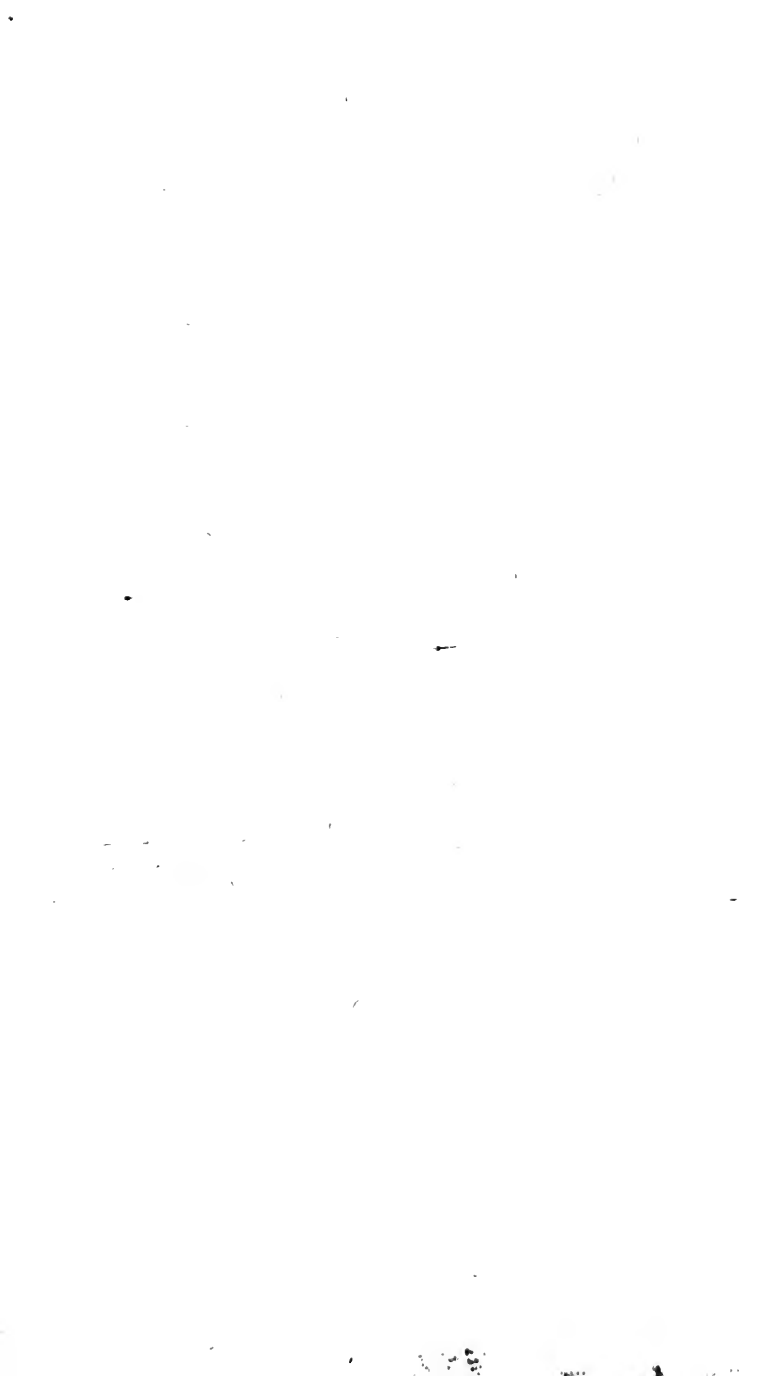




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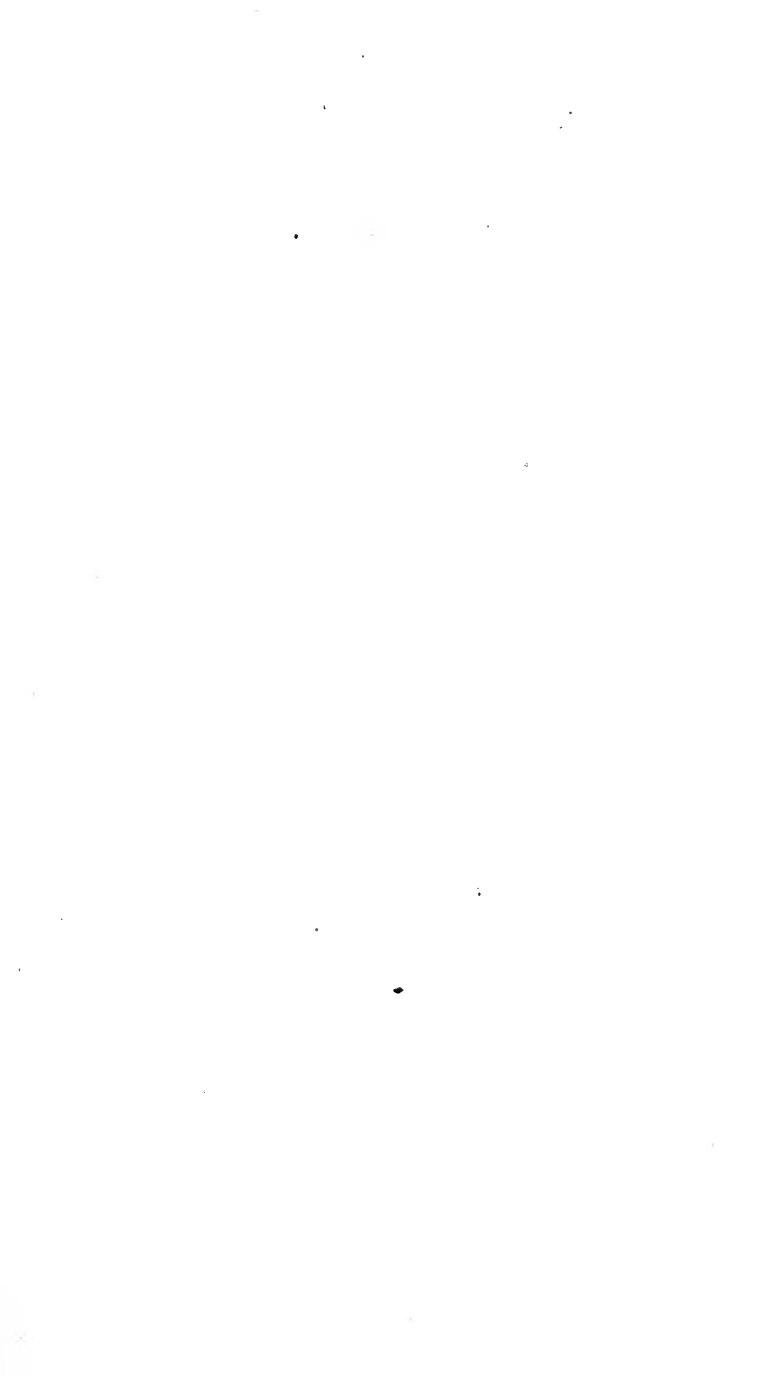


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S E R M O N S

O N T H E

Following SUBJECTS,

V I Z.

- | | |
|---|--|
| • Against too great Anxiety in worldly Matters. | Of the Sin of deliberate Fraud. |
| • Of Forgiveness of Injuries. | Of the Heinousness of the Sin of wilful Murder. |
| Of the Nature and End of the <i>Sabbath</i> . | Of the several Sorts of Hypocrisy. |
| The Parable of the Sower explained. | Who are the true Church of God. |
| The End and Design of the <i>Jewish</i> Law. | Rebellion against God as malignant as Witchcraft. |
| The Practice of Virtue the greatest Security against our Enemies. | All Sin proceeds from some Misapprehension of GOD. |
| Of the Nature and Extent of false Witness. | Of Religious Melancholy. |
| | Of publicly Denouncing Curses upon Sinners. |

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

The Tenth and Last VOLUME.

Published from the AUTHOR's Manuscript.

To which is added,

A Compleat INDEX of the Texts of Scripture Preached upon; a Second of the Texts occasionally explained; and a Third of the Principal Matters contained in This and the foregoing Volumes.

