have had two Sisters, the Children of which might very well be called the *Brethren of Jesus*. So that from hence there can be no Necessity of granting that *Jesus* had any Brother or Sister either by his Mother *Mary*, or his reputed and legal Father *Joseph*.

And thus I have endeavoured to make out our Blessed Saviour's Descent from the Line of *David*. But as for that Opinion which asserts him to have been of the Tribe of *Levi*, because his Mother *Mary* was Cousin to *Elizabeth* who was of that Tribe, it is very weak and groundless. For no Man asserts *Jesus* to have been so of the House of *David* as to exclude all Relation to other Tribes and Families, with which by mutual Marriages he might well contract a Kindred; it being prohibited to none but Heiresses to marry out of their own Family. And as for another Opinion, which (in order to the making of Christ a Priest) affirms *Nathan* the Son of *David*, from whom Christ descended, to have been a Priest, as *Solomon* was a King, and so to have founded a *Sacerdotal* Line as *Solomon* did a *Royal*; this being a Conceit both so groundless in itself, and withal so expressly

ly contradicted by the Scripture, which in *Heb. vii. 13.* so positively affirms, that *no Man of the Tribe of Judah ever gave Attendance at the Altar*; I say, upon this Account it deserves no further Thought, and much less Confutation.

Now to sum up all that has been delivered, it briefly amounts to thus much, that the Royal Line of *David* by *Solomon* being extinct in *Jeconiah*, the Crown and Kingdom passed into the immediately younger Line of *Nathan* (another Son of *David*) in *Salathiel* and *Zorobabel*; which *Zorobabel* having two Sons, *Abiud* and *Rhesa*, the Royal Dignity descended of Right upon the Line of *Abiud*, of which *Joseph* was the last, who marrying the Virgin *Mary*, which sprung from the Line of *Rhesa* the younger Son of *Zerobabel*, and withal having no Issue himself, his Right passes into the Line of *Mary*, being the next of Kin, and by that means upon *Jesus* her Son. Whereupon he was both *naturally* the Son of *David*, and also *legally* the King of the *Jews*; which latter is accounted to us by *St. Matthew*, as the former is by *St. Luke*; who delivers down the Pedigree of *Mary* the Mother of *Jesus*, and Daughter of *Eli*: tho' *Joseph* her Husband only stands there named ac-

according to the known Way of the *Jews* computing their *Genealogies*.

And this to me seems a most clear, full, and manifest Deduction of our Saviour's Pedigree from *David*, which yet I shall further confirm with this one Consideration ; that whatsoever Cavils the modern *Jews*, and others make now a-days against the *Genealogies* recorded by the *Evangelists* ; yet the *Jews* their Contemporaries, who were most nice and exactly skilful in Things of this nature, and withal most maliciously bent against Christ, and Christianity, never offered to quarrel against, or invalidate the Accounts they have given us of this Particular ; which had they been faulty, the *Jews* would most certainly have done ; this giving them so vast an Advantage against us. And this Consideration alone, were we now not able particularly to clear these Matters, is of that Weight and Substance, that, so far as Terms of moral Certainty can demonstrate a thing, it ought with every sober and judicious Person to have even the Force of a Demonstration. But the Discussion which has already passed upon this Subject will afford us Ground firm enough for the most rational and impartial Belief to stand upon. However, if any one knows some
other

other way of clearing this great Article of our Faith, which may better accord all Difficulties, and lie open to fewer and lesser Exceptions, he will do a worthy Service to the Christian Religion to produce it, and none shall be more thankful to him for it than myself.

Having thus finish'd the second Part of my Text, which speaks *Christ the Off-spring of David*, according to his Human Nature; as the *first* declared him the *Root of David* in respect of his Divine, I shall descend now to that

Third and last Part of the Text, which represents him to us under the glorious Denomination of *the bright and Morning Star*:

Three Things there are considerable in a Star.

First, The Nature of its Substance.

Secondly, The Manner of its Appearance.

Thirdly, The Quality of its Operation.

In every one of which respects Christ bears a lively Resemblance to it.

First, and First for the Nature of its Substance. It is commonly defined in Philosophy the purest, and most refined Part of its Orb; by which it is distinguished from all those Meteors and shining Nothings that

ascend no further than the Air, how high soever the Mistake and Ignorance of vulgar Eyes may place them, as also from the other Parts of the Celestial Sphere or Orb in which it is. In like manner, was not Christ the purest and the noblest Part of the World, which was the Sphere and Orb wherein, during his Humiliation, he was pleased to move? he was the very Flower, the Extract and Quintessence of Mankind, uniting all the Perfections of it in his Person, without any Alloy or Mixture of Imperfection. Upon which Account *David* by the Spirit of Prophecy calls him *fairer than the Sons of Men*, as being *anointed with the Oil of Gladness above his Fellows*: that is, the Graces of the Spirit descended not upon him in those minute Portions, and stinted Measures that they do upon other Mortals. Their Drop was nothing to his Ocean.

And to shew yet further of how pure a Make he was, we know him to have been wholly untouch'd with any thing of that original Stain, which has universally sunk into the Nature of all Men besides. He was a *second Adam* without any of the Guilt contracted by the *first*; he was born a *Man* without any *Human* Imperfections; a Rose without

out Thorns. He was nothing but Purity itself; Virtue cloathed in a Body, and *Innocence incarnate*. So blameless and free from all Shadow of Guilt, that the very *Jews* his bitter Enemies gave him this Testimony, *that he had done all things well*; Mark vii. 37. And even *Pilate* his unjust Judge, tho' he took from him his *Life*, yet left him his *Innocence*, declaring openly, *that he found in him no Fault at all*, John xvii. 38.

There are Spots (they say) not in the Moon only, but also in the Face of the Sun itself: But *this Star* was of a greater, and more unblemish'd Lustre; for not the least *Spot* was ever discover'd in it: tho' Malice and Envy itself were the Perspectives thro' which most of the World beheld it. And as it is the Privilege of the Celestial Luminaries to receive no Tincture, Sullage or Defilement from the most noisom Sinks and Dunghills here below, but to maintain a pure, untainted, Virgin Light in spite of all their Exhalations: So our Saviour shined in the World with such an invincible Light of Holiness, as suffered nothing of the corrupt Manners and depraved Converse of Men to rub the least Filth or Pollution upon him. He was not capable of receiving any Impression from all the Sin

and Villany which like a Contagion fastened upon every Soul round about him. In a word, he was pure, righteous, and undefiled, not only *above the World*, but what is more, *in the midst of it*.

Secondly, The next thing considerable in a Star is the Manner of its Appearance. It appears but small, and of a little Compass: So that altho' our Reason assures us that it is bigger than the whole Earth, yet our Sight would seem to persuade us that it is not much bigger than a Diamond sparkling upon the Circle of a little Ring. And now how appositely does this Consideration also suit the Condition of our Saviour! who both in his rising and shining upon the World seemed in the Eyes of all Men but a small and a contemptible thing; a poor, helpless Man; first living upon a Trade, and then upon something that was much meaner, namely, upon Alms. Whereupon, what slight Thoughts had they of his Person! as if he had been no more than an *ordinary Soul*, join'd to an *ordinary Body*; and so sent into the World to take his Course in the common Lot of Mortality. They little dream'd of a Diety, and of something greater than the World lodged in that little Tabernacle of his Flesh. So that notwithstanding

standing his being the Great and Almighty God, the Lord of Hosts, and King of Kings, yet the generality of Men took him for but a mean Person, and such another living Piece of Clay as themselves. *And* what could be the Cause of his being thought so, but the same that makes Stars to be thought little things, even their *Height* and vast *Distance* from poor, earthly Spectators? So the Glories of Christ's Person were by the very Transcendency of their Height placed above the Reach and Ken of a mortal Apprehension. And God must yet elevate our *Reason* by *Revelation*, or the Son of God himself will still seem but a small thing in our Eyes. For carnal Reason measures the greatest Things by all the Disadvantages of their outward Appearance, just as little Children judge of the Proportion of the Sun and Moon, reckoning that to be the Smallness of the Object which is only the Distance of the Beholder, or the Weakness of the Organ.

Thirdly, The third and last thing to be considered in a Star is, the Quality of its Operation, which is twofold. *First*, open and visible by its Light. *Secondly*, secret and invisible by its Influence. And,

First,

First, This Morning Star operates by its Brightness and Lustre; in respect of which it is the first Fruits of Light, and, as it were, Day in its Minority: clearing the heavenly Stage, and chasing away all other Stars, till it reigns in the Firmament alone. And now to make good the Comparison between Christ and this, we shall shew how he by his Appearance chased away many Things much admired and gazed at by the World, and particularly these three.

First, Much of the Heathenish Worship and Superstition, which not only like a Cloud, but like a black and a dark Night, had for a long Time covered the Face of the whole Earth, and made such Triumphs over the Reason of Mankind, that in nothing more appeared the Ruins and Decays of our Nature. And it was unquestionably the greatest and severest Instance of the Divine Wrath upon Man for his original Apostacy from God, thus to leave him confounded and uncertain in the Management of the greatest Affair and Concernment of his Soul, his Religion: So that, as it was then ordered, it was nothing else but a strange confused Compound of Absurdity and Impiety. For as to the Object of their Worship, the Apostle tells

tells us, that they *worshipped Devils*, 1 Cor. x. 20. and elsewhere they worshipped *Men like themselves*. Nay, *Birds and Beasts*, and *creeping things*; and, as Historians tell us, *Roots and Herbs*, *Leeks and Onions*; yea, and their own base Desires and Affections; Deifying and building Temples to Lust, Anger, Revenge, and the like. In summ, they worshipped all Things but God, who only of all Things was to have been worshipped.

Now upon the coming of Christ, very much, tho' not all, of this idolatrous Trumpery and Superstition was driven out of the World: So that many of the Oracles (those great Instruments of Delusion) ceased about the Time of our Saviour's Nativity. The Divine Power then dispossessing the Devil of his greater Temples, as well as of his lesser, the *Bodies of Men*: and so casting down the Throne of Fallacy and Superstition, by which he had so long enslaved the Vassal World; and led it captive at his Pleasure.

Secondly, As the *Heathenish false* Worship, so also the *Jewish imperfect* Worship began to be done away by the coming of Christ. The *Jews* indeed drew their Religion from a purer Fountain than the *Gentiles*; God himself being the Author of it, and so both ennobling

bling and warranting it with the Stamp of Divine Authority. Yet God was pleased to limit his Operations in this Particular to the Narrowness and small Capacities of the Subject which he had to deal with; and therefore the *Jews* being naturally of a gross and sensual Apprehension of Things, had the Oeconomy of their Religion, in many Parts of it, brought down to their Temper, and were trained to *Spirituals* by the Ministry of *Carnal Ordinances*. Which yet God was pleased to advance in their Signification, by making them Types and Shadows of that glorious Archetype that was to come into the World, his own Son; both in *Person* and *Office* by admirable Mystery and Contrivance fitted to be the great Redeemer of Mankind. He therefore being the Person to whom all the Prophets bore witness, to whom all Ceremonies pointed, and whom all the various Types prefigured; it was but Reason that when he actually appeared in the World, all that previous Pomp and *Apparatus* should go off the Stage, and, like *Shadows*, vanish before the *Substance*. And accordingly we look upon the whole Mosaical Institution as having received its Period by Christ, as defunct and ceased, and the Church now grown up to that
Virility

Virility and Stature, as to be above the Discipline of beggarly Rudiments, and like an adult Heir passing from the Pedagogy of Tutors, to assume its full Liberty and Inheritance: For those whom *Christ makes free* are *free* indeed.

Thirdly, and lastly, All pretended false *Messiahs* vanish'd upon the Appearance of Christ the true one. A Crown will not want Pretenders to claim it, nor Usurpers, if their Power serves them, to possess it: And hereupon the Messiahship was pretended to by several Impostors: but Fallacy and Falshood being naturally weak, they still sunk and came to nothing. It must be confessed indeed, that there rose up such Counterfeits after Christ as well as before him; yet still, I think, their Defeat ought to be ascribed to his coming: Because as a Light scatters the Darknes on all sides of it: So there was such a Demonstration and Evidence given of Jesus's being the true *Messias* by his coming in the Flesh, that it cast its discovering Influence both backwards and forwards; and equally baffled and confuted the Pretences of those who went before, and of those who rose up after him: So potent and victorious is *Truth*, especially when it comes upon such

an Errand from Heaven, as *to save the World.*

Amongst those several false Messias's, it is remarkable that one called himself *Barchocab*, or the Son of a *Star*: but by his *Fall* he quickly shewed himself of a Nature far differing from this glorious *Morning Star* mentioned in the Text, which even then was *fixed in Heaven* while it *shone upon the Earth*. It was not the transitory Light of a Comet, which shines and glares for a while, and then presently vanishes into nothing, but a Light durable and immortal, and such an one as shall outlive the Sun, and *shine and burn* when Heaven and Earth and the whole World shall be reduced to Cinders.

Having thus shewn how Christ resembled a *Star* in the respect of his external visible Shinnings to the World, by which he drove away much of the Heathenish Idolatry, all the *Jewish Ceremonies*, together with the Pretences of all counterfeit Messias's, as the Light dispels and chaces away the Darknes. Come we now in the

Second place to see how he resembles a *Star* also in respect of its *internal* secret Operation and *Influence* upon all sublunary inferior Beings. And indeed this is the noblest

and the greatest part of the Resemblance. *Stars* are thought to operate powerfully even then when they do not appear; and are felt by their *Effects* when they are not seen by their *Light*. In like manner, Christ often strikes the Soul, and darts a secret Beam into the Heart, without alarming either the Eye or Ear of the Person wrought upon. And this is called both properly and elegantly by *S. Peter*, 2 Ep. i. 19. *the Day-star's arising in our Hearts*; that is, by the secret silent Workings of his Spirit he illuminates the Judgment, bends the Will and the Affections, and at last changes the whole Man: and this is that powerful but *still Voice* by which he speaks eternal Peace to the Souls of his *Elect* in the admirable but mysterious Work of their *Conversion*. So that our great Concern and Enquiry should be, whether those heavenly Beams have reached us inwardly, and pierced into our *Minds*, as well as shone in our *Faces*; and whether the Influence of this *Star* upon us has been such as to govern and draw us after it, as it did the *Wise Men*, and thereby both *make* and *prove* us *wise* unto *Salvation*. For Light is operative as well as beautiful, and by working upon the Spirits affects the *Heart* as well as pleases the *Eye*. Above all things therefore

Let us be strict and impartial in this Search, where the thing searched for is of such Consequence. For since there are *false Lights*, *Light* itself should *be tried*; and if we would know infallibly whether it be the *Light from above*, by which we are led and live; and whether this *Morning-Star* has had its full Efficacy *upon*, or rather *within* us; Let us see whether or no it has scattered the Clouds and Darkness of our spiritual Ignorance, and the noisom Fogs of our Lusts and vile Affections. Do we live as the *Sons of Light*? Do we walk as *in the Day*; without stumbling into the Mire of our old Sins? These are the only sure Evidences that Christ is not only a *Star* in himself, but such an one also to us. For when the *Day-spring from on high visits us* truly and effectually, it first takes us out of *these Shadows of Death*, and then guides our Feet into the *Ways of Peace*.

To which God of his Mercy vouchsafe to bring us all; To whom be rendred and ascribed, as is most due, all Honour, &c.

(293)

JESUS of NAZARETH *proved the
true and only promised* Messiah.

I N A
S E R M O N

Preached at

St. MARY'S, Oxon.

Before the

U N I V E R S I T Y,
O N
CHRISTMAS-DAY, 1665.

JOHN i. 11.

*He came to his own, and his own re-
ceived him not.*

I C A N N O T think it directly requisite to
the Prosecution of these Words (nor will
the Time allotted for it permit) to assert
and vindicate the foregoing Verses from
the perverse Interpretations of that false

Pretender to Reason and real Subverter of all Religion, Socinus, who in the Exposition of this Chapter, together with some part of the 8th (both of them taken from the posthumous Papers of his Uncle *Lelius*) laid the Foundation of that great *Babel* of Blasphemies, with which he afterwards so amused and pestered the Christian World, and under Colour of *reforming* and refining (forsooth) the best of Religions, has employed the utmost of his Skill and Art to bring Men indeed to believe none. And therefore no small Cause of Grief must it needs be to all pious Minds that such horrid Opinions should find so ready a Reception and so fatal a Welcome in so many Parts of the World as they have done; considering both what they tend to, and *whom* they come from. For they tend only to give us such a Christ and Saviour, as neither the Prophets nor Evangelists *know* or *speak* any thing of. And as for their Original, if we would trace them up to that, thro' some of the chief Branches of their infamous Pedigree, we must carry them a little backward from hence; first to the forementioned *Faustus Socinus* and his Uncle *Lelius*, and from them to *Gentilis*, and then to *Servetus*, and so thro' a long Interval to *Mahomet* and his Sect, and from
them

them to *Photinus*, and from him to *Arius*, and from *Arius* to *Paulus Samosatenus*, and from him to *Ebion* and *Cerintbus*, and from them to *Simon Magus*, and so in a direct Line to the *Devil* himself: under whose Conduct in the several Ages of the Church these Wretches successively have been some of the most notorious Opposers of the Divinity of our Saviour, and would undoubtedly have overthrown the Belief of it in the World, could they by all their Arts of wresting, corrupting and false interpreting the holy Text, have brought the Scriptures to speak for them; which they could never yet do. And amongst all the Scriptures no one has stood so directly and immovably in their way as this first Chapter of St. *John's* Gospel, a Chapter carrying in it so bright and full an Assertion of the Eternal Godhead of the Son, that a Man must put common Sense and Reason extremely upon the Rack before he can give any tolerable Exposition of it to the contrary. So that an eminent *Dutch* Critick (who could find in his Heart (as much as in him lay) to interpret away that noble and pregnant Place of Scripture, *John* vii. 58. *Before Abraham was I am*, from being any Proof at all of Christ's Eternal *Pre-existence* to his Incarna-

tion, and so to give up one of the main Forts of the Christian Religion to the *Socinians*) has yet been forced by the over-powering Evidence of this Chapter (notwithstanding all his Shifts, too manifestly shewing what he would be at) to express himself upon this Subject more agreeably to the Sense of the Catholick Church, than in many other Places he had done. And well indeed might he, even for Shame itself, do so much, when it is certain that he might have done a great deal more. For such a commanding Majesty is there in every Period almost of this Chapter, that it has forced even the Heathens and *Atheists* (Persons who valued themselves not a little upon their Philosophy) to submit to the controlling Truth of the Propositions here delivered, and instead of contradicting or disputing, to *fall down and Worship*. For the things here uttered were Mysteries kept hid from Ages, and such as God had for Four thousand Years together, by all the wise Arts and Methods of his Providence, been preparing the World for, before it could be fit or ripe to receive them: and therefore a most worthy Subject they must needs have been for this beloved Apostle to impart to Mankind, who having so long lain in the Bo-

som

ſom of Truth itſelf, received all Things from that Great Original by more intimate and immediate Communications than any of the reſt of the Apoſtles were honoured with. In a word, *he was of the Cabinet*; and therefore no Wonder if he ſpoke *Oracles*.

In the Text we have theſe two Parts.

Fiſt, Chriſt's coming into the World, in thoſe Words, *he came to his own*.

Secondly, Chriſt's Entertainment being come, in thoſe other Words, *his own received him not*.

In the former of which there being an Account given us of one of the greateſt and moſt ſtupendous Actions that the World was ever yet Witneſs of; there cannot, I ſuppoſe, be a truer Meaſure taken of the Nature of it, than by a diſtinct Conſideration of the ſeveral Circumſtances belonging to it, which are theſe.

Fiſt, The *Perſon* who came.

Secondly, The *Condition* from which he came.

Thirdly, The *Perſons to whom* he came.
And,

Fourthly, and laſtly, The *Time* of his coming.

Of all which in their Order. And,

1. Fiſt

1. First for the *Person who* came. It was the Second Person in the glorious Trinity, the ever-blessed and eternal Son of God, concerning whom it is a Miracle and a Kind of Paradox to our Reason (considering the Condition of his Person) how he could be *said to come* at all: for since all *coming* is Motion or Progression from a Place in which *we were*, to a Place in which *we were not* before; and since Infinity implies an actual Comprehension of, and a Presence to all Places, it is hard to conceive how he who was God could be said to come any whither, whose *Infinity* had made all *Progression* to, or Acquisition of a new Place impossible. But Christ, who delighted to mingle every *Mercy* with *Miracle* and Wonder, took a finite Nature into the Society and Union of his Person; whereupon what was impossible to a *Divine Nature*, was rendered very possible to a *Divine Person*; which could rightfully and properly entitle itself to all the respective Actions and Properties of either Nature comprehended within its Personality: So that being made Man, he could do all things that Man could do, *except only Sin*. Every thing that was purely Human, and had nothing of any sinful Deficiency or Turpitude cleaving to it, fell within
within

within the Verge and Compass of his Actions: But now was there ever any Wonder comparable to this! to behold Divinity thus cloathed in Flesh! the Creator of all things humbled not only to the *Company*, but also to the *Cognition* of his Creatures! It is as if we should imagine the whole World not only represented *upon*, but also contained *in* one of our little artificial Globes; or the Body of the *Sun* envelop'd in a *Cloud* as big as a *Man's Hand*; all which would be look'd upon as astonishing Impossibilities; and yet as short of the other, as the greatest Finite is of an Infinite, between which the Disparity is immeasurable. For that God should thus in a manner transform Himself, and subdue and master all his Glories to a Possibility of human Apprehension and Converse, the best Reason would have thought it such a thing as God could *not do*, had it not seen it *actually done*. It is (as it were) to cancel the essential Distances of Things, to remove the Bounds of Nature, to bring Heaven and Earth, and (which is more) both Ends of the *Contradiction* together.

And thereupon some, who think it an Imputation upon their Reason, to believe any thing but what they demonstrate, (which
is

is no Thanks to them at all) have invented several strange Hypotheses, and Salvo's to clear up these things to their Apprehensions: As that the Divine Nature was never *personally* united to the human, but only passed thro' it in a kind of imaginary, phantastick Way; that is, (to speak plainly) in some way or other, which neither *Scripture, Sense* nor *Reason* know any thing of. And others have by one bold Stroke cut off all such Relation of it to the Divine Nature, and *in much another Sense*, than that of the Psalmist, made Christ *altogether such an one as themselves*, that is, a meer Man. $\psi\iota\lambda\omicron\varsigma\ \acute{\alpha}\nu\theta\rho\omega\pi\omicron\varsigma$, for *Socinus* would needs be as good a Man as his Saviour.

But this Opinion, whatsoever ground it may have got in this latter Age of the Church, yet no sooner was it vented and defended by *Photinus* Bishop of *Sirmium*, but it was immediately crush'd, and universally rejected by the Church: So that although several other Heresies had their Course, and were but at length extinguished, and not without some Difficulty, yet this, like an indigested Meteor, appeared and disappeared almost at the same time. However *Socinus* beginning where *Photinus* had long before left off, lick'd up his

his deserted forlorn Opinion, and lighting upon worse times has found much better Success.

But is it true that Christ *came* into the World? Then sure, I am apt to think, that this is a solid Inference, *that He* had an Existence, and a Being *before He came* hither; *since every Motion or Passage from one Place or Condition to another supposes the Thing or Person so moving to have actually existed under both Terms; to wit, as well under that from which, as that to which he passes.* But if Christ had nothing but an human Nature, which never existed till it was in the World, how could that possibly be said to *come into* the World? The Fruit that grows upon a Tree, and so had the first Moment of its Existence there, cannot with any Propriety or Truth of Speech be said to have *come to* that Tree, since that must suppose it to have been somewhere else before. I am far from building so great and so concerning a Truth merely upon the stress of this way of Expression; yet till the Reasoning grounded upon it be disproved, I suppose it is not therefore to be despised, though it may be seconded with much better.

But the Men, whom we contend with, seem hugely injurious to him, whom they call their Saviour, while they even *crucify* him in his *Divinity*, which the *Jews* could never do; making his very Kindness an Argument against his Prerogative. For his condescending to be a Man makes them infer that he is no more; and *Faith* must stop here, because *Sight* can go no further. But if a Prince shall deign to be familiar and to converse with those upon whom he might trample, shall his Condescension therefore unking him? And his Familiarity rob him of his Royalty? The Case is the same with Christ. Men cannot persuade themselves that a *Deity* and *Infinity* should lye within so narrow a Compass as the contemptible Dimensions of an Human Body: That Omnipotence, Omniscience and Omnipresence should be ever wrapt in Swadling Clothes, and abased to the homely Usages of a Stable and a Manger: That the glorious Artificer of the whole Universe, *Who spread out the Heavens like a Curtain, and laid the Foundations of the Earth* could ever turn Carpenter, and exercise an inglorious Trade in a little Cell. They cannot imagine, that *He who commands the Cattle upon a Thousand Hills, and takes up the Ocean*

Ocean in the Hollow of his Hand could be subject to the meannesses of Hunger and Thirst, and be afflicted in all his Appetites. That he who once *created*, and at present *governs*, and shall hereafter *judge* the World, shall be abused in all his Concerns and Relations, be *scourged*, *spit upon*, *mock'd*, and at last *crucified*. All which are Passages which lie extremely cross to the Notions and Conceptions that Reason has framed to itself that high and impassible Perfection that resides in the Divine Nature. For it is natural to Men to be very hardly brought to judge things *to be* any more, than what they *appear*; and it is also as natural to them to measure all Appearances by Sense, or at the furthest by Reason; though neither of them is a competent Judge of the Things which we are here discoursing of.

2. The second thing to be consider'd is the State or Condition *from which* Christ came; and that was from the Bosom of his Father, from the incomprehensible, surpassing Glories of the Godhead, from an eternal Enjoyment of an absolute, uninterrupted Bliss and Pleasure, in the mutual, ineffable Intercourses between him and his Father. The Heaven of Heavens was his Habitation, and Legions of Cherubims and Seraphims his humble and constant

constant Attendants. Yet he was pleased to disrobe himself of all this Magnificence, to lay aside his Sceptres and his Glories, and in a Word to *empty himself* as far as the essential Fulness of the Deity could be capable of such a Dispensation.

And now, if by the poor Measures and Proportions of a Man, we may take an Estimate of this great Action, we shall quickly find how irksome it is to Flesh and Blood *to have been happy*, to descend some Steps lower, to exchange the Estate of a Prince for that of a Peasant, and to view our Happiness only by the help of Memory, and long Reflections. For how hard a Task must Obedience needs be to a Spirit accustomed to Rule, and to Dominion! how uneasy must the Leather and the Frieze sit upon the Shoulder that used to shine with the Purple and the Ermin! All Change must be grievous to an Estate of absolute, entire, unmingled Happiness; but then to change to the lowest Pitch, and that at first, without inuring the Mind to the Burthen by gradual, intermediate Lessenings and Declensions, this is the sharpest and most afflicting Calamity that Human Nature can be capable of. And yet what is all this to Christ's Humiliation? He who tumbles from a Tower

surely has a greater Blow than he who slides from a Mole-Hill. And we may as well compare the falling of a Crumb from the Table to the falling of a Star from the Firmament, as think the Abasement of an *Alexander* from his Imperial Throne, and from the Head of all the *Persian* and *Macedonian* Greatness to the Condition of the meanest Scullion that followed his Camp, *any ways comparable to the Descension of him who was the Brightness of his Father's Glory, and the express Image of his Person, to the Condition of a Man, much less of a Servant, and a crucified Malefactor.* For so was Christ treated: This was the strange Leap that he made from the greatest Height to the lowest Bottom: Concerning which it might be well pronounced the greatest Wonder in the World, that he should *be able* so far to humble himself, were it not yet a greater that he could *be willing*. And thus much for the second Circumstance.

