









Sheldon Mayor.

Curia specialis tent' die Lunæ, 31 die
Januarii, 1675. Annoq; Regni
Regis CAROLI Secundi, *Angliæ*,
&c. xxviii.

THis COURT doth desire Mr. Sharpe to
Print his Sermon Preached yesterday morning
before the Lord Mayor and Aldermen at Bow-
Church, with what he had further prepared to deli-
ver at that time.

Wagstaffe.

Imprimatur,

Feb. 7. 1676.

Geo. Hooper, Rev.
D^o. Archiep. Cant.
à Sac. Domest.

A
S E R M O N

Preached before the
RIGHT HONOURABLE
THE
Lord Mayor,
AND
ALDERMEN of LONDON,
AT
BOW-CHURCH.

By JOHN SHARPE, Chaplain to the
Right Honourable *Heneage* Lord Finch, Lord
High Chancellor of ENGLAND.

L O N D O N:
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I T I M. iv. 8.

Godliness is profitable unto all things, having a promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.



These words are the enforcement of an exhortation which St. Paul had made to Timothy in the Verse before going, which was that he should *Avoid prophane and Old-wives Fables*; meaning those Impious and superstitious *Doctrines*, and the carnal and unchristian *Observances* that were grounded upon them (some of which he had mentioned in the beginning of this Chapter) which some at that time did endeavour to introduce into *Christianity*: and instead of applying his mind to these, that he should rather *Exercise himself unto true Godliness*.

This was the Exhortation. The Arguments wherewith he enforceth it are Two: First, The Unprofitableness of these Carnal and Supersti-

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rious Doctrines and Practices. Bodily exercise (saith he) profiteth little. Secondly, The real usefulness of solid Vertue and Godliness to all the Purposes of life. Godliness is profitable to all things, having a promise of this Life as well as of that which is to come.

I shall not here meddle at all with the former part of the Apostles *Exhortation* or the *Argument* that hath relation to it ; but shall apply my self wholly to the latter, craving leave most plainly and affectionately to press upon you the *Exercise of Godliness* upon those Grounds and Considerations on which the Apostle here recommendeth it.

Indeed to a man that considers well, it will appear the most unaccountable thing in the world, that among all those several *Exercises* that Mankind busie themselves about, this of *Godliness* should be in so great a measure neglected, that men should be so diligent, so industrious, so unwearied, some in getting *Estates*, others in Purveying for *Pleasures*, others in learning *Arts and Trades* ; All in some thing or other relating to this *sensible* World ; and so few should study to acquaint themselves with *God*, and the Concernments of their souls, to learn the *Arts of Virtue and Religious Conversation.*

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Certain it is, this *Piece of Skill* is not more above our reach than many of those other things we so industriously pursue; nay, I am apt to think it is more within our power than most of them. For in our other Labours we cannot always promise to our selves certain success. A thousand things may intervene which we know not of, that may defeat all our plots and designs though never so carefully laid; but no man ever seriously undertook the Business of Religion but he accomplished it.

Nay further, As we can with greater certainty, so can we with less pains and difficulty promise to our selves success in this affair, than we can hope to compass most of our worldly designs which so much take up our thoughts. I doubt not in the least but that less labour, less trouble, less solicitude will serve to make a man a good *Christian*, than to get an *Estate*, or to attain a competent skill in Humane Arts and Sciences.

And then for other Motives to oblige us to the study of *Religion*, we have incomparably more and greater than we can have for the pursuit of any other thing. It is certainly the greatest Concernment we have in the world. It is the very thing God sent us into the world about. It is the very thing that his Son came down

from Heaven to instruct us, in. It is the very thing by which we shall be concluded everlastingly happy, or everlastingly miserable after this life is ended.

These things well considered, we may justly (I say) stand amazed, that men should be so prodigiously supine and negligent in an Affair of this nature and importance, as we see they generally are.

If there can any account be given of this matter, I suppose it must be some such as this, That the *things* of this *World*, upon which we bestow our Care, our Time, our Courtship, are present to us. We see them every day before our eyes; we taste, we feel the sweetness of them; we are sensible that their enjoyment is absolutely necessary to our present well-being: But as for spiritual matters they lie under a great disadvantage. They appear to us as at a great distance. We do not apprehend any present need we have of them: Nor do we fancy any sweetness or relish in them. Nay, on the contrary, we form the most frightful and dismal *Images* of them that can be. We look upon them not only as *flat*, and *unsavoury*; but as things which if we trouble our heads too much about will certainly ruine all our designs in this
World.

World. We think *Religion* good for nothing but to spoil good Company; to make us melancholy and mopish; to distract us in our Business and Employments; and to put so many Restraints upon us that we can neither with that freedom nor success pursue our Temporal Concernments, which we think necessary to our happiness in this World.

But let us suppose things to be thus with Religion as we have fancied, yet cannot this be any reasonable Excuse for our carelessness about it. What though there were no visible Benefit by a religious life in this world? What though the rewards of our pains about it were only in reversion? Yet since a time will come when it will be our greatest Interest to have been heartily Religious, is it not a madness now to neglect it? What though *Religion* be a course of life difficult and unpleasant; a way strewd with Briers and Thorns; a way which if we follow, we are certainly lost, as to our hopes of any thing here? Yet since a Time will certainly come when we shall wish, that we had been *good Christians*, though we had lost our *right eyes* and our *right hands* upon the condition; when we shall wish that we had purchased Virtue though at the rate of the lots of the whole

World : For Gods sake why should we not be of the same mind now ? Who but Fools and Children but will look upon that which shall certainly and unavoidably be, with the same regard as if it was now present ?

But indeed, this is not the Case of Religion ; This Business of Piety is not so formidable as we often represent it. It is no such Enemy to our Temporal designs. It is a very innocent thing, and will do us no harm ; though we look no further than this present World. It will hinder none of our delights or pleasures, but will allow us to gratifie every *Appetite* that God and Nature hath put into us. And if any man doubt this, let him name that Natural desire, which the Christian Religion doth forbid or any way hinder the innocent satisfaction of : I am confident he shall be able to name none. Since this is the Case then, how much more *Childish* than *Children* shall we appear if we make so little reckoning of it ? How inexcusably Foolish shall we be, if we will not be at some pains to possess our selves of that which will be no manner of Hinderance to us in our affairs in this World, and will infallibly make us everlastingly happy in that which is to come ?

