

THE
SPIRITUAL BURGESS :
OR,
HEAVENLY TRADER.
A
SERMON on *Philippians* iii. 20.
ALSO, THE
Nature and Tendency
OF
ERROR.

On *Jude*, Verse 4.

Both preached at the Celebration of the
Sacrament of the LORD's Supper
at the *West-kirk*,

By the Reverend Mr. JOHN M^cCLAREN Mini-
ster of the Gospel in *Edinburgh*.

And published, since his Death, at the Request of
severals that heard them.

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Semi-Annual Report

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188

Presented to the
Board of Trustees
at their meeting

held on the

day of

188

at the
City of

THE
PUBLISHERS
TO THE
READER.

THESE two Sermons are a true Copy from the Reverend Author's own Notes, as will appear to those who heard them.

There needs nothing be said to recommend them to others, but to insert here the just Character given of him at his Death, published in the Thistle of July 17th 1734, which is as follows;

ON Thursday last died the Reverend Mr. John M'Claren, of a lingering Distemper, in the 67th Year of his Age. He was 42 Years in the Ministry; 7 Years at Kippen, 12 at Carstares, and 23 at Edinburgh.

He was a Man of solid Learning, and sound Principles, and a great Gospel-Preacher. He had a most fertile Invention,

and abounded with instructive Similies in his Sermons; by which, at once, he both instructed and delighted his Hearers, and often pleased them by surprizing them. His Stile was plain, and suited to the meanest Capacities; for he often said, The Gospel was so excellent in itself, that it needed not the Embellishments of human Art to set it off.

He was a noble Champion for Gospel-Truth, and strenuously appeared in the Defence of it, both in the Pulpit and Press.

He took great Pains and Pleasure in his ministerial Work, and shew'd a Temper of Mind most intent upon Divine Things.

He lived as he preach'd, and was a Pattern and Example of all Moral Virtues, and true Holiness; which he warmly pressed upon all his Hearers.

He was esteemed by his Brethren in the Ministry, and by several great Men who knew him, for his ministerial Abilities, Plainness, and Integrity.

He was peculiarly dear to his own Congregation, and is now generally lamented by all good People.



*The Spiritual Burgeſs, or
Heavenly Trader, &c.*

PHILIP. 3. 20.

*Our Converſation is in Heaven, from
whence alſo we look for the Saviour,
the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.*



HE Apoſtle *Paul*, Verſe 17. of this Chapter, exhorts theſe *Philippians*, to whom he writes, to be Followers of him and other Goſpel-Miniſters join'd with him; 1^{ſt}, Be-
cauſe they exemplified the Do-
ctrine they preached to them in their own Lives. What an Happineſs is it for a People to have ſuch Miniſters, whoſe Lives are a Commentary upon their Doctrine! who can (as *Paul*) ſay, *Be ye Followers of us, as we are of Chriſt*, 1 Cor. xi. 1. 2^{dly}, Be-
cauſe of the Lives and Man-
ners of ſome among them, and perhaps of ſome pretending to be Miniſters. He warns them of this Danger, to prevent their being infected thereby; inſinuating the infecting Influence of the bad Lives of Profeſſors, and eſpecially cor-
rupt

rupt Ministers. Their Lives he describes ;
 (1.) They were *Enemies to the Cross of Christ*,
i. e. to the Doctrine of free Grace, and Strictness
 in Holiness, derived from the Cross of Christ.
 (2.) From their fatal End, *viz.* *Whose End is*
Destruction. (3.) From the Consideration of
 the God they serv'd ; their *Belly* was their god.
 (4.) Because what they *gloried* in was their
Shame. (5.) From the Earthliness of their Con-
 versation, *viz.* They only mind, favour, intend,
 take Pleasure in, *earthly Things* as their E-
 lement.

In Opposition to this bad Conversation, he
 tells them what a Conversation he and other
 faithful Ministers had, *viz.* That their *Conver-*
sation was in Heaven, of a nobler and sublimer
 Nature ; and that therefore they might safely
 follow them, since such a Conversation tended
 to make them heavenly and spiritual in the
 mean Time, and in the Issue would lead them
 to, and land them in Heaven.

So in this Verse we have what the Con-
 versation of *Paul* and other first Gospel-ministers
 was, a *Conversation in Heaven.* (2.) You have
 the Reason influencing such a Conversation, *viz.*
 Because they *looked for the Lord Christ from*
thence. Briefly the Connection implies, *1st*, That
 a heavenly Conversation enables a Christian with
 some Confidence to look for the Saviour from
 Heaven. On the other Hand, *2dly*, That right
 Looking for the Lord Christ from Heaven in-
 fluences and determines to have our Conversation
 in Heaven.

Doct. 'Tis the Duty of all Christians, and in some Measure the Endeavour and Attainment of true Believers, to have their Conversation in Heaven.

This Doctrine is obvious from the Words. See also 2 Cor. iv. 18. 1 Thess. ii. 10. 1 John i.

1, 2, 3.

We shall, as the Lord pities, 1. Premise some Things. 2. Explain having our Conversation in Heaven. 3. Give the Reasons of the Doctrine. 4. Touch at the Connection of the two Parts of the Text. 5. Name some Qualities of this Conversation. *Lastly*, Apply.

For the *first* Head, we premise, 1st, That by Conversation here is meant the general *Series* and *Tract* of a Man's *Way*, with Reference to God, himself, and others. A Believer may make some Steps in the Way of Sinners, but that is not the Strain of his Way; a Hypocrite may take some Steps in the Way of Saints, but neither is that the *Series* of his Walk, *Psal.* l. 23. 2 Cor. i. 12.

2^{dly}, We premise, That having our Conversation in Heaven comes under several Denominations in Scripture, all to the same Purpose: As 'tis called a Walking *with* God, as *Enoch*; a Walking *before* him and being *perfect*, as *Abraham*; an *Ordering* our Conversation aright, *Psal.* l. 23. a being *just* and *upright*, as *Job*; a being *undefiled in the Way*, *Psal.* cxix. 1. 'Tis called a *Walking worthy of God unto all well-pleasing, worthy of the Vocation wherewith we are called*; 'tis called a *Walking worthy of him who hath*
cal-

called us to his Kingdom and Glory; a Living and Walking by Faith. In a Word, 'tis to be holy in all Manner of Conversation.

3dly, We premise, The Heaven in which we have our Conversation is not to be understood of the starry, but third Heaven: 'Tis the Heaven from whence they looked for the Saviour. Indeed, the Study of the Stars, and other Luminaries, is lawful and useful in itself; and, by the right Study thereof, Men may be led to some more Knowledge of God as a Creator and Preserver of the Universe, as you see, *Psal. viii.* But yet that bare Study will never lead Men to the Knowledge of a Saviour, and consequently to Heaven, Christ being the only Way thither. How many are there who excel in the Study of the Stars, and yet know very little of having their Conversation in Heaven!

4thly, 'Tis not to be understood of a bodily Conversation in Heaven, as is plain; for that will not be till the Resurrection, *1 Thess. iv. 17.* neither are our Bodies at present, considering their mortal and brittle Make, capable of that Place, or of the Glory that is there revealed; for *Flesh and Blood cannot inherit Incorruption*, as *Paul* tell us, *1 Cor. xv.* our mortal Bodies are too frail Vessels to be filled with that strong Wine: Therefore our Conversation in Heaven, while here, is mainly by Faith, realizing these great Things that ly beyond the Line of Time, *Heb. xi. 1.* *Faith is the Evidence of Things not seen; for we walk by Faith, not by Sight.* Thus *Enoch* walked with God.

5thly, Nor is it to be understood as if we were constantly to be taken up in the immediate Duties

ties of Religion, as Reading, Praying, &c. For, not only this is impossible, but we are called to a great many other Duties, relative, stational, &c. which also must have their Time and Room allowed them: And, if our Hearts were right with God, we might have our Conversation in Heaven no less when employed in these, than when taken up in the immediate Duties of Religion.

6thly, Nor is this to be understood as if Believers never had their Conversation in Heaven but when in a rejoicing and praying Frame. 'Tis true, Believers never look more like Heaven, and enjoy more of Heaven, than when in such a Frame; yet having our Conversation in Heaven cannot be confined to such a Frame, which is obvious.

7thly, We premise, That there are various Degrees of this Conversation; or, Believers reach not the same Measure of this Conversation in Heaven, either as to Frequency or Constancy. Some Stars move in a higher Orb than others.

8thly, We premise, That having our Conversation in Heaven is a Thing of the greatest Reality, Difficulty, and Rareness; yet, thro' Grace, attainable, as ye see in the Text.

9thly, We premise, That to have our Conversation in Heaven is a sure Character of a real Christian: None but such know what it is to have their Conversation in Heaven; and all real Christians have their Conversation in Heaven either more or less.

II. The *second* general Head is to explain what it is to have our Conversation in Heaven. And indeed it supposes some Experience of this, both

to explain and understand what this Conversation in Heaven is. In general, to have our Conversation in Heaven is to be now and then there, to be taking a View of Heaven, to be conversing there. God's People are said to have their *Hearts* in Heaven, where their *Treasure* is; to have their *Affections* upon *Things above*; to look not at *Things temporal and seen*, but *Things eternal and not seen*.