3. The Third is, The Persons *to whom he came*, expressed by that endearing Term *his own*; and this in a more peculiar, advanced Sense of Propriety. For all the Nations of the World were *his own* by *Creation*, and what is consequent to it by the Right of *Possession* and absolute Dominion; But the *Jews*

were his own by fraternal Right of Conſanguinity. He was pleaſed to derive his Humanity from the ſame Stock, to give them the Honour of being able to call the God of Heaven, and the Saviour of the World their *Brother*.

They were *his own* alſo by the Right of *Churchſhip*, as ſelected and enclosed by God from amidſt all other Nations, to be the ſeat of his Worſhip, and the great Conſervatory of all the ſacred Oracles and means of Salvation. The *Gentiles* might be called God's own, as a Man calls his Hall or his Parlour his own, which yet others paſs through and make uſe of; but the *Jews* were ſo, as a Man accounts his Cloſet, or his Cabinet his own; that is, by a peculiar, incommunicable Deſtination of it to his own uſe.

Thoſe who have that hardy Curioſity, as to examine the Reaſon of God's Actions, (which Men of Reaſon ſhould ſtill ſuppoſe,) wonder that, ſince the Deſign of Chriſt's Coming was univerſal and extending to all Mankind, he ſhould addreſs himſelf to ſo inconfiderable a Spot of the World, as that of *Paleſtine*, confining the Scene of all his Life and Actions to ſuch a ſmall handful of Men; whereas it would have ſeemed much more ſuitable

suitable to the Purposes of his Coming, to have made *Rome*, at that time the *Metropolis* of the Western World, and holding an Intercourse with all Nations, the Place of his Nativity and Abode: As when a Prince would promulge a Law, because he cannot with any Convenience do it in all Places; therefore he does it in the most eminent and conspicuous. To which Argument frequently urged by the Enemies of Christianity, he who would seek for a satisfactory Answer from any thing but the Absoluteness of God's Sovereignty, will find himself defeated in his Attempt. It was the mere result of the Divine Good Pleasure, that the Fountain of Life should derive a Blessing to all Nations, from so narrow and contemptible an Head.

And here, I cannot but think it observable, that all the Passages of the whole Work of Man's Redemption carry in them the Marks, not only of Mercy, but of Mercy acting by an unaccountable Sovereignty: And that for this very Reason (as may be supposed) to convince the World that it was purely Mercy on God's Part, without any thing of Merit on Man's, that did all. For when God reveals a Saviour to some few, but denies him to more; sends him to a People

despised, but passes over Nations victorious, honourable, and renowned, he thereby gives the World to know, that his own Will is the Reason of his Proceedings. For it is worth Remarking, that there is nothing that befalls Men equally and alike, but they are prone to ascribe it either *to Nature or Merit*. But where the Plea of the Receivers is equal, and yet the Dispensation of the Benefits vastly unequal, there Men are taught, that the thing received *is Grace*; and that they have no Claim to it, but the Courtesy of the Dispenser, and the Largess of Heaven; which cannot be question'd, because it waters my Field, while it scorches and dries up my Neighbour's. If the Sun is pleased to shine upon a Turf, and to gild a Dunghil, when perhaps he never looks into the Bed-Chamber of a Prince, we cannot yet accuse him for Partiality. That short, but most significant Saying in the *Evangelist*, *May I not do what I will with my own?* *Matt. xx. 15.* being a full and solid Answer to all such Objections.

4. The *fourth* and *last* Circumstance of Christ's Coming related *to the time* of it: He came to the *Jews*, when they were in their lowest and worst Condition, and that in a double Respect, *National* and *Ecclesiastical*.

1. And

1. And first upon a Civil or *National* Account. It was not then with them as in those triumphant Days of *Solomon*, when for Plenty, Riches, and Grandeur, they had little Cause either to make Friends or to fear Enemies, but shone as the Envy and Terror of all the surrounding Neighbourhood. At the best now they were but a *Remnant*, and a piece of an often scattered, conquered, and captivated Nation: But two Tribes of twelve, and those under the *Roman* Yoke, tributary and oppressed, and void of any other Privilege but only to obey, and to be fleeced quietly by whosoever was appointed their Governour. This was their Condition: And could there be any Inducement upon the common Principles and Methods of Kindness to visit them in that Estate? which could be nothing else but only to share with them in Servitude, and to bear a Part in their Oppression.

The Measure of Men's Kindness and Visits bestowed upon one another, is usually the Prosperity, the Greatness, and the Interest of the Persons whom they visit; that is, because their Favour is profitable, and their Ill-will formidable; in a word, Men *visit others* because they are *kind to themselves*. But whoever saw Coaches and Liveries thronging at

the Door of the Orphan or the Widow (unless peradventure a rich one) or before the House or Prison of an afflicted, decayed Friend? No, at such a time we account them not so much *as our own*, that unfriends and unbROTHERS, and dissolves all Relations, and 'tis seldom the Dialect of *my good Friend*, any longer than it is *my great Friend*.

But it was another sort of Love that warmed the Breast of our Saviour, he visits his Kindred, nay he makes them so in the lowest Ebb of all their outward Enjoyments. When to be a *Jew* was a Name of Disgrace, and to be *circumcised* a Mark of Infamy: So that they might very well be a *peculiar People*, not only because God separated them from all other Nations, but because all other Nations separated themselves from them.

Secondly, Consider them upon an *Ecclesiastical* Account, and so we shall find them as corrupted for a Church as they were despised for a Nation. Even in the Days of the Prophet *Isaiab*, i. 21. it was his Complaint, *that the faithful City was become an Harlot*; that is, notable for two things, as Harlots usually are, Paint and Impurity. Which growing Corruption, in all the intervening Time, from thence to the coming of Christ, received

received a proportionable Improvement: So that their Teachers, and most seraphick, adored Doctors of the Law, were still ranked with Hypocrites. For the Text of *Moses* was used only to authorize a false Comment, and to warrant the Impiety of a perverse Interpretation. Still for all their Villanies and Hypocrisies they borrowed a *Veil from Moses*; and his Name was quoted and pretended as a glorious Expedient to countenance and varnish over well contrived Corruptions: Nay, and they proceeded so high, that those who vouched the Authority of *Moses* most, deny the being of immaterial Substances, and the Immortality of the Soul, in which is wrapt up the very Spirit and vital Breath of all Religions: And these Men had formed themselves into a standing and considerable Sect called the *Sadduces*; so considerable, that one of them once stepped into the High-Priesthood: So that whether you look upon the *Sadduces* or the *Pharisees*, they had brought the *Jewish* Church to that pass, that they *established Iniquity by a Law*, or which is worse, turned the *Law* itself into *Iniquity*.

Now the State of things being thus amongst the *Jews* at the Time of Christ's Com-

ing, it eminently offers to us the Consideration of these two Things.

First, The invincible Strength of Christ's Love, that it should come leaping over such Mountains of Opposition, that it should triumph over so much *Jewish* Baseness and Villany, and be gracious even in spight of Malice itself. It did not *knock* at, but even *break open* their Doors. Blessing and Happiness was in a manner thrust upon them. Heaven would have took them *by Force*, as they should have *took Heaven*: So that they were fain to take Pains to rid themselves of their Happiness, and it cost them Labour and Violence to become miserable.

Secondly, It declares to us the immovable *Veracity* of God's Promise. For surely, if any thing could reverse a *Promise*, and unty the Bands of a *Decree*, it would have been that uncontrolled Impiety which then reigned in the *Jewish* Church, and that to such a degree, that the Temple itself was prophaned into a *Den of Thieves*, a Rendezvous of Higlers and Drovers, and a Place not for the *sacrificing*, but for the *selling* of Sheep and Oxen. So that God might well have forgot his Promise to his People, when they had altered the
very

very Subject of the Promise, and as much as in them lay had ceased to be his *People*.

We have here finished the first Part of the Text, and took an Account of *Christ's coming to his own*, and his coming thro' so many Obstacles: May we not therefore now expect to see him find a magnificent Reception, and a Welcome as extraordinary as his Kindness? For where should any one expect a *Welcome* if not coming to *his own*? And coming also not to charge, but to enrich them, not to share what they had, but to recover what they had lost, and in a word, to change their Temporals into Eternals, and bring an overflowing Performance and Fruition to those who had lived hitherto only upon Promise and Expectation; but it fell out much otherwise, *his own received him not*.

Nor indeed if we look further into the World shall we find this Usage so very strange or wonderful. For Kindred is not Friendship, but only an Opportunity of nearer Converse, which is the true Cause of a natural Inducement to it. It is not to have the same Blood in ones Veins, to have lain in the same Womb, or to bend the Knee to the same Father, but to have the same Inclinations, the same Affections, and the same Soul, that makes

makes the Friend. Otherwise *Jacob* may supplant *Eſau*, and *Eſau* hate and deſign the Death of *Jacob*. And we conſtantly ſee the Grand Seignior's Coronation Purple dipt in the Blood of his murdered Brethren, ſacrificed to *Reaſon* of State, or at leaſt to his own *unreaſonable* Fears and Suſpicions: But Friends ſtrive not who ſhall *kill*, but who ſhall *die* firſt. If then the Love of Kindred is ſo ſmall, ſurely the Love of Countrymen and Neighbours can promiſe but little more. *A Prophet* may without the help of his prophetick Spirit fore-ſee that he ſhall have *but little Honour in his own Country*. Men naturally malign the Greatneſs or Virtue of a Fellow Citizen, or a Domeſtick; they think the Nearneſs of it upbraids and obſcures them: It is a Trouble to have the Sun ſtill ſhining in their Faces.

And therefore the *Jews* in this followed but the common Practice of Men, whoſe Emulation uſually preys upon the next Superior in the ſame Family, Company, or Profeſſion. The bittereſt and the loudeſt *Scolding* is for the moſt part amongſt thoſe of the ſame *Street*: In ſhort, there is a kind of ill Diſpoſition in moſt Men, much reſembling that of Dogs,
they

they *bark* at what is high and remote from them, and *bite* what is *next*.

Now in this *second* Part of the Text, in which is represented the Entertainment which Christ found in the World, expressed to us by these Words, *his own received him not*, we shall consider these three things.

1. The Grounds upon which the *Jews* rejected Christ.

2. The Unreasonableness of those Grounds. And,

3. The great Arguments that they had to the contrary.

As to the first of these: To reckon up all the Pretences that the *Jews* alledge for their not acknowledging of Christ, would be as endless as the Tales and Fooleries of their Rabbies, a sort of Men noted for nothing more than two very ill Qualities, to wit, that they are still given to invent and write Lies, and those such unlikely and incredible Lies, that none can believe them but such as write them. But the Exceptions which seem to carry most of Reason and Argument with them are these two.

First, That Christ came not as a temporal Prince.

Secondly,

Secondly, That they looked upon him as an Underminer and a Destroyer of the Law of *Moses*.

1. As for the first. It was a Persuasion which had sunk into their very Veins and Marrow, a Persuasion which they built upon as the grand fundamental Article of all their Creed, that their *Messiah* should be a temporal Prince, nor can any thing beat their Posterity out of it to this Day. They fancied nothing but Triumphs and Trophies, and all the Nations of the Earth licking the Dust before them under the victorious Conduct of their *Messiah*; they expected such an one as should disenslave them from the *Roman* Yoke, make the Senate stoop to their Sanhedrim, and the Capitol do Homage to their Temple. Nay, and we find the Disciples themselves leaven'd with the same Conceit: Their Minds still ran upon the Grandeurs of an earthly Sovereignty, upon *sitting at Christ's right and left Hand in his Kingdom, banqueting and making merry at his Table*, and who should have *the greatest Office and Place* under him. So carnal were the Thoughts even of those who owned Christ for the *Messiah*; but how much more of the rest of the *Jews*, who contemp'd and hated him to the same Degree?

So that while they were feeding themselves with such Fancies and Expectations, how can we suppose that they would receive a Person bearing himself for the *Messiah*, and yet in the poor Habit and Profession of a mean Mechanick, as also preaching to them nothing but Humility, Self-denial, and a Contempt of those Glories and temporal Felicities, the Enjoyment of which they had made the very Design of their Religion? Surely the Frustration of their Hopes, and the huge Contrariety of these Things to their beloved pre-conceived Notions, could not but enrage them to the greatest Disdain and Rejection of his Person and Doctrine imaginable.

And accordingly it did so: For they scorned, persecuted, and even *spit* upon him long before his Crucifixion: And no doubt, between Rage and Derision, a thousand Flouts were thrown at him: As, what, shall we receive a thread-bare *Messiah*, a Fellow fitter to wield a Saw or an Hatchet than a Scepter? *For is not this the Carpenter's Son?* And have we not seen him in his Shop and his Cottage amongst his pitiful Kindred? And can such an one be a fit Person to step into the Throne of *David*, to redeem *Israel*, and to cope with all the *Roman* Power? No, it is absurd, unreasonable,

able, and impossible : And to be in Bondage to the *Romans* is nobler than to be freed by the Hand of such a *Deliverer*.

2. Their other grand Exception against him was, that he set himself against the Law of *Moses*, their Reverence to which was so sacred, that they judged it the unchangeable Rule of all human Actions ; and that their *Messiah* at his Coming was to impose the Observation of it upon all Nations ; and so to establish it for ever : nay, and they had an equal Reverence for all the Parts of it, as well the Judicial and Ceremonial as the Moral ; and (being naturally of a gross and a thick conception of Things) perhaps a much greater. For still we shall find them more zealous *in tything Mint, and Rue, and Cummin, and washing Pots, and Platters* (where chiefly their Mind was) than in the prime Duties of Mercy and Justice. And as for their beloved Sabbath, they placed the Celebration of it more in *doing nothing*, than in *doing good* ; and rather in sitting still, than in rescuing a Life, or saving a Soul : So that when Christ came to interpret and reduce the moral Law to its inward Vigour and Spirituality, they, whose *Soul* was of so gross a Make, that it was scarce a *Spirit*, presently defied him, as a *Sa-*

maritan, and an Impostor, and would by no means hear of such strange impracticable Notions. But when from refining and correcting their Expositions and Sense of the Moral Law, he proceeded also to foretel and declare the approaching Destruction of their Temple; and therewith a Period to be put to all their Rites and Ceremonies, they grew impatient, and could hold no longer, but sought to kill him; and thereby thought that they did God good Service, and *Moses* too: So wonderfully (it seems) were these Men concerned for God's Honour, that they had no way to shew it, but by rejecting his *Son*, out of *Deference* to his *Servant*.

We have seen here the two great Exceptions which so block'd up the Minds and Hearts of the *Jewish* Nation against *Jesus Christ* their true *Messiah*, that when *he came to his own, his own* rejected and threw him off. I come now in the next Place,

2. To shew the Weakness and Unreasonableness of these Exceptions. And,

First, For Christ's being a temporal Monarch, who should subdue and bring all Nations under the *Jewish* Scepter. I answer, that it was so far from necessary, that it was absolutely impossible, that the *Messiah* should
be

be such an one, and that upon the Account of a double Supposition, neither of which, I conceive, will be denied by the *Jews* themselves.

1. The first is the professed Design of his coming, which was to be a *Blessing to all Nations*: For it is over and over declared in Scripture, that *in the Seed of Abraham*, that is, in the Messiah, *all Nations of the Earth should be blessed*. But now if they mean this of a *temporal Blessing*, as I am sure they intend no other, then I demand how this can agree with his being such a *Prince*, as according to their Description, must conquer all *People*, and enslave them to the *Jews*, as *Hewers of Wood and Drawers of Water*, as their Vassals and Tributaries, and in a word, liable upon all Occasions to be insulted over by the worst condition'd People in the *World*? A worthy Blessing indeed, and such an one as I believe few Nations would desire to be beholden *to the Seed of Abraham* for. For there is no Nation or People that can need the coming of a *Messiah* to bless them in this Manner: Since they may bless themselves so whensoever they please, if they will but send Messengers to some of their Neighbours, wiser and more powerful than themselves, and de-
clare

clare their Estates and Country at their Service, provided they will but come and *make* them Slaves without *calling* them so; by sending Armies to take Possession of their Forts and Garrisons, to seize their Lands, Moneys, and whatsoever else they have; and in a Word, to oppress, beggar, and squeeze them as dry as a Pumice, and then trample *upon them* because they can get no more out of *them*; Let any People, I say, as they shall like this, apply to some potent *overgrown* Prince (whom the Fools, his Neighbours, shall have made so) and I dare undertake that upon a word speaking, they shall find him ready to be *such a Messias* to them at any Time. And yet this was all that the *Gentile* World could gain by those magnificent Promises of the *Messiah* (as universally a Blessing as the Prophets had foretold he should be) if the *Jews* Opinion concerning the Nature of his Kingdom over the rest of the World should take place. But since they judge such a kind of Government so great a Blessing to Mankind, it is pity but they should have a large and lasting Enjoyment of it themselves, and be made to feel what it is to be peeled and polled, fleeced and flayed, taxed and trod upon by the several Governments they should hap-

pen to fall under ; and so find the same Usage from other Princes which they had so liberally designed for them, under their supposed *Messiah*: As indeed through the just Judgment of God they have in a great Measure found ever since the Crucifixion of Christ.

Second, The other Supposition upon which I disprove the *Messiah's* being such a temporal Prince, is the unquestionable Truth of all the Prophecies recorded of him in Scripture ; many of which declare only the Sufferings, his Humility, his low despised Estate ; and so are utterly incompatible with such a princely Condition. Those two, the first *Psal.* xxii. the other in *Isa.* liii. are sufficient Proofs of this. 'Tis not to be denied indeed, that several have attempted to make them have no respect at all to the *Messiah* ; but still the Truth has been superior to all such Attempts. The *Jewish* Rabbies for the most part understand them of the whole Body of the People of *Israel* : And* one we know amongst our Christian Interpreters, though it will be hard to *christen* his Interpretation who will needs have this whole *liiid. Chap.* of *Isa.* to relate

* See more of this in the following Discourse on *Esay* liii. 8.

only to the Prophet *Jeremiah*, in the first and historical Sense of it: Little certainly to the Service of Christianity; unless we can think the properest way for confirming our Faith (especially against its mortal Adversaries the *Jews*) be to strip it of the chief Supports which the old Testament affords it. But every little Fetch of Wit and Criticism must not think to bear down the whole Stream of Christian, Catholick Interpreters; and much less the apparent Force and Evidence of so clear a Prophecy.

And therefore to return to the Rabbies themselves, the most learned of them after all such fruitless Attempts understand those Prophecies only of the *Messiah*: But then being fond of his temporal Reign and Greatness, some of them have invented the σοφὸν φάρμακον of two several Messiahs, *Messiah Ben David*, and *Messiah Ben Joseph*. One whereof was to be potent and victorious, the other low, afflicted, and at length kill'd. A bold un- heard of Fiction, and never known to the Ancient *Jewish* Church, till the modern Rabbies began to doat and blaspheme at all Adventures. But there is no Shift so senseless and groundless which an obstinate Adherence to a desperate Cause, will not drive the De-

fenders of it to. It is clear therefore that all the Pretences which the *Jews* have for the temporal Reign and Greatness of their *Messiah* is sufficiently answered, and cut off by these two Considerations: For to argue with them further from the Spirituality of the *Messiah's* Kingdom, as that the end of it was to abstract from all carnal, earthly, sensual Enjoyments, as the certain Hinderers of Piety, and Underminers of the Spirit, would be but a begging of the Question, as to the *Jews*, who would contend as positively that this was not to be the Intent of it. And besides the Truth is, their Principles and Temper are so hugely estranged from such Considerations, that a Man might as well read a Lecture of Musick or Astronomy to an *Ox*, or an *Ass*, as go about to persuade them that their *Messiah* was only to plant his Kingdom in Mens Hearts, and by infusing into them the Graces of Humility, Temperance, and Heavenly Mindedness, to conquer their Corruptions, and reign over their carnal Affections, which they had a great deal rather should *reign over* them. And thus much for Answer to their first Exception.

Secondly, I come now to shew the Unreasonableness of the other, grounded upon a Pretence,

Pretence, that Christ was a Supplanter of the Authority of *Moses*, and an Enemy to the Law. And here for Answer to this, I grant that Christ designed the Abrogation of their Ceremonial Law, and yet for all this I affirm that Christ made good that Word of his to the utmost, *That he came not to destroy the Law, but to fulfil it.* For we must know, that *to destroy* a Constitution, and *to abrogate*, or meerly to put an end to it are very different. *To destroy* a thing, is to cause it to cease from that use to which it is designed, and to which it ought to serve: But so did not Christ to the Ceremonial Law; the Design of which was to fore-signifie and point at the *Messiah* who was to come. So that the *Messiah* being come, and having finished the Work for which he came, the use of it continued no longer; for being only to relate to a thing future, when that thing was past, and so ceased to be future, the Relation, surely, grounded upon that Futurity must needs cease also. In a Word, if to *fulfil* a Prophecy be to *destroy it*, then Christ by abrogating the Ceremonial Law may be said also to have destroyed it. A Prophecy fulfilled is no longer a Prophecy; the very

Subject Matter of it being hereby took away; So a Type is no longer a Type when the Thing typified comes to be actually exhibited. But the *Jews*, who strip'd all these things from any Relation to a Spiritual Design, thought that their Temple was to stand for ever; their Circumcision and Sabbaths to be perpetual, their *New-Moons* never to *change*, and the difference of Meats, and of clean and unclean Beast to be unalterable. For alas, poor ignorant Wretches! All their Religion (as they had made it) was only to *hate Hogs*, and to *butcher Sheep and Oxen*. A Religion which they might very well have practised, had they sacrificed to no other *God*, but their *Belly*. Having thus shewn the Unreasonableness of the *Jews* Exceptions against Christ; I come now to

3. The Third and Last Thing, which is to shew, that they had great Reason for the contrary, high Arguments to induce them to receive and embrace him for their *Messias*. It is not the Business of an Hour, nor of a Day to draw forth all those Reasons which make for this Purpose, and to urge them according to their full Latitude and Dignity: and therefore being to speak to those, who need not be convinc'd

convinc'd of that which they believe already, I shall mention but two, and those very briefly.

1. The First shall be taken from this ; That all the Signs and Marks of the *Messiah* did most eminently appear in Christ : Of all which Signs I shall fix upon one as the most notable, which is the *Time* of his coming. It was exactly when the *Sceptre*, (or Government) was departed from *Judah*, according to that Prophecy of *Jacob* : And at the end of *Daniel's Weeks* ; at which time he foretold that the *Messiah* should come. Upon a Consideration of which one of their own Rabbies, but fifty Years before Christ, said that it was impossible for the coming of the *Messiah* to be deferred beyond *fifty* Years : A Proportion of Time vastly different from that of above *sixteen hundred*, and yet after this also, they can hear no News of such a *Messiah* as they expect. The same *Daniel* also affirms, that after the *coming* and *cutting off* of the *Messiah*, the City and the Temple should be destroyed : As clear therefore as it is, that the City and Temple are destroyed, so clear is it, that their *Messiah* came before that Destruction. From all which we may well insist upon that Charge made against them by our Saviour,

Ye Fools, ye can discern the Face of the Sky, and of the Heavens, but how is it that ye do not discern this Time? A Time as evident as if it were pointed out by a Sun-Beam upon a Dial. And therefore the modern *Jews* being pinched with the Force of this Argument, fly to their old stale Evasion, That the Promise of the Time of the *Messiah's* coming was not *absolute* but *conditional*; which Condition failing upon the great Sins of the *Jews*, the time of his coming has been accordingly defer'd. But this Answer signifies nothing: For the very Design of the *Messiah's* coming, was to *take away Sins* and be a *Propitiation for them*, even according to their own Rabbies Words and Confession: And therefore it is ridiculous to make the *Jews Sins* the Hindrances of his coming, when he made the *Atonement of Sins* the chief Reason why he should come. In a Word, if the *Messiah* was to come within such a certain Period of Time, (which Time is long since expired) and while the City and Temple were yet standing, which shortly after *Christ's* coming were demolished; then either that *Jesus* was the *Messiah*, or let them shew some other about that Time, to whom that Title might better belong.

2. A second Reason shall be taken from the whole Course and Tenor of Christ's Behaviour amongst the *Jews*. Every Miracle that he did was an act of Mercy and Charity, and designed to *Cure* as well as to *convince*. *He went about doing good*, he conversed amongst them like a walking *Balsam*, breathing Health and Recovery wheresoever he came. Shew me so much as one Miracle ever wrought by him to make a Man lame or bind, to incommode an Enemy, or to revenge himself; Or shew me any one done by him to serve an earthly Interest. As for Gain and Gold he renounced it. Poverty was *his Fee*, and the only Recompence of all *his Cures*: And had he not ben *sold* till he *sold* himself, the High Priests might have kept their thirty pieces of Silver for a better use. Nor was Fame and Honour the Bait that allured him: For he despised a *Kingship*, and regarded not their *Hosanna's*. He embraced a *Cross*, and declined *not the Shame*. And as for Pleasure and Softness of Life, he was so far from the least Approach to it, that *he had not where to lay his Head*, while the *Foxes* of the *World* had very warm places where to lay theirs. He *lived* as well as *wrought Miracles*. Miracles of Austerity, Fasting, and Praying, long Journeys,

Journeys, and coarse Receptions; so that if we compare his Doctrine with his Example, his very *Precepts* were *Dispensations* and *Indulgencies*, in comparison of the Rigours he *imposed* upon himself.

Let the *Jews* therefore, who shall except against Christ as an Impostor, (as they all do) declare what carnal or secular Interest he drove at; and if not, what there is in the Nature of Man, that can prompt him to an endurance of all these Hardships: to serve no temporal End or Advantage whatsoever. For did ever any sober Person toil and labour, and at length expose himself to a cruel Death, only to make Men believe that which he neither did nor could believe himself? And so by dying *in*, and *for* a lye, must procure himself *Damnation* in the next World, as well as *Destruction* in this? But if, for all this, they will still make Christ a Deceiver, they must introduce upon Mankind new Principles of acting, cancel, and overturn the old acknowledged Methods of Nature; and, in a word, either affirm that Christ was not a *Man*, or that he was influenced by Ends and Inclinations contrary to all the rest of Mankind: one of which must unavoidably follow; but neither of them ought to be admitted,

ted, where Sense or Reason is so much as pretended to.