But

But further; What if it be certain, that a Life of strict virtue is not only no Hinderance to our Temporal designs, but a great furtherance of them? What if it can be Proved, that besides the influence it has on our Happiness in the next Life, it is also the best thing in the World to serve our turns in this? And that nothing can so much contribute to the bringing about our *Worldly Aims*; no such ready way to attain to what our very *Flesh* and *Bloud* most desires, most delights in, as to be sincerely *Pious*. What imaginable pretence can we then have for our contempt of *God* and *Virtue*? If this can be made to appear, sure all our Objections will be fully answered; all our scruples satisfied; all our prejudices against *Religion* wholly removed; and every one that is not abandoned of his *Fortune* and his *Senses*, as well as his *Reason*, must think himself concerned to become a *Voluntary* to it; since he can have no *Temptation* or *Motive* to *Vice* which will not more powerfully draw him to *Virtue*; and all the *ends* that the *one* can pretend to *serve*, will much more effectually be *served* by the *other*; and he escapes an *Eternity* of *Misery*, and gets everlasting *Life* into the *Bargain*.

I think

I think it therefore worth the while to spend the time now allotted me in making good this Point, and discovering something at least of that universal *Profitableness of Godliness* to the purposes of *Human Life*, that St. Paul in my Text assures us of.

But because the *Studies* of men are so infinitely various, and the *Ends of Life* to be served so many, that it will be impossible to speak particularly of them; it will be needful to pitch upon some *general Heads*, such as, if they do not comprehend *all*, may yet take in *most* of those things, to which the Labours and Endeavours of men are directed, and in the acquisition of which they have compassed their Designs; and to shew the *serviceableness* of Religion above all other means for the attaining of them. And I think, I cannot pitch better than upon those three noted *Idols* of the World, *Wealth* and *Honour* and *Pleasure*; these being the *Goods* which have always been accounted to divide Mankind among them; and into the service of some one or *all* of which All that set up for a happy life in this world do lift themselves, how different and disagreeing soever they be from one another as to their particular Employments and ways of Living. I shall therefore make it
appear,

appear, that *Godliness* and *Religion* is a very great furtherance to the acquisition of all these; and that no man can take a more ready way either to improve his *Fortune*, or to purchase a *Name and Reputation* among men, or to live comfortably and pleasantly in this world, than heartily to serve *God*, and to live in the practice of every *Virtue*.

And in the *First* place, I begin with the *Conduciveness of Religion and Godliness* to improve our outward *Fortunes*; the Advantages of it for the getting or encreasing an *Estate*: For this is the thing to which our *Thoughts* are commonly first directed, as looking upon it as the *Foundation* of a happy *Life* in this world.

But here I desire not to be mistaken: I would not be thought to deal with you as one of our ordinary *Empiricks*, that promises many brave feats in his *Bill*, which are indeed beyond the power of his *Art*: I do not pretend that *Wealth* and *Opulency* is necessarily entailed upon *Religion*; so that whoever is good shall presently be enabled to make *Purchases*, and to leave *Lands* and *Livings* to his *Children*. *Riches* are one of those things that are not so perfectly in our power, that all men may hope for an equal share

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of them. The having more or less depends oftentimes not so much upon our selves, as upon that condition and quality in which we were born, the way and course of Life into which our Friends put us; and a hundred accidental circumstances to which we our selves contribute nothing. But this I say; supposing the virtuous man in equal circumstances with others; supposing him to stand upon the same level, and to enjoy the same fortuitous hits and external concurrences that they do, and he shall by many odds have the advantage of them for thriving and improving in the world in any condition of life whatsoever.

So that, so far as the getting of Riches depends upon Humane endeavours; so far as it is an *Art*, and falls under *Precepts* and *Directions*: no man alive can propose a better expedient in order thereto than a serious practise of Religion.

To make this good, let it be considered, that as to the *means* that do in a more direct and immediate manner influence upon the getting or improving an Estate (I speak of *General means*, such as are of use in all conditions of life; for to meddle with the Mysteries of any Particular Art or Trade, is not my purpose, as indeed it is beyond my skill :) as to such means as these, I say

I say, none can prescribe more effectual than these four.

1. *Prudence*, in administering our Affairs.
2. *Diligence*, in that Vocation wherein God hath placed us.
3. *Thrift* and good *Husbandry*.
4. Keeping a good Correspondence with those in whose power it is to hinder or promote our Affairs.

If now it do appear that *Godliness* doth highly improve a man in all these four respects; if it can be shewed that all these *Fruits* naturally grow and thrive better in a *Religious* Soil than any other, it will evidently follow; that supposing these above-named means do indeed contribute to the making of a Fortune, (and if they do not, no man knows what doth; and we strangely abuse our Friends and our Children, when upon that account we recommend them to them) it follows, I say, that a life of *Godliness* is a mighty advantage to a man for the purposes I am speaking of.

And first of all, it will be easie to shew that *Godliness* doth above all things tend to make a man wise and prudent, skilful and dexterous in the management of his Affairs of what nature soever:

for it doth very much clear and improve a mans understanding, not only by a certain natural efficacy it hath (as I shall shew hereafter) to purifie the *Blood* and *Spirits*, upon which the perfection of our Intellectual Operations doth exceedingly much depend; but also by dispelling those *adventitious clouds* that arise in the discerning faculty from the noisome *Fumes* of Lust and Passion.

All Vice in the very nature of it, depraves and distorts a mans judgment, fills our minds with prejudices, and false Apprehensions of things; and, no man that is under the dominion of it, can possibly have such a free use of his Reason as otherwise he might; for he will commonly see things, not as they are in themselves, but in those disguises and false colours which his Passion puts upon them: Upon which account he cannot avoid but he will be often imposed upon, and commit a thousand errors in the management of his Affairs, which the vertuous man, whose Reason is pure and uninctur'd, is secured from. It cannot be imagined that either he should foresee events so clearly, or spy opportunities so sagaciously, or weigh things so impartially, or deliberate so calmly, or transact so cautiously, as the man that is free from those

those manifold prepossessions which his mind is fraught with.

We see this every day verified in men of all Ranks and Conditions, of all Callings and Employments. What a multitude of inconveniences, as to matter of dealing between man and man, doth an intemperate Appetite betray men to? How silly and foolish is the most shrewd man, when Wine hath gotten into his head? There is none so simple in his company, but supposing him to be sober, and to have designs upon him, he shall be able to over-reach him. What a world of Advantages doth the Angry man give to him he deals with, by the hastiness and impatience of his spirit? How often doth a man do that in the fury and expectancies of a Lust, for which when his Ardors are over, he is ready to bite his nails for very vexation?