More particularly, the Word in the Original implies as much as a *Burgesship*, so that they are Burgesses in Heaven. And so there are these following Things implied; as,

1. That Heaven is a *City* that they belong to; for so it is called in Scripture, *Heb. xi. 10, 16. a City which hath Foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God*; a *City of God's preparing*, *Heb. xiii. 14. a City to come*. What a City must that needs be! Sure it must be suitable to the Majesty and Greatness of the Builder. 'Tis called *the City of the mighty King*, where are Mansions of Light, everlasting Habitations, Houses eternal in the Heavens, heavenly Palaces; a stately Description whereof we have, *Rev. xxi*. And yet, as magnifick as the Description is, 'tis but a faint Emblem of the Glory of that City.

2. It implies, That their *Original* is from Heaven. However mean an Original they may otherwise have, yet their Descent is far above that of the greatest Princes. True it is, their Original, as Men, is often mean; for generally they are the *Poor* of this World: But, as Believers, they are noble and Heaven-born, of a high Descent; thus they are said to be *born from above*, *John iii. to be Partakers of the Divine Na-*

Nature, 2 Pet. i. 4. to be the *Sons of God*,
 1 John iii. 1. to be *begotten* of him, Jam. i. 18.

3. It points out that they are *Burgesſes* and *Freemen* of that City. Thus they are ſaid to be *Fellow-Citizens*, and of *the Houſhold of God*, Eph. ii. 19. *Plal. lxxxvii. 5. And of Zion it ſhall be ſaid, This Man and that Man was born there.* To be a *Freeman of Rome* was of Old thought a great *Privilege* and *Honour*; but this is infinitely a greater *Privilege*, all *Believers* are *Chriſt's Freemen*.

4. It points out certain *Privileges* belonging to that City, and to them that are *Freemen* thereof; ſo there are *Privileges* annexed to this heavenly City, belonging only to them who are *Burgesſes* thereof, *Heb. xiii. 10. We have an Altar, &c.*

We ſhall mention ſome of theſe *Privileges*; as, 1^{ſt}, *Freedom* from the *Law* as a *Covenant of Works*, *Rom. vi. 14.* from the *Law's Curſe*, *Gal. iii. 10.* *Freedom* from a *Spirit of Bondage*, *Rom. viii. 15.* *Freedom* from *Sin's Power and Dominion*, *Rom. vi. 12, 14.* *Liberty of Access* to *God*, *Eph. ii. 18.* and *iii. 12, &c.*

A 2^d *Privilege* is to have their *Names* recorded in the *Register* of that City. As commonly the *Names* of *Citizens* are recorded in the publick *Register* of the City, ſo *Believers* are ſaid to have their *Names written in Heaven*, *Luke x. 20.* and to have their *Names written in the Lamb's Book of Life.*

3^{dly}, Another *Privilege* is to get an *Extract* of their *Burgesſhip*, and their *Names* being written in *Heaven*. As commonly *Burgesſes*

have an Extract of their Burgeship, so Believers are allowed this Privilege, and oftentimes have an Extract of their Burgeship attested by the Spirit; this is called the *White Stone* with the *New Name*, Rev. ii. 17. They are said to be *sealed with the Spirit*, Eph. iv. 30. See also *Rom. viii. 16. 1 Cor. ii. 12.*

A 4th Privilege is free Access to the City, to *trade* and *traffick* there; thither they bring their Duties, and receive gracious Returns from thence, *Heb. xii. 22, 23, 24. Jonah iii. 7. Psal. iii. 4. Heb. x. 19, 20.*

A 5th Privilege is free Access to see the *King's Face*, like the seven Princes of *Persia*. Here they have Access to see him by Faith, *2 Cor. iii. 18.* and immediately without all Vails in Heaven, *1 John iii. 2. 1 Cor. xiii. 12. Rev. xxi. 3.*

A 6th Privilege is, They have his *Mark in their Foreheads*, *Rev. xiv. 1. 2 Tim. ii. 19.* This Mark is a Transcript of God's Law upon their Hearts, that is the Copy of God's Covenant; 'tis the Garment of universal Holiness, external and internal; 'tis to *know* Christ's Voice as his Sheep, *John x.*

5thly, To be Burgeses of Heaven implies, That their *Stock* is in Heaven, and that they have one common Stock with the People of God. Thus they are said to have their *Treasure in Heaven*, as readily trading Citizens have their Stock in the City to which they belong. This Stock and Treasure is the Lord Christ, who is called the *Hope of Glory in them*; and their *Life*, *Col. iii. 4.* And in this Stock all true Believers have a common Interest, and live upon him as their Stock and Treasure.

2. Having their Conversation in Heaven implies the habitual *Frame* and *Temper* of their Spirit, viz. a heavenly and spiritual Frame of Spirit like Heaven. Thus they are said to *have their Heart, where their Treasure is*, and to *mind the Things of the Spirit*, Rom. viii. 5, 6. importing the habitual Frame of their Hearts; and so a Believer is called the *spiritual Man*, 1 Cor. ii. 15.

3. To have their Conversation in Heaven takes in their *being now and then* in Heaven; and there they are in the Exercise of Faith, that mounts and carries the Soul above all visible Objects to Things not seen, that realizes and brings down Things heavenly to the Soul's View, as if it were in Heaven, *Heb. xi. 1*. As also, there they are in their Thoughts and Meditations, contemplating and viewing these great Things beyond Time's Line, by Faith looking through the Prospect of the Promises: There they are in their Affections and Desires, going before them like Messengers, taking Possession of Heaven till they come there, *Col. iii. 1*. *Psal. lxxiii. 25*. There they are with Reference to their Hope; they have the Anchor of their Hope cast within the Vail upon sure Ground, *Heb. vi. 19*. *Which Hope we have as an Anchor sure and stedfast*; which Anchor of Hope will by Degrees wind them within the Harbour of Rest, beyond all Storms.

4. To have our Conversation in Heaven is to be *talking* with Heaven, on Things heavenly. As Converse, by mutual Discourse communicating our Thoughts one to another, is a great Part of Conversation among Men; so we find the
Lord

Lord Christ talks with his People by his Word, revealing his Mind to them by his Spirit in and by the Word; And God's People know his Voice, *John x. 27. My Sheep know my Voice.* He thus speaks to them, calling for believing, *Psal. xxvii. 8. When thou didst say, Seek my Face, &c.* Sometimes calling them off their Security and Sloth, *Cant. ii. 10. My Beloved said, Arise, &c. Cant. v. 2. Open to me.* Sometimes calling them off this World, *Cant. iv. 8. Come away with me.* And, on the other Hand, they speak to him partly in Prayer, *Cause me to hear the Voice of Joy and Gladness.* They speak to him in their Answers to his Calls; *O my Soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, Thou art my God, Psal. xvi. 2.* They speak to him in their humble Acknowledgments of their Sins, and tell him all their Complaints and Ailments, telling him all their Fears in their humble Expostulations with him, *Psal. xiii. 1, 2.* and pour out their Hearts before him, telling him every Thing that is afflicting to them, as *Hannah poured out her Soul, 1 Sam. i. 15.*

5. To have our Conversation in Heaven implies *Familiarity* and *Frequency*, as Frequency of Visits to Heaven, and that by the Actings and Outgoings of Faith thither, now and then viewing Heaven, and the frequent Desires and Prayers ascending up thither as so many Messengers and Missives to Heaven. Thus they are said to *live by Faith, Gal. ii. 20. to view Things eternal, 2 Cor. iv. 18.* and to *pray and make a Noise, Morning, Evening and Mid-day, Psal. lv. 17.* These Prayers, if rightly performed, are compared to the ascending up of *Incense, Psal. cxli. 2.* And,

as this points out Frequency of Visits, so also Familiarity. As Folk, where they visit often, become familiar; so God's People are helped to come with a humble Familiarity and Boldness, *Rom. viii. 17. Heb. iv. 16. Psal. xliii. 4. Then will I go to God, my God.* They can come with humble Familiarity; for they can come without slavish Fear: They can come to him as their God: They can tell him every Thing that ails them, tho' with Blushing, yet without slavish Fear: They can plead with him, wrestle with him, and hang on him, as Children on a Father; as you see in *Jacob's Wrestling with the Angel of the Covenant.*

6. To have our Conversation in Heaven is to have a Walk and Conversation like Heaven. So we are taught in the Lord's Prayer, that his *Will may be done in Earth as in Heaven.* This is to have our *Conversation as becometh the Gospel of Christ, Phil. i. 27.* That is, (1.) A Conversation rais'd and sublimated above this World, and all sublunary Things; to have the *Moon under our Feet, Rev. xii. 1. to be coming out of the Wilderness like Pillars of Smoke, perfumed with Myrrhe and Frankincense*; to have the *World crucified to us, and we to it.* (2.) 'Tis to have a Conversation free from Sin as far as possible. We don't mean absolutely so, for that is impossible while here; but we will have a Conversation attended with a Care to mortify all inward Lusts, *Gal. v. 24.* and a due Care to beware of all known Sins, and Temptations leading thereto, with a Heart-hatred of all Sin, *Psal. cxix. 129.* and particularly a Care to keep ourselves from our Master-sins, *Psal. xviii 23. Heb.*

xii. 2. (3.) To have our Conversation like the Gospel, is to have a Conversation shining in Holiness and Purity. Holiness is like Light, of a shining and resplendent Nature; so God is called *Light*, and is said to *dwell in Light*. We find Angels appeared in shining Garments, pointing out the shining Nature of Holiness, *Phil. ii. 15. Mat. vi. 10. Thy Will be done*. Angels obey God's Will universally, without Reserve; presently, without Delay; and cheerfully, without Grudging, counting Duty their Privilege; they serve him also perfectly, without any Defect, with their whole Strength. (4.) To have a Conversation according to the Gospel, is to be much taken up in these Duties whereby we resemble and come near Heaven; as, 1. The noble Duty of Praise. This is their great Work in Heaven that encircle the Throne. 2. Rejoicing in him; sunning and delighting ourselves in him, glorying in him as our Crown and Glory. This is their Work in Heaven, where they continually sun themselves in the clearest Beams of his Countenance. 3. Love to the Redeemer. Heaven is the Element where the noble Grace of Love is in Perfection: 'The more we love, the more we look like Heaven; for he that *loveth, dwelleth in God, and God in him*: And what is that but the Dawning of Heaven! 4. Frequent beholding and viewing his Face, as the Angels do in Heaven. 'Tis to be much in viewing the glorious Redeemer, as the Angels in Heaven are said to behold his Face, *2 Cor. iii. 18*.