By *JOHN CLARKE*, D.D. Dean of *Sarum*.

L O N D O N,

Printed by *W. Botham*, for *JAMES* and *JOHN KNAPTON*,
at the *Crown* in *St Paul's Church-Yard*. MDCCXXXI.





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C O N T E N T S.

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by

C O N T E N T S.

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S E R M O N



S E R M O N I.

Against too great Anxiety in
Worldly Matters.



MATT. VI. 31, 32.

Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or wherewithal shall we be clothed? For after all these things do the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.



THE Duty of Contentment and S E R M. I.
Resignation to the Will of God, is a Duty whose obligation is evident even from the Law of Nature. For since we at first received
VOL. X. B our

S E R M. our very Being from God, and owe our
 I. Preservation to him every moment, and every thing we enjoy is his free Gift; 'tis plain, that All Thanks are due to him for whatever good we *receive*; and no man has any just reason to repine against Providence, for the *want* of such good things as he has no right to demand. As to the *Calamities* and *Troubles* incident to humane Life; with regard to *These* also, *Sinful* Creatures have no just cause of murmuring: For *wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the Punishment of his Sins?* Lam. iii. 39. Under the Revelation of the *Gospel*, the Grounds and Motives of Contentment are become yet *much stronger*, since the Concerns of this present World, short and uncertain and transitory in Themselves, appear still *more* transitory, when compared with that *Life and Immortality* which is now brought to *Light*; and the *Afflictions* of this *present* time, are not worthy to be compared with the *Glory* that shall be revealed hereafter. Proportionable to the real Value of Things, ought to be mens Care and Concern about them: And therefore with the *greatest*
reason.

reason, our Saviour, in exhorting his Disciples to take care of their *eternal* Interest, bids them, *comparatively* speaking, to take No thought what they should eat, or what they should drink, or wherewithal they should be clothed; For after all these things (says he) do the Gentiles seek; For your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. Literally understood, the Precept, to the greatest part of Christians, is manifestly impracticable: For the *Necessaries of Life* must needs be taken care for; and without the Support of the *present* life, there can be no room for the practice of those Virtues, by which we are to be prepared for that which is *to come*. There *must* therefore be *some Distinctions* made, in our understanding This and the like Precepts: For want of attending to which, Many may be apt to say, *This is a hard saying, and who can bear it?* And yet in reality, the distinctions upon which the right understanding of this Precept depends, are as plain and obvious, in the nature of the Thing, and in the construction and connexion of the Words themselves, as other the most

S E R M. I. usual figures and comparative ways of expression in common Speech, which no man ever mistakes. To set this matter therefore in a clear and distinct Light, I observe

I. *First*; T H A T there was a particular *time*, and there were particular *persons*, when and to whom, and when and to whom *only*, this Precept was given in its *literal* and *strict* sense. Our Saviour sent forth his Apostles to preach the Gospel *from City to City*, in such a manner as was altogether inconsistent with their attending to *Any* worldly affairs. Accordingly he invested them with miraculous Powers, and promised to afford them a miraculous Support. And suitable to the Circumstances of such a Mission, were the Precepts he gave them to observe therein.


Luk. xii. *Sell that ye have, and give alms. Freely ye have received, freely give. Provide neither gold nor silver nor brass in your purses: Nor scrip for your journey; neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves; for the workman is worthy of his meat. At another time, and in other circumstances, his directions to them were very different:*

33.
Matt. x. 8.

Luk. xxii. 36; Now he that hath a purse, S E R M^o
 let him take it, and likewise his scrip; and I.
 he that hath no sword, let him sell his gar-
 ment and buy one. In like manner the
 words of the *Text*, considered as spoken
 to the *Apostles*, during their preaching
 from one City to another, may well be
 understood literally: *Take no thought, what*
ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, or
wherewithal ye shall be clothed. Ver. 34;
Take no thought, no, not so much as for
the morrow; for the morrow shall take
thought for the things of itself.