It is thus more or less with all kind of Vices, they craze a mans head, and cast a mist before his eyes, and make him often lose himself in those very ways wherein he pretends to be most skilful: So that it cannot be denied, that vertue is of a singular use in all matters wherein we have occasion to make use of our Reason, and doth secure us from a multitude of indiscretions, which without it we should unavoidably commit.

But secondly, *Godliness* is also an excellent means to secure a mans diligence in the discharge of his *Calling* and *Employment*, which is also a matter of very great consequence in order to our thriving in the world: for it is the *diligent hand* that maketh rich, and the *man* that is diligent in his *business*, that shall stand before *Kings*; as *Solomon* tells us.

Now the *Obligations* that *Religion* layeth upon us to be careful in this point, are far stronger than what can arise from any other respect or consideration soever; for it obligeth us to mind our *Business*; not only for our *own* but for *Gods* sake: it chargeth the matter upon our *Consciences*, and represents it to us as a part of that service we owe to our *Creator*; and upon the due performance of which, no less then the everlasting welfare of our souls doth depend: for it assures us, that he that will call us to account for every *idle Word*, will much more do so for the *idle* expence of our *Time*, and the abuse or not improvement of those *Talents* that he hath entrusted us with. So that though we had no worldly inducement to make us diligent in our *Callings*, though we were sure we should suffer no prejudice in our *Temporal Affairs* by *Idleness*, and the neglect of our *Business*, (the fear of which yet is the only principle that puts
world

worldly men upon action) nevertheless we were infinitely concerned not to be slack or negligent in this matter, in regard it is a point that will be so severely exacted of us in the other world.

I know but one Objection that can be made against this discourse, and it is this; that what engagements soever Religion lays upon us to the careful spending of our time, yet its own Exercises, Prayer and Reading, and Meditation, take up so great a portion of it, which might be spent in the works of our ordinary Employment, that in effect it rather hinders our attendance on our Business than promotes it. But to this it is easily answered, that there is no man so engaged in the world, but may if he please, make both his Business and his Devotions consist together without prejudicing of either.

They have very false Apprehensions of Religion, that think it obliges us to be always upon our knees, or always poring upon some good Book: no, we do as truly serve God, and perform acts of Religion, when we labour honestly in our Vocation, as when we go to Church, or say our Prayers.

It is true indeed, we ought to have our hearts in Heaven as much as is possible, and to that end

we ought to pray continually ; but what hinders but we may do this in the midst of our Business ? There is no employment doth so entirely engross a mans mind, but he may find leisure if he please, many times a day , to entertain good thoughts, to quicken and reinforce his purposes, to cast up a short Prayer or a wish to God Almighty. And this I dare say for your encouragement, that such a devout frame of heart , such frequent and sudden dartings of your souls to God, while you are at your Business, will be so far from hindering or distracting you in it, that they will make you go about it with much more vigour and alacrity.

But further, I would ask any man that makes the foresaid Objection , supposing *Religion* ten times more expensive of our time then really it is , yet whether *Vice* and *Sin* be not much more so, then it would be. What a multitude of idle avocations from, and interruptions in our Business doth that daily occasion unto men ? what a number of impertinent Discourses, unprofitable Visits, needless points of Gallantry , long diversions by Drink, and Play, and Company ; not to mention a great many other Debauches, doth it frequently engage men in ? and yet these we count no hinderances to our Business ; these

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we complain not of; but to spend a quarter of that time in some devout Exercise, this is intolerable, it waists too much of our time, our occasions will not permit it. Such partial and unjust estimators of things are we. But I proceed:

In the third place then, as for *Frugality* and *good Husbandry*, which is another necessary requisite for the getting of *Wealth*. *Religion* is unquestionably the best mistress of it in the world; for it retrencheth all the exorbitances and wantonnesses of our Desires, which are the things that pick the money out of our purses, and teacheth us to live after the measures of *Nature*, which every body knows are little, and cheap. It perfectly cuts off all those idle expences with which the Estates of other men stand almost continually charged. The *Modesty* of it cloaths us at a small rate; and its *Temperance* spreads for us, though a neat, yet a frugal Table. The attendance it requires on our Business will not allow us to embezel our money in Drinking or Gaming: nor will that *Purity* which is inseparable from it ever let us know what the vast and sinking expences of lewdness and uncleanness are. In a word, it is *Vice* only that is the chargeable thing; it is only *Shame* and *Repentance* that

men buy at such costly rates. Godliness is saving, and full of good Husbandry; nor has it any known or unknown ways of spending, except it be those of *Charity*, which indeed, in proper speaking, are not so much expence, as *Usury*; for money so laid out, doth always even in this life return to us with Advantage.

The fourth and last means I mentioned of *Thriving* in the world, was the *keeping a good Correspondence with all those in whose power it is to hinder or promote our Affairs*. This every body knows to be a prime point in *Policy*; and indeed it is of a large extent, and of continual use. No man can be supposed so independent on others, but that as he is some way beholden to them for all that he has, so he stands in need of their help and concurrence for all that he hopes for. Men do not make their fortunes of themselves, nor grow rich by having Treasures dropped in their Laps, but they do it by the benefit of Humane Society, by the mutual assistances and good offices that one man performs for another. So that whoever intends to thrive in the world, it above all things imports him so to carry himself towards all that he hath any commerce with, so far to secure their favour and good will
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that they may be obliged not to deny him any of those assistances, which the exigency of his Affairs calls for at their hands. But now how this should be done any otherwise than by being truly *Just* and *Honest*, by abstaining from *Violence* and *Injury*, by being *True* to our *Trusts*, and *Faithful* in performing our *Contracts*; and in a word, by doing all those good *Offices* to others which we expect they should do unto us, which as our Saviour tells us is the sum of *Religion*, is a very hard thing to conceive.