7: To have our Conversation in Heaven is to be travelling thither, moving heavenward in the Road of Duty, as Travellers move towards their de-

designed Place in the common Road. Thus they are said to go from *Strength to Strength*; Psal. lxxxiv. 7. to be going to *Zion, with their Faces thitherward*, Jer. l. 4, 5. So they go thither by the Motions and Outgoings of their Souls heavenward in the Canal of Duties rightly performed; every right Duty being a Step to Heaven: And so they advance in Spiritual-mindedness, in Holiness, and Conformity to God.

8. To have our Conversation in Heaven, is to have a spiritual Traffick and Commerce with Heaven, as Merchants who have Commerce with far and distant Countries; therefore Christians are compared to Merchants in Scripture, *Matth. xiii. 44.*

Here we may notice several Things; As, *1st*; In Trafficking there are frequently publick *Fairs*; where Merchants buy and sell, and make Gain; so in the Gospel there are publick Markets and Fairs, cry'd Fairs, to which all are invited to come and buy Gospel-commodities upon cheap and easy Prices, *Isa. lv. 1. Ho, every one, &c.*

2^{dly}, Merchants that trade with remote Countries have readily a *Factor* that does for them: So the Lord Christ (so to speak) is their FACTOR and Correspondent in Heaven; they send their Wares or Duties, and their Bills to Heaven to Christ, who sends them suitable Returns of the good Things of that Country. Thus he is called an *Advocate*, and directs us to ask in his Name, promising, whatsoever we ask to answer us.

3^{dly}, There is a sending *spiritual Wares* there, as their Prayers, Praises, and other Duties and Services, *1 Pet. ii. 5, 6. Ye are a spiritual Priest-*

Priesthood, &c. You read of their Prayers coming up like Incense, *Psal.* cxli. 2. of their coming up to Heaven, his holy Dwelling-place.

4thly, In Merchandizing there are *forbidden* Wares that will not pass in Heaven, as is common in trading Countries; as,

1. *Uncommanded Worship* is a counterband Commodity, that can by no Means pass in Heaven: 'Tis a Trade vain, and without Warrant; *Isa.* xxix. 13. *In vain do they worship me, &c.*

2. *Light Duties*, that want Weight and Solidity; as formal and superficial Services, that want the Heart in them: They are frothy, without Solidity, and will not pass in Heaven, *Ezek.* xxxiii. 31. *They come before me as my People, &c.*

3. *Polluted, unclean Wares.* Such are the Prayers of them whose Lives are polluted with the moral Defilement of the Flesh: Such are the Prayers of the Immoral, the Drunkard, Swearer, and the like; their Duties are unclean, like Goods that have the Plague in them; such will find no Place in Heaven, *Isa.* i. 11, 12. *Prov.* xv. 8. *Tit.* i. ult.

4. Such Wares and Duties as are *rotten*, and have the Worm of some allowed Lusts and Idols in the Heart of them, *Psal.* lxvi. 18. *If I regard Iniquity in my Heart, &c.* *Psal.* xiv. 2. *Ezek.* xiv. 3, 4. Again,

5. Such Wares and Duties as are *over-rated* with an Opinion of their Worth and Merit; such Duties can never pass in Heaven, Pride spoils the passing of them: And the more they are over-rated here, they are the more undervalued in Heaven; as we see in the Prayer of the proud

proud *Pharisee*, *Luke xviii. 11.* for God despises the Proud, and takes Pleasure to humble them.

6. Such Duties and Wares as are *not directed to a right Port*, are counterband Goods: As, when the Design of these Duties is not to glorify God in a Mediator, but to obtain our own carnal Ends; as the *Pharisees*, who pray'd to be seen of Men, and to devour Widows Houses, &c.

7. Such Duties and Wares as are *not directed to the great Factor and Correspondent in Heaven*, to be presented and made accepted by and through him. As we are directed in our Prayers, whatever we ask, to ask *in his Name*, and to put all our spiritual Sacrifices in the Hand of this great High Priest, that he may present and perfume them with the Incense of his Sacrifice, *1 Pet. ii. 5. Heb. xiii. 15.* By him therefore let us offer unto God the Sacrifice of Praise, &c.

5thly, In this spiritual Traffick there are *Laws and Rules*, which these who would traffick there with Success must observe; as,

1. They must be *commanded and allowed* in the Word, otherwise they are counterband and forbidden, *1 John v. 14.* This is the Confidence, that if we ask any Thing according to his Will, he heareth us.

2. Such Wares must come on a *right Bottom*, viz. the Bottom of saving Faith; for Faith is the Bottom that carries our Duties into Heaven: Hence we are said to have Access by Faith, *Eph. ii. 18.* we read, that *by Faith* Abel offered a more excellent Sacrifice than Cain.

3. Such Duties and Wares must be *manufactured* by the Assistance of the Spirit, otherwise

our Duties cannot pass in Heaven. All our Duties must be performed by his gracious Assistance; that gives them a Stamp, whereby they are distinguished from the Duties of natural Men. Our Prayers must be dictated and performed by his special Assistance, *Rom. viii. 26, 27.* So the Duty of Mortification, *Rom. viii. 13.* not only Prayer, but Praise, *1 Cor. xiv. 15. I'll praise with the Spirit.* So Hope and Waiting; *We through the Spirit wait for the Hope of Righteousness.* And so all these Fruits we read of, *Gal. v. 22.* are the Fruits of the Spirit.

4. Such Wares must have a *right Mark* on them, as some Merchant-goods have a peculiar Mark by which they are valued and pass, *i. e.* they must be marked with Christ's Name on them, otherwise they cannot pass in Heaven; *i. e.* they must be performed by Strength derived from Christ. They are to be offered up in his Name, and put in his Hand, as our great High Priest, that he may scent and perfume them, and thereby take away the evil Scent of the Defects that cleave to them. Thus we are called to pray in his Name, to seek in his Name, &c.

6thly, In this Conversing and Trafficking with Heaven, there are *Returns* of the Wares and good Things of that Country. As Merchants receive from far Countries, for the Goods they send thither, the rich Commodities of that Country; so Christians, who are spiritual Merchants, in Return to their Prayers and other Services receive rich Incomes; as Influences of all Sorts, enlightning, quickning, sanctifying and comforting Influences, Sense of Peace with God,
Peace

Peace of Conscience, further Conformity to God, far better than the richest Commodities of both *Indies*.

7^{thly}, In Merchandizing or Trafficking, Merchants draw *Bills* upon their Factors, to be answered by them : So the Lord Christ allows his People to draw Bills upon him, as it were ; He puts a Blank in their Hands : He says, *Whosoever we ask in my Name, I will do it*, John xvi. 7, 16. *Isa. xlv. 11*. He allows them to seek, not only Grace, but Glory ; not Half a Kingdom, but a Whole Kingdom, yea, the Kingdom of Heaven and Glory ; and what can they seek more ?

8^{thly}, In this spiritual Merchandizing there is a drawing Bills upon them ; as Factors sometimes draw Bills upon their Merchants, and Merchants are generally careful to answer these Bills to preserve their Credit. In general, every Thing Christ requires of them is a Bill drawn on them, as every Petition they send to him is a Bill upon him. But sometimes the Lord is pleased to draw deep upon them, to try their Faith if they'll trust him : So sometimes, by a cross Providence, he draws a Bill on them ; sometimes to part with a Child ; sometimes with a dear Relation, a Husband, a Wife, &c. sometimes with their Liberty ; yea, sometimes with their Life. Our Lord is often very sparing in this Kind of Bills, yet he requires that we be ready to answer when he calls ; *If any Man love Father or Mother more than me, he is not worthy of me*.

9^{thly}, In this Trafficking there is an *answering* or a *returning* these Bills Christ draws upon them ;

them ; and thus we find God's People answering these Bills in a willing parting with dear Relations at his Call. So *Abraham* answered the Bill, when he offered up his Son *Isaac* ; so did these, *Heb. x. 34.* who took with Joy the spoiling of their Goods ; so *Moses* despised all the Court-pleasures of *Egypt* ; and these Worthies, *Heb. xi. 35.* who refused Deliverance, that they might obtain a better Resurrection. But, alas, how oft do we crack Credit with Christ this Way !