And thus I have at length finished what I first proposed to be discoursed of from these Words, *He came to his own, and his own received him not.* In which, that Men may not run themselves into a *dangerous Mistake*, by thinking the *Jews* the only Persons concerned in these Words, and consequently that the Guilt here charged upon them could affect none else; we must know, that although upon the score of the *Natural Cognation* between Christ and the *Jews*, the Text calls them by that appropriating Character *his own*, and accordingly speaks of *his coming* to them as *such*; yet that all the Nations of the World, who have had the Gospel preached unto them, are as really *his own*, as any of the Race of *Abraham* could be, (if those may be called *his own* whom he had so dearly *bought*) and consequently that we are as capable of having Christ *come to us*, as the *Jews* themselves were. And accordingly he actually has, and every Day does *come to us*; not in the same manner, indeed, but to the same Purpose; Not in the *Form of a Servant*, but with the Majesty of a *Saviour*; that is to say, *he comes to us* in his
Word,

Word, in his Sacraments, and in all the *Benefits* of his Incarnation; and those exhibited to us with as much *Reality* and *Effect*, as if with our very Eyes we beheld the Person of our *Benefactor*. And then on the other hand, as we are altogether as capable of *his coming to us*, as his Kindred and Contemporaries the *Jews* themselves were; so are we likewise as capable of *not receiving him*, as those Wretches were or could be. And therefore let no Man flatter himself with reference to Christ, as the *Jews*, in much the like case, did with reference to the old Prophets; boasting (forsooth) *that had they lived in the Days of their Fathers they would have had no hand in the Blood of those holy Messengers of God*, *Mat. xxiii. 30*. Let no vicious Person, I say, though never so noted, and profess a Christian, conclude from hence, that had he lived *when* and *where* our Saviour did, nothing could have induced him to use him as those Miscreants had done. For though I know that such Men, (as bad as they are) do with great Confidence aver all this, and think themselves in very good earnest, while they do so; yet as, in general, he who thinks he cannot *deceive* himself, does not sufficiently *know* himself; So, in this particular

ticular Case, every Hypocrite or wicked Liver professing Christianity, while he thinks and speaks in this manner, is really imposing upon himself by a false Persuasion; and would (though he may not know so much) have born the very same Malignity towards our Saviour, which those *Jews* are recorded to have done; and under the same Circumstances would have infallibly treated him with the same Barbarity. For, why did the *Jews* themselves use him so? Why? because the Doctrines he preached to them were directly contrary to their Lusts and corrupt Affections, and defeated their Expectations of a worldly *Messias*, who should have answered their sensual Desires with the Plenties and Glories of such an earthly Kingdom, as they had wholly set their gross Hearts and Souls upon. Accordingly, Let us now but shift the Scene, and suppose Christ in Person preaching the same Doctrines amongst us, and withall as much hated and run down for an *Impostor* by the whole National Power, Civil, and Ecclesiastical, as it then fared with him amongst the *Jews*; and then no doubt we should see all such vicious Persons, finding themselves prick'd and galled with his severe Precepts, quickly

quickly fall in with the Stream of publick Vogue and Authority, and as eagerly set *for* the taking away his Life, as *against* reforming their own. To which we may further add this, That our Saviour himself passes the very same Estimate upon every such wicked Professor of his Gospel, which he then did upon the *Jews* themselves, in that his irrefragable Expostulation with them, *Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I command you?* Luke vi. 46. implying thereby, That this was the greatest Hostility and Affront, that Men could possibly pass upon him. And no doubt, but the *Jews* themselves, who avowedly rejected Christ, and his Doctrine, out of any almost invincible Prejudice infused into them by their Teachers and Rulers, concerning the utter Inconsistency of both with the Moisaick Constitution, were much more excusable before God, than any Christians can be, who acknowledging the Divine Authority both of his *Person*, and his *Gospel*, do yet reverse and contradict that in their Lives and Actions, which they avow in their *Creeds*, and solemn *Declarations*. For he who prefers a base Pleasure or Profit before Christ, *spits in his Face*, as much as
the

he *Jews* did: And he who debauches his immortal Soul, and prostitutes it to the vile and low Services of Lust and Sensuality, *crucifies his Saviour* afresh, and puts him to as open a Shame as ever *Pontius Pilate*, the high Priest, or those mercenary Tools, the very Soldiers themselves did. They do not indeed *pierce his Side*, but (what is worse) they strike a Dagger into *his Heart*.

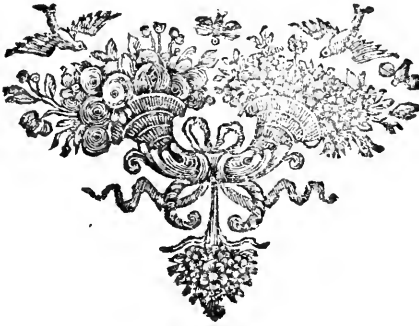
And now, if the passing of all these Indignities upon one, who came into the World, only to *save it* (and to redeem those very Persons who used him so) is not able to work upon our Ingenuity, should not the Consequences of it at least work upon our Fears, and make us consider, whether, as we affect to *sin like the Jews*, it may not be our Doom to *suffer like the Jews too*? To which purpose, let us but represent to our selves the woful Estate of *Jerusalem* bleeding under the Rage and Rapine of the *Roman* Armies; together with that Face of Horror and Confusion, which then sat upon that wretched People, when the casting off their *Messias* had turned their *Advocate* into their *Judge*, their *Saviour* into their *Enemy*; and by a long Refusal of his
Mercy,

Mercy, made them ripe for the utmost Executions of his *Justice*. After which proceeding of the Divine Vengeance against such Sinners, should it not (one would think) be both the *Interest* and *Wisdom* of the stoutest and most daring Sinners in the World, forthwith to make Peace with their Redeemer upon his own Terms? And, (as hard a Lesson as it seems) to take his *Yoke* upon their *Necks*, rather than with the *Jews* to draw his *Blood* upon their *Heads*; especially since one of the two must and will assuredly be their Case: For the *Methods* of *Grace* are fixed, and the *Measures* stated: And as little Allowance of *Mercy* will be made to such *Christians*, as reject Christ in his *Laws*, as to those very *Jews* who nailed him to the Cross.

In fine, Christ *comes to us* in his Ordinances, with *Life* in one Hand, and *Death* in the other. To such, as *receive him not*, he brings the *abiding Wrath of God*, a present Curse, and a future Damnation: But *to as many as shall receive him* (according to the Expression immediately after the Text) *he gives Power to become the Sons of God*. That is, in other Words, to be as happy, both in this World, and the next, as infinite

Goodness acting by infinite *Wisdom* can make them.

To him therefore, who alone can do such great Things for those who serve him, be rendred and ascribed, as is most due, all Praise, Might, Majesty, and Dominion, both now and for evermore. Amen.



A
S E R M O N

Preached on

G O O D - F R I D A Y,

A T

Christ-Church, *Oxon.*

Before the

U N I V E R S I T Y,

O N

March the 20th. 1668.

Isaiah liii. 8. latter part.

— *For the Transgression of my People was
he stricken.*

THIS great and eloquent Prophet the Evangelist of the *Jewish* Church (as without any Impropriety he may be called) from *v.* 13. of the foregoing Chapter to the end of this, seems wrapt up with the
Con-

Contemplation of a *Great Person* under strange and unusual Afflictions, whose Character, with all the Heights of Rhetorick which the Genius of *Grief* and *Prophecy* together could raise him to, he here sets himself with full purpose to describe. In all which Description there is no one Passage which does not speak something *extraordinary* and *supernatural* of the Person *described*, and withal represent the Describer of it in the highest degree of Ecstasy and Rapture; so that nothing could transcend the Height of the *Expression* but the *Sublimity* of its *Subject*. For still it fastens upon him the Marks and Tokens of something more than a *Man*, indeed more than a *Creature*, ascribing Actions to him which surmount any created Power, and so visibly, upon all Principles of Reason, above the Strength and Reach of the strongest *Arm of Flesh*, that if the Person here spoken of be but a Man, I am sure it requires *the Wit* of more *than a Man* to make Sense of the Prophecy. Who that great Person therefore was, here so magnificently set forth by the Prophet, is the thing now to be enquired into. In which Enquiry we shall find several Opinions, and every one of them pretending to give the right Interpretation of

the Place. I shall reduce them all to these two.

First, The Opinion of the *ancient*.

Secondly, The Opinion of some *later* Interpreters.

First, As for the *ancient* Interpreters, I may boldly and truly say, that it was the general Sense of all the old *Jewish* Rabbies, that the Person intended in this Prophecy was the *Messias*. Take the Affirmation of *Rabbi Alschech* in his Comment upon this Prophecy, *Rabbini nostri beatæ memoriæ uno ore statuunt juxta receptam traditionem hic de Rege Messia sermonem esse*. And tho' their Opinion of the temporal Greatness of the *Messias* might (if any thing) tempt them to draw this Prophecy another way, (since it declares the low, abject, and oppressed Condition of the Person here treated of) yet to shew that a *suffering Messias* was no such Paradox in the Divinity of the *ancient Jewish Rabbies*, it was a constant received Speech among them, that dividing all the Afflictions of the People of God into three Parts, one third was to fall upon the *Messias*.

And as for the Doctors and Fathers of the Christian Church, they do all with one unanimous Breath declare this to be a Prophecy

phesy of the *Messias*, and this *Messias* to be *Jesus Christ*. And so full are they to this purpose, that *Esaias* upon the Account of this Prophecy is stiled by some of them *Evangelista*, and *Paulus propheticus*. Nor was ever the least Intimation given of any other Sense of it, till a little before this last Century, a new *Christianity* has endeavoured to get footing in the *Christian* World.

Second, The other Opinion is of the *later* Interpreters, amongst which I account the *Jewish*, that is, such as have wrote after a Thousand Years since Christ's Time, whose Opinion in this Matter will be found to have this eminent Property of *Falsity*, that it is very *various*. For having departed from the old received Interpretation, they are no ways agreed what they shall substitute in the room of it. Some will have the Subject of this Prophecy to have been the People of *Israel*. Some indefinitely any just or *righteous Person*. Some affirm it to have been *Josiah*; and one among the rest will needs have the Person here spoken of to have been the Prophet *Jeremy*. The Authors of each of which Opinions give us such insipid Stories upon this Chapter, as are fitter to be ushered in

with the grave and solemn Preface of [*once upon a time*] than to be accounted Interpretations of the Word of God.

He who contends for the Prophet *Jeremy*, is one *Rabbi Saadias Haggæon*, and he stands alone, not being countenanced by any of his *Jewish* Brethren, till one in the *Christian Church* thought fit to be his Second, and out of his Zeal (forsooth) to the *Christian Faith*, to wrest one of the strongest Arguments out of the Hands of the Christian Church, which it has fought with against *Judaism* ever since it was a Church. And thus much I shall with Confidence (because with Evidence) affirm, that if such Prophecies may be proved to have had *their first and literal Completion* in the Person of any besides *Jesus of Nazareth*, all Arguments proving them to belong to him at a *second hand*, and by *Accommodation* (as the Word is) are but vain and precarious to the *Jews*, who will, and indeed upon his Hypothesis *may* reject them, as easily as we can alledge them, and then convince him who can.

But how can this Prophecy be made to agree to *Jeremy*? With what Truth or Propriety could he be said to have been *exalted and extolled, and to have been very high, to*

have been stricken for our Transgressions, and to have had the Iniquity of us all laid upon him? How could it be said of him, *who shall declare his Generation?* And that he *should see his Seed and prolong his Days?* And also that he *should divide the Spoil with the Mighty?* with the like Expressions.

Why yes, says our Expositor, *he was exalted, and very high*, because the *Chaldeans* had him in Admiration, which is yet more than we read of, and Thanks to a good Invention for it: tho' it must be confessed, that upon his being drawn out of the Dungeon he was something *higher and more exalted* than he was before. In the next place *he was stricken for Transgression, and had our Iniquities laid upon him*, because by the Sin and injurious Dealing of the *Jews* he was cruelly and unworthily used, as indeed all or most of the Prophets were both before and after him. And then for that saying, *Who shall declare his Generation?* The meaning of that we are told is, *who shall reckon his Years?* For he shall live to be very aged: tho' yet we know no more of his Age, but that he prophesied about *Forty Years*; whereas some others have prophesied much longer, and particularly *Hosea*, who prophesied about *Fourscore*. As

for the other Expression of *seeing his Seed, and prolonging his Days*, that we are taught must signify, *that* he should see many of his Converts in *Egypt*, where he should live for a long time. Tho' yet we read not of any one of those *Converts*, nor of any such *prolonging* his Days there, but that it is a constant Tradition of Antiquity that he died an untimely disastrous Death, being knock'd on the Head in *Egypt* by his wicked Country-men with a Fuller's Club. And in the last place, for *his dividing the Spoil with the Mighty*, that we are informed was fulfilled in this, that *Nebuzaradan* Captain of the *Chaldean* Host (as we find it in *Jeremy* xl. 5.) gave him a *Reward* and some *Viſuals* (that is to say, a small Supply or *Modicum* of Meat and Money for his present Support) and *so sent him away*. A worthy glorious *dividing of the Spoil* indeed, and much after the same rate that the Poor may be said to divide the *Spoil*, when they take their Shares of what is given them at rich Men's Doors.

So then we have here an Interpretation, but as for the Sense of it, that, for ought I see, must shift for itself. But whether thus to drag and hale Words both from Sense and Connext, and then to squeeze whatsoever
Meaning

Meaning we please out of them, be not (as I may speak with some change of the Prophet's Phrase) to *draw* Lies with *Cords* of Blasphemy, and *Nonsense* as it were with a *Cart-rope*, let any sober and impartial Hearer or Reader be Judge. For whatsoever Titles the Itch of *Novelty* and *Socinianism* has thought fit to dignify such *immortal, incomparable, incomprehensible* Interpreters with, yet if these Interpretations ought to take place, the said Prophecies (which all before * *Grotius* and the aforefaid Rabby *Saadias* unanimously fixed, in the first Sense of them, upon
the

* Having had the Opportunity and Happiness of a frequent Converse with Dr. *Pocock* (the late *Hebrew* and *Arabick* Professor to the University of *Oxon*, and the greatest Master certainly of the Eastern Languages, and Learning, which this or any other Age or Nation has bred) I asked him (more than once, as I had occasion) what he thought of *Grotius's* Exposition of *Isaiab* liii. and his Application of that Prophecy, in the first Sense and Design of it to the Person of the Prophet *Jeremy*? To which, *smiling* and *shaking his Head*, he answered, Why, what else can be thought or said of it, but that in this the *Opiniator* overruled the *Annotator*, and *the Man had a mind to indulge his Fancy*? This Account gave that great Man of it, tho' he was as great in *Modesty* as he was in *Learning* (greater than which none could be) and withal had a particular Respect for *Grotius*, as having been personally acquainted with him. But the Truth is, the Matter lay deeper than so, for there was a certain Party of Men whom *Grotius* had unhappily engaged himself with, who were extremely disgusted at the Book *de Satisfactione Christi*, written
by

the sole Person of the *Messiah*) might have been actually fulfilled, and consequently the Veracity of God in the said Prophecies strictly accounted for, tho' *Jesus of Nazareth* had never been born. Which being so, would any one have thought that the Author of the Book *de Veritate Religionis Christianæ, & de Satisfactione Christi*, could be also the Author of such Interpretations as these? No Age certainly ever produced a mightier Man in all sorts of Learning than *Grotius*, nor more happily furnished with all sorts of Arms, both *offensive* and *defensive*, for the Vindication of the Christian Faith, had he not in his *Annotations* too frequently turned the Edge of them the wrong way.

Well therefore, taking it for manifest, and that upon all the Grounds of rational and unforced Interpretation, that the Person here spoken of was the *Messias*, and that this

by him against *Socinus*, and therefore he was to pacify (or rather *satisfy*) these Men, by turning his Pen another way in his *Annotations*, which also was the true Reason that he never answered *Crellius*; a shrewd Argument, no doubt, to such as shall well consider these Matters, that those in the Low Countries, who at that time went by the Name of *Remonstrants* and *Arminians*, were indeed a great deal more.

Messias could be no other than *Jesus of Nazareth*, the great Mediator of the second Covenant, *very God, and very Man*, in whom every Tittle of this Prophecy is most exactly verified, and to whom it does most peculiarly and incommunicably agree: We shall proceed now to take an Account of the several Parts of the Text, in which we have these three Things considerable.

First, The *Suffering* itself, *he was stricken*.

Secondly, The *Nature* of the Suffering, which was *penal*, and *expiatory*: *he was stricken for Transgression*: And,

Thirdly, The *Ground* and *Cause* of this Suffering, which was God's Propriety in, and Relation to the Person for whom Christ was stricken, implied in this Word, *My People*: *For the Transgression of my People was he stricken*.

Of each of which in their order: And,

First, For the Suffering it self: *He was stricken*. The very Word imports Violence and Invasion from without. It was not a Suffering upon the Stock of the meer internal Weaknesses of Nature, which carries the Seeds and Causes of its Dissolution in its own Bowels, and so by degrees withers and decays, and at length dies, like a Lamp that
for

for want of Oil can burn no longer, but like a Torch in its full Flame beat and ruffled, and at length blown out by the Breath of a North Wind; so was Christ dealt with in the very prime and vigour of his Years, being by main Force torn and stricken out of the World. Blows did the Work of Time, and *Stripes* and *Spears* were instead of *Age* to put a Period to his afflicted Life. Now the Greatness of this Suffering will be made out to us upon these three Accounts.

First, Upon the Account of the *Latitude* and Extent of it.

Secondly, Of the *Intenseness* and Sharpness of it: And,

Thirdly, Of the *Person* inflicting it.

First, As for the *Latitude* or *Extent* of it. The Blow reach'd every Part of his Humanity, carrying the Grief all over, till by an universal Diffusion of itself it entred, according to the Psalmist's Expression, *like Water into his Bowels, or like Oil into his Bones*. It spread itself into every Part of his *Body*, as if it had been another *Soul*. Nothing was free from suffering that could suffer. Suffering seem'd to be his Portion, his Inheritance, nay, his very Property. Even the Religion that he came to propagate and establish

blish was a *suffering Religion*, and by the severest Method of Establishment he gave the first and the greatest Instance of it in himself. He who would recount every Part of Christ that suffered must read a Lecture of *Anatomy*. *From the Crown of the Head to the Sole of the Foot there was nothing but the Traces of Pain and Suffering: they made long Furrows upon his Back* (says the Psalmist) they did, as it were, tear and plow up his innocent Body. In his Person we might have seen Grief in its Height and Supremacy, Grief triumphant, *crow'n'd*, and arrayed in *Purple*, Grief reigning, and doing the utmost that it was able. It is a Subject too well known, and too frequently discoursed of, to make Descriptions of the *Thorns*, the *Spears*, and the *Nails*, that acted their several Parts in this Tragedy, and that so, that the very Narrative of our Saviour's *Passion* cannot but beget another in every pious Hearer of it. But when we have said the utmost of his bodily Sufferings, we still know that Nature has provided a Support able to make and stand up against all these: for the Strength and Firmness of a *resolved Mind* will bear a Man above *his Infirmary*, as the Breath bears up the Body from sinking:

sinking: But when the Supporter itself fails, when the *primum vivens* and the *ultimum moriens* has had a mortal Blow, and the *Iron enters into the very Soul*, the baffled Nature must surrender and quit the Combat, unless *seconded* and held up by something greater and mightier than itself. And this was our Saviour's Condition. There was a Sword which reach'd his very *Spirit*, and pierced his *Soul*, till it *bled thro' his Body*, for they were the Struggles and Agonies of the inward Man, the Labours and Strivings of his restless Thoughts, which cast his Body into that prodigious Sweat. For tho' it was the Flesh that *sweated*, it was the Spirit that *took the Pains*. It was that which was then *treading the Wine-press of God's Wrath alone*, till it made him *red* in his Apparel, and dyed all his Garments with *Blood*. What Thought can reach, or Tongue express, what our Saviour then felt within his own Breast! The Image of all the Sins of the World, for which he was to suffer, then appeared clear and lively, and express to his Mind. All the vile and horrid Circumstances of them stood (as it were) particularly ranging before his Eyes in all their dismal Colours. *He saw how* much the Honour of the Great God was abused

abused by them, and how many Millions of poor Souls they must inevitably have cast under the Pressures of a Wrath infinite and intolerable, should he not have turned the Blow upon himself. The Horror of which then filled and amazed his vast apprehensive Soul, and those Apprehensions could not but affect his tender Heart, then brim-full of the highest Zeal for God's Glory, and the most relenting Compassion for the Souls of Men, till it fermented and boiled over with Transport and Agony, and even forced its way thro' all his Body in those strange Ebullitions of Blood, not to be parallel'd by the Sufferings of any Person recorded in any History whatsoever. It was this which drew those doleful Words from him, *My Soul is exceeding sorrowful*, &c. *πείλοπος ἔστιν ἡ ψυχὴ μου*. It was surrounded, and (as it were) besieged with an Army of Sorrows. And believe it, his Soul was too big, and of too strong a Make to bend under an ordinary Sorrow. It was not any of those little things which makes us put the Finger in the Eye, as Loss of Estate, Friends, Preferment, Interest, and the like, Things too mean to raise a Tumult in the Breast of a resolved Stoick, and much less in his, who both placed and preached

Happiness, not only in the want, but in the very Defiance of them.

And now after this his Agony in the Garden, I need not much insist upon the *Wounds* given his Reputation by the Sword of a blaspheming Tongue, the sharpest of all others, and which, like a poisoned Dagger, hurting both with Edge and Venom too, at the same time both makes a Wound and prevents its Cure. Even a guilty Person feels the Sting of a malicious Report, and if so, much more must one who is innocent, and yet infinitely more must he, who was not only innocent, but Innocence itself. Reputation is tender, and for it to be *blown upon* is to be *tainted*; like a Glass, the clearer and finer it is, the more it suffers by the least *Breath*. And therefore for him, who came to destroy the Kingdom of Satan, to be traduced as a Partner with, and an Agent for *Beelzebub*: for him, whose greatest Repasts were Prayer and Abstinence, and the most rigid Severities upon himself, to be taxed as a *Wine-bibber*, and a good Fellow: for him who came into the World, both in Life and Death to bear Witness to the Truth, to suffer as an Impostor, and a *Deceiver*; what could be more

grievous and afflicting to a great *Innocence*, joyned with as great an *Apprehension!*

However, his Church gains this great Advantage of Comfort by it, that the worst of Sufferings comes sanctified to our Hands by the Person of our grand Example, who was reviled and slandered, and tossed upon the Tongues of Men before us. A greater Martyrdom questionless than to be cast, as the primitive Christians were, to the Mouths of Lions, which are tender and merciful compared to the Mouths of Men; whether we look upon that bitter Spirit which acted in those *Jews*, or in some Christians now a-days worse than *Jews*: Men, who seem to have out-done all before them in the Arts of a more refined Malice, and improved Calumny. Qualities lately sprung up out of the Stock of a spreading Atheism, and domineering, reigning Sensuality; Sins now made National and Authentick, and so much both *Judgment* and *Mercy-proof*, that it is well if we can be *cured* without being *cut off*. But to return to the Business before us. We have now seen the first thing setting forth the Greatness of this Suffering; to wit, *the Latitude and Extent of it*; as that it seized both Body and Soul, and every Part and Faculty of both.

Secondly, The next thing declaring its Greatness was the *Intenseness and Sharpness of it*. We have seen already how *far* it went, we are now to consider how *deep*. It fell not on him like a Dew or Mist, which only wets the Surface of the Ground, but like a pouring soaking Rain which descends into the very Bowels of it. There was Pain enough in every single Part to have been spread in lesser Proportions over the whole Man. Christ suffered only the Exquisiteness and Heights of Pain, without any of those Mitigations which God is pleased to temper and allay it with as it befalls other Men; like a Man who drinks only the Spirits of a Liquor separated and extracted from the dull, unactive Body of the Liquor itself. All the Force and Activity, the Stings and Fierceness of that troublesome thing were (as it were) drain'd and distill'd, and abridg'd into that Cup which Christ drank of. There was something sharper than *Vinegar*, and bitterer than *Gall*, which that Draught was prepared and made up with. We cannot indeed say, that the Sufferings of Christ were long in Duration, for to be violent and lasting too, is above the Methods or Measures of Nature. But he who lived at that rate, that he might be said to live an Age every

Hour,

Hour, was able to suffer so too; and to comprize the greatest Torments in the shortest space; which yet by their shortness lost nothing of their Force and Keeness; as a Penknife is as *sharp* as a Spear, though not so *long*. That which promotes and adds to the Impressions of Pain, is the delicate and exact Crasis and Constitution of the Part, or Faculty aggrieved. And there is no doubt but the very Fabrick and Completion of our Saviour's Body was a Master-piece of Nature, a thing absolutely and exactly framed, and of that fineness as to have the quickest and most sensible Touches of every Object; and withal to have these advanced by the Communion of his admirably made Body, with his high and vigorous Intellectuals. All which made him drink in Pain more deeply, feel every Lash, every Wound with so much a closer, and a more affecting Sense. For it is not to be doubted but a dull Fellow can endure the Paroxysms of a Fever, or the Torments of the Gout or Stone, much better than a Man of a quick Mind and an exalted Fancy; because in one Pain beats upon a Rock or an Anvil, in the other it prints itself upon Wax. One is even born with a kind of Lethargy and Stupefaction into the World, armed with an *Iron*

Body and a *leaden* Soul against all the Apprehensions of ordinary Sorrow ; so that there is need of some Pain to awaken such an one, and to convince him that he *is alive* ; but our Saviour, who had an Understanding too quick to let any thing that was intelligible escape it, took in the dolorous afflicting Object in its full Dimensions. He saw the utmost Evil of every one of those Strokes, which the guilt of our Sins inflicted on him ; and what his Eye saw, his Heart proportionably felt : For surely they must needs have been inconceivably afflicting, in the actual Endurance, which were so dreadful in their very Approach that the Horror of them put *the Man of God's right Hand, the Man made strong* for that very purpose, to start back, and decline the Blow, could the Avoidance of it have stood with the Decrees of Heaven. *Father, if it be possible let this Cup pass from me* : Which yet was not the Voice of Cowardise, but of human Nature ; Nature, which by its first and most essential Principle would have *saved itself*, might it have consisted with *the saving of the World*.