BUT when the words are considered as
 a general direction, to *all* Christians, at
all times, and in *all* circumstances; then
 'tis manifest they must be understood to
 be a caution against *such* Worldly Cares,
 as are inconsistent with *Our* Duty; in like
 manner as to the *Apostles*, they were at
 that particular *Time* a prohibition of *All*
 Worldly Cares, as being inconsistent with
Their Duty. The Professors of Christ's
 religion, must at *no* time, and in *no* cir-
 cumstances, be *so* sollicitous; they must
 in *no* case be *so* anxious, about the affairs
 of the *present* Life, as to neglect the

S E R M. greater and more important Concerns of
 I. That which is *to come*. And *This* sense of the words is justified by the *Argument* our Saviour makes use of in the Context, ver. 24; *No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other: Ye cannot serve God and Mammon: Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on: That is, do not so take thought about these things, as to become Servants of Mammon, and forget your Duty towards your heavenly Master. St John in his first Epistle, ch. ii. 15, gives a like Exhortation; Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world; If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. And the words of our Saviour, ver. 34 of This chapter; Take no thought for the morrow; as they might well be applied to the Apostles in the literal sense, during the time of their Mission; so with regard to Christians in all Ages, (the word, *morrow*, signifying figuratively*

ratively the indefinite uncertain future S E R M.
time of man's life,) they may very reason- I.
ably, (according to the forementioned Ar- 
gument drawn by our Lord from the im-
possibility of serving both God and Mam-
mon,) they may very reasonably be under-
stood *only* as a Prohibition of *That Care*
of the World, which he himself elsewhere
describes, (*Matt. xiii. 22.*) as *choaking the*
word, so that it *becometh unfruitful*: It
being indeed very natural for worldly
and ambitious minds, continually to en-
large their Prospect of *the morrow*, and
to extend their Hopes and Designs from
one uncertain indeterminate time to an-
other; 'till Death unexpected blasts all
their Thoughts at once, and surprizes
them unfruitful of any Works of Righ-
teousness. Which Folly is very affectio-
nately reprov'd by our Saviour in the
Parable of the Rich man, who was blef-
sing himself in the vain Thoughts of his
Stores laid up for many years, that very
night when his Soul was required of
him.

II. *Secondly*, I O B S E R V E that the words
of the Text, when considered as a *gene-*

S E R M. *ral* Command to *all* Christians, are very
 I. reasonably to be understood in this greater
 latitude of signification; because, if we attend to the connexion of the whole sentence in this and the following verses, we shall find the expression to be, not *absolute*, but *comparative*. *Take no Thought* (says our Lord) *what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; -----but seek ye first, or principally, (in St Luke 'tis, seek ye rather) the Kingdom of God.* Now, according to the Analogy of the *Jewish* language, *Two* Sentences connected in this manner by way of opposition, are in sense the same *only*, as if it had been said in *One*; *Be more careful to attain the Kingdom of God, than the Conveniencies of this present Life.*

T H E R E are in Scripture *Many* very remarkable Expressions of this kind.

I N the *Old Testament*, Mal. i. 2, 3. *Jacob have I loved, says God, and Esau have I hated.* The Propositions are not to be understood asunder, but to be taken together as *One*; *Jacob have I loved, more than Esau.* For God did not intend to express *Hatred* towards *Esau*; but only


to love *Jacob* comparatively with a *greater Love*. Again, *Jer. vii. 22*; *I spake Not unto your Fathers, nor commanded them, in the day that I brought them out of the Land of Egypt, concerning Burnt-offerings or Sacrifices; but This thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my Voice.* The two parts of this sentence of the Prophet, are not to be taken separately, as if he affirmed that God did *not* require Burnt-offerings *at all*; (for 'tis certain he *did* command them in most express words in the Law;) but the whole is to be understood together, that God did not *insist upon Burnt-Offerings so much*, as upon Obedience to the Commandments of the *moral Law*. There is a like expression, *Hos. vi. 6*; *I desired Mercy, and not Sacrifice*. The meaning is not, that God did *not* require Sacrifice; but that he desired Mercy *rather* than Sacrifice, and (as it follows in the very next words,) *the Knowledge of the Lord more than Burnt-offerings*.