10thly, In this Trafficking there is a returning of Letters, when they have any Returns of Incomes from Heaven. As Merchants send Letters of Thanks to their Factors, when they manage their Affairs faithfully ; so we find Believers returning Thanks, when they receive gracious Returns from Heaven as Answers of their Prayers, *Psal. lxxvi. 19.* and *cxvi. 1.* when they receive inward Strength, *Psal. cxxxviii. 3.* In the Day of my Distress thou heardst me, and strengthnedst me with Strength in my Soul. When they receive Deliverance from Danger ; as *Psal. xl. 1, 2.* when they receive Comfort, *Isa. xii. 1.* And yet, how oft are Believers defective this Way ! as you see in *Hezekiah*, 'tis said, *He did not render according to the Mercy bestowed.*

Lastly, In Trafficking there are Hazards and Dangers ; as commonly there are in Trafficking with remote Countries, especially by Sea, where they are oft exposed to Pirates. And here there is Danger from Satan, our own evil Hearts, and a sinful World ; these labour to divert us from trafficking and sending Goods there, they labour to spoil and mar the right Performance of Duty. Again,
Satan

Satan as an Accuser labours to mar the Passing and Acceptance of our Duties and Persons: Thus he accused *Job*, and stood at *Joshua's* Right-hand to resist him; and thus he is called *the Accuser of the Brethren*, Rev. xii. 10. And Satan labours, when we receive or are receiving Returns from Heaven, like a Pirate, to rob us of them, by tempting us to Pride, Forgetfulness and Unthankfulness: Or, when Answers and Returns are long of coming, how busy is he to tempt us to think our Duties are not acceptable, or will return empty and in vain?

III. The *third* general Head is, To give the *Reasons* of the Doctrine, why they ought to have their Conversation in Heaven. And,

1. Because 'tis commanded, *Col. iii. 1. Cant. viii. 13. O thou that dwellest, &c.*

2. Because their new Nature leads them to this. It leads them to move and ascend upward, from whence their new Nature came, as Waters will rise as high as their Spring; for they are *born from above*, Rom. viii. 6.

3. Things heavenly and spiritual are suited to their new Nature, being spiritual and heavenly. We see every Creature loves to converse with such Objects and Persons as are agreeable to their Natures and Temper; hence some Studies are more agreeable to some Men than others. Likeness is the Foundation of Conversation.

4. Because every Thing affects and aspires towards its own Perfection. Now, this Conversation in Heaven is there at the Height of its Perfection; for there is the proper Element of such a Conversation.

5. Because their Stock and Treasure is in Heaven, *Col. iii. 4. When Christ, who is our Life, shall appear, &c.* Now, Christ tells us, that *where our Treasure is, there our Heart will be.* The Treasure being like the Load-stone, it draws the Heart of the Christian where it is.

6. (which falls in with the former Reasons) Because the Lord Christ is in Heaven: 'Tis his being there, that commends Heaven to them, makes them long to be there, and makes the Thoughts of coming there sweet: *So shall we ever be with the Lord, 1 Theff. iv. 17.*

7. Having their Conversation in Heaven is their proper Trade and Business as Christians, by which as Christians they subsist, even as Men subsist themselves and their Families by their proper Callings: So that 'tis no Wonder their Conversation be in Heaven, seeing all the spiritual Incomes, whereby the Principle of spiritual Life is preserved, come from thence.

8. Because they hope to come thither; Hope being cast as an Anchor within the Vail, *Heb. vi. 19.* We see them comforting themselves with the Hope of it, *Psal. lxxiii. 24.* Now, where Mens Hopes are, their Hearts and Thoughts are hovering about the Place, till they come there to the Possession of it. *Christ is called in them the Hope of Glory.*

We cannot reach the full Application of this Subject, and therefore shall conclude with a short Word of *Exhortation* to all, especially to Communicants, to study to have their Conversation in Heaven. We shall only make use of one Consideration or two. 1. The solemn Ordinance,
of

of which you have been partaking, strongly obliges you to this,

1. In as much as therein you have engaged and promised to the Lord to study this Conversation; like the Disciples, they all promised they would never leave him.

2. Because in that Ordinance your Engagements to study this Conversation are sealed upon your Part, by your taking the Sacrament, and that before many Witnesses. Here your Engagements are, as it were, recorded and entred into the Register.

3. If you have been sincere Communicants, you have had some Taste and Experience what it is to have your Conversation in Heaven; you have someway tasted of that *Wine*, as an Earnest of your *drinking it new in Heaven*, Mat. xxvi. 29.

4. Because in that Ordinance you have Furniture and Supply secured and sealed up to you, to enable you to keep and maintain a Conversation in Heaven, and a Traffick there; for in this Ordinance all the Promises are sealed up to Believers: Yea, you have the Spirit as the Sealer, and Thing sealed, by whose Means it is that you have your Conversation in Heaven, Rom. viii. 26, 27. Eph. i. 13.

5. Because in that Ordinance you have your Admission to Heaven in your whole Person, and, being Residenter there, sealed up to you, Mat. xxvi. 29. *Verily I say unto you, I will not drink of the Fruit of the Vine, &c.* Does not this oblige and encourage you to have your Conversation in Heaven?

In a Word, Would you be able to look for
D Christ's

Christ's second Coming from Heaven, and not be ashamed at his Coming? Would you desire not to be, like the idle Servant, surpris'd at his Coming? Would you have the well-grounded Hope of a better Resurrection, and having your vile Bodies conform'd to his glorious Body, which is so sweet a Cordial against the melancholly Thoughts of Death and a Grave? Then study to have your Conversation in Heaven; as you see their Conversation in the Text enabled them to say, that *from thence they looked for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Passing other *Directions*, we shortly recommend this one; Be much in the Exercise of Faith in a Redeemer, *2 Cor. v. 7, 8. We walk by Faith.*

1. Faith realizes the great Things that ly beyond a Grave; it brings them down, and presents them to View.

2. It carries the Believer in his Duties within the Vail.

3. Faith scents and perfumes the Duties of a Christian by the Blood of Christ, which it carries along with it in its Hand as Incense.

4. It puts all the Christian's Duties in the High Priest's Hand, *viz.* the Redeemer, that he may present them, and procure Acceptance.

5. Faith brings in sweet Returns of the good Things of Heaven: For the Promise is made to Faith; *Whatever we ask believing, we shall receive.* So *Abel* by Faith offered up a more excellent Sacrifice than *Cain*. In a Word, Faith is the Spring of that Conversation, and 'tis by Faith we shift and get through this evil World, till Faith be swallowed up in Vision.

F I N I S.

The NATURE and TENDENCY of ERROR:

O N

Jude, Verses 3, 4. *Beloved, when I gave all Diligence to write unto you of the common Salvation: It was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you, that ye should earnestly contend for the Faith which was once delivered unto the Saints. For there are certain Men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this Condemnation, ungodly Men, turning the Grace of our God into Lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.*

THE Scope of this Epistle seems to be, To guard the Christians of those Times, and so in all After-ages, against the dangerous Errors that very early sprung up in the Church, and the loose Practices to which these Errors opened a Door; and, for that End, to exhort them to *contend earnestly for the Faith (i. e. the precious Truths of the Gospel) once delivered to the Saints.*

So in the Words ye have, *first*, A great Duty pressed, *viz.* To contend, and that earnestly, as in an Agony, (as the Word signifies in the Original) for the Faith, 1. Because 'tis a Trust, therefore 'tis said to be *delivered* to them. 2. Because 'tis *once* delivered; *i. e.* the Revelation of God's Will as to the Way of coming to Heaven is now complete, and we are not to expect a new Revelation; which obliges us the more earnestly to contend for the Faith. 3. This Faith is said to be delivered to the *Saints*, partly to point out the Persons who will earnestly contend for the Faith; partly the strong Obligation they ly under to contend for it, being Saints; partly to point out that Errors are in their Nature and Tendency destructive of Holiness, and consequently do oblige them the more to contend for the Faith in Opposition to Errors.

In the 4th Verse, ye have some more particular Reasons, from the Description of the Persons who were spreading these Errors, and from the Errors they were labouring to spread; as, 1. They are said to be *crept in unawares*. 2. To be *of old ordained* (or forewritten) *to this Condemnation* or Judgment. 3. They are said to be *ungodly Men*. 4. They are said to *turn the Grace of God* (the sweetest Thing in all the World to Believers) *into Lasciviousness*, abusing the most precious Thing unto the worse Use: Besides, 'tis called the Grace of *our God*, to put an Edge on their Zeal against Error, from their Interest in that God whose Grace they abused. 5. They are said to *deny the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ*; which they did, by denying him to be the same God with the Father, and equal

qual to him. We refer the particular Explication of the Words till we come to the Doctrine.

Doct. 1st, *That 'tis the great Duty of God's People, to which they are in a special Manner called, to contend earnestly for the Faith.*

But this Doctrine we design not to insist on, except to touch upon it in the Use.