Thirdly, The third thing setting forth the Greatness of this Suffering, is the *Cause and Author* of it, which was *God* himself. The

Measure of every Passion is the Operation of the Agent. And then, we know what Omnipotence can do; Omnipotence *employed* or rather *inflamed* by *Justice*; in whose Quarrel it was then engaged. We must not measure the Divine Strokes by the Proportion of those Blows, which are inflicted by the greatest and most exasperated Mortal; the Condition of whose Nature sets bounds to his *Power*, when it cannot to his *Rage*: So that, in the utmost Executions of it he acts but like a *Wasp*; very angrily indeed; but very weakly. Every Blow inflicted by the fiercest Tyrant can reach no farther than the Body; and the Body is but the dwelling Place, not any part of the Soul; and consequently can no more communicate its Ruins to that, than a Man can be said to be wounded in his Person, because a Wall of his House was broken down. Upon which account there have been some, whose Souls have been so fortified with Philosophy, and great Principles as to enable them to laugh in *Phalaris's* Bull; to sing upon the Rack; and to despise the Flames. For still, when God torments us by the instrumental Mediation of the Creature, his Anger can fall upon us in no greater Proportions than what can pass through the narrow Capacities

of a created Being. *For* be the Fountain never so full, yet if it communicates itself by a little Pipe, the Stream can be but small and inconsiderable, and equal to the Measures of the Conveyance. God can no more give his *Power*, than his *Glory to another*; there is no mortal Arm can draw his Bow: God cannot thunder or lighten by Proxy. He alone is the *Father of Spirits*, and none can reach the Conscience, but he who made it: And therefore being to discharge the utmost of his vindictive Justice upon the Sins of Mankind then charged upon our Saviour, he took the Sword into his own Hand, entred the Lists, and dealt with him immediately by himself. And then we find the Difference of our Saviour's suffering by the difference of his Behaviour. While he was buffeted, scourged, and nailed to the Cross, we hear nothing from him, but *like a Lamb before the Shearers he was dumb*: Not because he *could not*, but because he *scorned* to roar under the Impressions of a finite Anger. But when God reached forth his Hand, and darted his immediate Rebukes into his very Soul and Spirit, (as he did while he was hanging upon the Cross) then he cries out, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!* Silence upon such

a Loss would have been but Stupidity, and Patience and Absurdity ; for when God withdrew his Presence from him, that Darkness which then covered the Face of the whole Earth, was but a faint Emblem of that blacker Cloud of Despair which had overcast his Soul. It is not possible for us to conceive the utmost Weight of those heavy Strokes inflicted by the Almighty himself upon our Saviour. All the Representations and little Draughts of them made by Words and Fancy are vastly short of the keen Impressions of Sense. *But* yet that which gives us the nearest Resemblance of them, surely, is the Torment of a *guilty* Mind under a State of *Desertion* ; when God shall turn the *Worm of Conscience* into a *Scorpion*, and smite it with the secret invisible Stings of his Wrath, such as shall fester and rage inwardly, gnaw and rake the very Entrails of the Soul. The Burden and Anguish of this has been sometimes so insupportable, that some have professed themselves to envy the Condition of *Judas* and the damned Spirits, as thinking the *Endurance* of those Flames more tolerable than the *Expectation*, and accordingly have done Violence to their own Lives, and so fled to Hell as to a Sanctuary, and chose Damnation as a Release.

Far were such Persons (God knows) from bettering their Condition by completing that which they could not bear in the very Beginnings and Forecasts of it; yet however it demonstrates to us the unspeakable wretchedness of a guilty Soul, labouring under the Hand of God. And by the way, let the boldest, the hardest, and the securest Sinner know that God is able, without ever touching him either in his Estate, his Health, his Reputation, or any other outward Enjoyment dear to him, but merely by letting a few Drops of his Wrath fall upon his guilty Conscience, so to scald and gall him with the lively Sense of Sin, that he shall live a continual Terror to himself, carry about him an Hell in his own Breast; which shall echo to him such Peals of Vengeance every Hour, that all the Wine and Musick, all the Honours and Greatness of the World shall not be able to minister the least ease to his heart-sick and desponding Soul. Now in these Torments of a guilty Conscience we have some little Image of the Pains then suffered by our Saviour, the Greatness of both being founded upon the same Reason; namely, that *God* is the sole and immediate Inflicter of such Strokes: And then surely the suffering must needs be grievous, when infinite

nite Justice passes *Sentence*, and infinite Power does *Execution*.

And thus I have finished the first general thing proposed from the Text, which was the Suffering itself, expressed in these Words, *he was stricken*, and that by considering the *Latitude*, the *Intenseness*, and also the *Cause* of it: All of them so many Arguments to demonstrate to us its *unparallel'd Greatness*.

2. The second general thing proposed was the Nature and Quality of this Suffering; namely, that it was *penal* and *expiatory*, *he was stricken for Transgression*. And to prove that it was *penal*, there needs no other Argument to any clear, unbiassed Understanding than the natural, genuine and unconstrained use of the Word: For what other Sense can there be of a Man's *being stricken or suffering for Sin*, but his being punished for Sin? And that I am sure is spoke so plain and loud by the universal Voice of the whole Book of God, that Scripture must be *crucified* as well as *Christ*, to give any other tolerable Sense of it. But since Heresy has made such bold Invasions upon those sacred Writings, we will consider both those Senses which these Words are asserted to be capable of.

1. First

1. First of all then, some assert, that *to be stricken for Transgression* imports not here a *Punishment* for Sins past, but a *Prevention* or taking away of Sin for the future. So that Christ is said *to be stricken, to suffer, and to die for Sin*, because by all this he confirmed to us an excellent and holy Doctrine, the Belief of which has in it a natural Aptness to draw Men off from their Sins. In a word, because Christianity tends to make Men holy, and cease from Sin, and because Christ by his Blood sealed the Truth of Christianity, therefore is he said *to die for Sin*; a strange and remote Deduction, and such an one as the common Rules and Use of speaking would never have suggested. But then besides, because it is easy to come upon the Authors of this perverse Interpretation, by demanding of them what Fitness there could be in Christ's Death to confirm his Doctrine? And what Reason the World could have to believe Christianity true, because the Author of it, a pious, innocent, excellent Person was basely and cruelly put to Death? Therefore they further say, that this Effect of its Confirmation is really and indeed to be ascribed to his subsequent *Resurrection*, though only his *Death* be still mentioned; that being the most difficult

cult and heroick Passage of all, that he either did or suffered for our Sakes, and consequently the greatest Instance of his Patience, and Persuasion of the Truth of that Doctrine, for which he suffered. But by their Favour, if Christ is said no otherwise *to die for Sin*, than because he delivered a Doctrine, the Design of which was to draw Men off from Sin, and which was confirm'd to be true only by his *Resurrection*; how comes it to pass that this Effect is still joyned with his *Death*, but never with his *Resurrection*? It being said over and over, that *he died for Sin, suffered and bled for Sin*, but never that *he rose again for Sin*. It is, indeed, said once that he rose again *for our Justification*; but in the very foregoing Words it is said, that he was *delivered to Death for our Offences*: Which shews that those Words *for our Offences*, and *for our Justification*, have there a very different Sense, and bear a different Relation to the Words with which they are joined, in that, as well as in the other Scriptures. But this whole Invention is so forced and far fetched, and so much out of the Road of common Reason, that it is impossible it should gain, but by the Strengths and Prepossessions of Prejudice; and where *Prejudice*

dice stands for *Judgment*, for ought I see, it is as vain to urge *Arguments* as to quote *Scriptures*.

2. The other Sense of these Words, and which alone the Catholick Church receives for true, is, that *Christ's being stricken for Sin*, signifies his being *punished for Sin*. The Word [*For*] in this case denoting the antecedent *meritorious* Cause of his suffering, and not the *final*, as the School of *Socinus* does assert; and, consequently, must *directly* relate to the Removal of the *guilt* of Sin, and not the *Power*, as it is also affirmed by the same Persons. Now that *Christ's suffering and being stricken for Transgression* imports that suffering to have been *penal* and *expiatory*, as it might with the highest Evidence be demonstrated from several Scriptures: So at this time I shall confine myself within the Limits of the Chapter, from whence I took my Text: And here I shall found the Proof of it upon these two Expressions.

First, That *Christ* is said *to have born our Sins*, in the 12th v. Now *to bear Sin* is an *Hebrew Phrase* for that, which in *Latin* is *Luere peccatum*, and in *English* *to be punished for Sin*. And if *to bear* another Man's Sin or Iniquity by *suffering*, does not imply

ply the undergoing of the Punishment due to that Man's Sin; we must invent a new way of expounding *profane* Writers as well as *sacred*, and interpreting the common Speeches of Men, as well as the Word of God.

Secondly, The other Argument shall be taken from that Expression which declares Christ to have been made a *Sacrifice*, or an *Offering for Sin*, in the 10th v. *When thou shalt make his Soul an Offering for Sin*. The Proof of what I here affirm, is grounded upon the Use and Design of a *Sacrifice*, as it has been used by all Nations in the World; which was to appease the Deity by paying down a *Life for Sin*; and that by the Substitution of a *Sacrifice*, whether of Man or Beast, to die and pay down his Life instead of the Sinner. *For there* was a tacit Acknowledgment universally fixt in the Hearts of all Mankind, *that the Wages of Sin was Death*, and that *without shedding of Blood there could be no Remission*: Upon which was built the Reason of all their Sacrifices and Victims. So surely therefore as Christ was a *Sacrifice*, and as the Design of a *Sacrifice* is to pay down a *Life for Sin*, and as to pay down a Life for Sin is to be *punished* for Sin; so sure it is, that
Christ's

Christ's Death and Sufferings were *penal*. Now it being clear that the Foundation of all Punishment is Compensation or Exchange; that is to say, something paid down to divine Justice for something done against it; and since all Compensation implies a Retribution equivalent to the Injury done, therefore, that Christ might be qualified to be a Sacrifice fit to undergo the full Punishment due for the Sins of Mankind, two things were required.

1. An infinite Dignity in his Person; for since the Evil and Demerit of Sin was infinite; and since Christ was so to suffer for it, as not to remain under those Sufferings for an infinite Duration; that Infinity therefore was to be made up some other way; which could not be, but by the infinite Worth and Dignity of his Person, grasping in all the Perfections and Glories of the Deity, and by consequence deriving an infinite Value to his Sufferings.

2. The other Qualification required was a perfect *Innocence* in the Person to suffer: For so much was specified by the Paschal Lamb, of which we still read in Scripture, *That it was to be a Lamb without blemish*. And there is no doubt, but had Christ had any Sin of

his own to have satisfied for, he had been very unable to satisfy for other Mens. He who is going to Goal for his own Debts, is very unfit to be a Security for another's.

But now this perfect Innocence, which I affirm necessary to render Christ a fit and proper Sacrifice, is urged by our Adversaries to be the very Reason why Christ's Sufferings could not be *penal*; since Punishment in the very Nature and Essence of it imports a Relation to Sin. To this I answer, that Punishment does indeed import an essential Relation to Sin; but not of Necessity to the Sin of the Person upon whom it is inflicted; as might be evinced by innumerable Instances, as well as undeniable Reasons.

If it be replied, that God has declared *that the Soul that Sins shall die*.

I answer, that this is only a *positive* Law, according to which God declares he will proceed in the ordinary Course of his Providence; but it is not of *natural* and *eternal* Obligation, so as universally to bind God in all Cases; but that he may when he pleases deal otherwise with his Creature. But this will receive farther Light from the Discussion of the third and last general Head, to which we now proceed. Namely,

3. *The Ground and Cause of this suffering,* which was God's Propriety in, and relation to the Persons for whom Christ suffered, specified in these Words, *My People: For the Transgression of my People was he stricken.*

If it be here asked, upon what account the Persons here spoken of were denominated and made God's People? I answer, that they were so by an eternal Covenant and Transaction between the Father and the Son; by which the Father, upon certain Conditions to be performed by the Son, consigned over some Persons to him to be *his People*. For our better understanding of which we are to observe that the business of Man's Redemption proceeds upon a two-fold Covenant.

First, An eternal Covenant made between the Father and the Son, by which the Father agreed to give both Grace and Glory to a certain Number of Sinners, upon Condition that Christ would assume their Nature, and pay down such a Ransom to his Justice, as should both satisfy for their Sin, and withall Merit such a measure of Grace as should effectually work in them all things necessary to their Salvation. And this Covenant may be properly called *a Covenant of Suretyship or Redemption.*

Redemption. Upon which alone, and not upon any Covenant made between God and Man in their own Persons, is built the Infallibility of the future believing, repenting, and finally persevering, of such as Christ from all Eternity undertook to make his People.

Secondly, The other is a Covenant made in time, and actually entred into by God and Man, by which God on his Part promises to Men eternal Salvation, upon Condition of Faith and Repentance on theirs. And this is called in Scripture *the second Covenant*, or *the Covenant of Grace*, and stands opposed to that which is there called *the first Covenant*, or *the Covenant of Works*.

Now by that eternal Compact or Transaction between the Father and the Son (of which alone we now speak) was this Donation of a certain determinate Number of Persons made to Christ to be his People, by virtue of which Agreement or Transaction he was *in the Fulness of Time* to suffer for them, and to accomplish the whole Work of their Redemption from first to last. For to affirm that Christ died only to verify a Proposition (*That whosoever believed should be saved*) but in the mean time to leave the whole Issue

of Things in reference to *Persons* so loose and undetermined, that it was a Question, whether ever any one should *actually believe*, and very possible that none ever might, and consequently that after *Christ had suffered, had been stricken, and died for Transgression*, yet for any thing that he had done in all this, he might never have had a *People*; this certainly is a strange and new Gospel, and such as the Doctrine of our Church seems utterly unacquainted with.

Having thus shewn the Foundation upon which the Persons here spoken of are called by the Prophet *God's People*, namely, an eternal Covenant, in which God the Father and the Son mutually agreed upon the Terms of their Redemption, we are now to observe, that the same thing that thus denominates and makes them *God's People*, makes them under the same Relation to belong also *to Christ*, and that not only upon the Account of his Nature that he was *God*, but chiefly of his *Office*, that he was their *Mediator*, which Capacity made him equally concerned in that eternal Covenant, he accepting and agreeing to those Terms that were proposed and offered him by the Father. *By his Acceptance*

ceptance of which he became both a *mystical Head and a Surety* to those for whom he so undertook. And this Relation of his to them was the Cause why he both might be, and actually was *stricken by God for their Transgression*, without any Violation of the Divine Justice, notwithstanding the perfect *Innocence* of his Person. For to render it just to inflict a Punishment upon an innocent Person instead of another, either of these two Causes are sufficient.

First, An intimate Conjunction between those Persons, and that either *natural*, as between Father and Son, or *political*, as between King and People, and the like: Or,

Secondly, The voluntary *Consent* and Will of an innocent Person to undergo the Punishment due to the nocent, as it is between a Man and his Surety.

Accordingly from that Covenant, by which the *Father* made over a certain Number of Persons to *the Son to be his People*, there arose this two-fold Relation of Christ to them.

1. Of a King to his People, or of a mystical Head to his Members, so that legally and politically they suffered as really in Christ, as the whole Body suffers when the Head is wounded, or struck thro' with a Dart.

2. The other Relation is of a *Surety*; so that the Satisfaction paid down by Christ to God's Justice for Sin, is, in Estimation of Law, as really accounted to be paid down by the Saints, as if they had paid it in their own Persons.

And this is a farther, and withall a full Answer to that Objection formerly hinted from the *Innocence* of Christ's Person, as if it rendred him uncapable of *Punishment*. For his own free voluntary Consent to be a *Surety* for Sinners, and responsible for all that Divine Justice could charge them with, *transferred* the Guilt and Obligation from their Persons to his own.

In a word, the *Compact* between Christ and his Father made him a *King*, a *mystical Head*, and also a *Surety* to some certain Persons; and his being so, made *them his People*, and their being his People, did, upon that Account, make it both just and equitable for him to suffer, and *to be stricken for their Transgression*, which is the result of the Text, and the thing undertook by us to be proved.

I have now finished the several Things proposed from the Text, in which having set before you how much Christ has suffered, and all for our Sakes, I hope it will kindle

the

the Workings of a pious Ingenuity in every one of our Breasts. For I am sure if *Christ's suffering* for us were the *Doctrine*, Gratitude should make our Readiness *to suffer for him the Application*. Christianity I shew was a *suffering Religion*, and there are two sorts of Suffering to which it will certainly expose every genuine Professor of it.

1. The first is from himself.

2. The second from the World.

1. And first it will engage him in a Suffering from himself, even that grand Suffering of Self-denial and Mortification, the sharpest and most indispensable of all others, in which every Christian is not only to be the *Sufferer*, but himself also the *Executioner*. *He who is Christ's* (says the Apostle) *has crucified the Flesh, with the Affections and Lusts*. A severe Discipline certainly, in which a Man is to act his fiercest Anger upon his dearest Friends. For could Nature ever yet suggest to any one the *Hatred of his own Flesh*, the Crucifixion of his Desires, and the stabbing of his most beloved Affections? Nature indeed cannot, will not prompt it,

but Christianity, which rises many Strains above Nature, both must and will. The best Sacrifice to a *crucified* Saviour is a *crucified* Lust, a bleeding Heart, and a dying Corruption. We cannot bring, nor indeed does Christ expect a Recompence for what he has suffered for us, yet that which he will accept, as if it were a Recompence, is for us to deal cruelly with that Body of Sin which has caused the acting of all those Cruelties upon him. Let the ambitious Man lay his Pride in the Dust, the covetous Man deposite his Treasures in the Banks of Charity and Liberality, and let the voluptuous *Epicure* renounce his Cups and his Whores, and this will be a present to Heaven better than an whole Hecatomb: Nor could *the Fruit of his Body* fall so grateful a *Sacrifice upon God's Altars* as *the Sin of his Soul*. But it is like the jolly World about us will but scoff at the Paradox of such Practices, and explode them as Madness and Melancholy: Yet let those Sons of Pleasure know, that such as scorn to be thus melancholy in this World, will have but little Cause to be merry in the next.

2. The other kind of Suffering in which Christianity will engage a Man, is from the World. Such is the Genius and Nature of the Christian Religion, that it must unavoidably bring him, who owns it, in the Power of it, under temporal Troubles and Afflictions. *In the World* (says Christ) *ye shall have Tribulation.* And he spoke it not so much by a Spirit of Prophecy as Philosophy, and by an actual Sight of it in its pregnant Causes. For the Contrariety of the Principles and Maxims of Christianity to those of the World, cannot but engage Men in such Practices as shall also thwart the Customs and Modes which govern the Actions of the World. But where there is Contrariety there will be Fighting, and where there is Fighting, the weaker, I am sure, must suffer; and generally the Christian's is so in all worldly Encounters, whose chief Defensatives lie not in that Armour that is Sword-proof or Bullet-proof, and who wears no Breast-plate *upon*, but *within* his Breast, that is, his Innocence, his Conscience, and his Confidence in a reconciled God. Suffering is a thing which all Men abhor, and that because they are ashamed of it; and their being so is grounded upon this Opinion, that *to suffer*, in the very

Nature of it, seems to impeach the suffering Person, either in the Reputation of his *Power*, or of his *Innocence*, that is, he suffers, either because he *is weak*, and cannot hinder it, or because he *is faulty*, and so deserves it. But with every Christian Christ is an abundant Answer to both these Objections. For when we see Omnipotence hanging upon the Cross, and God himself *scourged* and *spit* upon, and when we see him who could have commanded Fire from Heaven, and Legions of Angels to his Rescue, yet surrendering himself quietly to the Will of his Murderers, surely no mortal Man, who is but Dirt and Worms Meat at the best, can pretend himself too great and too high to suffer. And again, when we behold Virtue, Innocence, and Purity, more than Angelical, crucified between Thieves and Malefactors, *shall* any Man whose Birth and Actions revile and speak him a Sinner to his Face, think himself too good to come under the Cross, and to take his Share in the common Lot of Christianity? 'Tis not the Suffering itself, but the Cause of it, that is dishonourable. And even in the worst and most shameful of Sufferings, tho' the Hangman does the *Execution*, yet it is the Crime alone which does the *Disgrace*.

Christ commands us nothing, but he enforces it with Arguments from his *Person* as well as from his *Word*, and it is well if we can make a due Use of them. For God knows how soon he may call us from our easy Speculations and Theories of *Suffering* to the practical Experience of it: How soon he may draw us forth for Persecution and the fiery Trial. Only this we may be sure of, that if these Things be brought upon us for *his Honour*, it will be for *ours* too to endure them. And be our Distresses never so great, our Calamities never so strange and unusual, yet we have both our Saviour's Example to direct, and his Promise to support us, who has left it upon Record in his Everlasting Gospel, *that if we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him.*

To whom therefore be rendred and ascribed, as is most due, all Praise, Might, Majesty, and Dominion, both now and for evermore. Amen.

A
S E R M O N
U P O N T H E
R E S U R R E C T I O N,
P R E A C H E D
On Easter-Day, 1667.

A C T S ii. 24.

*Ὁν ὁ Θεὸς ἀνέστησε, λύσας τὰς ᾠδῖνας τοῦ θανάτου
καθέτι ἐκ ἧν δυνατὸν κρατεῖσθαι αὐτὸν ὑπ' αὐτοῦ.*

*Whom God hath raised up, having
loosed the Pains of Death; because
it was not possible that he should be
holden of it.*

IT is of infinite Concern to Mankind, both
as to their Welfare in this World and the
next, to preserve in their Minds a full Belief
of a future Estate of *Happiness* or *Misery*, into
which,

which, according to the Quality of their Actions here, they must for ever be disposed of hereafter, the Experience of all Ages having found the Insufficiency of bare human Restraints to controul the audacious Sinfulness of some Tempers and Dispositions, without holding them under the Awe of this Persuasion. From which, tho' some by much and long sinning, and perverse Ratiocinations caused thereby, have in a great measure disentangled their Consciences, yet these are but few and inconsiderable compared with the rest of the World, in whose Minds Education, and better Principles, grafted upon the very Instincts of Nature, have fixed this Persuasion too deep to be ever totally rooted out. And it is from the victorious Influence of this, that the common Peace of the World has been maintained against those bold Invasions, which the Corruption of Man's Nature would otherwise continually make upon it. But now as highly necessary as it is for Men to believe such a *future Estate*, yet it must be acknowledged, that with the generality of the World this *Belief* has stood hitherto upon very false, or at the best very weak Foundations, and consequently that it is of no small Import to state and settle it upon better. For the doing of which the most effectual

effectual Ways, I conceive, may be these two.

1. By Revelation.
2. By Exemplification.

First, As to the first whereof, it must needs be, either by an immediate Declaration of this great Truth (not discoverable by Reason) by a Voice from Heaven, or by God's inspiring some certain select Persons with the Knowledge of it, and afterwards enabling them to attest it to the World by Miracles. And as this is undoubtedly sufficient in itself for such a Purpose, so Providence has not been wanting, partly by *Revelation*, and partly by *Tradition* thereupon, to keep alive among Men some Persuasion at least of this important Truth all along, as appears even from those fabulous Accounts and Stories which the Heathen World still cloathed or rather corrupted it with. Nevertheless such has been the Prevalence of human Corruption and Infidelity, as in a great Degree to frustrate all the Impressions that bare *Revelation* or *Tradition* could make upon Men's Minds, while they chiefly governed their *Belief* by the Observation of their *Senses*, which, from the daily occurring Instances of Mortality, shew them, *that as the Tree fell so it lay*: And that no Body
was

was ever seen by them to return from the Mansions of the *Dead*, but that, for any thing they could find to the contrary, all passed into *Dust and Rottennes*, and perpetual Oblivion.

Secondly, The other ways therefore of convincing the World of this momentous Truth (in comparison of which all Science and Philosophy are but Trifles) must be by *Exemplification*; that is to say, by giving the World an *Instance* or *Example* of it in some Person or Persons, who having been confessedly dead, should revive, and return to Life again. And this, one would think, should be as full and unexceptionable a Proof that there may be a *Resurrection* of Men to a *future Estate* as could be desired, nothing striking the Mind of Man so powerfully as *Instances* and *Examples* which makes a Truth not only *intelligible*, but even *palpable*, sliding it into the Understanding thro' the Windows of Sense, and by the most familiar as well as most unquestionable Perceptions of the Eye. And accordingly this Course God thought fit to take in the *Resurrection* of Christ, by which he condescended to give the World the greatest Satisfaction that Infidelity itself could rationally insist upon: Howbeit, notwithstanding so plain

plain an Address both to Men's *Reason* and *Sense* too, neither has this Course proved so successful for convincing of the World of a *Resurrection* from the *Dead*, and a future Estate consequent thereupon, but that Unbelief has been still putting in its Objections against it. For it is not, I confess, the Interest of such as live ill in this World to believe that there shall be another, or that they shall be sensible of any thing after Death has once done its Work upon them: And therefore let Truth and Scripture, and even Sense itself, say what they will for a *Resurrection*, Men, for ought appears, will for ever square their *Belief* to their *Desires*, and their *Desires* to their *Corruptions*; so that, as we find it in St. Luke xvi. 31. *Tho' they should even see one rise from the Dead they would hardly be persuaded of their own Resurrection.* Such a sad and deplorable Hardness of Heart have Men sinned themselves into, that nothing shall *convince* them but what first *pleased* them, be it never so much a *Delusion*. Nevertheless the most wise and just God is not so to be mocked, who knows, that by *raising Christ from the Dead*, he has done all that rationally can or ought to be done for the convincing of Mankind, that there shall be a *Resurrection*,

whether they will be convinced by it or no. But now if after all it should be asked, how is Christ's Resurrection a Proof that the rest of Mankind shall rise from the Dead too? I answer, that considered indeed as a *bare Instance* or *Example*, it proves no more, than that there *may be* such a thing, since the same infinite Power which effected the one may as well effect the other; but then if we consider it as an *Argument*, and a *Confirmation* of that *Doctrine* (whereof the Assertion of a general *Resurrection* makes a principal Part) I affirm that so taken it does not only prove that such a thing *may be*, but also that it actually *shall be*, and that as certainly as it is impossible for the Divine Power to set a Seal to a Lye, by ratifying an Imposture with such a Miracle. And thus as Christ's Resurrection irrefragably proves the Resurrection of the rest of Mankind, so it no less proves Christ himself to have been the Messiah, for that having all along affirmed himself to be so, he made good the Truth of what he had so affirmed by his miraculous rising again, and so gave as strong a Proof of his Messiahship, as *infinite Power*, joined with equal *Veracity*, could give. And upon this Account we have his *Resurrection* alledged by St. *Peter* for the same Purpose,

pose, here in the Text, which was part of his Sermon to the *Jews* concerning *Jesus Christ*, whom he proves to be their true and long expected *Messiah*, against all the Cavils of Prejudice and Unbelief, by this one invincible Demonstration.

In the Text then we have these three Things considerable.

First, Christ's Resurrection, and the Cause of it, in these Words, *whom God hath raised up*.

Secondly, The Manner by which it was effected, which was, by *loosing the Pains of Death*. And,

Thirdly, and *Lastly*, The Ground of it which was, its absolute *Necessity*, expressed in these Words, *it was not possible that he should be holden of it*. And,

1. For the first of these, the Cause of the Resurrection, set forth in this Expression, *whom God hath raised up*. It was such an Action as proclaimed an omnipotent Agent, and carried the Hand of God writ upon it in broad Characters, legible to the meanest Reason. Death is a Disease which Art cannot cure: And the Grave a Prison which delivers back
its

its Captives upon no human Summons. To restore Life is only the Prerogative of him who gives it. Some indeed have pretended by Art and physical Applications to recover the dead, but the Success has sufficiently upbraided the Attempt: Physick may repair and piece up Nature, but not create it. Cordials, Plaisters and Fomentations cannot always stay a Life when it is going, much less can they remand it, when it is gone. Neither is it in the Power of a Spirit or Demon good or bad to inspire a new Life: For it is a *Creation*, and to *create* is the incommunicable Prerogative of a Power infinite and unlimited. Enter into a Body they may, and so act and move it after the manner of a Soul; but it is one thing to *move*, another to *animate* a Carcass. You see the Devil could fetch up nothing of *Samuel* at the Request of *Saul*, but a Shadow and a Resemblance, his Countenance and his Mantle, which yet was not enough to *cover* the Cheat, or to *palliate* the Illusion. But I suppose no body will be very importunate for any further Proof of this, that if *Christ was raised*, it must be by God who raised him. The Angel might indeed *roll* away the *Stone* from the Sepulchre, but not turn it into a *Son of Abraham*; and a less

Power than that which could do so, could not effect the Resurrection.