The usefulness or rather the necessity of such a Behaviour as this, in order to the gaining the good *Opinion* of others, and so serving our own ends by them, is so universally acknowledged, that even those that make no real Conscience of these things, are yet nevertheless in all their dealings forced to pretend to them. *Open* and *Bare-fac'd Knavery* rarely serves a mans turn in this world, but it is under the mask of *Virtue* and *Honesty* that it usually performs those Feats it doth; which is no less than a Demonstration of the conduciveness of those things to promote our Temporal Interests: for if the meer *Pretence* to them be a great advantage to us for this purpose, it cannot be imagined but that the *Reality* of them will be a greater. Certainly

the *Power* of *Godliness* will be able to do more than the *Form* alone, and that if it was upon no other account than this, that no man that is but a meer *Pretender to Honesty* can long hope to keep his credit among men. It is impossible to *act a Part* for any long time; let him carry it never so cunningly, his *Vizor* will some time or other be thrown off, and he will appear in his true colours; and to what a world of mischiefs and inconveniences he will then be exposed, every one that knows how hated, how detested, how abandon'd by every one, a *Knave* and a *Villain* is, may easily determine. I hope I need say no more to convince you that *Religion* is the best *Policy*, and that the more hearty and consciencious any man is in the practice of it, the more likely he is to *Thrive* and *Improve* in the world.

So that I may now proceed to the *second* general point to be spoken to, which is the *Profitableness of Religion for the attaining a good Name and Reputation*. How very much it conduceth to this purpose will appear from these two considerations.

First, it lays the *surest Grounds and Foundations* for a *good Name and Reputation*.

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Secondly, Men are generally so just to it, that it rarely misses of a good Name and Reputation. The first is an argument from *Reason*; the second from *Experience*.

First of all *Godliness* layeth the truest *Foundations* for a fair Reputation in the world. There are but two things that can give a man a title to the good *Opinion* and *Respects* of men; the inward *Worth* and *Dignity* of his *Person*, and his *Usefulness* and *Serviceableness* to others. The first of these challengeth mens *Esteem*, the other their *Love*. Now both these *Qualities* Religion and *Virtue* do eminently possess us of.

For first, the *Religious* man is certainly the most *Worthy* and *Excellent* Person; for he of all others lives most up to the great *End* for which he was designed, which is the natural measure of the *Goodness* and *Worth* of Things.

What ever external Advantages a man may have, yet if he be not endowed with virtuous *Qualities*, he is far from having any *True Worth* or *Excellence*, and consequently cannot be a fit object of our *Praise* and *Esteem*; because he wants that which should make him *Perfect* and *Good* in his *Kind*. For it is not a comely *Personage*, or a long *Race* of *Famous Ancestors*, or a large *Revenue*, or a multitude

of Servants, or many swelling Titles, or any other thing without a man that speaks him a *Compleat Man*, or makes him to *be* what he should be; but the right use of his Reason, the employing his Liberty and Choice to the best purposes, the Exercising his Powers and Faculties about the *fittest Objects*, and in the most *due measures*. These are the Things that make him *Excellent*. Now none can be said to do this but only he that is *Virtuous*.

Secondly, Religion also is that which makes a man most *Useful* and *Profitable* to others; for it effectually secures his performance of all those Duties whereby both the security and welfare of the *Publick*, and also the Good and Advantage of *particular Persons* is most attained.

It makes men Lovers of their Country, Loyal to their Prince, Obedient to Laws; it is the surest Bond and Preservative of Society in the world; it obliges us to live peaceably, and to submit our selves to our Rulers, not only for *wrath*, but also for *Conscience* sake: It renders us modest and governable in Prosperity, and resolute and couragious to suffer bravely in a good cause in the worst of times: It teacheth us to endeavour as much as in us lies to promote
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the good of every particular Member of the Community, to be inflexibly upright, to do hurt to none, but good offices to all, to be charitable to the Bodies and Souls of men, to do all manner of kindnesses that lie within our power: it takes off the sourness and moroseness of our Spirits, and makes us Affable and Courteous, Gentle and Obliging, and willing to embrace with open Arms and an hearty Love, all sorts and conditions of men.

In every Relation wherein we can stand to one another, it influenceth upon us in order to the making us more useful; it makes *Parents* kind, and Indulgent, and careful of the Education of their *Children*, and *Children* Loving and Obedient to their *Parents*: it makes *Servants* diligent to *please their Masters*, and to do their work in singleness of heart, not with eye-service as men-pleasers, but as unto God; and it makes *Masters* gentle and forbearing, and careful to make provision for their Family, as those that know they have a *Master in Heaven*, that is no respecter of persons. In a word, there is no condition or capacity, in which Religion will not be signally an instrument of making us more serviceable to others, and of doing more good in the world. And if such be the spirit and temper of it, how is it possible

possible but it must needs acquire a great deal of Respect and Love from all sorts of men? If Obligingness and doing good in ones Generation do not endear a man to those that know him, do not entitle him to their Love and Affections, what thing in the world is there that is likely to do it?

But secondly, *True and unaffected Goodness seldom misses of a good Reputation in the world.* How unjust to Virtue soever men are in other respects, yet in this they generally give it its due; where ever it appears it generally meets with Esteem and Approbation; nay it has the good word of many that otherwise are not over-fond of Religion. Though they have not the grace to be *Good* themselves, yet they rarely have the confidence not to commend *Goodness* in others.

Add to this, that no man ever raised to himself a *Good name* in the world, but it was upon the score of his *Virtues*, either *Real* or *Preended*. Vice hath sometimes got *Riches*, and advanced it self into *Preferments*, but it never was accounted *Honourable* in any Nation.

It must be acknowledged indeed that it may and doth sometimes happen, that *Vicious* men may be had in *Esteem*; but then it is to be considered,

sidered, that it is not for their *Vices* that they are esteemed, but for some *good Quality* or other they are eminent in. And there is no doubt, if those men were without those *Vices*, their *Reputation* would be so far from being thereby *diminished*, that it would become much more *Considerable*.

It must also be acknowledged on the other hand, that even *Virtuous* and *Good* men may sometimes fail of that *Esteem* and *Respect* that their *Virtue* seems to merit, nay, in that degree as to be slighted and despised, and to have many *Odious Terms* and *Nick-names* put upon them: But when we consider the cases in which this happens, it will appear to be of no force at all for the disproving what has been now delivered. For *first*, it ought to be considered what kind of *Persons* those are that treat *Virtue* and *Virtuous* men thus *Contemptuously*, we shall always find them to be the *Worst* and the *Vilest* of mankind; such who have debauched the natural principles of their minds, have lost all the notions and distinctions of *Good* and *Evil*, are fallen below the *Dignity* of *Humane Nature*, and have nothing to bear up themselves with, but *Boldness* and *Confidence*, *Drollery* and *Scurrility*, and turning into *Ridicule* every thing that is

grave and serious: But it is with these as it is with the *Monsters* and *Extravagances* of *Nature*, they are but very *Few*. Few in comparison of the rest of mankind, who have wiser and truer sentiments of things. But if they were more numerous, no man of understanding would value what such men said of him. It looks like a Crime to be commended by *such* Persons, and may justly occasion a man to reflect upon his own actions, and to cry out to himself as *He* did of old, What have I done that these men speak well of me?