Doct. 2d, *As it often falls out that erroneous Men creep into the Church of Christ, so their Errors in their Nature and Tendency open a Door to Lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, even Jesus Christ our Saviour.*

This is obvious from the Words, and from the Parable of the Tares sown while Men were sleeping. Ye see, *Paul* forewarns of this, *2 Tim. iii. Acts xx.* So does also *Peter*, *2 Epist. 2 Chap.* Ye read of the Churches of *Galatia, Corinth, Ephesus* and *Thyatira*, what Errors were early crept in among them.

For Method, we shall, 1st, Premise some Things. 2dly, Explain the Import of *creeping in.* 3dly, The Description of the Men in the Text; 1. Of their Being said to be of *old fore-ordained to this Condemnation.* 2. To be *ungodly Men.* 3. To *turn the Grace of our God into Lasciviousness.* 4. To *deny the only Lord God our Saviour.* 4thly, Instance in some Errors that lead to Lasciviousness. 5thly, Shortly give some Reasons whence Errors creep into the Church. 6thly, Shew the Connection between
Errors

Errors and Lasciviousness. And, *Lastly*, Shall make Application of the Doctrine.

It is not unsuitable for a Fast-day before a Sacrament to speak of this Subject, because a Flood of Errors and Immoralities are, like a Sea, threatning to break in upon us; and sure, abounding Errors and Immoralities are Ground of deep Humiliation, if any Thing be so. We read, *Numb. xxv.* of the Godly at that Time mourning at the Door of the Tabernacle for the Sins of them that were joined to *Baal-peor*.

I. As to the *first* Head, We premise, 1. That, as there is a natural Connection betwixt Truth and Holiness, as betwixt Light and Purity; so also betwixt Errors and loose Practices: For Doctrines of Darkness naturally lead to the Works of Darkness, *Matth. vii. By their Fruits ye shall know them.* And, *Gal. v.* we find *Heresy* among the Fruits of the Flesh. There is a reciprocal Connection betwixt loose Principles and immoral Practices; loose Principles dispose to loose Practices: For Error darkens the Light within, and loose Practices lead to loose Principles, as tending to patronize or screen immoral Practices.

2. We premise, That there is a Connection betwixt lesser and greater Errors, the former insensibly leading to the other: For Error is like a Precipice, where, if Men stumble, 'tis a Wonder if they tumble not down to the Bottom; Or, Error is like a By-road, into which if Men wander by Mistake, it may be a While ere they recover the right Way: For *Paul* tells us, *2 Tim. iii. That evil Men and Seducers shall wax*

wax worse and worse. Some who embraced lesser Errors at first, have been drawn in to maintain the grossest Errors at last ; of which, if they had been told at the Beginning, they would have said with *Hazael*, 2 Kings viii. 13. *Am I a Dog, that I should do so?*

3. We premise, That all, that are misled into Errors, do not fall into the same Degree of Looseness of Practice : For which several Reasons might be given ; as, restraining Grace, a mere virtuous Disposition in some, &c. Nor does the Tendency and sad Effects of such Errors appear at first ; for often the Broachers of such Errors come in Sheep's Clothing, and with a Pretence and Shew of more Strictness than ordinary ; and oft in Things indifferent, whereby they insnare the Simple and Unthinking ; therefore our Lord tells us, *Ye shall know them by their Fruits*, Mat. vii.

4. We premise, That 'tis easier to convince Men of the Evil of immoral Practices, than to convince them of Errors : For, in the first, readily Conscience within sides and takes Part with the Reprover against the immoral Person ; whereas, in the last, Light and Conscience, being blinded, stands up for the reprov'd Person against the Reprover. The Difficulty of convincing such is hinted at by *Paul* 2 Tim. ii. 25. while he says, *If God peradventure will give them Repentance to the Acknowledgment of the Truth.*

II. The *second* Head is, To explain the Import of their being said to *creep in unawares* (for 'tis

'tis but one Word in the original.) Notice, That the Persons here spoken of may comprehend both corrupt Teachers and private Persons, who make it their Business to spread Error.

1st, This points out and supposes the Church's Sloth and Security, that 'tis Night and a sleeping Time with the Church; for we read in the Parable, *Mat. xiii.* That, *while men slept, the Enemy came and sowed Tares.* And it seems to be Night with this Church.

2dly, It implies, That such a Time, when the Church is secure, is a fit Season for the Enemy to sow the Tares of Errors; for then they are less observed, as we see in the Parable of the Tares. We seem to be fallen asleep in the warm Beams of outward Peace.

3dly, It points out the cunning and subtile Way of their entering and spreading their Errors: They creep in as Thieves unobserved into Houses in the Dusk of the Evening, or like Serpents into an Hole of an House; for they are the Seed of the Serpent, and partake of his Cunning. *Paul* tells of some false Brethren brought in unawares, *Gal. ii. 4.* *Christ* tells us, they come in *Sheep's Clothing*; they insinuate themselves into Peoples Affections, and so steal them unawares off their Feet. *2 Tim. iii. 6.* *Paul* says, *They creep into Houses and lead captive silly Women.* And, *Gal. iv. 17.* *They zealously affect you, but not well, &c.*

4thly, It points out their Zeal as well as their Cunning in spreading their Errors; for their creeping in, as it points out their Care not to be discovered, so also their Zeal to spread their Errors. And indeed erroneous Persons are observed

ved to be very zealous this Way, far more than God's People are to defend the Truth: They are like the *Pharisees*, who compass Sea and Land to make one *Profelyte*.

5thly, It points out, That oft such do not discover themselves at first; they hide their Poison under fair Pretences, as Love to their Persons, and Pretences to greater Strictness; therefore Error is compared to a *little Leaven*, that leaveneth the whole Lump; and their Word is said by *Paul* to eat as Canker.

6thly, That such Persons and Errors may creep into a Church, and yet the Generality not be sensible of it; as is here implied, while *Paul* informs them, that such Men were crept in among them. It was long after the Tares were sown (*Matt. xiii.*) ere they were discovered.

7thly, It may point out the Danger the Church is in, in this Case. The Warning the Apostle gives them of this, and the Description of them in the Text, shews the Danger; 'tis like a Plague entring a City. The Cautions given by *Peter*, 2 *Pet. iii. 17, 18.* and *John iv. 1.* confirm this. The Danger's great; for thereby Truth's corrupted, and Souls ruined, as Mens Bodies are by Poison.

8thly, and Lastly, It says, That People need to be warned, and made sensible of their Danger. As this is the necessary Duty of faithful Ministers, as Watchmen, to give Warning of Dangers to Peoples Souls; so 'tis absolutely necessary to put People upon their Guard, which can never be, unless the People of God be made sensible of their Danger.

III. The *third* Head is, To consider the Description of them given in the Text. And, *First*, They're said to be *of old foreordained to this Condemnation*, or forewritten. The Phrase points out,

1. What a dreadful Judgment it is to be given up to loose Principles and loose Practices; for 'tis a spiritual Judgment upon the Soul, and to the worst of all Judgments, *2 Thess. ii. 10, 11. For this Cause God shall send them strong Delusions, to believe a Lie, &c.* To be given up to a *reprobate Mind*, is the worst of Judgments; for this Plague was inflicted upon the Heathen for the Abuse of natural Light, *Rom. i. 28.* How much more upon them that abuse Gospel-light? Such *bring upon themselves swift Damnation.*

2. It implies, That this was long before foretold and foreseen; as *Enoch* prophesied of such, *Ver. 14th* of this Epistle, *Behold, the Lord cometh, &c.* Our Lord foretold it, *Matt. xxiv.* He forewarns of false Christs; and *Paul* foretells it, *Acts xx. 29, 30.* and *2 Pet. iii. 3.* And also God foresaw this in his Omniscience, for he knows all Things that are to come to pass.

3. It points out, That God has eternally decreed to give up some in Time unto that dreadful Judgment of damnable Errors and Lasciviousness; as there was a Decree concerning *Judas* being given up to betray our Lord Jesus his Master. And, *Rom. ix. 21, 22.* there are some long before designed to be Vessels of Wrath for the Manifestation of his glorious Justice, as well as some designed to be Vessels of Mercy for the Manifestation of his free and sovereign Grace.

4. Ye would notice, That the Decree of giving up some to such Errors and Lasciviousness is an Act of absolute Sovereignty, as well as Election; for *Paul* says, *He has Mercy on whom he will have Mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.* In this he does the Creature no Wrong; for, tho' the Decreeing to give up the Sinner to such a Judgment be an Act of Sovereignty, yet the actual giving up in Time the Sinner to such a Judgment is an Act of retributive Justice; for none are given up in Time to that Judgment, but for their former Sins. The Decree only ascertains the Effect, but does no Violence to Mens free Will, more than if there had not been such a Decree. And consequently, That none are given up in Time to this dreadful Judgment, but for their former Sins, which Men commit freely, as if there were no such Decree, *2 Theff. ii. 10, 11. For this Cause God shall send them strong Delusions, &c.*

5. Notice, Tho' this be a tremendous Judgment, yet it is no sure Sign of Reprobation; for that is a Thing cannot be known here. Besides, that many who have been intangled both in gross Errors, and immoral Practices, have been recovered by free and sovereign Grace. *1 Cor. vi. 10, 11.* we read of a Catalogue of great Sinners, yet by Grace made Saints. Their Case is dangerous, but not desperate, *2 Tim. ii. 25. If so be God will give them Repentance.*

6. Notice, That no Errors enter into the Church but by God's overruling and permissive Providence, who can turn such Providences to his own Glory, *1 Cor. xi. 19. There must be*

Heresies among you, that they who are approved may be made manifest.