2. I come now to the second thing, which is to shew the *manner* by which God wrought this Resurrection, set forth in these Words, *having loosed the Pains of Death*. An Expression not altogether so clear, but that it may well require a further Explication. For it may be required, with what Propriety God could be said *to loose the Pains of Death*, by Christ's Resurrection, when those *Pains* continued not till the *Resurrection*, but determined and expired in the Death of his Body? Upon which Ground it is, that some have affirmed, That Christ descended into the place of the damned; where during his Body's abode in the Grave, they say, that in his Soul he really suffered the Pains of Hell; and this not unsuitably to some ancient Copies, which read it not *ᾠδῖνας θανάτου*, *the Pains of Death*, but *ᾠδῖνας ᾗδου*, *the Pains of Hell*; and this also with much seeming consonance to that Article of the Creed in which Christ is said to *have descended into Hell*. But to this I answer, That Christ suffered not any such Pains in Hell, as the forementioned Opinion would pretend, which we may demonstrate from this, That if Christ suffered any of those Pains during
his

his Abode in the Grave, then it was either in his *Divine Nature*, or in his *Soul*, or in his *Body*: But the Divine Nature could not suffer; or be tormented, as being wholly impossible: Nor yet could he suffer in his *Soul*; forasmuch as in the very same Day of his Death, that passed into *Paradise*, which surely is no place of Pain: Nor *Lastly*, in his *Body*; for that being Dead, and consequently for the time bereaved of all Sense, could not be capable of any Torment. And then; for answer to what was alledged from the ancient Copies, it is to be observed that the word *ᾗδης* (which some render *Hell*;) indifferently signifies also *the Grave*, and a *State of Death*. And Lastly, for that Article of the Creed in which there is mention made of *Christ's Descent into Hell*, there are various Expositions of it, but the most rational and agreeable is, that it means *His abode in the Grave and under the State of Death* three Days and three Nights, or rather three *ἡμέρας*, viz. part of the *First*, and *Third*, (so called by a *Synéchoche* of the part for the whole) and the *Second* entirely: Whereby as his *Burial* signified his *Entrance* into the Grave; So his *descending into Hell* signified his Continuance there and Subjection to

that Estate. And thus the three parts of his Humiliation in the last and grand Scene of it, do most appositely answer to *three* parts of his Exaltation. For *First*, his Death answers to his rising again. *Secondly*, his Burial answers to his ascending into Heaven. And *Thirdly*, his descending into Hell, answers to his sitting at the Right Hand of God, in a State of never dying Glory, Honour and Immortality. But however, that his *descending into Hell* mentioned in the Creed cannot signify his *local Descent* into the place of the Damned, the former Argument disproving his suffering the *Pains* of Hell, will by an easy Change of the Terms sufficiently evince this also. For first, Christ could not descend according to his *Divine Nature*; since that which is Infinite and fills all places could not acquire any *new place*. And as for his Soul, that was in *Paradise*, and his Body was laid in the *Grave*; and being so, what part of Christ could descend into Hell, (the whole Christ being thus disposed of) needs a more than ordinary Apprehension to conceive.

We are therefore in the next place to see, how we can make out the Reason of this Expression upon some other or better Ground.

In order to which, it is very observable, that the same word which in the Greek Text is rendred by *ἰδίναι*, and in the *English* by *Pains*, in the Hebrew signifies not only *Pain*, but also a * *Cord* or *Band*, according to which it is very easy and proper to conceive, that the Resurrection discharged Christ from the *Bands of Death*: besides that this Rendition of the Word seems also most naturally to agree with the genuine Meaning of some other Words in the same Verse; as of *λύσαι* having *loosed*, which is properly applicable to *Bands* and not to *Pains*; as also of *καταδέσσει*, which signifies proper to be *bound* with some *Cord* or *Band*: So that undoubtedly this Exposition would give the whole Verse a much more natural and apposite Construction, and withal remove the Difficulty. But

Secondly, Because the Evangelist St. *Luke* follows the Translation of the *Septuagint*, (who little minding the Hebrew Pointings, rendred the Word *קָוָה* not by *χορδία* *Cords* or *Bands*, but *ἰδίναι* *Pains*) we are therefore not to baulk so great an Authority, but to see how the Scheme of the Text may be made clear, and agreeable, even to this Exposition.

* See Dr. *Hammond's* *Annot.* on the Place.

To this therefore I answer,

First, That the Words contain in them an Hebraism, *viz. the Pains of Death*, for a *painful Death*; as it is said, *Matth. xxiv. 15. The abomination of Desolation, for an abominable Desolation*; and so the Resurrection loosed Christ from a *painful Death*, not indeed painful in *sensu composito*, as if it were so at the time of his Release from it, but in a *divided Sense* (as the Logicians speak) it loosed him from a Continuance under that Death; which, relating to the *Time* of his suffering it, was *so painful*.

2. But *Secondly*, I answer further, that though the *Pains of Death* ceased long before the *Resurrection*, so that this could not in strictness of Sense be said to remove them; yet, taken in a *Metonymy* of the *Cause* for the *Effect*, the *Pains of Death* might be properly said to have been *loosed*, in the Resurrection, because that Estate of Death into which Christ was brought by those foregoing *Pains* was then conquered and completely triumph'd over. *Captivity* under Death and the Grave was the Effect and Consequent of those *Pains*, and therefore the same Deliverance which discharged Christ from the one, might not improperly be said to loose him

him from the other. And thus Christ was no sooner *bound*, but within a little time he was *loosed* again. *He was* not so much *buried*, as for a while *deposited* in the Grave for a small inconsiderable Space: So that even in this respect he may not inelegantly be said *to have tasted of Death*; for a *Taste* is transient, short, and quickly past. God rescued him from that Estate, as a *Prey from the Mighty*, and a *Captive from the Strong*: and though he was in the very *Jaws of Death*, yet he was not *devoured*. Corruption, the common Lot of Mortality, seized not on him; Worms and Putrefaction durst not approach him: His Body was sacred and inviolable; as sweet under Ground as above it, and in Death it self retaining one of the highest Privileges of *the Living*.

3. Come we now to the last and principal thing proposed; namely, The *Ground* of Christ's Resurrection, which was its absolute *Necessity*, expressed in these Words, *Because it was not possible that he should be holden of it*: and that according to the strictest and most received sense of the Word [*possible*.] For it was not only *par & æquum*, that Christ should not always be detained under Death, because of his *Innocence*, (as *Grotius*

precariously, and to serve any Hypothesis, would have the word *δυνατόν* here signify) but it was absolutely *necessary* that he should not, and impossible that he should continue under the Bands of Death, from the *peculiar Condition* of his *Person*, as well as upon several other Accounts. And accordingly this *Impossibility* was founded upon these five Things.

1. The Union of Christ's Human Nature to the Divine.

2. God's Immutability.

3. His Justice.

4. The Necessity of Christ's being believed in.

5. And *Lastly*, the Nature of his Priesthood.

First of all then, the *hypostatical Union* of Christ's Human Nature to his Divine, rendered a perpetual Duration under Death absolutely impossible. For how could that which was united to the great Source and Principle of Life be finally prevailed over by Death, and pass into an Estate of perpetual Darkness and Oblivion? *Even while* Christ's Body was divided from his Soul, yet it ceased not to maintain an intimate indissoluble Relation to his Divinity. It was assumed into the same *Person*; for according to the
Creed

Creed of *Athanasius*, as the *Soul and Body* make one Man; so the *Divine Nature and the Human* make one *Christ*. And if so, is it imaginable that the Son of God could have one of his *Natures* rent wholly from his *Person*? his *Divinity* (as it were) buoyed up his sinking *Humanity*; and preserved it from a total Dissolution: for, as while the Soul continues joined to the Body, (still speaking in *sensu composito*) Death cannot pass upon it; forasmuch as that is the proper Effect of their Separation; So, while *Christ's* *Manhood* was retained in a personal Conjunction with *his Godhead*, the Bands of Death were but feeble and insignificant, like the *Withs and Cords* upon *Sampson*, while he was inspired with the mighty Presence and Assistance of God's Spirit.

It was possible indeed that the *Divine* Nature might for a while suspend its supporting Influence, and so deliver over the *Human* Nature to Pain and Death, but it was impossible for it to let go the Relation it bore to it. A Man may suffer his Child to fall to the Ground, and yet not wholly quit his Hold of him, but still keep it in his Power to recover and lift him up at his Pleasure. Thus the *Divine Nature of Christ* did for a while hide it
self

self from his Humanity, but not desert it ; put it into the Chambers of Death, but not lock *the everlasting Doors* upon it. The Sun may be clouded and yet not eclipsed, and eclips'd but not stop'd in his Course, and much less forced out of his Orb. It is a Mystery to be admired, that any thing belonging to the Person of Christ should *suffer*, but it is a Paradox to be exploded, that it should *perish*. For surely that Nature which diffusing itself throughout the Universe communicates an enlivening Influence to every part of it, and quickens the least Spire of Grass according to the Measure of its Nature, and the Proportion of its Capacity, would not wholly leave a Nature assumed into its Bosom, and, what is more, into the very Unity of the *Divine Person*, breathless and inanimate, and dismantled of its prime and noblest Perfection. For Life is so high a Perfection of Being, that in this respect the least Fly or Mite is a more noble being than a Star. And God has expressly declared himself, *not the God of the Dead, but of the Living* : and this in respect of the very *Persons* of Men ; but how much more with reference to what belongs to the *Person* of his Son ? For when Natures come to unite so near, as mutually to interchange

change Names and Attributes, and to verify the Appellation by which *God is said to be Man*, and *Man to be God*; surely Man so privileg'd and advanced, cannot for ever lie under Death, without an insufferable Invasion upon the Entireness of that glorious Person, whose Perfection is as inviolable, as it is incomprehensible.

2. The second Ground of the Impossibility of Christ's Continuance under Death, was that great and glorious Attribute of God, his *Immutability*. Christ's *Resurrection* was founded upon the same bottom with the Consolation and Salvation of Believers, expressed in that full Declaration made by God of himself, *Malac. iii. 6. I the Lord change not: therefore the Sons of Jacob are not consumed*. Now the *Immutability* of God, as it had an Influence upon Christ's Resurrection, was twofold.

First, In respect of his Decree or Purpose.

Secondly, In respect of his Word or Promise.

And *First* for his *Decree*. God had from all Eternity designed this, and sealed it by an irreversible Purpose. For can we imagine that Christ's Resurrection was not decreed as well

as his Death and Sufferings? and these in the 23. v. of this Chapter are expressly said, to have been determined by God. It is a known Rule in Divinity, that whatsoever God does in Time, that he proposed to do from Eternity; for there can be no new Purposes of God: since he who takes up a new Purpose, does so because he sees some Ground to induce him to such a Purpose, which he did not see before; but this can have no place in an infinite Knowledge, which by one comprehensive Intuition sees all things as present, before ever they come to pass: So that there can be no new Emergency that can alter the Divine Resolutions. And therefore it having been absolutely purposed to raise Christ from the Dead, his Resurrection was as fixed and necessary, as the Purpose of God was irrevocable: A Purpose which commenced from Eternity, and was declared in the very Beginnings of Time; a Purpose not to be changed nor so much as bent, and much less broke, by all the created Powers in Heaven and Earth, and in Hell besides. For though indeed Death is a great Conqueror, and his Bands much too strong for Nature and Mortality: Yet when over-match'd by a Decree, this Conqueror, as old as he has
grown

grown in Conquest, must surrender back his Spoils, unbind his Captives, and in a word, even *Death* itself must receive its *Doom*. From all which it is manifest, That where there is a *Divine Decree*, there is always an *Omnipotence* to second it; and consequently, that by the Concurrence of both no less a Power was employed to raise Christ out of the Grave, than that which first raised the World itself out of *nothing*.

2. Let us consider God's *Immutability* in respect of his Word and *Promise*, for these also were engaged in this Affair. In what a clear Prophecy was this foretold, and dictated by that Spirit, which could not lye? Psalm xvi. 10. *Thou shalt not suffer thy Holy One to see Corruption*. And Christ also had frequently foretold the same of himself. Now when God says a thing, he gives his Veracity in Pawn to see it fully performed. *Heaven and Earth may pass away sooner than one Iota of a Divine Promise* fall to the Ground. Few things are recorded of Christ, but the Rear of the Narrative is still brought up with this, That such a thing was done, *that it might be fulfilled what was spoken by such, or such a Prophet*; Such a firm, unshaken, adamantine Connexion is there between a Prophecy

phesy and its Accomplishment. *All things that are written in the Prophets concerning Me* (says Christ) *must come to pass.* And surely then the most illustrious Passage that concerned him could not remain under an Uncertainty and Contingency of Event. So that, what is most emphatically said concerning the persevering Obstinacy and Infidelity of the *Jews*, John xii. 39, 40. *That they could not believe, because, that Esaias had said, that God blinded their Eyes, and hardened their Hearts, that they should not see with their Eyes, nor understand with their Hearts, and so be converted and he should heal them.* The same, I affirm, may with as great an Emphasis, and a much greater Clearness to our Reason, be affirmed of Christ, that *therefore* Death could not hold him, *because* the Kingly Prophet had long before sung the Triumphs of his glorious Resurrection in the forementioned Prediction. In a Word, whatsoever God purposes or promises, passes from contingent and meerly possible into certain and necessary: and whatsoever is necessary, the contrary of it is so far impossible.

But when I say that the Divine Decree or Promise imprints a Necessity upon things; it
 may

may to prevent Misapprehension be needful to explain what kind of Necessity this is, that so the Liberty of second Causes be not thereby wholly cashiered and taken away. For this therefore, we are to observe that the Schools distinguish of a two-fold Necessity, *physical* and *logical*, or *causal* and *consequential*; which Terms are commonly thus explained, *viz.* That *physical* or *causal Necessity* is when a thing by an efficient productive Influence certainly and naturally causes such an Effect: and in this Sense neither the Divine Decree nor Promise makes things necessary; for neither the Decree nor Promise, by itself produces or effects the Thing decreed or promised; nor exerts any active Influence upon second Causes so as to impel them to do any thing; but in point of Action are wholly ineffective. Secondly, *logical or consequential Necessity* is, when a thing does not efficiently *cause* an Event, but yet by certain infallible *Consequence* does *infer* it. Thus the Fore-knowledge of any Event, if it be true and certain, does certainly and necessarily infer, that there must be such an Event: forasmuch as the Certainty of the *Knowledge* depends upon the Certainty of the thing *known*. And in this Sense it is, that God's Decree

Decree and Promise give a necessary Existence to the thing decreed or promised, that is to say, they infer it by a necessary infallible Consequence: So that it was as impossible for Christ not to rise from the Dead, as it was for God absolutely to decree and promise a thing, and yet for that thing not to come to pass.

The *Third* Reason of the Impossibility of Christ's Detention under a State of Death, was from the *Justice* of God. God in the whole Procedure of Christ's Sufferings must be considered as a Judge exacting, and Christ as a Person paying down a Recompence or Satisfaction for Sin. For tho' Christ was as pure and undefiled with the least Spot of Sin as Purity and Innocence itself: yet he was pleased to make himself the greatest Sinner in the World by *Imputation*, and rendring himself a Surety responsible for our Debts. For, as it is said, 1 Cor. v. 21. *He who knew no Sin was made Sin for us.* When the Justice of God was lifting up the Sword of Vengeance over our Heads, Christ snatch'd us away from the Blow, and substituted his own Body in our Room, to receive the whole Stroke of that dreadful Retribution inflicted by the Hand of an angry Omnipotence.

But

But now, as God was pleas'd so to comport with his Justice, as not to put up the Injury done it by Sin without an equivalent Compensation; so this being once paid down, that proceeding was to cease. The Punishment due to *Sin* was *Death*, which being paid by Christ, Divine Justice could not any longer detain him in his Grave. For what had this been else but to keep him in Prison after the Debt was paid? Satisfaction disarms Justice, and Payment cancels the Bond. And that which Christ exhibited was full Measure, pressed down and running over, even adequate to the nicest Proportions, and the most exact Demands of that severe and unrelenting Attribute of God. So that his Release proceeded not upon Terms of Courtesy but of Claim. The Gates of Death flew open before him out of Duty; and even that Justice which was infinite, was yet circumscribed within the inviolable Limits of *what was due*. Otherwise Guilt would even grow out of Expiation, the Reckoning be inflamed by being paid, and Punishment itself not appease but exasperate Justice. Revenge indeed in the Hands of a sinful mortal Man is for the most part vast, unlimited, and unreasonable; but Revenge in the Hands of an infinite Justice is not so in-

finite as to be also indefinite, but in all its actings proceeds by Rule and Determination, and cannot possibly surpass the Bounds put to it by the Merits of the Cause, and the Measure of the Offence. It is not the effect of meer Choice and Will, but springs out of the unalterable relation of Equality between Things and Actions. In a word, The same Justice of God which required him to deliver Christ to Death, did afterwards as much engage him to deliver him from it.

4. The *Fourth* Ground of the Impossibility of Christ's perpetual continuance under Death was the *Necessity of his being believed in as a Saviour*, and the Impossibility of his being so without rising from the dead. As Christ by his Death paid down a Satisfaction for Sin, so it was necessary that it should be declared to the World by such Arguments as might found a rational Belief of it; so that Mens Unbelief should be rendred in excusable. But how could the World believe that he fully had satisfied for Sin, so long as they saw Death, the known Wages of Sin, maintain its full Force and Power over him, holding him, like an obnoxious Person, in Durance and Captivity? When a Man is once imprison'd for Debt, none can conclude the Debt either paid by him or
 forgiven

forgiven to him, but by the Release of his Person. Who could believe Christ to have been a God and a Saviour while he was hanging upon the Tree? A dying, crucified God, a Saviour of the World who could not save himself, would have been exploded by the universal Consent of Reason as an horrible Paradox and Absurdity. Had not the Resurrection followed the Crucifixion, that Scoff of the *Jews* had stood as an unanswerable Argument against him, Mark xv. 31. *Himself he cannot save*; and in the 32. v. *Let him come down from the Cross, and we will believe in him*. Otherwise, surely, that which was the lowest instance of human Weakness and Mortality could be no competent Demonstration of a Deity. To save is the effect of Power, and of such a Power as prevails to a compleat Victory and a Triumph. But it is expressly affirmed, 2 Cor. xiii. 4. *That Christ was crucified through Weakness*. Death was too hard for his Humanity, and bore away the Spoils of it for a Time. So that, while Christ was in the Grave, Men might as well have expected, that a Person hung in Chains should come down and head an Army, as imagine that a dead Body, continuing such, should be able to triumph over *Sin and Death*, which so

potently triumphs over the *Living*. The Discourse of the two Disciples going to *Em-maus*, and expecting no such thing as a Resurrection, was upon that Supposition hugely rational, and significant, Luke xxiv. 21. *We trusted* (said they) *that this had been he who should have redeemed Israel*: thereby clearly implying that upon his Death they had let that Confidence fall to the Ground together with him. For they could not imagine that *a breathless Carcase* could chase away the *Roman Eagles*, and so recover the Kingdom and Nation of the *Jews*, from under their Subjection; which was the Redemption that even the Disciples (till they were further enlightened) promised themselves from their Messiah. But the Argument would equally, nay, more strongly hold against a spiritual Redemption, supposing his Continuance under a State of Death, as being a thing in it self much more difficult. For how could such an one break the Kingdom of Darkness, and set his Foot upon *Principalities* and *Powers*, and *spiritual Wickednesses in high places*, who himself fell a Sacrifice to the Wickedness of mortal Men; and remained a Captive in the lower parts of the Earth, reduced to a Condition not only below

MENS

Mens *Envy*, but below their *very Feet*?

5. The *Fifth* and *Last* Ground of the Impossibility of Christ's perpetual Continuance under a State of Death was the Nature of the Priesthood, which he had took upon him. The Apostle, *Heb. viii. 4.* says, *That if he were upon Earth he should not be a Priest.* Certainly then much less could he be so should he continue *under the Earth.* The two great Works of his Priesthood were to offer Sacrifice, and then to make Intercession for Sinners, correspondent to the two Works of the Mosaical Priesthood; in which the Priest first slew the Lamb, and then with the Blood of it entred into the *Holy of Holies*, there to appear before God in the behalf of the People. Christ therefore after that he had offered himself upon the Cross was to enter into Heaven, and there presenting himself to the Father to make that Sacrifice effectual to all the Intent, and Purposes of it. Upon which Account the Apostle, to express his Fitness for the Priesthood infinitely beyond any of the Sons of *Aaron*, states it upon this, *Heb. vii. 25.* *That he lives for ever to make Intercession for us, and upon that very Score also is able to save to the uttermost.* But surely the dead could

not intercede for the living, nor was the Grave a *Sanctum Sanctorum*. Had not Christ risen again, his Blood indeed might have cried for Vengeance upon his Murderers, but not for Mercy upon Believers. In short, it had spoke no better thing than the Blood of *Abel*, which call'd for nothing but a fearful Judgment upon the Head of him who shed it. Christ's Death merited a *Redemption* for the World, but Christ while dead could not shew forth the full *effects* of that Redemption. He made the *Purchase* at his Death, but he could not take *Possession* till he was returned to Life. Ever since Christ ascended into Heaven, he has been pursuing the great Work begun by him upon the Cross, and appying the Virtue of his Sacrifice to those for whom it was offer'd. It is affirmed by some, and that not without great probability of Reason, that the Souls of the Saints who dyed before Christ's Resurrection did not actually enter into a State of compleat Glory, till Christ the great Captain of their Salvation upon his Ascension first entred into it himself, and then made way for others. So that according to that Divine Anthem of the Church, *After that he had overcome the Sharpness of Death, then at length, and not till then, he opened the Kingdom of*

of

of Heaven to all Believers. And thus I have given five several Reasons, why it was *not possible* that a State of Death should finally prevail over Christ, which was the thing to be proved. And I have nothing further to recommend to your Consideration, but only two things, which the very Nature of the Subject seems of itself to imprint upon all pious Minds.

1. The first is a *Dehortation* from Sin, and that indeed the strongest that can be. For can we imagine that the second Person in the glorious Trinity, would concern himself to take upon him our Flesh, and to suffer, and die, and at length rise again, only to render us the more secure and confident in our Sins? Would he neither *see*, nor endure *any Corruption* in his *dead* Body, that we should harbour all the Filth and Corruption imaginable in our *immortal* Souls? Did he conquer and triumph over Death, that we should be the Slaves and Captives of that which is worse than Death? Christ has declared that he will *dwell* in those, whom he assumes into the Society of his mystical Body: But can we think, that he who passed from a clean new Sepulchre into an heavenly Mansion, will descend from thence to take up his Habitation in the rot-

ten Sepulchre of an Heart possessed and polluted with *the Love* of that which he infinitely *hates*? It will little avail us, that Christ rose from a *temporal* Death, unless we also rise from a *spiritual*. For those who do not *imitate* as well as *believe* Christ's Resurrection, *must expect no Benefit by it*.

2. Christ's Resurrection is an high and sovereign Consolation against *Death*. *Death* we know is the grand Enemy of Mankind, the merciless Tyrant over Nature, and the King of Terrors. But, blessed be God, Christ has given a mortal Blow to his Power, and broke his Sceptre. And if we by a thorow Conquest of our Sins, and rising from them can be but able to say, *O Sin? where is thy Power?* We may very rationally and warrantably say thereupon, *O Death, where is thy Sting?* So that when we come to resign back these frail Bodies, these Vessels of Mortality to the Dust from whence they were taken, we may yet say of our Souls as Christ did of the Damsel whom he raised up, *that she was not dead, but only slept*; for, in like manner, we shall as certainly rise out of the Grave, and triumph over the Dishonours of its Rottenness and Putrefaction, as we rise in the Morning out of our Beds, with Bodies refreshed

refreshed and advanced into higher and nobler Perfections. For the *Head* being once risen, we may be sure the *Members* cannot stay long behind. And Christ is already risen and gone before, to prepare Mansions for all those who belong to him under that high Relation, *that where he is, they* (to their eternal Comfort) *may be also, rejoicing and singing Praises and Hallelujahs to him who sitteth upon the Throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever.*

To whom be rendred and ascribed, as is most due, all Praise, Might, Majesty, and Dominion, to eternal Ages. Amen.



The Christian PENTECOST:

OR THE

Solemn Effusion of the Holy Ghost ;

IN THE

*Several miraculous Gifts conferred by him upon
the Apostles and first Christians ;*

Set forth in a

S E R M O N

Preach'd at

Westminster-Abbey, 1692.

I COR. XII. 4.

*Now there are Diversities of Gifts, but
the same Spirit.*

OUR blessed Saviour having newly changed his *Crown of Thorns* for a *Crown of Glory*, and ascending up on high took Possession of his Royal Estate and SOVEREIGNTY, according to the Custom of PRINCES, is here treating with

this lower World (now at so great a Distance from him) by his *Ambassador*. And, for the greater Splendor of the *Embassy*, and Authority of the Message, by an *Ambassador* no ways inferior to himself, even the Holy Ghost, the third Person in the blessed Trinity, *in Glory equal, in Majesty co-eternal*; and therefore most peculiarly fit, not only as a *Deputy*, but as a kind of *alter idem* to supply his Place and Presence here upon Earth: and indeed had he not been *equal* to him in the *Godhead*, he could no more have *supplied* his Place, than he could have *filled* it: which we know, in the Accounts of the World, are things extremely different; as by sad and scandalous Experience is too often found.

Now the sum of this his glorious *Negotiation* was to confirm and ratifie Christ's Doctrine, to *seal the new Charter of the World's Blessedness* given by Christ himself, and drawn up by his [Apostles: and certainly, it was not a *greater Work* first to *publish*, than it was afterwards to *confirm* it. For Christianity being a Religion made up of *Truth* and *Miracle*, could not receive its *Growth* from any Power less than that which first gave it *its Birth*. And being withal a
Doctrine

Doctrine contrary to corrupt Nature, and to those Things, which Men most eagerly loved, to wit, their *worldly Interests*, and their *carnal Lusts*; it must needs have quickly decayed, and withered, and dyed away, if not *watered* by the same Hand of *Omni-potence* by which it was first *planted*.

Nothing could keep it up, but such a standing, mighty Power, as should be able upon all occasions to countermand, and controul Nature; such an one as should, at the same time, both *instruct* and *astonish*; and baffle the Disputes of *Reason* by the obvious overpowering Convictions of *Sense*.