But secondly, it cannot be denied but that some persons who are otherwise *Virtuous* and *Religious*, may be guilty of such *Indiscretions* as thereby to give others occasion to *sight* and *despise* them. But then it is to be considered, that this is not to be charged upon *Virtue* and *Religion*, but is the *Particular Fault* of the *Persons*. Every one that is *Religious* is not *Prudent*; the meanness of a mans *Understanding*, or his *Rash* and *Intemperate Zeal*, or the moroseness of his *Temper*, or his too great *Scrupulosity* about little things, may sometimes make his *Behaviour* *Unconth* and *Fantastick*, and betray him to do many actions which he may think his *Religion* obliges him to, that other People will be apt
to

to fancy *Silly* and *Ridiculous*. But this doth not at all reflect upon *Religion*; nor doth it follow, that because the *Imprudence* of this or the other Particular man, exposes him to the *Mirth* and the *Pleasantness* of others, that therefore all *Religious Persons* must fall under the same *Fate*. Most certainly *Religion*, wherever it is governed by *Knowledge* and *sound Principles*, wherever it is managed with *Prudence* and *Discretion*, is a thing so *Noble*, so *Amiable*, that it attracts *Love*, and commands *Respect* from all that are acquainted with it, unless they be such profligately wicked Persons as I just now spoke of.

There is one *Objection* made from the *Scripture* against this and the former *Point* I have been speaking to, which I desire to remove, before I proceed to the *third* General Head of my *Discourse*. It is this: That the *Scripture* is so far from representing *Godliness* as a means to *Improve our Fortunes*, or attain a *Reputation in the world*, that it seems directly to affirm the contrary; for it assures us, that *All those that will live godly in Christ must suffer Persecution*. That the *Disciples of Christ shall be Hated of All men for His Names sake*. That the *World shall revile and persecute them*, and speak all manner of *Evil of them*; and that through

many Tribulations we must enter into the Kingdom of God.

But to this it is easily answered, that these and other such like Passages of Scripture do not speak the *General and Common Fate* that attends Godliness in all *times and places* of the world, according to the *Ordinary* course of Gods Providence; but only refer to that *particular Time*, when *Christianity* was to be planted in the world; then, indeed, *Persecution and Disgrace*, loss of *Goods*, and even of *Life* it self, was to be the common portion of those that professed it: nor could it otherwise be expected; for, when a new *Religion* is to be set up, and such a Religion as is perfectly *destructive* of all those others that have been by long *custom* received, and are by *Laws* established in the world, It cannot be imagined but that it will meet with a great deal of *Contradiction and Opposition* from all sorts of persons. But this was a peculiar and extraordinary case, and could but last for a certain time; now that *Christianity* hath obtained in the world, and is adopted into the *Laws of Kingdoms*, as God be thanked it is among us at this day: so far need we be from fearing that the practice of it will draw upon us any *Persecution*; or such other *Inconveniencies* as are mentioned

tioned in the fore-cited places, that there is no doubt but that we may Rationally expect from it all those *External Benefits* and Advantages, which as we have seen it is in its own nature apt to produce, and which God hath indeed made over to it by *Promise*, in several Passages of the Scripture, especially of the Old Testament.

For that I may mention this by the By, I do not conceive that those Promises of *Long Life*, *Good Days*, and all manner of worldly *Prosperity*, with which the Practice of *Godliness* is so frequently enforced in the *Old Testament*, were so appropriated to the *Jewish Religion*, as to be antiquated or disannulled by the Introduction of the *Christian*; but rather that they are still in force to all the Purposes they were then: For that the coming of *Christ* into the world did add many great *Blessings* and *Priviledges* to the People of God, which before they had not, we are certain of: but that it *took away* from them any that before they had, this we nowhere read, nor indeed is it probable.

But I hasten to the third and last General Head I am to speak to, which is the *Excellent Ministeries of Religion above all other things, to the Pleasures of Humane Life*: which point, if it be

clearly made out, I do not see what can be further wanting to recommend it unto us, as the most effectual Instrument for the serving all our turns in this World. Now that Godliness doth indeed make the most excellent Provisions for all sorts of Pleasures, will appear by these four Considerations.

First, That it eminently ministreth to *Health*, which is a necessary Foundation for all *Pleasures*.

Secondly, It doth much increase the *Relish* and *Sweetness* of all our other *Pleasures*.

Thirdly, It secures us from all those *Inquietudes* and *Disturbances* which are apt to *embitter* our *Pleasures*, and make our *Lives* uncomfortable.

Fourthly, It adds to *Humane Life* a world of *Pleasures* of its own, which those that are not possessed of it, are utterly unacquainted with.

First of all, *Godliness* doth very much conduce to *Health*, which is so necessary to our enjoyment of any *sensible Good*, that without it, neither *Riches*, nor *Honours*, nor any thing that we esteem most gratifying to our Senses will signify any thing at all to us. Now that a *Sound* and *Healthful Constitution* doth exceedingly much depend

depend upon a discreet government and moderation of our Appetites and Passions, upon a sober and temperate use of all Gods Creatures, which is an *essential* Part of *True Religion*, is a thing so evident, that I need make no words about it. What are most of our *Diseases* and *Infirmities* that make us miserable and unpittied while we live, and cut us off in the midst of our days, and transmit Weakness and Rottenness to our *Posterity*, but the effects of our *Excesses* and *Debauches*, our *Wantonness* and *Luxury*? Certainly, if we would observe those Measures in our *Diet* and in our *Labours*, in our *Passions* and in our *Pleasures* which Religion has bound us up to, we might to such a degree *Preserve* our *Bodies*, as to render the greatest Part of *Physick* perfectly superfluous. But these things are too well known to need to be insisted on. I therefore pass on to the next thing.