7. We are forewarned of this, not to prevent our being grieved and humbled when such Errors break in, but to prevent our being stumbled at Christ's Way when these Things happen, *John xvi. 1. These Things I have told you, that ye should not be offended in me. Matt. xi. 16. Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me.*

The second Description given of them in the Text is, They are said to be *ungodly Men*; pointing out,

1. The Want of a due Fear or Awe of God upon their Hearts; otherwise they durst never vent such Errors, nor be guilty of such Practices; and this may be oft observed of such: For, *by the Fear of the Lord, Men depart from Evil*; and *the Fear of the Lord is said to be the Beginning of Wisdom.*

2. It may point out their little Regard to the Revelation of God's Will in the written Word. Either they slight it, or pervert it; as, *2 Pet. iii. 16. they are said to pervert the Scriptures to their own Perdition.* Or they prefer their corrupt Reason to Scripture-revelation, and measure Gospel-mysteries by their blind narrow Reason; as, *Col. ii. 8. Beware any Man beguile you through Philosophy and vain Deceit*: As also, *v. 18. Hence a crucified Christ is said to be to the Jews a Stumbling-Block, and to the Greeks Foolishness.*

3. It may point out their little Regard to the Duties of the first Table, especially secret Prayer. Commonly they are not praying Folk, nor much acquaint with that Branch of Religion. They may

may have something of the Form of Prayer, but are not much acquaint with Heart-prayer, nor the Manner or Success of the Duty.

4. Readily they are not much acquaint with the inward Exercise of serious Religion, nor exercised unto Godliness; are much Strangers to their own Hearts, not observing and groaning under a Body of Death, and the sinful Workings thereof within: With these such are not readily much acquainted, otherwise it would cure them of several Errors. See 1 *Tim.* iv. 7. where *Paul* prescribes this as an Antidote, *But rather exercise thyself to Godliness.*

5. They are ungodly; for they are not much acquaint with the Spirit in his various Operations and Influences upon the Heart, enlightning, quickning, enlarging, strengthening, and comforting; know but little what it is to be assisted in Duty, what it is to be deserted or straitned, what Access to God in Duty is, and what it is sometimes to be shut out; what it is to have God's Countenance shining on them, and then to come under a dark Cloud: These are Things many in our Day profanely ridicule, and call them *Vapours*, the *Heating of the animal Spirits*, *Mysticks*, and such like. All we say of these is, what *Jude* says, *They are sensual, not having the Spirit.*

6. They are said to be ungodly Men, because they often take great Liberty in doing and allowing several Things that the Word does not allow, and that under the specious Name of lawful Liberty; and are ready to censure others that are more tender, as weak and narrow-spirited, not knowing their own Liberty: Hence they will call drink-
ing

ing a little more than necessary, but the Use of Christian Liberty; and using some Oaths, as *Faith, Conscience*, Things indifferent; or may be in their merry Moods border upon obscene Language, or take an undue Liberty on the Sabbath-day, or may be can break a Jest upon the Scriptures and Strictness in Religion for their Diversion.

7. Readily they are very proud, and full of themselves, of their own Parts and Learning, tho' outwardly complaisant. *Col. ii. 18.* they are said to be *pust up by their fleshy Mind*: And, *1 Tim. vi. 3, 4.* *If any Man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesom Words, &c. v. 4.* *He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about Questions, &c.*

The *third* Branch of their Description is, That they *turn, change, or transfer, the Grace of our God into Lasciviousness or Wantonness.* The Word seems to be in Allusion to the Revellings and Debauchries committed at the Feasts of *Bacchus.* See *Eph. iv. 19.* where the same Word is used, *1 Pet. iv. 3.* Notice, All erroneous Persons are not given up to come this full Length; for which several Reasons may be given. Notice again, That the Apostle here speaks partly of the abominable Excess some were given up to this Way; partly what the native Tendency of such Errors is, and leads to, tho' at the first they come not the full Length of others, to commit these Immoralities. Notice again, That, as there are different Degrees of the Grossness of Errors, so accordingly Men are less or more given up to commit Lasciviousness; but, as lesser Errors pave the Way to grosser, so lesser Degrees of this Lascivi-

iviousness dispose to greater, till Men be swallowed up in the Gulf of Lasciviousness.

The *fourth* Branch of the Description is, Their *Denying the only Lord God, and (or even) our Lord Jesus Christ*; as the Word, AND, in the Original signifies. See *Col. ii. 2.* where it must be so understood. Ye read there of the *Acknowledgment of the Mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ*; where the Word, AND *the Father,* must necessarily be understood **EVEN the Father.** Upon this notice,

1. That our Lord Christ is the **ONLY LORD GOD**, even the *same God* with the Father, every Way equal to him, *Phil. ii. 6.* For we do not read of any of that Age, or after, that ever denied the Father to be the only Lord God; whereas the fundamental Error of denying Christ's Supreme Deity entered the Church very early.

2. Consequently, That to deny the Son to be the absolutely Supreme God, is to deny the only Lord God: For, *John v. 23. He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father that hath sent him.* And, *1 John ii. 23. He that denieth the Son, hath not the Father.*

3. Notice, That this was the Effect of their turning the Grace of God into Wantonness; *viz. their Denying the only Lord God, and (or even) Jesus Christ,* was both their hainous Sin, and a dreadful Judgment to which they were justly given up.

4. Here is pointed out what our Zeal should be against such Errors and Persons, considering what they abuse, even the sweetest Thing in the Gospel, *viz. the rich Grace of the only Lord God*; considering also whose Grace it is they abuse,

buse, even the Grace of the only Lord God ; as also the Affront they do to the Redeemer in robbing him of his greatest Glory, even of being *the only Lord God*, and likewise our Interest in, and Obligation to, him as our only Lord God and Saviour ; all which should inflame our Zeal against such Persons and Errors.

IV. The *fourth* general Head is, To instance in some of these Errors that tend to turn the Grace of God into Lasciviousness ; as,

1st, When Men give or take an Allowance to sin, because rich Grace abounds in a free Pardoning of Sin. This was an Error creeping in in *Paul's* Time, which he abhors and refutes, *Rom. vi. 1. Shall we continue in Sin, &c.* this is to make pardoning Grace a Bolster on which to sleep in Sin.

2^{dly}, When some say, Believers are not under the Law as a Rule of Life ; and that Believers do not commit Sin, and so need not repent. This Error is so gross, we need not insist on it.

3^{dly}, Men turn the Grace of God into Lasciviousness, while they assert, That People have a free Will, and a Power to do spiritually good Things, and to repent of themselves ; for this leads to Lasciviousness, as well as the former : For, considering Man's corrupt Nature, and Love to, and Unwillingness to part with Sin, if once they believe that 'tis in their Power to repent and do Good when they will, this cannot but tempt them to take their Fill of Sin.

4^{thly}, When Men teach, That we are justified and acquitted at God's Bar by our own good Works. For, 1. Hereby Men are taken off the only Foundation of their Justification before God,
even

against their Corruptions and Lusts, and so must needs be left under their Power and Slavery.

7thly, When Men deny and ridicule the Spirit's internal and sanctifying Influences and Operations upon the Soul, in and by the Word, as many in our Day do, no Wonder that such hate internal Holiness of the Heart; and then no Wonder they be given up to Lasciviousness, since they banish the Spirit away. And what must the fatal Consequence of this be, but the Devil's entering and taking Possession with his Legion of corrupt Lusts? and then they are hurried on in a Course of Sin, as the Swine were by the Devils, till they tumble into the Lake of Fire and Brimstone.

Lastly, While some deny the Morality of the Sabbath. There is no Error been broached that has had more Influence to corrupt the Morals of Christians than denying the Morality of the Sabbath; 'tis observed, that such who make no Conscience of observing a Sabbath, are not Proof against any Temptation that comes in their Way. In a Word, we may judge of a Christian, whether he be tender or not, by the Regard he pays to a Sabbath.

V. The *5th* Head, Whence is it that Errors thus break into the Church? We answer shortly, *1st*, God suffers this in his holy and wise Providence, for these Ends; as,

1. 'Tis a just and tremendous Judgment sent upon Men for not *receiving the Truth in the Love of it*.

2. It is to discover the Rottenness and Unsound-

oundness of such who have an empty Profession, and no more.

3. This is to discover the Soundness of others that are really built upon the Rock Christ, as the House built upon the Rock, when the Floods came. 1 Cor. ii. 19. *Paul* tells us, *There must be Heresies, that they that are approved may be made manifest.*

4. 'Tis to clear up and make the Truth shine forth more brightly. Tho' by Errors in the mean Time Truth be much darkned, even as the Sun is darkned by a thick Cloud, yet, by its Rays cattering the Cloud, it shines more brightly.

2dly, *Satan*, the Father of Lies, hath no small Hand in the inbreaking and spreading of such Errors; as we read, *Mat. xiii. 25.* that, *while Men slept, the Enemy (i. e. Satan) did sow Tares.* Error is a Lie; and our Lord tells us, *Satan is the Father of Lies,* John viii. 44.