And this was the Design of the *Spirit's Mission*. That the same *Holy Ghost*, who had given *Christ his Conception*, might now give Christianity its *Confirmation*. And this he did by that wonderful and various Effusion of his *miraculous Gifts* upon the first Messengers, and Propagators of this Divine Religion. For as our Saviour himself said, John iv. 48. *Unless you see Signs and Wonders you will not believe*. So that *Sight* was to introduce Belief: and accordingly, the first Conquest and Conviction was made upon the *Eye*, and from thence passed victorious to the *Heart*.

This

This therefore was their *Rhetorick*, this their Method of Persuasion. Their *Words* were *Works*: *Divinity* and *Physick* went together: They *cured the Body*, and thereby *convinced the Soul*: They conveyed and enforced all their Exhortations, not by the *Arts of Eloquence*, but by the *Gifts of Tongues*; These were the *Speakers*, and Miracle the *Interpreter*.

Now in treating of these Words, I shall consider these three Things.

First, What those Gifts were, which were conferred by the *Spirit* both upon the *Apostles*, and *first Professors* of Christianity.

Secondly, What is imported, and to be understood by *their Diversity*: and

Thirdly, and Lastly, What are the Consequences of their Emanation from one and the same Spirit.

First, And first, for the first of them. These *Gifts* are called in the Original $\chiα\rho\acute{\iota}\sigma\mu\alpha\lambda\alpha$, that is to say, *Acts of Grace or Favour*; and signify here certain Qualities and Perfections, which the *Spirit* of God freely bestowed upon Men, for the better enabling them to preach the Gospel, and to settle the Christian Religion in the World: and accordingly we will consider them under that

known Dichotomy, or Division, by which they stand divided into *ordinary*, and *extraordinary*.

And first, for the *ordinary Gifts of the Spirit*, these he conveys to us by the Mediation of our own Endeavours. And as he, who both makes the *Watch*, and winds up the *Wheels* of it, may not improperly be said to be the Author of its Motion; so God, who first *created*, and since *sustains* the Powers and Faculties of the Soul, may justly be called the *Cause* of all those Perfections, and Improvements, which the said Faculties shall attain unto by their respective Operations. For that which gives the *Form*, gives also the Consequents of that *Form*; and the Principle, with all its appendant Actions, is to be referred to the same *Donor*.

But God forbid that I should determine God's Title to our Actions barely in his giving us the *Power* and *Faculty* of Acting. *Durandus* indeed, an eminent Schoolman held so, and so must *Pelagius* and his Followers hold too, if they will be true to, and abide by their own Principles.

But undoubtedly, God does not only give the *Power*, but also vouchsafes an *active Influence* and *Concurrence* to the Production

tion of every particular *Action*, so far as it has either a *natural* or a *moral* Goodness in it.

And therefore, in all *acquired Gifts, or Habits*, such as are those of *Philosophy, Oratory, or Divinity*, we are properly *συνεργοὶ* *Co-workers with God*. And God ordinarily gives *them* to none, but such as labour hard for them. They are so his *Gifts*, that they are also our own *Acquisitions*. His Assistance, and our own Study are the joint and adequate Cause of these Perfections: And to imagine the contrary, is all one, as if a Man should think to be a Scholar, barely by his Master's *teaching*, without his own *learning*. In all these Cases, God is ready to do his Part, but not to do both *his own* and *ours* too.

Secondly, The other sort of the Spirit's Gifts are *extraordinary*. Which are so absolutely and entirely from God, that the Soul, into which they are conveyed, contributes nothing to the obtaining of them but a bare Reception: As when you pour some generous Wine or Liquor into a Cask or Vessel, that affords nothing to its own Fullness, but a meer Capacity; the rest it owes wholly to the liberal Hand that infused it: And, no doubt, from an Allusion to this, such Endowments

ments are said to be by way of *Infusion* from the Holy Ghost.

Of which kind were the *Gift of Miracles*, the *Gift of Healing*, the *Gift of Prophecy* and of *speaking with Tongues*; which great things might indeed be the *Object* of Mens Admiration, and sometimes also the *Motive* of their Envy, but never the *Effect*, or Purchase of their own Endeavours.

Now concerning *these Gifts* we must observe also, that there was no small Difference amongst them, as to the manner of their *In-existence* in the Persons who had them.

For one of them, to wit, the *Gift of Tongues*, after its first *Infusion by the Spirit*, might be in a Man by *habitual Inherence*, as a standing Principle, or Power residing in the Soul, and enabling it upon any Occasion to express itself in several Languages. There being no Difference between the *acquired* and the *supernatural* Knowledge of *Tongues*, as to the Nature and Quality of the Things themselves, but only in respect of their first Obtainment, that one is by industrious *Acquisition*, the other by Divine *Infusion*.

But then for the *Gifts of healing the Sick*, *raising the Dead*, and the like; inasmuch as these were immediate Emanations from;
and

and peculiar Effects of an *Infinite* and *Divine Power*. Such a Power could not be made *habitually to inhere* and *reside* in the Apostles; nor indeed in any created Being whatsoever. But only by an *exterior Assistance*, the Power of God was ready at hand, upon special and emergent Occasions, at their Invocation, or Word, (as God should think fit) to produce such miraculous Effects: For if *this Power of healing* had been *habitually* lodged in the Apostles, so that they might exert, and make use of it when they pleased, it will be hard to give a satisfactory Reason, why St. Paul should leave Trophimus at Miletum sick, as we find he did, 2 *Tim.* iv. 20.

And then *Lastly*, for the *Gift of Prophecy*, and foretelling future Events; neither was this in the Soul by *constant Inhesion*, and *habitual Abode*; but (as we may not unfitly express it) only by sudden Strictures, by transient Immissions, and Representations of the *Ideas* of Things *future*, to the Imagination. In a word, it was in the Mind not as an *Inhabitant*, but as a *Guest*; that is, by intermittent *Returns* and *Ecstasies*, by *occasional Raptures* and *Revelations*; as is clear from what we read of the Prophets in the Old

Testament. And thus much I thought good to discourse of the Nature of *these Gifts*, and to shew what kind of Things they were; how they qualified, and affected the Apostles, and Primitive Christians, in the Exercise of them; that so we may not abuse our Understandings by an empty Notion of the Word, without a clear and distinct Apprehension of the Thing.

And here, I doubt not, but some will be apt to enquire, how long these *extraordinary* and *miraculous Gifts* continued in the Church: For the Resolution of which, the very Nature of the Thing itself will suggest thus much, that the conferring of these *Gifts*, being in order to the Establishment of a Church, and the settling of a *new Religion* in the World, their Duration was to be proportioned to the need, which that *new Religion* had of such *Credentials*, and Instruments of Confirmation. For when Christianity first appeared in the World, it found it under the mighty Prejudice and Prepossession of two contrary Religions, but both of them equally bent, and set against that, to wit, *Gentilism*, and *Judaism*. Which Prejudices nothing could conquer, but the *Arm of Omnipotence* itself (as it were) *made bare* be-

fore them, in such stupendous Works, as could not but convince them to their Face, that it was a Religion which came from God. But when these Prejudices were once removed, by the actual Entertainment of, and Submission to the *Christian Faith*, there could not be the same Use or Need of *Miracles* then, which there was before. For still we must remember, that the State of a Church in its *Infancy* and first Beginnings, and in its *Maturity and Continuance* is very different, and consequently that the Exigencies of it, under each Condition, must equally differ too. It is a much harder Work first to advance, and put a thing into Motion, than to continue and keep up that Motion being once begun; for though indeed (as we observed before) there is an *Omnipotence* required to *maintain*, as well as first to *set up* the Christian Church, yet it does not therefore follow that this *Omnipotence* must still exert itself to the same Degree, and after the same way, in *one Case*, that it does in *the other*.

Wherefore the Use and Purpose of Miracles being *extraordinary*, and to serve only for a time; they were not by their *Continuance* to thwart their *Design*, nor to be made *com-*

mon by their being *perpetual*. The exact Period of their Duration can hardly be assigned; but manifest it is from all History that they (or at least some them) continued long after the Apostles time; as we may gather from the several Ages of those eminent Fathers and Christian Writers, who have so freely given in their Testimony concerning the ejecting of evil Spirits from Persons possessed, as very common in their time in the Christian Church; a Power no doubt *supernatural*, and therefore *miraculous*: Such as were *Justin Martyr*, who lived something before the middle of the second Century, and *Irenæus* who lived about thirty Years after, and *Tertullian* who lived in the latter End of the Second, and the Beginning of the Third, and *Minutius Felix* thereabouts, and *St. Cyprian* about the Middle of the Third, and *Lactantius* about the Beginning of the Fourth. All these, I say, according to the Times they lived in, speak of this Power of casting out Devils (but more especially *Tertullian* in the twenty third Chapter of his Apologetick) with so much Assurance, that it must needs prove it to have been very frequent amongst the Christians in those Days; as several Passages in those forementioned Writers particularly

ticularly declare : Which might easily be produced and rehearsed by us, could we spare Room enough for them in so short a Discourse.

But however, certain it is, that now these extraordinary and miraculous Powers are ceased, and that upon as good Reason, as at first they began. For when the *spiritual Building* is consummate, and not only the *corner Stone* laid, but the Superstructure also *finished*, to what Purpose should the Scaffolds any longer stand? Which when they leave off to contribute to the Building, can serve for little else but to upbraid the Folly of the Builder. Besides, that by so long a Continuance *Miracle* would almost turn into *Nature*; or, at least look very like it; the Rarities of Heaven would grow cheap and common, and, (which is very preposterous to conceive,) they would be *Miracles* without a *Wonder*.

The Papists indeed, who having swallowed and digested the Belief of so many monstrous Contradictions, would do but very unwisely, and disagreeably to themselves, if, for ever after, they should stick at any advantageous Absurdity; these, I say, hold, that the *Gift of Miracles* still continues ordinary in their Church; and that the Christian Reli-

gion has still the same need of such miraculous Confirmations, as it had at first.

Where, if by *the Christian* they mean their own *Popish Religion*, I am so fully of their Mind, that I think there is need, not only of *daily*, but even of *hourly*, or rather *continual* Miracles, to confirm it; if it were but in that one single Article of *Transubstantiation*. But then, we know whose Badge and Character the Scripture makes it, to *come in lying Wonders*; and we know also, *that lying Wonders are true Impostures*: And theirs are of that Nature, that the Fallacy is so gross, and the Cheat so transparent in them, that, as it hardens the *Jews* and *Mahometans* with a desperate, invincible Prejudice against *Christianity*, as a thing as false as those *Miracles*, which they see it recommended by; so, I am confident, that it causes many Christians also to nauseate their own Religion, and to fall into secret Atheism; being apt to think (as even these Impostors also pretend) that the very Miracles of the Apostles might be of the same Nature, with those which they see daily acted by these spiritual Juglers: So that hereby the grand Proof of Christianity falls to the Ground, and has no Force or Hold upon Mens Minds at all.

all. Whereas our Saviour himself laid the main Stress and Credit of his Gospel, and of his Mission from God, upon his *Miracles*. *The Works that I do* (says he) *bear Witness of me,* John x. 25. And, *Believe me for my very Works sake,* John xiv. 11. And, *had I not done amongst them the Works which no other Man did, they had not had Sin,* John xv. 24. So that we see here, that the Credit of all turned upon his *Miracles*, his mighty and *supernatural Works*.

But as, we know, it often falls out, that, when a Man has once got the *Character of a Lyar*, even Truth itself is suspected, if not absolutely disbelieved when it comes from the Mouth of such an one: So these *Miracle-Mongers* have alarm'd the World round about them to a Discernment of their *Tricks*, when they came afterwards to preach *Christianity*, especially to *Infidels*, and to press it upon Mens Belief in the Strength of those miraculous Works which were truly and really done by Christ; yet, since they pretend the same of their own Works too, (which all People see through, and know to be *Lyes*, and *Impostures*) all, that they preach of Christ, is presently looked upon as false, and fictitious, and leaves the Minds of Men lock-

ed up under a *fixed, obstinate, and impregnable Infidelity*. Such a fatal Blow has the Legerdemain of those Wretches given to the Christian Religion, and such Jealousies have they raised in some Mens Thoughts against it, by their false Miracles and fabulous Stories of *the romantick* Feats of their pretended Saints. In all which there is nothing indeed strange or miraculous, but the Impudence and Impiety of such as report and make them, and the Folly of such as can believe them.

2. Pass we now to *the second Thing proposed*, which is to shew, *what is meant by this diversity of Gifts, mentioned in the Text*. It imports, I conceive, these two Things.

1. Something by way of *Affirmation*, which is *Variety*.

2. Something by way of *Negation*, which is *Contrariety*.

1. And first, for the first of them. It imports *Variety*; of which excellent Qualification, it is hard to say, whether it makes more for *Use or Ornament*. It is the very Beauty of Providence, and the Delight of the World. It is that which keeps alive Desire, which would otherwise flag and tire, and be quickly
weary

weary of any one single Object. It both supplies our Affections, and entertains our Admiration; equally serving the innocent *Pleasures*, and the important *Occasions* of Life. And now all these Advantages God would have this desirable Quality derive even upon his Church too. In which *great Body* there are, and must be several Members having their several *Uses, Offices, and Stations*: As in the 28th v. of this Chapter (where my Text is) the Apostle tells us, that *God has placed in the Church, first Apostles, secondarily Prophets, thirdly Preachers; after that Miracles; then Gifts of Healing, Helps, Governments, Diversities of Tongues.* The particular Function, and Employment of so many Parts subserving the joint Interest, and Design of the whole. As the Motion of a Clock is a complicated Motion of so many Wheels fitly put together; and *Life* itself, but the Result of so many several Operations, all issuing from, and contributing to the Support of the same Body. The great help and furtherance of Action, is *Order*; and the Parent of Order is *Distinction*. No Sense, Faculty, or Member must encroach upon, or interfere with the Duty and Office of another. For as the same Apostle discourses in *the two next Verses,*

Verses, Are all Apostles? Are all Prophets? Are all Teachers? Are all Workers of Miracles? Have all the Gifts of Healing? Do all speak with Tongues? Do all interpret? No, but as in the natural Body the Eye does not *speak*, nor the *Tongue see*; so neither in the Spiritual, is every one, who has the Gift of Prophecy, endued also with the *Gift and Spirit of Government*; every one, who may speak well, and pertinently enough upon a Text, is not therefore presently fit to rule a Diocese; nor is a nimble Tongue always attended with a strong and a steady Head. If all were *Preachers*; who should govern? or rather indeed, who could *be governed*? If the Body of the Church were *all Ear*, Men would be only *Hearers of the Word*, and where would then be *the Doers*? For such, I am sure, we are most to seek for in our Days, in which, sad Experience shews that *bearing Sermons* has, with most, swallowed up and devoured the Practice of them, and manifestly serves instead of it; rendring many Zealots amongst us, as really guilty of the *Superstition* of resting in the bare *Opus Operatum* of this Duty, as the Papists are or can be charged to be in any of their religious Performances whatsoever. The Apo-

stle

He justly reproaches such *with itching Ears,* 2 *Tim.* iv. 3. And I cannot see, but that the *Itch in the Ear,* is as bad a Distemper as in any other Part of the Body, and perhaps a *worse.*

But to proceed : God has use of all the several Tempers and Constitutions of Men, to serve the Occasions and Exigencies of his Church by. Amongst which some are of a sanguine, chearful, and debonair Disposition, having their Imaginations, for the most Part, filled and taken up with pleasing Ideas, and Images of Things; seldom or never troubling their Thoughts, either by looking *too deep* into them, or dwelling too long upon them. And these are not properly *framed* to serve the Church either in the knotty, dark and less pleasing Parts of Religion, but are fitted rather for the airy, joyful Offices of Devotion; such as are *Praise and Thanksgiving, Jubilations, and Hallelujahs*; which, though indeed not so difficult, are yet as pleasing a Work to God as any other. For they are the noble Employment of Saints and Angels; and a lively Resemblance of the glorified and beatifick State; in which all that the blessed Spirits do, is to rejoice in the God, who
made,

made, and saved them, to sing his Praises, and to adore his Perfections.

Again, there are others of a *melancholy, reserved, and severe Temper*, who *think much and speak little*; and these are the fittest to serve the Church in the *pensive, afflictive* Parts of Religion; in the Austerities of Repentance and Mortification, in a Retirement from the World, and a settled Composure of their Thoughts to Self-reflection and Meditation. And such also are the ablest to deal with troubled and distressed Consciences, to meet with their Doubts, and to answer their Objections, and to ransack every Corner of their shifting, and fallacious Hearts, and, in a word, to lay before them the true State of their Souls, having so frequently descended into, and took a strict Account of their own. And this is so great a Work, that there are not many, whose Minds and Tempers are capable of it, who yet may be serviceable enough to the Church in other Things. And it is the same thoughtful and reserved Temper of Spirit, which must enable others to serve the Church in the hard and controversial Parts of Religion. Which sort of Men, (though they should never *rub Mens itching Ears*

Ears from the Pulpit) the Church can no more be without, than a Garrison can be without *Soldiers*, or a City without Walls; or than a Man can defend himself with his *Tongue*, when his Enemy comes against him with his *Sword*. And therefore, great pity it is, that such as God has eminently and peculiarly furnished, and (as it were) cut out for this Service, should be cast upon, and compell'd to the *popular, speaking, noisy* Part of Divinity; it being all one, as if, when a Town is besieged, the Governour of it should call off a valiant and expert Soldier from the Walls, to sing him a Song or play him a Lesson upon the Violin at a Banquet, and then turn him out of Town, because he could not sing and play as well as he could fight. And yet as ridiculous as this is, it is but too like the irrational and absurd Humour of the present Age; which thinks all Sense and Worth confined wholly to the Pulpit. And many excellent Persons, because they cannot make a Noise with *Chapter and Verse*, and harangue it *twice a Day to factitious Tradesmen*, and ignorant *old Women*, are esteemed of as nothing, and scarce thought worthy to eat the Church's Bread. But for all these false Notions, and wrong Measures

of Things and Persons, so scandalously prevalent amongst us, *Wisdom* (as our Saviour tells us) *is and will be justified of her Children.*

But then again, there are others besides these, who are of a warmer and more fervent Spirit, having much of *Heat* and *Fire* in their Constitution: And God may and does serve his Church even by such kind of Persons as these also, as being *particularly* fitted to preach the terrifying Rigours and *Curses of the Law* to obstinate daring Sinners; which is a Work as absolutely necessary, and of as high a Consequence to the good of Souls, as it is, that Men should be *driven*, if they cannot be *drawn* off from their Sins; that they should be cut and launced if they cannot otherwise be cured, and that the terrible *Trump of the last Judgment* should be always sounding in their Ears, if nothing else can awaken them. But then, while such Persons are thus busied in *Preaching of Judgment*, it is much to be wished, that they would do it with *Judgment* too; and not preach *Hell* and *Damnation* to Sinners so; as if they were *pleased* with what they preached; No, let them rather take heed, that they mistake not their own fierce Temper for the
Mind

Mind of God ; for some I have known to do so, and that at such a Rate, that it was easy enough to distinguish the Humour of the Speaker, from the Nature of the Thing he spoke. Let Ministers threaten *Death and Destruction* even to the very worst of Men in such a Manner, that it may appear to all their sober Hearers, that they do not *desire*, but *fear* that these dreadful Things should come to pass: Let them declare God's Wrath against the hardened and impenitent, as I have seen a *Judge* condemn a *Malefactor*, with *Tears* in his *Eyes*: For surely much more should a *Dispenser of the Word*, while he is pronouncing the infinitely more killing Sentence of the *Divine Law*, grieve with an inward-bleeding *Compassion* for the Misery of those forlorn Wretches, whom it is like to pass upon. But I never knew any of the *Geneva*, or *Scotch* Model (which sort of sanctified *Reprobationers* we abound with) either use, or like this way of Preaching in my Life ; but generally *Whips* and *Scorpions*, *Wrath* and *Vengeance*, *Fire* and *Brimstone*, made both Top and Bottom, Front and Rear, First and Last of all their Discourses.

But then on the contrary, there are others again, of a gentler, a softer, and more tender Genius, and these are full as serviceable for the Work of the Ministry, as the former sort could be, though not in the same way; as being much fitter to represent the *Meekness* of *Moses*, than to *preach his Law*; to bind up the *broken-hearted*, to speak Comfort and Refreshment *to the weary*, and to take off the Burden from the *heavy laden*. *Nature* itself seems peculiarly to have fitted such for the Dispensations of *Grace*. And when they are once put into the Ministry, they are (as it were) marked and singled out by Providence, to do those benign Offices to the Souls of Men, which Persons of a rougher and more vehement Disposition are by no means so fit, or able to do. These are the Men, whom God pitches upon for the *Heralds* of his *Mercy*, with a peculiar *Emphasis* and Felicity of Address, to proclaim and issue out the Pardons of the Gospel, to close up the Wounds which the *legal Preacher* had made, to bathe and supple them with the *Oil of Gladness*; and in a word, to crown the Sorrows of Repentance with the Joys of Assurance. And thus we have seen how the Gospel must have both its *Boanerges* and
its

its *Barnabas, Sons of Thunder, and Sons of Consolation*: The first (as it were,) to *cleanse the Air* and purge the Soul, before it can be fit for the Refreshments of a *Sunshine, the Beams of Mercy, and the Smiles of a Saviour.*

David had shewn himself but a mean Psalmist, had his Skill reached no further than to one Note: And therefore, *Psal. cx. v. 1.* we have him *Singing of Judgment as well as Mercy*; and so raising the sweetest *Harmony* out of the seeming *Discord* of the most disagreeing Attributes. There can be no *Composition* in any Thing, without some Multiplicity and *Diversity of Parts*: And therefore we have a Catalogue of those *Gifts*, which did (as it were) *compound* and make up the Primitive Church in the 8, 9, and 10th Verses of this 12th Chapter of the 1st to the Corinthians. Where the Apostle tells us, That *to one is given the Word of Wisdom, to another the Word of Knowledge, to another Faith*; with many more such like Gifts there reckoned up; and indeed so many and various were the *Gifts* poured out by the Spirit of God upon the first Preachers of the Gospel, that there is need almost of the *Gifts of Tongues* to rehearse them.

Of which great *Variety*, as we have hitherto observed the *Use*, so it is intended also for the *Ornament* of the Church. I say *Ornament*: For I cannot persuade myself, that God ever designed his Church for a rude, naked, unbeautiful Lump; or to lay the Foundations of *Purity* in the Ruins of *Decency*. The *Entrance and Gate* of Solomon's *Temple* was called *Beautiful*: And, as there were several Orders of *Priests* and *Levites* belonging to it, so they had their several Offices, their several Chambers and Apartments in that Temple. It was a kind of Representation of Heaven; in which, our Saviour tells us, there are many *Mansions*. But behold! there are wiser, much wiser, than Solomon amongst us, who will have it quite otherwise in the Christian Church. Nothing of Order or Distinction, nothing of Splendor or Dress must be allowed of here. No, they are all for lying in the *Dust* before God, (as their word is,) and therefore will have nothing but *Dust* and *Nastiness* for the Church's Furniture: To attempt a Confutation of such Persons would be superfluous; and indeed I have no more to say for those, who contend for such a sordid, and mean Condition of the Church, but, that in this, they do not so
 much

much speak their *Devotion* as their *Educacion*: It being generally found that a slovenly way of breeding disposes Men to a kind of slovenly Religion.

Much might be spoken by way of Analogy between the *internal*, and *external*, the *spiritual* and the *material* Ornaments of the Church; but both of them serve to dress and set off the *Spouse of Christ*; the first to recommend her to his own Eyes, and the latter to the Eyes of the World.

Where would be the Beauty of the Heavens themselves, if it were not for the multitude of the Stars, and the variety of their Influences? And then for the Earth here below, and those who dwell therein, certainly we might live without the Plumes of Peacocks, and the curious Colours of Flowers; without so many different *Odours*, so many several *Tastes*, and such an infinite Diversity of *Airs* and *Sounds*. But where would then be the Glory and Lustre of the Universe? The Flourish and Gaiety of Nature? If our Senses were forced to be always poring upon the same Things, without the Diversion of Change, and the quickning Relish of Variety? And now, when matters stand thus, may we not justly say, *If God so clothes the Field, so*

paints the Flowers, and paves the very Places we tread upon, and with such Curiosity provides for all our Senses, which yet are but the Servants, and under Officers of the Soul; shall he not much more provide for the Soul itself and its own Service thereby, in the glorious Oeconomy, and great Concernments of the Church? And moreover, does not such a liberal Effusion of *Gifts* equally argue both the *Power* and the *Bounty* of the Giver? *Number* and *Multitude* are the Signs of *Riches*, and the Materials of *Plenty*; And therefore though *Unity* in the *Government* and *Communion* of the *Church* is indeed a great Blessing, yet in the *Gifts* and *Endowments* of it, it would be but Penury and a Curse. But

Secondly, As this *Diversity of the Spirit's Gifts* imports *Variety*, so it excludes *Contrariety*: Different they are, but they are not *opposite*. There is no Jarr, no Combat, or Contest between them, but all are disposed of with mutual Agreements, and a happy Subordination: For as *Variety* adorns, so *Opposition* destroys; Things most different in Nature, may yet be united in the same Design; and the most distant Lines may meet and clasp in the same Centre.

As for instance, one would think that the Spirit of *Meekness*, and the Spirit of *Zeal* stood at that distance of Contrariety, as to defy all Possibility either of Likeness, or Reconciliation; and yet (as we have already shewn) they both may and do equally serve and carry on the great End and Business of Religion. And the same Spirit, which *baptizes with Water*, *baptizes also with Fire*. It is an Art to attain the same End by several Methods; and to make things of a quite contrary Operation to concur in one and the same Effect.

Come we now to the *third and last thing* proposed from the Words; which is to shew, *what are the Consequences of this Emanation of so many and different Gifts from one and the same Spirit*: I shall instance in four, directly and naturally deducible from it: As

First, If the Spirit works such *Variety of Gifts*, and those in so vast a Multitude, and for the most part above the Force of Nature, certainly it is but rational to conclude, *that it is a Being superior to Nature, and so may justly challenge to itself a Deity*. There have been several who have impugned the Deity of the Holy Ghost, though not in the

same manner; but the principal of them come within these two sorts.

1. *Macedonius* and his Followers, who allowed him to be a *Person*, but denied his *Deity*: Affirming him to be the *chief Angel*, the supreme and most excellent of those blessed Spirits, employed by God administering the Affairs of the Church, and conveying good Suggestions to the Minds of Men, and for that Cause to be called the *Holy Spirit*; and sometimes *simply* and καὶ ἑξοχλῶ, or by way of Eminence *the Spirit*. And the same was held by one *Biddle* an Heretick of some Note here in *England*, a little before the Restoration: That is to say, while *Confusion* and *Toleratation* gave Countenance to almost *all Religions*, except the *true*.