IN the *New Testament*, the same manner of expression, agreeable to the nature of the *Jewish* language, is likewise frequently

S E R M.
I.




S E R M. I. frequently used; and 'tis necessary to be taken notice of, in order to the true Understanding of several Passages. *Job. xvii. 9; I pray not for the world, says our Saviour, but for them which thou hast given me.* His meaning is; not, that he did not at all desire the conversion and Salvation of the *Whole World*; but that his principal and particular Regard, in the Petitions he was at This time putting up, was towards those who at present actually believed on his Name. Again, in his Discourse with the Woman of *Canaan*; *Matt. xv. 24: I am not sent, says he, but to the lost Sheep of the house of Israel.* The meaning is not absolute, (as might seem from the first part of the sentence,) that he was *not sent at all* to any others than the *Jews* only; but that he was not sent so soon, so immediately, so principally; his mission was not to be made known so early, to any other nation, as to the *lost sheep of the house of Israel.* For, that he was also, in process of time, to be a Light to lighten the *Gentiles*, as well as to be the glory of his people *Israel*, the Scriptures of the Prophets expressly enough declared;

clared; and our Saviour himself in this S E R M.
very place sufficiently intimates, when I.
immediately after That seeming Refusal, 
yet he effectually granted this Stranger's
request, by healing the infirmity of her
daughter. And in his instructions to his
Disciples, ch. x. 5; he speaks with less
obscurity: *Go not into the way of the
Gentiles; ---- but go rather to the lost sheep
of the house of Israel.* Which afterwards
was still more clearly express'd; *Acts xiii.*
*46; It was necessary that the word of God
should first be spoken to the Jews, but af-
terwards to the Gentiles.*

IN St Paul's Epistles, there are many
Instances of the like manner of speaking.
*1 Tim. ii. 14; Adam was not deceived, but
the woman being deceived was in the trans-
gression: His Meaning is not to say, that
Adam was not deceived at all; but that
the Woman being first deceived, began
the transgression. 1 Cor. vi. 12; All things
are lawful for me, but all things are not
expedient: He never intended to affirm,
that all Actions were lawful; but that of
those Actions which were confessedly
lawful, yet it did not follow that they
were*

S E R M. were All expedient. In the same epistle,
 I. ch. i. 17; *Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel*: He does not mean absolutely, that he was not to baptize at all; but that his proper and peculiar Office, was not so much to baptize men with his own hands, as to preach the Gospel to them in order to their conversion. To mention but One place more; *Rom. vi. 17; God be thanked, says he, that ye were the Servants of Sin; but ye have obeyed from the heart That Form of Doctrine which was delivered you.* According to the manner of speaking in modern languages, it must needs seem a very strange and unusual expression; *God be thanked, that ye were the Servants of Sin*: But in the *Jewish* Idiom it was very intelligible, that the Two parts of the sentence should be taken as One: *God be thanked, for that ye, who Formerly were the Servants of Sin, have Now obeyed from the Heart That Form of Doctrine which was delivered you.*

AND thus therefore likewise in the words of the Text; if the connexion of the whole be considered, and the two parts

parts of the Sentence be united in one ; S E R M.
 (*Take no thought, saying, what shall we I.*
eat, or what shall we drink,---- but seek 
ye first the Kingdom of God;) the sense, 'tis
 very clear, will be *comparative*, and amount only to This: Be not *so* solicitous for the things of this *present* life, as to neglect the more important Concerns of That which is *to come* : But let your *principal* and *chief* Care be to secure your *eternal* Interest; and the Blessing of Providence upon your ordinary industry, will provide you such a proportion of *temporal* accommodations, as he shall see best and most expedient for you. In some particular cases, God has given extraordinary Examples of this kind: As in the instance of *Solomon*, 1 Kings iii. 11; *God said unto him, Because thou hast----- not asked for thy self---- riches,---- nor ---- the life of thine enemies, but---- Understanding to discern judgment; Behold I have ----- given thee a wise and an understanding heart; ---- and I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both Riches and Honour.* Our Saviour does not promise any thing of this nature to his Disciples,
 be-

S E R M. because his Kingdom is not of this world.