3dly, The Spreading of Errors flows from Mens selves, as it discovers their Ignorance of the Scripture; Thus Christ tells the *Pharisees*, that they erred, *not knowing the Scriptures:* Partly from some unmortified Lusts within, as Pride, and a high Opinion of themselves; in others from Ambition, and a Desire to head a Party. *Paul* tells, *Acts xx. 30.* That *some will arise, and teach Things they ought not, to draw Disciples after them.* Partly from Covetousness, and Love of the World; this *Peter* tells us, speaking of these Men, *2 Pet. ii. 2.* *With Covetousness shall they make Merchandice of you.* Partly from a strange Itch in others after Singularity. But we design not to insist further on this Head.

VI. The 6th Head is, To point at the Connexion betwixt such Errors and loose Practices; How the former leads to, and influences the latter: As,

1st, Men are given up to such loose Practices, as a just Judgment inflicted for their Errors. Thus we read, *Rom. i.* that, for their Idolatry, *God gave them up to a reprobate Mind, to do Things that were not convenient; and that thereby they received the Recompence of their Errors, as was meet.*

2dly, Such Errors naturally root out the Fear of God: And then no Wonder they fall into such Practices, when the Fence against such Practices is broken down; for, *by the Fear of the Lord, Men depart from Evil.*

3dly, Such Errors naturally darken the Understanding, as well as they flow from Darkness; and then no Wonder they fall into the dead Sea of loose Practices, even as Night-fires lead Travellers into Marishes and Bogues, *Rom. i. 22. Professing themselves to be wise, they became Fools.*

4thly, Such Errors naturally destroy the Relish and Taste of sound Truths, as corrupt Humours in the Palate destroy the natural Taste of sound Meats. *2 Tim. iv. 3. 'tis said, The Time will come when they cannot endure sound Doctrine; but, having itching Ears, will heap up Teachers to themselves after their own Lusts.* Thus, *Titus i. 16.* there it is said, That Men will profess to know God, yet that *in Works they deny him, because they are abominable, and as to every good Work reprobate; that is, without a Spiritual Taste of what is right.*

5thly, Er-

5thly, Errors open a wide Door to *Satan* to enter into such, whereby he gets a strong Possession of them; hence he easily leads them captive wherever he will. *2 Tim. ii. 26.* They are said to be *led captive by him at his Will.* Hence he leads them in the Way of immoral Practices, as the Devil drove the Swine into the Lake. Besides, such loose Practices strengthen *Satan's* Possession of them.

6thly, Errors sometimes furnish some specious Pretences (such as they are) to defend the Practices of such Immoralities, and so skreen them from, or blunt the Edge of, such Challenges, as otherwise would much sowre and mar the Pleasure of such Practices; as we see in the denying the Morality of the Sabbath, this skreens Men from Challenges for many Things they take Liberty to do on a Sabbath-day.

VII. The 7th Head is the *Application*; and,
I. By Way of Inference.

Inference 1st. If it be so, &c. Then we see the Danger of Error; it naturally leads to La-sciviousness. Error leads out of the right Way, Error destroys both Faith and Holiness; and, as *Peter* tells us, *2 Pet. iii. 17.* being *led away with the Error of the Wicked,* makes Men *fall from their Stedfastness.* Error is a Lie, and to follow the Way of Lies must be very dangerous; as *Solomon* says, *it causes to err from the Words of Knowledge,* *Prov. xix. 27:*

Inference 2d. We see the Danger many Professors are in of being carried away with Errors: For, how ignorant are many? They are
light,

light, and having itching Ears after Novelties, and having no experimental Taste of Religion to ballast them, how open do they ly to be carried away with such Winds of Errors? *Eph. iv. 14. That we be no more Children tossed to and fro with every Wind of Doctrine, &c.*

Inference 3d. We see also the Necessity of these following Things; as,

1st, A watching and praying, and being on our Guard, *2 Pet. iii. 17. Ye therefore, Beloved, seeing ye know these Things, beware lest ye also be led away with the Error of the Wicked.* Errors enter with sly Pretences, and oft are not observed at first. Christ tells us, Such Teachers come in Sheep's Clothing; Christ bids us *watch and pray, Mat. xxvi. 41. that we enter not into Temptation.*

2dly, We see the Necessity of being well acquainted with the Holy Scriptures: Many cannot distinguish betwixt Truth and Error, for Want of Acquaintance with their Bible. *David* tells us, *It was by God's Word he kept himself from the Paths of the Destroyer, Psal. xvii. 4. Thy Word is a Lamp unto my Feet, and a Light unto my Path, Psal. cxix. 105.* Ye should make the Word familiar to you.

3dly, We may see the Necessity of a sound and well-inform'd Judgment, to antidote us against such Errors. How defective are many Professors this Way, wanting Solidity of Judgment, and are so easily carried away, like Children, *with every Wind of Doctrine, Eph. iv. 14. Paul would have us to be in Understanding, not Children, but Men, 1 Cor. xiv. 20.*

4thly,

4thly, We may see the Necessity of being built by Faith upon Christ Jesus, the only Rock, against which the Gates of Hell cannot prevail. Till Men be built upon this Rock, they've no Security against Apostasy either into Error or Immoralities, but, in a Day of Temptation, will be like the House built upon the Sand, I *John* ii. 19. *They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us.*

5thly, We see the Necessity of some experimental Taste of the Power and Sweetness of Religion upon the Heart, to antidote us against Errors, *John* 7. 17. *If any Man will do my Will, he shall know my Doctrine, whether it be of God, or not.* Experience this Way is a strong Antidote against all fallacious Reasonings that tend to seduce from the Truth: Men will be easily drawn to part with Truths, of which they never have tasted the Sweetness.

6thly, We see the Necessity of keeping at a Distance from dangerous Company; such Company is infectious, like a Company infected with a Plague: Bad Company is *Satan's* Net, whereby he catches many simple Souls. *Solomon* cautions us, *Prov.* i. 10. *My Son, if Sinners entice thee, consent thou not.* Unsound or profane Company are *Satan's* Agents for Hell. *John* cautions against familiar Converse with such, *Epistle*, v. 10. *If any Man bring not this Doctrine, receive him not into your House.* So does *Paul*, I *Cor.* v. 11. *If any Man that is called a Brother be a Fornicator, &c. not to eat with such.*

7thly,

7thly, We may see the Necessity of putting the Keeping of our Souls into Christ's Hand. Times of Danger call us to put the Keeping of our Souls into his Hand; for Times of abounding Errors are dangerous Times, as *Paul* tells, *1 Tim.* iv. 1, 2. *Paul* did so, *2 Tim.* i. 12. *I know whom I have believed, &c.*

8thly, We see the Necessity of contending for the Faith. This is the Design of this Epistle; for that End does the Apostle acquaint them with the dangerous Errors and Immoralities that were then breaking in. If ever we be called to contend for the Faith, it is when 'tis in Danger; and sure 'tis never more in Danger than when the old Serpent is spewing out a Flood of Errors. This is the Testimony of Jesus we are to contend for; and *Paul*, *1 Cor.* xvi. 13. exhorts us to *stand fast in the Faith.*

A second Use may be of *Reproof*, 1st, To erroneous Persons, whether Teachers or Professors, *Paul* bids *reprove them sharply, that they may be sound in the Faith*, *Titus* i. 13. We see our Lord sent a *Reproof* to these Churches that were infected with the Errors of the *Nicolaitans*, and of the false Prophetess *Jezebel*, *Rev.* ii. and iii. Chapters; and we see our Lord reproveth the *Sadducees* for denying the Resurrection. Such not only injure the Truth, endanger their own Souls, but mislead others, and so draw the Guilt of their Blood upon their own Heads.

2dly, It reproveth them who deny Errors to be Sins, as some *Arminians* do, because, say they, Error lies in the Judgment, and Men cannot act otherwise than they judge. But this is
loose

ose Doctrine ; for, are not *Heresies* among the
fruits of the Flesh ? Gal. v. Do we not read,
Peter ii. 1. of damnable Heresies they were to
bring in ? and does not Christ reprove the *Pha-*
risees for their Error in denying the Resurrecti-
 on ? Is not the Understanding and Judgment
 subject to the Law ? and consequently Darkness
 of the Mind, and Errors of the Judgment, are
 contrary to the Law, and so great Sins. Are we
 not called to be sound in the Faith ? If that be a
 Duty, certainly Unsoundness in the Faith must
 be a Sin. Are not Errors, Lies ? They are cal-
 led the Doctrine of Lies in Scripture, and conse-
 quently must be very sinful, as coming from the
 Father of Lies. And do not Errors open a Door
 to Immoralities, and therefore must be Sins ? If
 Errors be not Sins, then they are not to be cen-
 sured, but tolerated ; but, does not our Lord re-
 prove them who suffered *Jezebel* to teach and
 to seduce Christ's Disciples ? Further, denying
 of Magistracy, and asserting the Community of
 Wives, are dangerous Errors ; but, will any say
 these Errors are to be tolerate ? Sure, if the right
 Knowledge of God be a Duty, then Errors, that
 flow from Ignorance of God, must be great Sins.