2. But secondly, *Sacinus* and his School deny both the *Deity* of the Holy Ghost, and his *personal Subsistence* too; not granting him to be a *Person*, but only the *Power of God*: To wit, that *Vis* or ἐνέργεια, by which he effects, or produces things. And amongst those who assert this, none have given such bold Strokes at the *Deity of the Holy Ghost*, as *Crellius*, in his Book *de uno Deo Patre*, and his other *de Spiritu Sancto*.

Now

Now to draw forth and insist upon all the *Arguments and Texts of Scripture*, which use to be traversed on both sides in this Controversy, would be a Thing neither to be done within this Compass of Time, nor perhaps so proper for this Exercise; and therefore let it suffice us upon the Warrant of express Scripture, not sophisticated by *nice and forced Expositions*, but plainly interpreted by the *general Tradition* of the Church (to which all *private Reason* ought in *Reason* to give Place) to confess and adore the *Deity* of the Holy Ghost.

Now this *Holy Spirit* is in the Church, as the *Soul* in the natural Body: For as the same Soul does *in* and *by* the several Parts of the Body exercise several Functions and Operations; so the *Holy Ghost*, while he animates the *mystical Body* of Christ, causes in it several Gifts and Powers, by which he enables it to exert Variety of Actions. And as in the River *Nilus*, it is the same Fountain which supplies the seven *Streams*; so when we read of the seven *Spirits*, *Revelation* iv. 5. they are but so many several Gifts of the *same Spirit*, all bearing the Name and Title of their Donor; as it is usual for so many several *Volumes* to bear the single Denomi-

nation of their *Author*; and we say properly enough, that such an one has read *Cicero* or *Plutarch*, when he has read their Works.

But now surely this glorious Person or Being, who thus *enlightens the Minds of all Men coming into the World* in some Measure and of the *Church* more especially, cannot be in the Rank and Number of created Beings. The Heathens attributed a kind of Divinity, or *Godhead* to *Springs*, because of that continual inexhaustible Emanation from them, resembling a kind of *Infinity*. But here we see the very *Gifts of the Spirits* to be *Divine*: And where we find such a Divinity in the *Stream*, certainly we may well ascribe it in a more transcendent manner to the *Fountain*: Besides, if the *Holy Ghost* were not *God*, I cannot see how our *Bodies could be well called his Temples*; since none but God can challenge to himself the Prerogative of a *Temple*. And so much for the first Consequent. But

Secondly, This great *Diversity of the Spirit's Gifts* may read a Lecture of *Humility* to some, and of *Contentment* to others: God indeed, in this great Scheme of the Creation, has drawn some *capital Letters*, set forth some *Master-Pieces*, and furnished them with
higher

higher Abilities than ordinary, and given them *Gifts*, as it were, *with both Hands*: But for all that, none can brag of a Monopoly of them, none has so absolutely engrossed them all, as to be *that thing* of which we may say, Here we see, *what and how much God can do*. No, God has wrote upon no created Being the utmost Stint of his *Power*, but only the free Issues and Products of his *Pleasure*. God has made no Man *in Opprobrium Naturæ*, only to overlook his fellow Creatures, to upbraid them with their Defects, and to discourage them with the amazing Distance of the Comparison: He has filled no Man's Intellectuals so full, but he has left some Vacuities in them, that may sometimes send him for Supplies to *Minds* of a much lower Pitch: He has stocked no Land or Country with such universal Plenty, without the Mixture of some Wants, to be the Ground and Cause of Commerce: For mutual Wants, and mutual Perfections together, are the Bond and Cement of Conversation. The vast Knowledge and ruling Abilities of *Moses*, might yet stand in need of *Aaron's* Elocution: And he who *speaks with the Tongue of Angels*, and the greatest Fluency of spiritual Rhetorick, may yet be at a loss, when he

comes

comes to matters of Controversy, and to assert the Truth against the Assaults and Sophistry of a subtle Opponent. God indeed can, and sometimes happily does unite both these Gifts in the same Person: But where he does not, let not him who can *preach*, condemn him who can only *dispute*; neither let him who can *dispute*, despise him who can only *preach*: For (as we have shewn before) the Church is served by both, and has equally need of some Men to speak and *declare the Word*, and of others to *defend it*: It being enough, and too often more than enough, for one Man to maintain what another says. In which Work, the *speaking* Part is indeed the more easy, but the *defensive* the more glorious.

And, as this may give some Check to the *Presumption* of the most raised Understandings, so it should prevent the *Despondency* of the meanest: For the Apostle makes this very use of it *in the 12. and 22 v.* Where he would not have even the lowest and poorest Member of the Church to be dejected, upon the *Consideration* of what it *wants*, but rather be comforted in the Sense of what it *has*. Let not the *Foot trample upon itself* because it does not *rule the Body*, but consider, that it has the

Honour

Honour to support it : Nay, the greatest Abilities are sometimes beholding to the very meanest, if but for this only, that without them they would want the Gloss and Lustre of a *Foil*. The *two Talents* went into Heaven as easily as the *five* : And God has put a peculiar Usefulness even into the smallest Members of the Body, answerable to some Need or Defect in the greatest ; thereby to level them to a mutual Intercourse of Compliance and Benefaction ; which alone can keep things equal, and is indeed the very *Poise* and *Ballast* of Society. And thus much for the second Consequent. But

Thirdly, The foregoing Doctrine affords us also a Touchstone for the *Trial of Spirits* : For, such as are the *Gifts*, such must be also the *Spirit* from which they flow : And since both of them have been so much pretended to, it is well for the Church, that it has the Rule of Judgment, and a Note of Discrimination. There is none, who is not wilfully a Stranger to the Affairs of our *Israel*, but has had the Noise and Blusters of *gifted Brethren*, and of *Persons pretending to the Spirit*, ringing in his Ears. Concerning which Plea of theirs, since we all know, that there are *Spirits*, both *good and bad*, it cannot be denied, but that in some Sense

Sense *they might have the Spirit* (such a *Spirit* as it was) and that in a very large Measure : But as for *their Gifts*, we must examine them by the Standard of those here mentioned by the Apostle.

And first, for *that of Prophecy* : These Men were once full of a Prophecy that the World should be destroyed in the Year 1656 ; because, forsooth, the Flood came upon the old World in that Year reckoning from the Creation. And again, that the Downfal of *Pope* and *Antichrist*, together with that of *Monarchy* and *Episcopacy*, (which they always accounted as Limbs of *Antichrist*) should be in the Year 1666. And that because some remarkable Mention is made of the *Number 666* in the *Revelation* ; with many other such like Predictions : The Event of all which has shewn, that those Men were not of *God's Privy Council* ; but on the contrary that all their *Prophecies* were like those of Almanacks, which warn every wise Body to prepare against *foul Weather*, by their foretelling *fair*.

And then, for the *Gift of Healing*, let a bleeding Church and State shew, how notably they were gifted that way. They played the *Chirurgeons* indeed with a Witness, but we never yet heard that they acted the *Physician* ;

cian; all their Practice upon the *Body Politick* was with *Powder and Ball, Sword and Pistol*. No saving of Life with those Men, but by *Purging* away the *Estate*.

And likewise for the Gift of *discerning of Spirits*: They had their *Tryers*, that is, a Court appointed for the Tryal of Ministers; but most properly called *Cromwell's Inquisition*; in which they would pretend to know Mens *Hearts*, and inward *Bent of their Spirits* (as their word was) by their very Looks. But the Truth is, as the chief Pretence of those Tryers was to enquire into Mens *Gifts*; so if they found them but *well* gifted in the Hand, they never looked any further; for a *full and free Hand* was with them an abundant Demonstration of a *gracious Heart*; a word in great Request in those Times.

And moreover, for the *Gifts of diverse Tongues*, it is certain, that they scarce spake the same thing for two Days together. Though otherwise it must be confessed, that they were none of the greatest *Linguists*; their own Mother Tongue serving all their Occasions, without ever so much as looking into the *Fathers*, who always spake the Language of the *Beast* to such as could not understand them. *Latin* was with them a mortal Crime, and *Greek*,
instead

instead of being owned for the Language of the *Holy Ghost*, (as in the New Testament it is) was looked upon like the *Sin against it*; so that in a Word, they had all the *Confusions of Babel* amongst them without the *Diversity of Tongues*.

And then *Lastly*, For the *Gift of Interpreting*; they thought themselves no ordinary Men at expounding a Chapter; if the turning of a few rational significant Words and Sentences into a loose, tedious, impertinent Harangue could be called an *Exposition*. But above all, for their *interpreting Gift*, you must take them upon *Ezekiel*, *Daniel*, and the *Revelation*; and from thence (as it were) out of a dark prophetic *Cloud*, thundering against the old Cavaliers, and the Church of *England*, and (as I may but too appositely express it) *breaking them upon the Wheels in Ezekiel*, casting them to the *Beasts in Daniel*, and *pouring upon them all the Vials in the Revelation*. After which let any one deny it who durst, that the *black Decree* was absolutely passed upon those *Malignants*, and that they were all of them, to a Man, Sons of *Reprobation*.

And thus, I think, I have reckoned up most of the extraordinary Gifts of the Spirit,

and compared them with those of our late *gifted Brethren*. Amongst all which *Divine Gifts*, I must declare, that I cannot find the *Gift of Canting and Whining*, and *making Faces*; that is, of speaking *bad Sense* with *worse Looks*; which yet those Men used to call *the Language of Canaan*. Nor can I find the *Gift* of uttering every sudden, crude, undigested Thought coming over their Minds, and of being impudently bold and *familiar* with Almighty God in Prayer.

I cannot find the *Gift* of exploding the *Mysteries*, and peculiar *Credenda* of the *Gospel*, in order to the turning *Christianity* into bare *Morality*.

I cannot find the *Gift* of accounting *Tenderness of Conscience against Law*, as a Thing sacred, but *Tenderness of Conscience according to Law*, as a Crime to be prosecuted almost to Death.

In a word, I cannot find the *Gifts* of * *Rebelling, Plundering, Sequestering, Robbing Churches, and Murdering Kings*, and all this purely for the sake of Conscience and Religion.

* Notwithstanding the sanctified Character they bear in the *Republicans new Gospel*, viz. *Luttlow's Memoirs*: And in the Judgment of those who like such *Practices*, and therefore publish such *Books*, to the manifest Affront of the *Monarchy* they live under: A strange unaccountable way doubtless of supporting it.

These Things I say, (whether it be through the Weakness of my discerning Faculties, or whatsoever else may be the Cause) I cannot, for my Life, find amongst the Primitive *Gifts of the Spirit*.

And therefore, wheresoever I do find them, let Man talk never so much of *inward Motions, and extraordinary Calls of the Spirit, of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ, and of the publick Good, of Moderation and of an healing Spirit, and the like*; yet long and sad Experience having taught us the true meaning of all these fine and fallacious Terms; I must needs say, both of them, and the *Spirit* from which they proceed, in those Words of St. James iii. 18. *That they descend not from above, but are earthly, sensual and devilish*. These are the Names which God knows and calls them by, though Schismatics and Hypocrites may call them *Reformation*. But,

Fourthly, In the fourth and last Place, *This Emanation of Gifts from the Spirit*, assures us that *Knowledge and Learning* are by no Means opposite to *Grace*; since we see *Gifts* as well as *Graces* conferred by the same *Spirit*. But amongst those of the late *reforming Age* (whom we have been speaking of) all *Learning* was utterly cryed down. So that
with

with them the best *Preachers* were such as could not *read*, and the ablest *Divines* such as could not *write*. In all their *Preachments* they so highly pretended to the *Spirit*, that they could hardly so much as *spell the Lett. r.* To be *blind* was with them the proper Qualification of a *Spiritual Guide*, and to be *Book-Learned* (as they called it) and to be *Irreligious* were almost *Terms convertible*. None were thought fit for the *Ministry* but *Tradesmen* and *Mechanicks*, because none else were allowed to *have the Spirit*. Those only were accounted like *St. Paul*, who could *work with their Hands*, and in a literal Sense, *drive the Nail home*, and be able to *make a Pulpit* before they *preached* in it.

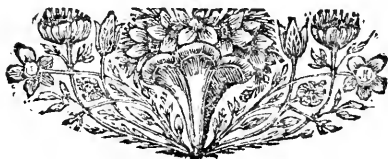
But the *Spirit* in the *Primitive Church* took quite another *Method*; being still as careful to furnish the *Head* as to sanctify the *Heart*; and, as he wrought *Miracles* to found and establish a *Church* by these extraordinary Gifts, so it would have been a greater *Miracle* to have done it without them.

God, as he is the *Giver of Grace*, so he is the *Father of Lights*; he neither admits *Darkness* in himself, nor approves it in others. And therefore those who place all *Religion* in the *Heats of a furious Zeal*, without the

due Illuminations of Knowledge, *Know not of what Spirit they are*; indeed of such a Spirit, as begins *in Darkness*, leads to it, and ends in it.

But, certainly, we shall one Day find, that a Religion so much *resembling Hell*, neither was, nor could be the readiest *Way to Heaven*. But on the contrary, that the Spirit always guides, and instructs before *he saves*; and that, as he brings to *Happiness* only by the Ways of *Holiness*; so he never leads to true *Holiness*, but by the Paths of *Knowledge*.

To which Holy Spirit, together with the Father and the Son; Three Persons and one God, be rendred and ascribed, as is most due, all Praise, Might, Majesty, and Dominion, both now and for evermore. Amen.



*The peculiar CARE and CONCERN of
PROVIDENCE for the Pro-
tection and Defense of KINGS,*

Set forth in a

S E R M O N

Preached at

WESTMINSTER-ABBAY,
Novemb. 5. 1675.

Pſalm CXLIV. 10. former Part.

*It is He, that giveth Salvation unto
Kings.*

THE greateſt and moſt magnificent
Title, by which GOD exhibits
himſelf to the Sons of Men, is, that he
is *King of Kings*, and that the *Govern-
ours* of the Earth are his *Subjects*, Princes

and *Emperors* his *Vassals*, and *Thrones* his *Footstools*; and consequently that there is no *Absolute Monarch* in the World but *One*. And from the same also it follows, that there is nothing, which *Subjects* can justly expect from their *Prince*, but *Princes* may expect from *God*; and nothing which *Princes* demand from their *Subjects*, but *God* in a higher Manner, and by a better Claim requires from them. Now the Relation between *Prince* and *Subject* essentially involves in it these two things;

First, *Obedience* from the Subject to all the Laws and just Commands of his Prince. And accordingly as Kings themselves have a *Sovereign* over them, so they have *Laws* over them too. *Laws* which lay the same Obligation upon *crowned Heads*, that they do upon the meanest *Peasant*: For no *Prerogative* can bar *Piety*: No Man is too *great*, to be bound to be *good*. He who wields the Sceptre, and shines in the Throne has a great *Account* to make, and a great *Master* to make it to: And there is no Man sent into the World *to rule*, who is not sent also *to obey*.

Secondly, The other thing imported in this Relation is *Protection* vouchsafed from the

Sovereign to the Subject. Upon which Account it is, that as God with one Hand gives a *Law*, so with the other he defends the *Obedient*. And this is the highest Prerogative of worldly Empire, and the brightest Jewel in the Diadems of Princes, that by being God's *immediate Subjects* they are his *immediate Care*, and intituled to his more especial Protection; that they have both an *Omniscience*, in a peculiar Manner, to wake over them, and an *Omnipotence* to support them: And that they are not the *Legions* which they *command*, but the *God* whom they *obey*, who must both guard their Persons and secure their *Regalia*. For *it is he, and he only who giveth Salvation unto Kings*.

The Words of the Text, with a little Variation, run naturally into this one Proposition, which, containing in it the full Sense of them, shall be the Subject of our following Discourse, *viz.*

That God in the Government of the World exercises a peculiar and extraordinary Providence over the Persons and Lives of Princes.

The Prosecution of which Proposition shall lie in these four Things.

First, To shew upon what Account any Act of God's Providence may be said to be *peculiar* and *extraordinary*.

Secondly, To shew how and by what Means, God does after such an *extraordinary* Manner save and deliver Princes.

Thirdly, To shew the Reasons why he does so. And

Fourthly and *Lastly*, To draw something by way of Inference and Conclusion from the whole.

Of all which in their Order : And

First, For the first of these ; which *is to shew upon what Account any Act of God's Providence may be said to be peculiar and extraordinary*. Providence in the Government of the World acts for the most part by the Mediation of *second Causes* : which, tho' they proceed according to a Principle of Nature, and a settled Course and Tenour of acting, (supposing still the same Circumstances,) yet Providence acting by them may, in several Instances of it, be said to be *extraordinary*, upon a threefold Account : As,

First, When a thing falls out besides the common and usual Operation of its proper Cause. As for Instance, it is usual and natural for a Man meeting his Enemy upon full Advantage,

Advantage, to prosecute that Advantage against him, and by no means to let him escape, yet sometimes it falls out quite otherwise. *Esau* had conceived a mortal Grudge and Enmity against his Brother *Jacob*, yet as soon as he meets him, he *falls upon him*, in a very different way from that of Enemies, and embraces him. *Ahab* having upon Conquest got *Benhadad*, his inveterate Enemy, into his Hands, not only spares his Life, but treats him kindly and lets him go. That a Brother unprovoked should *hate*, and a Stranger not obliged should *love*, is against the usual actings of the Heart of Man. Yet thus it was with *Joseph*, and no doubt with many others. In which, and the like Cases, I conceive, things so falling out, may be said to come to pass by an *extraordinary* Act of Providence; it being manifest, that the Persons concerned in them do not act, as Men of the same Principles and Interests under the same Circumstances use to do. For Interest, we say, *will not lye*, nor make a Man *false* to himself, whatsoever it may make him to others.

Secondly, Providence may be said to act *extraordinarily*, when a thing falls out beside, or contrary to the Design of expert, politick and shrewd Persons, contriving or acting

in it. As when a Man by the utmost of his Wit and Skill, projects the compassing of such or such a thing, fits Means to his End, lays Antecedents and Consequents directly and appositely for the bringing about his Purpose; but in the Issue and Result finds all broken and baffled, and the Event contrary to his Intention; and the order of Causes and Councils so studiously framed by him, to produce and effect opposite to, and destructive of the Design driven at by those Means and Arts. In this Case also, I say, we may rationally acknowledge an *extraordinary* Act of Providence: Forasmuch as the Man himself is made instrumental to the effecting of something perfectly against his own *Will* and *Judgment*, and that by those very Ways and Methods which in themselves were the most proper to prevent, and the most unlikely to bring to pass, such an Event. The World all the while standing amazed at it, and the Credit of the Politician sinking: for that, nothing seems to cast so just a Reproach even upon Reason itself, as for Persons noted for it to act as notably against it.

Thirdly and *Lastly*, Providence may be said to act in an *extraordinary* Way, when a thing comes to pass visibly and apparently beyond

beyond the Power of the Cause immediately employed in it. As that a Man dumb all his Life before, should on the suddain speak : as it is said, that the Son of *Cræsus* did, upon the sight of a Murther ready to have been committed upon the Person of his Prince and Father. That a small Company should rout and scatter an Army, or (in the Language of Scripture) that *one should chase an hundred, and an hundred put ten thousand to flight*. That Persons of mean Parts, and little or no Experience should frustrate and overreach the Counsels of old, beaten, thorough-paced Politicians. These Effects, I say, are manifestly above the Ability and stated way of working belonging to the Causes from whence they flow. Nevertheless such things are sometimes seen upon the great Stage of the World, to the Wonder and Astonishment of the Beholders, who are wholly unable by the common Method, and Discourses of Reason, to give a satisfactory Account of these strange *Phænomena*, by resolving them into any thing visible in their immediate Agents : In which case therefore, I conceive, that the whole Order and Connexion of these things one with another, may be reckoned an Act of Providence *extraordinary*.

And

And thus much for the first general thing proposed, which was to shew *upon what Account the Works of Providence come to be thus distinguished*: which Consideration it will be easy for every one to make Application of to the ensuing Particulars. I proceed now to the

Second General thing proposed; which is to shew, *How and by what means God does after such an extraordinary manner save and deliver Princes.*

I shall mention seven.

1. By endowing them with a more than ordinary Sagacity and Quickness of Understanding above other Men. Kings they say have a long Reach with their Arm, but they have a further with their Mind. In *1 Kings iv. 29.* God is said to have *given Solomon Largeness of Heart, even as the Sand on the Sea-shore.* And in *Prov. xxv. 5.* *The Heart of Kings is said to be unsearchable.* In the former Text the Royal Mind is compared to the Sand on the Sea-shore for *Compass*, and in this latter it may seem to vie with the Sea itself for *Depth.* And does not this Day's Solemnity give us an eminent Proof of this? For when this horrid Conspiracy, contrived in Hell and Darkness, was conveyed to one
of

of the Confederates under the Shelter of an equivocal Writing, our apprehensive and quick-scented King presently smooakd the ambiguous Paper, and founding the Depths of the black Intrigue, found that at the Bottom of it, which few Mortals besides (though of the quickest Faculties) could have discovered from it; who had not had their Conjectures alarm'd by some Glimmerings of Light into that dark Project before. Such a piercing Judgment does God often give to these his Deputies. A Judgment which looks *into*, or rather *through* and *through* all others, but is *looked* into by none.

And there is nothing that both adorns and secures a Prince comparably to this discerning Faculty: for by this, as by a great Light kindling many others, he commands the use of the best Understandings and Judgments throughout his Dominions, calling them to his Council, and so seeing with their Eyes, apprehending and contriving with their Heads; all their Knowledge and Experience, like Rivers paying Tribute to the Ocean, being conveyed into and swallowed up in his Royal Breast. It is both the Safety and Felicity of a Prince to have a wise Council, but it must be his own *Wisdom* which provides him one.

Wisdom

Wisdom is a noble Quality and not discernible but by itself. It is Art that must judge of Art; and he who discovers Wisdom in another, must do it by the Idea he first had of it in his own Brain. Now as the first and chief external Safeguard of a Prince is in his Council; and as it is his discerning Faculty which must furnish him with this, so his next Safety is in the Choice of his Friends; and it is the same discerning Faculty which must secure him here too: For it is this that must distinguish between *Friendship* and *Flattery*, the most baneful Mischief that can be practised by one Man upon another; and Shadows do not more inseparably follow Bodies, than Flattery does the Persons of great Men. Flatterers are the *Bosom Enemies* of Princes, laying *Trains* for them, not at all less destructive, than that which was discovered this Day; contriving their Ruin acceptably, pleasingly, and according to their own Heart's Desire. *Poyson* has frequently destroyed Kings, but none has been so efficaciously mortal as that drank in by the *Ear*. He who meets his Enemy in the Field knows how to encounter him, but he who meets him at his Table, in his Chamber or in his Closet, finds his Enemy got within him before he is aware of him, killing him
with

with Smiles and Kisses, and acting the Assafinate under the Masquerade of a Counsellor or a Confident: *the surest*, but the *basest* way of destroying a Man.

But now, it is the Prince's Wisdom, and discerning Spirit, that must be his rescue from the Plots of his friendly Traitor. It is a most remarkable Speech of *Solomon*, Prov. xx. 8. *That the King sitting on the Throne of Judgment scattereth away all Evil with his Eye.* And the Nature of this Evil is peculiarly such, that to *discover*, is to *defeat* it. It is a work of Darkness which the light never looks upon, but it scatters too.

Nothing is so notable in the Royal Bird, the Eagle, as the Quickness of his Eye. The *Sight* is the Sense of Empire and Command; that which is always first and leads the way in every great Action: For so far as a Prince *sees*, so far properly he *rules*; and while he keeps his *Eye open* and his *Breast shut*, he cannot be surprized.

And thus much for the first way by which Providence saves and delivers Princes; namely by endowing them with a more than ordinary Sagacity and Quickness of Understanding above other Men,

2. God saves and delivers Sovereign Princes by giving them a singular *Courage and Presence of Mind* in cases of Difficulty and Danger. As soon as ever the sacred Oyl had anointed *Saul* King, it is said 1 *Sam. x. 9. that God gave him another Heart.* That is, a Great and a Kingly *Spirit*, raising his Thoughts above the Common Level and Designs of a private Condition. And a little after, when there was a general consternation over all *Israel*, upon the Invasion of the *Ammonites*, though the Report of it met *Saul* in his former mean Employment, coming from the Field after his Father's Herd: yet it is said in the 11th Chap. of the same *Book* and v. 6. *That the Spirit of God came upon Saul when he heard these Tydings.* That is, the Royal Spirit, which he had received at his Anointing, then began to stir and act, and flame out like itself; taking him presently from following an Herd, and putting him in the Head of an Army. It is incredible to consider the Motion of some Minds upon the sudden Surprize of Danger; and how much in such cases some will even out-act themselves. How much quicker their Wit is to invent, and Courage to execute than at other times. *Tullus Hostilius*, in the midst of a Battle surprized

prized with the Treachery of *Metius Suf-fetius* falling off with a great part of his Army to the Enemy, cries out to his Soldiers that it was by his Order, and thereby confirmed their Hearts from fainting through the Apprehension of Treachery, into a present and glorious Victory by their supposing it a contrived Stratagem.

Next to *Wisdom* the greatest Gift of Heaven is *Resolution*. It is that which gives and obtains Kingdoms, that turns Swords into Sceptres, that Crowns the Valiant with Victory, and the Victorious often with a Diadem. It was answered by a neighbouring Prince to one alledging a Flaw in the Title of *Hen. VII.* to the Kingdom of *England*, that he had three of the best Titles to his Kingdom of any Prince living: Being the *Wiseſt* Prince, the *Valianteſt* Prince, and the *Richeſt* Prince in Chriſtendom.

Preſence of Mind to get out of a Plunge, and upon a ſudden to unravel the Knots and Intricacies of a perplexed Buſineſs, argues a Head and a Heart made for great Things. It is a kind of Ecſtacy and Inſpiration, a Beam of Divine Light darting in upon Reaſon, and exalting it to a pitch of Operation beyond its natural and accuſtomed Meaſures; and per-
haps

haps there was never any Person in the World remarkably and heroically great, without some such kind of Enthusiasm, that is, such a mighty Principle, as at certain times raised him up to strange unaccountable heights of Wit and Courage. And therefore whosoever he is, who in the Strength of such a Spirit can look the most menacing Dangers in the Face, and when the State of all things about him seem desperate, can yet bear his great Heart above Despair, such an one for the most part makes *Fortune* itself bend and fall down to him, Difficulties vanish, and Dangers fly before him; so much is Victory the Claim of the valiant, and Success the Birth-right of the bold. And this is the second way by which *Providence gives Salvation unto Kings.*

3. God saves and delivers Sovereign Princes, by *disposing of Events and Accidents*, in a strange Concurrence for their Advantage and Preservation. Nothing indeed is or can be properly accidental to God; but *Accidents* are so called in respect of the Intention, or Expectation of second Causes; when things fall out besides their Knowledge or Design. And there is nothing, in which Providence so much triumphs over, and (as I may

may

may so say) laughs at the profoundest Wisdom of Men as in the stable, certain Knowledge and Disposal of all casual Events. In respect of which the clearest mortal Intellect is wholly in the dark. And upon this Account, as loose as these Events seem to hang upon one another, yet they are all knit and linked together in a firm Chain, and the highest Link of that Chain, as the Poets speak most truly and philosophically (though in a Fable) is fastened to *Jupiter's* Chair: That is, it is held and managed by an unerring Providence; the Chain indeed may wave and shake this way, and that way, but still the *Hand* that holds it is steady, and the *Eye* that guides it infallible.