I. But a competency of temporal Blessings he encourages them to expect shall be added unto them ; always excepting the case of persecution, to which is annexed a Promise of peculiar Rewards.

III. *Thirdly* ; I O B S E R V E further, that the Precept in the Text, when considered as a general Command to all Christians, appears plainly intended to be understood with some latitude, from the Reason assigned by our Lord in the very words themselves, For *after all these things do the Gentiles seek. Take no Thought what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink ; For, after all these things do the Gentiles seek.* The thing therefore here prohibited by our Lord to His Disciples, is such a sollicitude after the affairs of the World, as the *Gentiles* have, who know not God ; who have neither a right Sense of the Providence of God, in disposing of all temporal things here upon earth ; nor That certain expectation, which the Gospel has given us, of an eternal Kingdom hereafter in the Heavens. These men, (excepting some few Noble Spirits among them,

them, of whom the World was not worthy;) the generality of them lived according to that Epicurean Maxim, *Let us eat and drink, for to morrow we die*; placing the whole of their happiness in *such* enjoyments, as they possessed in common with the Beasts that perish. Which gratifications of sense, our Saviour commanded *His* Disciples to have no regard for, *comparatively* with their Care for the Concerns of Eternity.

S E R M.
I.

IV. *Fourthly* and *Lastly*; T H A T the words of the Text, when applied to *all Christians in general*, are not to be understood in the strict and *literal* Sense, but in *That comparative* manner I have now explained; appears further from the *additional reason* subjoined by our Saviour in the *last* clause: *For your heavenly Father knoweth, that ye have need of all these things.* Our heavenly Father's *knowing that we have need of all these things*, is not a reason against our taking Thought for them in *That method* of Labour and honest Industry, by which he himself, who *knows that we have need of them*, has appointed them to be obtained; but 'tis a reason
only

S E R M. only against *such* sollicitude about them,
 I. as implies either a *Distrusting* of his Providence, or the not having a right *sense* of it, or not making a just *acknowledgment* of it in all things. The manner of our Saviour's arguing in this particular, is exactly parallel to the directions we find him giving in This very chapter, concerning *Prayer*. Ver. 7; *Ye*, says he, *when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the Heathen do; for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking: Be not ye therefore like unto Them; for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.* The expression is very nearly the same as in the words of the Text, *Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.* Yet in the very next words, ver. 9, he instructs them *how* they should pray for those very things, their want of which, he had just told them, God perfectly knew before-hand: *After This manner (says he) pray ye; Our Father which art in Heaven,---- give us this day our daily Bread.* As therefore our Saviour in his instructions about *Prayer*, by telling his
 Disciples

Disciples that their heavenly Father knows S E R M.
what things they have need of, before they I.

ask him; does not encourage them to forbear Praying *at all*, but directs them to pray *in such a manner* as is most proper to express their just Acknowledgment of *Him*, and entire Dependence upon *Him*, whom they know to be before-hand perfectly acquainted with all their Wants: So in the *Text* likewise, by telling us that our Father knows *we have need of all these things*, 'tis plain he does not mean to encourage us (in general and ordinary cases) to neglect the usual and natural means of providing for our Subsistence; but only (as I before observed) forbids *such* a Sollicitude about Worldly Affairs, as implies either a *Distrusting* of God's Providence, or the not having a right *Sense* of it, or not making a just *acknowledgment* of it in all things. A Disciple of Christ, must have it constantly and habitually impress'd upon his Mind, that 'tis our *heavenly Father* who continually supplies us with necessaries, for the *Preservation* of that Being which he at first *Gave* us: That 'tis *He* who *causes His Sun*