3dly, It reproves them who are for Liberty
 of Conscience, and for a Toleration to every one
 to preach what Doctrine they think fit : For here
 the Apostle warns them of such Errors, exhorts
 them to *contend for the Faith*. If a Toleration
 of all Errors is to be allowed, there would be no
 great Need of contending for the Faith. Does
 not *Paul* reprove the *Corinthians* for the Errors
 breaking in among them, and the *Galatians* for
 the Error of Justification by Works ? And does

not our Lord reprove some of the Churches of *Asia* for suffering the Doctrine of the *Nicolaitans* to break in among them? If all Errors are to be tolerate, there's no Ground for such a Re-proof. Does not *Paul* exhort *Timothy* to reject him that is an Heretick after the first and second Admonition? But readily none are for such a Toleration, but who are unsound in the Faith; like Malefactors, that could be content there were no Laws to punish Crimes. Such a Toleration is a wide opening of a Door to poison and ruine immortal Souls; but, if a Common-wealth could not suffer a Plague to come in, much more should a Church not suffer dangerous Errors, which are as pernicious to Souls as the Plague is to the Body.

4thly, It reproves them who are indifferent about the spreading of Errors and Immoralities, and not zealous for the Truths of the Gospel. For this, ye see, the Lord reproves *Ephesus*, that she had fallen from her first Love or Zeal. While she is commended for her former Zeal, 'tis said, she could not suffer them that were evil. Such discover but little Love to the precious Truths of the Gospel, little Concern for the Interests of the Mediator's Kingdom, and for the Salvation of immortal Souls, of which Errors are plainly destructive. Certainly, where Love to Truth is, there will be Zeal, and that proportionally to the Measure of Love; for, what is Zeal, but the Flame of Love? How many in our Day are justly reprovably here, who sometime ago discovered Love to and Zeal for the Truths of the Gospel, who now are become very cool and moderate that Way, yea, labour to extenu-

enuate gross Errors, and run down Zeal for Truth as a Wild-fire, and contrary to Peace? So that Zeal for good old Truth is become like an Almanack out of Date, and Folk zealous for Truth nicknamed *fiery unpeaceable Men*: But, if our Forefathers had contended with no more Zeal for the Truth than we do in our Day, we should never have had the Truth handed down to us in the Purity in which we now enjoy it; but are not like to enjoy it long, if this Want of Zeal for the Truths of Christ continue.

5thly, It reproves them who are for, and preach up universal Charity to all Men, which is a common Theme severals insist upon in our Day. Certainly Charity or Love to Men is a noble Grace, and the Sum of the second Table, *Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thyself*. Paul tells us, 1 Cor. xiii. Charity will continue in Heaven, when Faith will end in vision, and Hope in Fruition: But, as they say, *Dolus latet in generalibus*, Deceit lurks in Generals; we would fain know what such mean by Charity, which they so much commend, and set off by rhetorical Flourishes: For, if by Charity they mean a general Love to all Mankind, or a Love to our Enemies, and requiting ill Offices with good Offices, or a bearing with the Infirmities of others, or a charitable Construction of their Actions so far as they will bear it, or even a bearing with them in Errors of lesser Moment, or a doing them all the good Offices we can, or that special Love that God's People owe one to another, these are certainly great and uncontroverted Duties; But, if by this universal Charity they mean a bearing with others, and not

censuring them for gross Errors, not being zealous against them, but put some favourable Constructions upon them, admitting them into our familiar Company, such a Charity is so wide as seems not to be the Scripture's Charity, but opens a Door to the Toleration of all Errors. 'Tis observed by many, that, while such Men are for such universal Charity, they show but little Charity for a certain Sort of People that are now named the *Strict Folk*; yea, that they cannot conclude their Harrangues for Charity, without some bitter Invective against that Sort of People, whose Zeal appears in standing up for our good old Doctrine and Principles.

A third Use may be of *Exhortation*. And, if it be so, &c. This Doctrine calls, *1st*, For Prayer, that the Lord may graciously be pleased to prevent and put a Stop to the breaking in of dangerous Errors, and of Profanity which follows Errors as a dark Shadow, which, like a great Sea, threatens to break in upon us. This is no other than what *Paul* forewarns would be in the last Times, *1 Tim. iv.* at the Beginning, and is the native Consequent of long Peace in the Church, which we of this Church have enjoyed, but not improv'd. We do not incline to insist on the particular Grounds of Fear, but it is too evident to any who observe our present Posture and Situation. We have seen one Professor of Divinity in several Assemblies supported by many Advocates, if not defending, yet extenuating his Errors; we have seen also a dangerous Pamphlet published by another Professor, and yet

yet no Notice taken of it. 'Tis plain that dangerous Books from *England* are valued and bought up, while sound systematick Divinity is neglected and condemned. In short, our new Way of Preaching, wherein the Substantials of the Gospel are much neglected, gives too great Ground for these Fears. We should pray for the stopping of such Errors, if we have any Love to immortal Souls, any Concern for the Interest of the Mediator's Kingdom, and the Continuance of Truth to Afer-Posterity. It were good there were a Remnant mourning for these, like them who were weeping at the Door of the Tabernacle for the Sins of them that were joined to *Baal-peor*, *Numb. xxv.*

2dly, It calls for Prayer for the Continuance of a sound Gospel-Ministry in this Church, and that a corrupt Ministry may never be the Plague thereof, which, if it break in, will be the certain Ruin of this Church. We should plead the Promise, that *he would give Pastors according to his own Heart, that would feed his People with Knowledge and Understanding.*

3dly, It calls upon us to pray for a Day of Power to back and enliven Word and Ordinances, to make them effectual for the Conversion and building up of Souls, *Psal. lxxxv. Wilt thou not revive us? &c.* Of which there seems to be a great Suspending in our Day: And this we should do, because otherwise Ordinances not only do not Good to Souls, but harden them; because, if God leave his Sanctuary, it gives Ground to fear he'll remove it; and when the Power of Religion is gone, the very Profession of it will be a Burden, and soon cast off.

4thly,

4thly, It calls upon us to be deeply humbled for these Errors and Immoralities that, like a Spring-tide, are ready to break in upon us. Sure, if any Thing be a just Ground of Humiliation, this is: For,

1. This is a dreadful Judgment, because spiritual Judgments are the worst of all Judgments, as affecting the Soul; like Diseases affecting the Vitals, which are more dangerous than Diseases affecting the Extremities of the Body. 'Tis a black Token of God's Wrath, *2 Theff. ii. 11, 12.* For this Cause God shall send them strong Delusions, &c.

2. Thereby the Waters of the Sanctuary, *i. e.* Gospel-Doctrines, are corrupted, and turned to Wormwood, whereby many Souls are poisoned and ruined. Persecutions destroy the Body, but Errors destroy the Soul.

3. Errors breaking in, provoke God to withdraw his Presence from the Ordinances; and then, what Good can they do either to Conversion or Edification? then are poor Souls starved; and, is not this Matter of Humiliation?

4. Abounding Errors and Immoralities will at length bring on National Judgments and Calamities, as ye see what the Idolatry of the Ten Tribes, and then of the Two, brought on them; and so the gross Errors of the Churches of *Asia*, brought the *Turks* on them, and to this Day they groan under a heavy Thralldom. We see the Judgments on *Shiloh* are made Use of as a Warning to the *Jews*; Go to my House which was at Shiloh, *Jer. vii. 12.*

5. Errors breaking in, may provoke God to unchurch us, and to remove his Candlestick from

from us, and make us *Loammi*, as he threatens the Ten Tribes, *Hof. ii.* Thus he threatned *Ephesus* with the removing of her Candlestick; and, *Mat. xxi. 43.* he tells them, *The Kingdom of God should be taken from them; and then, Wo unto us when he leaves us, Hol. ix. 12.*

6. If we be not rightly humbled for these Errors and Immoralities that are like to break in among us, it may provoke the Lord to withdraw his Presence from this publick solemn Occasion, and that both from Ministers and People. These Sins, unmourned for, will be a thick Cloud to separate between God and us; and then this will be but a dead, dry, and lifeless Communion; and, instead of getting Good, we'll get Harm; instead of honouring, we'll but dishonour God. In a Word, 'tis the Work of a Fast-day to be humbled for these Evils.

7. If ye be thus exercised, (1.) It will evince your Love to the Redeemer, and your Zeal to his precious Interests; and to such there is a Promise, *John xiv. 23. If any Man love me, &c. Zeph. iii. I'll comfort them that are sorrowful for the solemn Assembly, to whom the Reproach of it is a Burden.*

(2.) If Judgments come, ye may expect (if any may) to be marked and hid in that Day. *Ezek. ix. there's a Mark set on the Foreheads of them that cry for the Abominations done in the City. Zeph. ii. Seek the Lord, ye Meek of the Earth; it may be ye shall be hid in the Day of the Lord's Wrath.*

(3.) There's a Promise of a sweet Visit and Reviving to such. May be, when others are past by, they may get a Meal, *Isa. lvii. 15. He dwells*

*dwells with them that are of a humble Spirit,
to revive the Spirit of the contrite Ones.*

In a Word, If ye be kindly humbled and exercised for these Things, a Sacrament will be a Seal, securing your Perseverance and Preservation in your Pilgrimage-Journey against the infectious-Airs of Errors; ye may get such a Taste and Experience of the Sweetness and Power of Gospel-Truths, as, like a strong Cordial, will fortify your Hearts against the Tentations of the Day, whether to the right or left Hand, enabling you with *Paul* to say, that he'll preserve you from every Evil to his heavenly Kingdom.

F I N I S