Secondly, *A Life of Religion* doth very much increase the relish and sweetness of all our sensible *Enjoyments*. So far is it from abridging us of any of our earthly delights (as its enemies slanderously represent it) that it abundantly heightens them. It doth not only indulge to us the free Use of all those good Creatures of God which he hath made for the Support and Com-
fort

fort of Mankind, while they are in these Earthly Bodies ; but also makes them more exquisitely gratifying and delightful than without it they could possibly be. And this it doth in part by the means of that never sufficiently commended Temperance and Moderation I before spoke of : for hereby it comes to pass that our *Senses*, which are the Instruments of our Pleasures are always preserved in that due Purity and Quickness, that is absolutely necessary for the right performing of their *Offices*, and the rendering our Perceptions of any thing grateful and agreeable. Whereas the *Sensual* and *Voluptuous* man defeats his own designs, and whilst he thinks to enjoy a greater share of Pleasures than other men, really enjoys a *less*. For his Dissoluteness and giving up the reins to his Appetites only serves to dull and stupify them. Nor doth he reap any other Benefit from his continual hankering after *Bodily Pleasures*, but that his *Sensations* of them are hereby made altogether *Flat* and *Unaffecting*. Neither is his *Meat* half so savoury, nor his *Recreations* so diverting, nor his *Sleep* so sweet, nor the *Company* he keeps so agreeable as *Theirs* are, that by following the measures

of a temperate and moderate life, and a moderate use of

of *Nature* and *Reason*, come to them with *truer* and more *unforc'd* Appetites.

But besides this, there is a certain *Lightfomness* and *Cheerfulness* of mind, which is in a manner *peculiar* to the truly *Religious* Soul, that above all things *sets off* our *Pleasures*, and makes all the *Actions* and *Perceptions* of *Humane* Life *Sweet* and *Delightful*. True *Piety* is the best *Cure* of *Melancholy* in the world; nothing comparable to it for dispelling that *Lumpishness* and *Inactivity*, that renders the Soul of a Man incapable of enjoying either it self or any thing else. It fills the Soul with perpetual *Light* and *Vigour*, infuseth a strange kind of *Alacrity* and *Gayety* of *Humour* into us. And this it doth not only by removing those things that *Hinder* our *Mirth*, and make us languish in the midst of our *Festivities*, (such as are the *Pangs* of an *Evil Conscience*, and the *storms* of *unmortified Passions*, of which I shall speak in the following particular) but even by a more *Physical* *Efficiency*. It hath really a mighty *Power* to *Correct* and *Exalt* a mans *Natural* *Temper*. Those *Ardent* *Breathings* and *Workings* wherewith the *Pious* Soul is continually carried out after *God* and *Virtue*, are to the *Body* like so much *Fresh* *Air* and *Wholsom* *Exercise*, they *Fan* the

Blood, and keep it from *Settling*; they *Clarifie* the *Spirits*, and purge them from those grosser *Feculencies* which would otherwise *Cloud* our *Understandings*; and make us *dull* and *listless*. And to these effects of *Religion* doth *Solomon* seem to Allude, when he tells us, that *Wisdom maketh a mans face to shine*, Eccles. 8. 1.

Where he seems to intimate, that that *Purity* and *Exaltation* into which the *Blood* and *Spirits* of a man are wrought by the Exercise of *Virtue* and *Devotion* doth diffuse it self even to his *Outward Visage*, making the *Countenance* clear, and serene, and filling the *Eyes* with an unusual kind of *Splendor* and *Vivacity*. But whether this be a true Comment on his words or no, certain it is, that *Piety* disposeth a man to *Mirth* and *Lightness* of Heart above all things in the world: and how admirable a *Relish* this doth give to all our other *Pleasures* and *Enjoyments* there is none but can easily discern.

Thirdly, Let it be further considered, that *Godliness* is a most *Effectual Antidote* against all those *Inquietudes*, and *Evil Accidents*, that do either wholly *destroy*, or very much *embitter* the *Pleasures* of this *Life*.

For whilst it teacheth us to place all our *Happiness*

pineness in *God Almighty* and *our selves* only, whilst we have learn'd to bring all our Affections and Passions, our Desires and Aversions, our Hopes and Fears, under the command of our *Reason*, and endeavour not so much to suit *Things* to our *Wills*, as our *Wills* to *Things*; being Indifferent to all Events that can happen, save only that we always judge those Best which God in his Providence sends us. Being I say, thus disposed (as certainly Religion if it be suffered to have its perfect work upon us will thus dispose us,) what is it that shall be able to disturb or interrupt our *Pleasures*, or create any Trouble or Vexation to us? Our *Present Enjoyments* will not be *Embittered* with the fear of losing them, or *lessened* by our Impatient Longing after *Greater*. Our *Brains* will not be upon the *Rack* for *Compassing* things that are perhaps *Impossible*, nor our *Bodies* under the Scourge of *Rage* and *Anger* for every *Disappointment*. We shall not look pale with *Envy* that our *Neighbours* have that which we have not, nor *Pine* away with *Grief* if we should happen to lose that which we have.

But the *Vicious* man is exposed to all these Miseries, and a thousand more; He carries that within him, which will perpetually fret

and torment him, for he is a *Slave* to his *Pas-*
sions; and the least of them, when it is let loose
upon him, is the *Worst* of *Tyrants*. He is like
the *Troubled Sea*, restless and ever working,
ruffled and discomposed with every thing. He
is not capable of being rendred so much as *To-*
lerably Happy by the best Condition this world
affords: For having such a world of Impetu-
ous *Desires* and *Appetites* which must all be *Ja-*
tisfied, or else he is miserable; and there being
such an infinite number of *Circumstances* that must
concur to the giving them that *Satisfaction*: And
all these depending upon *Things without him*,
which are perfectly out of his Power, it can-
not be avoided but he will continually find mat-
ter to disquiet him, and render his condition
troublesome and uneasie: a thousand unfore-
seen Accidents will ever be crossing his Designs.
Nor will there be wanting some little Thing
or other, almost hourly to put him out of Hu-
mour.

And if this be the Case of the *Vicious* man,
in the *Best Circumstances* of this world (where
the Causes of Vexation are in a manner un-
discernable) in what a miserable Condition
must he needs be, under those more *Real Af-*
fections unto which Humane Life is obnox-

ous,

ous, what is there that shall be able to support his Spirit under the Tedioufness of a *Lingering Sickness*, or the Anguish of an *Acute Pain*? What is become of all his Mirth and Jollity, if there should happen a *Turn* in His *Fortune*, if he should fall into *Disgrace*, or his Friends forsake him, or the Means of maintaining his Pleasures fail him, and the miserable man become *Poor* and *Despised*? Not to mention a great many more Evils, which will make him incapable of any Consolation, eat into the Heart of his best Enjoyments, and become *Gall* and *Wormwood* to his choicest Delicacies.