Now nothing has so powerful an Influence upon the great Turns of Affairs, and the Lives and Fortunes of great Persons, as the little, unobserved, unprojected Events of Things. For could any Thing be greater than the Preservation of a great Prince and his next Heir to the Crown, together with his Nobles and the chief of his Clergy, from certain imminent, and prepared Destruction? And was not all this effected by a pityful small Accident in the mistake of the Supercription of a Letter? Did not the Oversight of one Syl-

able preserve a Church and a State too? And might it not be truly said of that contemptible Paper, that it did *Cæsarem vehere & fortunam Cæsaris*, and that the Fate of three Kingdoms was *wrapt and sealed up* in it?

A little error of the Eye, a misguidance of the Hand, a slip of the Foot, a starting of an Horse, a sudden Mist, or a great Shower, or a Word undesignedly cast forth in an Army, has turned the Stream of Victory from one side to another, and thereby disposed of the Fortunes of Empires and whole Nations. No Prince ever returns safe out of a Battle, but may remember how many Blows, and * Bullets have gone *by* him, that might as easily have gone *through* him, and by what little odd unforeseeable Chances Death has been turned aside, which seemed in a full, ready, and direct Career to have been posting to him. All which Passages, if we do not acknowledge to have been guided to their

* See a late Signal Instance of this in a Prince, *who had his Shoulder so kindly kissed by a Cannon Bullet*, (as the late Archbishop, by a peculiar strain of Rhetorick, expresses this wonderful Passage in his Sermon at Court; upon *Jeremiah ix. 23, 24. Page 34.*) For well indeed might it pass for *wonderful*; the *Salutes* from the *Mouth of a Cannon*, being commonly so boisterous, that they seldom *kiss*, but they *kill* too.

respective Ends and Effects, by the Conduct of a Superior, and a Divine Hand, we do by the same Assertion cast off all Providence, strip the Almighty of his noblest Prerogative, and make God not the *Governor*, but the meer *Spectator* of the World. And thus much for the third way. The

Fourth, by which God saves and delivers Sovereign Princes, is by wonderfully *inclining the Hearts and Wills* of Men to a benign Affection towards them. Hearts and Wills are Things that Princes themselves cannot command, and yet the only Things in the *Strength* of which they do *command*. For the Heart is the grand Spring of Action, and he who governs that part, does by consequence command the whole. But now, this is the incommunicable Prerogative of God; who, and who only, can either by *Power* or by *Knowledge* reach the Heart. For as it is said, *Prov. xxi. 1. That the Heart of the King is in God's Hand, and that as the Rivers of Water he turneth it which way soever he will:* So are the Hearts of the People too; which like a mighty Stream or Torrent, he turns this way, or that way, according to the wise Counsels of his Providence. For if he intends

to advance a Prince, they shall be a *Stream* to bear him up from sinking ; if to forsake or ruin a Prince, they shall overflow, and swell, and rush in upon him with such a furious uncontrolled Tide as no Power or Arts of State shall be able to divert or to withstand. God can turn the Hearts of a Nation suddenly and irresistibly. He has done so more than once or twice, and may do so again.

Thus, for instance, when *David* fled before *Absalom*, and was forced to leave the Royal City, it was the general Affection of his People, (God touching their Hearts,) which brought him back and resettled him in his Throne ; so that in 2 *Sam.* xix. 14. it is said of him, *That he bowed the Hearts of all the Men of Judah even as the Heart of one Man ; so that they sent this word unto the King, return thou and all thy Servants.* And just such another Message did the Lords and Commons of *England* send our banished *David* in the Year Sixty. For what was it else which so gloriously restored the King ? *Plots* were nothing, and *Foreign Assistance* less than nothing. It was an universal, invincible Current of the Peoples Wills and Affections, that bore down all those Mountains of Opposition,

position, which so many Years had been raised up against him, and at length (in spite of Guilt and Malice) brought him in *free and unshackled, absolute* and victorious over the Heads of his armed Enemies. It was his Peoples *Hearts* which made their *Hands* useless to his Restoration:

On the other side, when the greatest Part of the Kingdom was rent from the House of *David*, and transferred to *Jeroboam*; in *1 Kings* xii. 14. The Prophet expressly tells them, *That this thing was from God*: That is, he by a secret over-ruling Energy upon the Hearts and Affections of the People, took them off from one, and enclined and carried them over to the other. And it is often by this alone, that the great *Lord of Lords* and Controuler of Monarchs putteth down one and setteth up another. He can raise Armies of *Hearts* to drive any King out of his Kingdom without striking a Stroke; as on the contrary, where he intends to own and support the Royal Estate of any Monarch, he shall set him up a Throne in every one of his Subjects Breasts. So that according to that Scripture-Expression, *Their Desire shall be to him, and he shall rule over them*. And certainly, where Affection binds, Allegiance

must needs be very easy; and a pleasant Thing to *rule*, where there is no Heart to *resist*.

5. God saves and delivers Sovereign Princes by *rescuing* them from *unseen and unknown Mischiefs* prepared against them. This is most evident: For if a Prince's own Observation can bear witness to many Deliverances vouchsafed him by Providence, Providence itself can certainly bear witness to many more, which he is wholly ignorant of. Forasmuch as in every Man, but especially in Princes, their Concern reach further, and carry a wider Compass than their Knowledge can: It being impossible that any Man living should know all that is spoken or done concerning him, and consequently be aware of all the mischievous Blows levelled against him. How many secret Cabals and Plots have been against the Reputation, the Interest, and sometimes the Life also of every considerable Person in the World, which never yet came to their Eye, or their Ear, nor, (thanks to the Care of a guarding Providence) ever troubled so much as a Thought, nor hurt so much as an Hair of their Head! And yet the Contrivers of them have wanted neither Will, nor Wit, nor Power (the natural Force of Causes considered)

dered) to add Execution to Intention, and to give Fire to their Trains, and Efficacy to their cursed Projects, had not an invisible, over-swaying Power baffled and disappointed all the Artifices of their Malice, and fisted the base *Conception* before the *Birth*.

And this is a way of Deliverance so eminent for the Mercy of it, that if a Prince or great Person can be obliged to Providence for any, it must be for this. For when a Man knows the Danger he is in, all his Senses quickly take the Alarm, call up the Spirits, and arm his Courage to meet the approaching Evil, and to defend himself. But when he knows nothing of the impending Mischief, he lies open and defenseless, like a Man bound, and naked, and sleeping, while a Dagger is directed to his Breast. And for a merciful tender Providence then to step in to his Assistance, to ward off the fatal Blow, and to turn the approaching Edge from his unguarded Heart, this surely is the height of Mercy; and engrosses the Glory of the Deliverance wholly to the Divine Goodness, without allowing any mortal Wit or Courage the least Share, or Concurrence in it. No Prince can tell what the Discontents of ill Subjects, the Emulation of neighbour States or Princes

have been designing, endeavouring and projecting against him: All which Counsels by a controuling Power from above, have from Time to Time been made abortive and frutaneous. Let Princes therefore reckon upon this, and know assuredly, that they stand indebted to Providence for more Deliverances than they can know. And if the protecting Mercies of Heaven thus surpass their Knowledge, surely it is but Reason, that their Sense of them, and Gratitude for them should surmount Expression.

Sixthly, God saves and delivers Sovereign Princes by imprinting a certain Awe and Dread of their Persons and Authority upon the Minds of their Subjects. And there is not any one Thing, which seems so manifestly to prove Government a thing perfectly Divine, both as to its Original and Continuance in the World as this. For what is there in any one mortal Man, that can strike a Dread into, and command a Subjection from so many Thousands as every Prince almost has under his Government, should Things be rated according to the meer natural Power of second Causes? For the Strength of one Man can do nothing against so many; and his Wisdom and Counsel but little more: And those who are to
obey

obey him, know so much, and yet for all that they yield him absolute Subjection, dread his Threatnings, tremble at his Frowns, and lay their Necks under his Feet. Now from whence can all this be, but from a secret Work of the Divine Power, investing Sovereign Princes with certain Marks and Rays of that Divine Image, which over-awes, and controuls the Spirits of Men they know not *how nor why?* But yet they feel themselves actually wrought upon, and kept under by them, and that very frequently against their Will.

And this is that properly which in Kings we call *Majesty*, and which no doubt is a kind of Shadow or Portraiture of the Divine Authority drawn upon the Looks and Persons of Princes, which makes them Commanders of Mens Fears, and thereby capable of governing them in all their Concerns. *Non fero fulgur oculorum tuorum*, is the Language of every Subject's Heart, struck with the awful Aspect of a resolute and magnanimous Prince. There is a Majesty in his Countenance that puts Lightning into his Looks and Thunder into his Words. In *Dan. v. 19.* it is said of *Nebuchadnezzar*, that *God gave him such a Majesty, that all People, Nations and Languages trembled before him.* When
Alexander

Alexander the Great found his whole Army in a Mutiny, and refolute not to march forward, but to return to their own Country, againſt any Arguments or Perſuaſions that he could uſe; he * leaps down from the Place, upon which he had been ſpeaking to them, and arguing with them, and laying hold of thirteen of the moſt forward and violent Mutincers, cauſes them to be bound Hand and Foot, (in the Face of his whole Army looking on) and then thrown into the Sea. All which this terrible and victorious Army, to which he himſelf owed his Greatneſs, and which but even now was upon ſuch high and daring Terms with him, quietly ſees and ſuffers, and with a ſneaking abject Behaviour return to their Tents, as if a Lion had charged and chaſed a Flock of Sheep into their Folds. Nay, the Hiſtory ſays further, that they were fearful and ſollicitous and inquisitive what the King meant to do with the reſt of them. By which and the like Paſſages Kings may ſee what they *are*, and what *they may do*, if they will but own their high

* At the ſame Time uttering theſe Words (ſo ſuitable to his Kingly Mind and Courage) *Jam ſciētis, & quantum ſine Rege valeat exercitus, & quid opis in me uno ſit.* Quin. Curtius. Lib. X.

Office with an equal Courage, and be true to that *Sovereignty* and *Character* which God has stamp'd upon them. *Alexander*, as great as he was, was but one Man: But he was a Prince, and as such acted by a Commission from Heaven, as one of the Almighty's Vicegerents, and upon that Account able to *encounter* as well as to *lead* his Army. A King acting as a King, has all the Power of Heaven to bear him out; the *Stars in their Courses shall fight for him*; the Angels are his Guards, and the Lord of Hosts *their Captain*. And this is the sixth way by which God saves and delivers Princes; namely, by the *Authority and Majesty of their Persons*.

7. In the seventh and last Place. God saves and delivers Sovereign Princes, by disposing their Hearts to such virtuous and pious Courses, as he has promised a Blessing to, and by restraining them from those ways to which he has denounced a Curse. And this is the greatest Deliverance of all; as having a Prospect upon the Felicity of both Worlds, and laying a Foundation for all other Deliverances. For it is this that qualifies and renders a Man a Subject capable of, and fit for a Deliverance. King *Abimelech* was about to do an Action that would certainly have

have drawn Death and Confusion after it. *Thou art but a Dead Man* (says God to him) in *Gen. xx. 3.* But preventing Grace snatched him from the brink of Destruction, and delivered him from *Death* by restraining him from *the Sin: I withheld thee* (says God in the *6th*) *from sinning against me.* See the Force of Princely Piety in the Person of *Hezekiah.* God tells him *that he should die,* and bids him prepare for it. But Piety is *stronger than Death,* and reverses the fatal Edict. The *Assyrians* invade his Kingdom, and take his fenced Cities, but how does he withstand them? Why he puts on Sackcloth for his Armour, and it was neither the Valour nor the Number of his Troops, but the Prayer of *Hezekiah,* and the irresistible Force of a King *fighting upon his Knees* that routed *Sennacherib.*

Virtue entitles a Prince to all the Mercies of Heaven, all the Favours, all the Endearments of Providence. It has a present and a future Influence; one upon his *Person,* the other upon his Posterity. So that in *1 Kings xi.* when God declared his purpose to remove the Kingdom from the *House of Solomon* for all his Idolatries and Abominations, Yet in the *34. v.* he says, *howbeit I will make him*

him King all the Days of his Life, for my Servant David's sake, because he kept my Commandments and my Statutes. And in the 32. v. he declares, that his Son after him should have one Tribe for his Servant David's sake. Nay, the Piety of a King diffuses a Blessing, and a Protection upon the whole Kingdom: For how often upon the Provocations of *Judah*, did the Memory of *David's* Piety (as it were) *disarm* the Divine Vengeance; and interpose between them and the destroying Sentence? So that in the *second Book of Kings*, it is said three several Times, upon three several remarkable Occasions, that God *would not destroy* *Judah and Jerusalem for his Servant David's sake*. And who knows, but the Piety, the Virtues, and the Christian Sufferings of the late martyred King, may be one great Preservative of the present Peace of this wretched and ungrateful Nation? so that when God lately sent his destroying Angel, with his drawn Sword, over *Poland, Germany, Holland* and other Countries; he has looked upon the Blood of that Royal Martyr shed for the Rights and Liberties of his Kingdoms, and bid the *destroying Angel* pass over *England* and draw no more Blood there, where the Memory of that

that Sacred Blood had made such an Atonement and Expiation, and cryed aloud for *Mercy* upon all; even those *that shed it* not excepted. Certain it is that the Virtues of a Prince are a Blessing to more than to himself and his Family. They are a publick Seminary of Blessings; they are the *Palladiums* and the strong Holds, nay the common Stock and the Inheritance of the Kingdom, and (in a Word) an *Exchequer* that can never be *shut up*.

And thus much for the second general Thing proposed, which was to shew *the several Ways and Means, by which God does after such an extraordinary manner save and deliver Sovereign Princes*: All which, for Memory's sake, it may not be amiss to rehearse and sum up in short: As namely he delivers them,

1. *By endowing them* with a more than ordinary Sagacity and Quickness of Understanding above other Men.

2. By giving them a singular Courage and Presence of Mind in cases of Difficulty and Danger.

3. By disposing of Events and Accidents in a strange Concurrence for their Advantage and Preservation.

4. By

4. By wonderfully inclining the Hearts and Wills of Men to a benign Affection towards them.

5. By rescuing them from unseen and unknown Mischiefs prepared against them.

6. By imprinting a certain Awe and Dread of their Persons and Authority upon the Minds of the People.

7. Seventhly and lastly. By disposing their Hearts to such virtuous and pious Courses, as God has promised a Blessing to, and by restraining them from those ways to which he has denounced a Curse. And these are the several ways by which Providence *gives Salvation unto Kings.*

I proceed now to the

3d. General thing proposed which is *to shew the Reasons*, why Providence is so much concerned in the *Salvation and Deliverance of Kings.* Which that we may the better do, we must know, that there are two Things, by which God supports the Societies of Mankind, which he will certainly maintain and preserve, as long as he suffers the World to last, and Men to live in it; and these are *Government and Religion*; which being so, I suppose, we need alledge no other Reason for God's peculiar Care over the
Persons.

Persons and Lives of Sovereign Princes, if we demonstrate,

1. That they are the greatest Instruments in the hand of Providence to support *Government* and civil Society in the World. And

2. That they have the most powerful Influence upon the Concerns of *Religion*, and the Preservation of the Church, of all other Persons whatsoever.

And first for the first of these. *That Kings are the greatest Instruments in the hand of Providence to support Government, and civil Society in the World: The* Proof of which I conceive will be fully made out by these two Things.

1. By shewing that Monarchy, or Kingly Government, is the most excellent and best adapted to the ends of Government, and the Benefit of Society. And

2. That the Greatness or Strength of a Monarchy depends chiefly upon the personal Qualifications of the Prince or Monarch.

1. And first; let us shew that *Monarchy or Kingly Government is the most excellent and best adapted to the ends of Government and the Benefits of Society.* This is too large and noble a Subject to be fully managed in such

such a Discourse. At present let it suffice to say, that Monarchy in the kind of Government is the first; and consequently the most perfect of all other Sorts. It is an Image of the Divine Supremacy, Man's Imitation of Providence, a Copy of God's Government of the Universe in a lesser Draught. For the World has but one sovereign Ruler, as well as but one Maker; and every Prince is both his *Lieutenant*, and his *Resemblance* too. The Excellency of any Government consists in the natural Firmness of its Constitution; freeing it from the Principles of Dissolution. And the Dissolution of Government, as of most other Things, proceeds chiefly from the internal Fightings and Conflicts of contrary Parts. But now Unity excludes Contrariety, and that which is but one cannot disagree or jarr with itself. It is Multitude only that admits of the Contests of Particulars, and a *Common-wealth*, where *Governors* cannot *govern themselves*. That which like a Worm eats out the very Heart of Government, is the Emulation, the Ambition, and the Discord of the Parties invested with it. But the Supremacy placed in one cuts off all these: For no Man is his own Rival, no Man envies him-

self, or *design* to trip up his own Heels, whatsoever he may chance to do.

And to shew the Naturalness of Monarchy, all other Forms of Government insensibly partake of it, and slide into it. For look upon any *Aristocracy* or *Democracy*, and still you shall find some one ruling active Person amongst the rest, who does every Thing, and carries all before him. Was not *De Witt* amongst our Neighbours a kind of King in a Common-wealth? And was not that Usurper here amongst ourselves a Monarch in Reality of *Fact*, before he wore the *Title*, or assumed the *Office*? Moreover, when any Common-wealth is forced to defend itself by War, it finds it necessary to appoint one General over all, as this very *Common-wealth* found to its Cost, and to make the *Conduct* of its Armies at least *monarchical*. Nay, the *Romans* themselves in their greatest Exigencies of State, had recourse to their Dictatorship, which was a perfect Monarchy for the Time. And when they sent out their Armies under the Conduct of two Consuls, yet those Consuls were to command the whole Army by Turns, one one Day, and another another; which was a tacit Confession

sion of the Necessity of a single Conduct for the right Management of great Affairs. And I think upon a full Survey of the *Roman* Story, we may truly pronounce, that the greatest Defeats that were ever given that Commonwealth, in any lasting War, have been from this, that the Custom of shifting Consuls every Year, hindred the Conduct of the whole War from being continued in the Hands of one experienced Commander. In their Wars with *Hannibal* nothing is more manifest. From all which I infer, that Kingly Government is the most natural, excellent, and beneficial to Society of all others: And that in every *Common-wealth*, (in spite of its Constitution) there will be something of *Monarchy*; And that if a *Republick* ever achieves any thing great or considerable, it is still by Virtue of something in it that is *monarchical*.

Secondly, The next thing, is to shew, *That the Greatness or Strength of a Monarchy depends chiefly upon the personal Qualifications of the Prince or Monarch*. It ebbs or flows according to the rising or falling of his Spirit. For still it is the *Person* that makes the *Place* considerable, and not the *Place* him. And we shall find in every Government tha

the Activity and Bravery of the Prince, is the *Soul Politick* which animates and upholds all. When *Alexander the Great* died, the *Grecian* Monarchy expired with him. He was both the *Emperor* and the *Empire* too. And after the Death of *Julius* and *Augustus Caesar*, those great commanding Souls, the *Roman* Empire declined every Day, falling into the Hands of Brutes and Sots, who could scarce wield the weight of their own Bellies, and much less the Burthen of such vast Dominions. The present Grandeur of the *Papacy* is entirely owing to the Prudence and governing Arts of some of the Popes; and it never suffered any great Blow, but when a weak, or a voluptuous Person sat in the Chair. And here amongst ourselves, both the Protector, and the new Protectorship *died* in one Man, though the Name indeed survived a while in another; and it was quickly seen, how ridiculous it was for any one to attempt to succeed into his *Power*, who could not succeed into his *Spirit*.

But it is evident from Reason, that the Fate and Fortune of Governments must naturally follow the personal Abilities of the Governor: For what is there else, that the
Strength.

Strength of a Kingdom can be supposed to lean upon, but one of these three? Its *Treasure*, its *Military Power*, or its *Laws*. But now, none of all these can signify any thing, where the Prince is not endued with that Royal Skill, that is requisite to the due Management of them. For surely the bare Image of a Prince upon the *Coin* of any Nation can neither *improve* or *employ* the Treasure of it; Nor can the Military Force of a Kingdom do much to strengthen it, should the Prince either wear a Padlock upon his Sword, or draw it in Defence of his Enemies. Nor lastly, can the Laws much contribute to the Support of it, if the Execution of them be either neglected or discountenanced: For it is not how Laws are *made*, nor how they are *interpreted*, but how they are *used*, that must influence the Publick. By all which we see what Moment there is in the sole Person of a Prince. For as he is qualified or disposed, so all these great Things become helpful or ineffectual. The *Treasure*, *Arms*, and *Laws* of a Nation are all virtually in him. And it is he who must breath Life and Efficacy into them all. Which is the first great Reason, why *God* extends such a particular Providence o-

ver the Persons of Kings, namely, because the main Concerns of Civil Government and Society, which Providence so much tenders the Preservation of, are principally deposited in them.

Secondly, The other great Reason is, *Because Princes have the most powerful Influence upon the Concerns of Religion, and the Preservation of the Church, of all other Persons whatsoever.* Religion is indeed an immortal Seed, and the Church is Proof against the *very Gates of Hell*, as being founded upon a *Promise*, and so standing fast in the eternal Strength of God's Veracity. Nevertheless, as to its outward State and Circumstances in this World, it must clasp about the secular Power, and as that frowns or smiles upon it, so it must droop or flourish. Accordingly God has declared *Kings* to be *nursing* Fathers of his Church: And every Prince by the essential inherent Right of his Crown is, or should be a *Defender of the Faith*. He holds it by a Charter from Heaven; long before the Pope's Donation, who never gives any Thing to Princes, but what was their own before. Every Christian King is within his own Dominions the great Pastor, both to
rule

rule Christ's Flock, and to see it fed, though he does not feed it himself.

We know how glorious a Deliverance our Church received this Day; and it was by the Wisdom of that Head which wore the Crown, that God vouchsafed it to her King and Church then, (as 'tis seldom otherwise) were both designed to the same Fate. But God preserved the King, and the King the Church. And who knows but for such a Day as this, God paved his Way before him in such a peaceable Entrance into the *English* Throne, so much above and against the Expectation of the World round about him, and of the Court of *Rome* especially; which, it is well known, had other Designs upon the Anvil at that Time. And as he then saved the Church from perishing by one Blow; so he afterwards supported it from dying gradually, either by the Encroachments of *Superstition*, or the Attempts of *Innovation*.

And it is observable, (which I speak not in Flattery, but in a profound Sense of a Blessing which the whole Kingdom can never be thankful enough for;) that none of the *Families* that ever reigned over this Nation, have to their Power been so careful and ten-

der of the Church, kept their Hands so clean from any thing that might look like *Sacrilege*, been so zealous of its Privileges, and so kind to its Ministers, as the Royal Family that now sways the Scepter in the Succession of three several Princes. And I doubt not but as *Sacrilege* has blasted the mightiest Families with a Curse, so the Abhorrence of it will and must perpetuate a Blessing upon this.

And thus having dispatched the several Heads at first proposed, and shewn *upon what Accounts the Actings of God's Providence may be said to be extraordinary: And by what Ways and Means this extraordinary Providence saves and delivers Princes; as also the Reasons why it does so:* I proceed now to the

Fourth and last thing proposed. Which is to make some useful Deductions from what has been delivered, and it shall be by way of Information concerning two Things.

First, The Duty and Behaviour of Princes towards God.

Secondly, The Duty and Behaviour of Subjects towards their Prince.

First, And first for that of Princes towards God. It shews them from whom, in their Distress, they are to expect, and to whom,
in

in their Glory, they are to ascribe all their Deliverances. *David* was as great a Warriour, and as valiant a Prince as ever reigned. In all his Wars Success waited upon his Courage, and Victory did Homage to his Sword, yet he tells us that he would neither *trust in his Sword nor in his Bow*, nor in the Alliance of *Princes*. All Auxiliaries but those from above he found weak, fickle and fallacious. And as Princes are to own their great Deliverer, so are they to shew the World that they do so, by setting a due Estimate upon the Deliverance: Especially when it is shewn in so single an Instance, as that which we now commemorate. And whosoever he is, who really and cordially values any notable *Deliverance* vouchsafed him by God, surely above all things it will concern him, not to *court* the *Mischief* from which he has been *delivered*: But

Secondly, Which most properly belongs to us. We learn from the Premises the Duty and Behaviour of Subjects towards their Princes. Does not God by such a protecting Providence over Kings point out to us the Sacredness of their Persons? and command a *Reverence*, where he himself thinks fit to place an *Honour*? Does not every extraordi-

nary Deliverance of a Prince, carry this Inscription upon it in the brightest Characters, *Touch not mine anointed?* Whom God has placed upon the *Throne*, shall any human Power presume to drag to the *Bar?* or shall Royal Heads be crowned and anointed only to prepare them to be sacrificed upon a Scaffold?

As for our Parts, when we reflect upon our Prince, signalized by so many strange unparallel'd Rescues, ought they not both to endear him to our Allegiance, and in a manner consecrate him to our Veneration? For is not this he, whom in the Loins of his Royal Progenitor, God, by this Day's Mercy, (as I may so say) *delivered* before he was *born?* He, for whose sake God has since wrought so many Miracles? *Covering his Head in the Day of Battle*, and which is more, securing it *after Battle*, when such a *Price* was set upon it? Is not this he, whom the same Providence followed into Banishment and gave him Safety and Honour, where he had not so much as to lay his Head, or to set his Foot upon, that he could call his own? Is not this he, whom God brought back again by a Miracle as great as that by which he brought *Israel* out of *Egypt*, not *divided* but (as it were)

were) *drying up a Red Sea*, before him? Is not this he, whom neither the Plots of his Enemies at home, nor the united Strength of those abroad have been able to shake or supplant? And lastly, is not this he, whom neither the barbarous Injuries of his Rebel Subjects at home, nor the Temptations of foreign Princes abroad, nor all the Arts of *Rome* besides, could in his greatest Extremity bring over to the *Romish Profession*; but that after all, he returned, and since his Return still continues in the same Communion, which he was in when he went from us, *Carolus a Carolo*, firm and immoveable like the Son of a Father, who could rather part with his Crowns, Kingdoms, and his very Life, than quit his Honour or give up his Religion?

For all which glorious Things done for him and by him, may the same God who has hitherto *delivered* him, order his Affairs so, that he may never need another *Deliverance*, but that he may grow old in Peace and Honour; and be as great as the *Love of his Friends* and the *Fears of his Enemies* can make him; commanding the *Hearts* of the one in *spight of the Hearts* of the other; and, in a word, continue to reign over us till Mortality shall be swallowed up of

Immortality, and a temporal Crown changed into an eternal.

Which God of his infinite Mercy grant ; to whom be rendred and ascribed, as is most due, all Praise, Might, Majesty, and Dominion, both now and for evermore. Amen.

F I N I S.