And has he not now, think you, made *admirable* Provisions for his *Pleasures*? Has he not done himself a wonderful Piece of Service, by freeing himself from the *Drudgery*, as he calls it, of Virtue and Religion? Alas, *Poor Man!* this is the only Thing that would now have secured him from all these sad *Accidents* and *Displeasures*. The *Good Man* sits above the *Reach* of *Fortune*, and in spite of all the *Vicissitudes* and *Uncertainties* of this *Lower World*, with which other men are continually Alarm'd, enjoys a *Constant* and *Undisturbed Peace*. Those *Evils* that may be *Avoided*, (and really a great many which afflict mortal men; are such) he by his

Prudent Conduct and Government of himself wholly prevents. And those that are *Unavoidable*, he takes by such a *Handle*, that they have no power to do him any *Harm*: For he is indeed possessed of that which the *Alchymists* in vain seek for: Such a *Sovereign Art* he has, that he can turn the *Basest Metals* into *Gold*, make such an use of the *worst Accidents* that can befall him, that they shall not be accounted his *Miseries*, but his *Enjoyments*. So that however the varieties of his Condition may occasion a *change* in his *Pleasures*, yet can they never cause any *Loss* or *Destruction* of them.

And this security he enjoys, not as some of the *Stoicks* of old pretended to do, by an Imaginary *Insensibility*, or by changing the *names* of *Things*, calling that *no Evil* which Really is one: but by an absolute Resignation of himself to the will of *God*, and an Hearty acquiescing in his wise Providence. He is certain there is a *God* that governs the world, and that nothing happens to him, but by his Order and Appointment. And he is certain also that this *God* hath a *Real* kindness for him, and would not dispense any *Event* unto him, but what is really for his *Good* and *Advantage*. And these thoughts so support his *Spirit*, that he not only bears patiently, but thanks

thanks God for what ever happens to him. And instead of Fretting and Complaining that things succeed otherwise then he expected, he Resolves with himself that that Condition, whatever it be, in which he actually is, is indeed best for him; and that which he himself, were he to be the Carver of his Fortunes, supposing him but truly to understand his own Concernments, would chuse for himself above all others.

But further, besides this security from *Outward Disturbances* which our virtue obtains for us, there is another *Evil* which it also delivers us from, with which the wicked man is almost perpetually haunted, and which seldom suffers him to enjoy any sincere, unmingled Pleasure. That which I mean is the *Pangs* of an *Evil Conscience*, the Fears, the Restlessness, the Confusion, the Amazements that arise in his soul from the sense of his Crimes, and the just Apprehensions of the shame and vengeance that doth await them, possibly in this Life, but most certainly in the Life to come.

How Happy, how Prosperous soever the Sinner be as to his other Affairs, yet these Furies he shall be sure to be plagued with: no pompousness of Condition, no costly Entertainments, no noise of Company will be able to drive them
away.

away. Every man that is wicked cannot but know that he is so, and that very Knowledge is a Principle of perpetual Anguish and Disquietude. Be his Crimes never so secret, yet he cannot be confident they will always continue so: and the very Apprehension of this makes him feel all the Shame and Amazement of a present Discovery. But put the case he hath had the good luck to sin so closely, or in such a nature that he need fear nothing from *Men*; yet he knows there is an Offended *God* to whom he hath a sad and a fearful Reckoning to make: a God too *Just* to be Bribed, too *Mighty* to be Over-awed, too *Wise* to be Imposed upon. And is not *the man*, think you, under such Reflections as these likely to live a very *Comfortable life*? Ah, none knows the *Bitterness* of them but himself that feels them. To the Judgment of others he perhaps appears a very happy man, he hath the world at his beck, all things seem to conspire to make him a great *Example* of *Prosperity*, we admire, we applaud his Condition. But ah, we know not how sad a heart he often carries under this fair *Out-side*: we know not with what sudden Damps his spirit is often struck, even in the heighth of his Revelings. We know not how unquiet, how broken

ken

ken his sleeps are , how oft he starts and looks pale ; when the Wife that lies by his side understands not what the matter is with him.

He doth indeed endeavour all he can to stifle his Cares, and to stop the mouth of his Conscience. He thinks to *divert* it with *Business*, or to *flatter* it with little *Sophistries*, or to *drown* it with *rivers of Wine*, or to *calm* it with *soft and gentle Airs*. And he is indeed sometimes so successful in these Arts as for a while to lay it asleep. But alas this is no lasting peace , the least thing awakens it, even the sound of a *Passing-Bell*, or a *clap of Thunder*; nay, a *Frightful Dream*, or a *Melancholy Story* hath the power to do it, and then the poor man returns to his Torment.

And now judge you, whether the Honest and Virtuous Man that is free from all these Agonies, that is at Peace with *God*, and at Peace with his own *Conscience*, that apprehends nothing terrible from the *one*, nor feels any thing troublesome from the *other*, but is safe from *Himself* and from all the *world* in his own Innocence : Judge, I say, whether such a one hath not laid to himself *better and surer Foundations* for Pleasures and a happy Life , than the man that by indulging his *Lusts* and *Vices*, only breeds up a *Snake* in his *Bosom*, which will not cease to *Sting* and *Gall*

him beyond what a Tongue is able to express,
or a witty Cruelty to Invent.

Fourthly and lastly, besides the benefits of Religion for removing the hinderances of our Pleasures; it also adds to Humane Life a world of pleasures of its own, which vicious men are utterly unacquainted with.

.. And these are of so excellent a kind, so delicious, so enravishing, that the highest gratifications of sense are not comparable to them. Never till we come to be heartily Religious do we understand what true Pleasure is. That which ariseth from the grateful motions that are made in our outward senses, is but a faint shadow, a meer dream of it. Then do we begin to enjoy true Pleasures indeed when our Highest and Divinest Faculties, which were wholly laid asleep while we lived the life of sense, begin to be awakened, and to exercise themselves upon their proper objects, when we become acquainted with God, and the Infinite Abyfs of Good that is in him, when our hearts are made sensible of the great Love and goodwill he bears us; and in that sense are powerfully carried out in Joy, and Love, and desire after him: when we feel the Divine Nature daily more and more displayed
in.

in our souls, shewing forth it self in the blessed Fruits of Charity and Peaceableness, and Meekness, and Humility, and Purity, and Devotion, and all the other Graces of the Holy Spirit. It is not possible but that such a Life as this must needs be a Fountain of inexpressible joy to him that leads it, and fill the Soul with transcendently greater content than any thing upon earth can possibly do : for this is the Life of God, this is the Life of the Blessed Angels above, this is the Life that is most of all agreeable to our own natures. While we live thus, things are with us as they should be ; our Souls are in their natural Posture, in that state they were framed and designed to live in : whereas the Life of Sin is a state of Disorder and Confusion ; a perpetual violence and force upon our Natures. While we live thus, we enjoy the *Pleasures of men*, whereas before when we were governed by sense, we could pretend to no other satisfactions but what the *Brutes* have as well as we. In this state of life we gratifie our *Highest and Noblest Powers*, the intellectual Appetites of our Souls ; which as they are infinitely capacious, so have they an infinite good to fill them : whereas in the sensual Life, the *meanest*, the *dullest*, and the *most contracted* Faculties of our Souls were only provided for.

But what need I carry you out into these *Speculations*, when your own *sense* and *experience* will ascertain you in this matter above a thousand Arguments. Do but seriously set your selves to *serve God*, if you have yet never done it, do but once try what it is to live up to the Precepts of *Reason*, and *Virtue*, and *Religion*; and I dare confidently pronounce that you will in *one month* find more *Joy*, more *Peace*, more *Content*, to arise in your spirits, from the sense that you have resisted the Temptations of Evil, and done what was your duty to do, than in *many years* spent in *Vanity* and a *Licentious* course of living. I doubt not in the least, but that after you have once *seen* and *tasted* how *gracious the Lord is*, how good all his ways are, but you will proclaim to all the world, that *One day spent in his Courts is better than a thousand*: Nay, you will be ready to cry out with the *Roman Orator* (if it be lawful to quote the Testimony of a *Heathen*, after that of the *Divine Plalmist*) that *One day lived according to the Precepts of Virtue is to be preferred before an Immortality of Sin*.

You will then alter all your sentiments of things, and wonder that you should have been so strangely abused by false representations of *Virtue* and *Vice*. You will then see that *Religion* is quite

quite another thing than it appeared to you before you became acquainted with it. Instead of that grim, sour, unpleasant Countenance in which you heretofore painted her to your self; you will then discover nothing in her but what is infinitely Lovely and Charming. Those very Actions of Religion which you now cannot think upon with Patience, they seem so harsh and unpleasant, you will then find to be accompanied with a wonderful Delight. You will not then complain of the narrowness of the Bounds, or the scantiness of the Measures that it hath confined your desires to; for you will then find that you have hereby gained an entrance into a far greater and more perfect Liberty. How ungentlely, how much against the grain of Nature soever it now looks to forgive an Injury, or an Affront; you will then find it to be as far more easie, so far more sweet than to revenge one. You will no longer think works of Charity burdensome or expensive; or that to do good Offices to every one is an employment too mean for you; for you will then experience that there is no sensuality like that of doing good, and that it is a greater pleasure to do a kindness than to receive one. How will you chide your self for having been so averse to Prayer and other devout

Exercises, accounting them as tiresome unfavoury things ; when you begin to feel the delicious Relishes they leave upon your spirit ? You will then confess that no Conversation is half so agreeable as that which we enjoy with God Almighty in Prayer ; no Cordial so reviving as heartily to pour out our souls unto him. And then to be affected with his *Mercies*, to praise and give thanks to him for his Benefits, what is it but a very *Heaven* upon *Earth*, an anticipation of the Joys of Eternity ? Nay, you will not be without your pleasures even in the very entrance of Religion, then when you exercise acts of *Repentance*, when you *mourn* and *afflict* your self for your sins, which seems the frightfullest thing in all Religion. For such is the nature of that holy sorrow, that you would not for all the world be without it, and you will find far greater Contentment and satisfaction in *grieving* for your *Offences*, then ever you did receive from the *Committing* them.

But, O the ineffable Pleasures that do continually spring up in the heart of a good man, from the sense of Gods Love, and the hope of his Favour, and the fair prospect he hath of the Joy and Happiness of the other world ! How pleasing, how transporting will the thought of these things be to you ! To think that you are one of those
happy

happy souls that are of an Enemy become the Friend of God, that your ways please him, and that you are not only *Pardoned*, but *Accepted* and *Beloved* by him: to think that you a *poor Creature* who were of your self nothing, and by your sins had made your self far worse than nothing, are yet by the goodness of your Saviour become so *considerable a Being*, as to be able to give delight to the King of the world, and to *cause joy in Heaven among the Blessed Angels* by your *Repentance*: to think that God charges his Providence with you, takes care of all your Concerns, hears all your Prayers, provides all things needful for you, and that he will in his good time take you up unto himself, to live everlastingly in his Presence, to be partaker of his Glories, to be ravished with his Love, to be acquainted with his Counsels, to know and be known by *Angels*, *Archangels*, and *Seraphims*; to enjoy a Conversation with *Prophets*, *Apostles*, and *Martyrs*, and all the *Raised and Glorified Spirits of Brave Men*; and with all these to spend a happy and a rapturous Eternity; in Adoring, in Loving, in Praising God for the Infiniteness of his Wisdom, and the Miracles of his Mercy and Goodness to all his Creatures. Can there be any *Pleasure* like this? Can any thing in the world put you into such an *Ecstasie of Joy* as the
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very

very *thought* of these things ? With what a mighty scorn and contempt will you in the sense of them look down upon all the little Gauderies and sickly Satisfactions that the men of this world keep such a stir about! How empty & evanid, how flat and unfavoury will the best Pleasures on Earth appear to you in comparison of these Divine Contentments ? You will perpetually rejoyce, you will sing Praises to your Saviour, you will blest the day that ever you became acquainted with him ; you will confess him to be the only master of Pleasure in the world, and that you never knew what it was to be an *Epicure* indeed, till you became a *Christian*.

Thus have I gone through all those Heads which I at first proposed to insist on. What now remains but that I resume the *Apostles Exhortation* with which I begun this Discourse, that since as you have seen, *Godliness is so exceedingly profitable to all the purposes of this Life, as well as the other: since, as you have seen, Length of days is in her right hand, and in her left hand riches and honour; and all her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace:* you would all be perswaded seriously to *Apply your selves to the exercise of it.* Which that you may do, *God of his, &c.*