S E R M. *to rise, and sends us Rain and fruitful Seasons, filling our Hearts with Food and Gladness: That 'tis He who (in the Psalmist's expression) maketh the Grass to grow upon the mountains; giving even to the Beast his food, and to the young Ravens which cry; and filling all things Living, with plenteousness: Or, as our Saviour himself describes it still more sublimely, in the words just before my Text; Behold (says he) the Fowls of the Air; they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into Barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth Them: And, consider the Lilies of the Field;---- they toil not, neither do they spin; And yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of Them: Wherefore if God so clothe the grass of the Field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall be not much more clothe you, O ye of little Faith? What men careless and ignorant of the Truth, usually and vulgarly stile Natural Causes, are indeed nothing but mere inanimate Instruments in the hands of God; and the Course of Nature, as 'tis commonly called, is, in the truth and*

reality

reality of things, a mere *empty Name*, any S E R M.
 otherwise than as signifying, by an ab- I.
 stract way of speaking, the *regularity* of u ~
His Operations who made and governs
 all things. 'Tis *He alone* therefore, who
gives us richly all things to enjoy; even
 all *those* things, which, in a vulgar and
 careless way of speaking, we usually as-
 scribe to *natural* and *inanimate Causes*.
 Which very same Causes, whensoever he
 pleases, he can make to be the Instruments
 of our *Punishment* as well as of our *Sup-*
port. He can (as *Moses* elegantly ex-
 presses it; he can) *make the Heavens to be*
Brass, and the Earth Iron: He can *scorch*
 with Drought, or *drown* with Moisture,
 or *blast* with unwholesome Winds, in or-
 der to destroy with Famine, and *make a*
fruitful land barren for the Wickedness of
them that dwell therein: Or, without re-
 moving the *Blessings themselves* of Nature,
 he can at any time withdraw the *Be-*
nefit and the *Effect* of them. For *man*
liveth not by Bread alone, but by every
word that proceedeth out of the Mouth of
God; that is, by *His Blessing* upon the
 instruments of Nature. Which Blessing

S E R M.

I.

whensoever he pleases to withdraw, and with Rebukes doth chasten man for Sin, he maketh his Beauty to consume away, as it were a Moth fretting a garment; Ps. xxxix. 11. Without the divine Blessing therefore, all Care, all Labour, all industry is in vain; nay, even the very Possession of all temporal good things, will afford no enjoyment. But *They* who, by seeking with their first and chief care the righteousness of God's Kingdom, have secured to themselves *His* Favour and Blessing, may safely depend and rely upon His Providence, that He who feeds the *Fowls of the Air*, and clothes even the *Lilies of the Field*, will much more take care of *Them*. Not in the way of *idleness* and *stolt*: For *similitudes* are not to be applied *literally*: But, in proportion to the natures of the things compared, he who provides for the *Fowls of the Air* and the *Lilies of the Field* in a way suitable to *Their* nature, will much more provide for *Men* in a way suitable to *Ours*: Either after a *super-natural* manner, in such *extraordinary* cases as was that of the Apostle's Mission to preach the Gospel; or else,

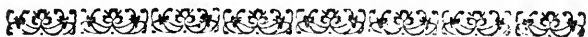
else, in *ordinary* Cafes, by the *natural* S E R M.
means of Labour and Induſtry, whereby I.
God has appointed that the Earth ſhall
bring forth her increaſe. In the Uſe of
which means, 'tis our Duty to rely upon
Providence for his Bleſſing on the Effect.
If any would not work, ſays St Paul, nei-
ther ſhould he eat : And yet the ſame A-
poſtle exhorts, *Phil. iv. 6, Be careful for*
nothing, but in every thing by prayer and
ſupplication let your requests be made known
unto God. This is taking Thought for
the things of the World, not as the *Gen-*
tiles who know not God, but as thoſe
who conſider that our *heavenly Father*
knoweth that we have need of all theſe
things.





S E R M O N II.

Of Forgiveness of Injuries.



EPHES. iv. 32. latter part.

*Forgiving one another, even as God, for
Christ's sake, hath forgiven you.*



THIS is the constant Method of S E R M.
St Paul in all his Epistles, II.
after he has finished the *par-*
ticular Subject upon occasion
of which the Epistle was
written, to add in the close of his Dis-
course such *general* exhortations to the
practice of Virtue, as might be of Use,
not only in *That Age*, and to *That par-*
ticular Church to which the Epistle was
written, but to *all Christians at all times*

S E R M. and in *all places*; and might most effectually secure them against all such corruptions either in Faith or Practice, as he foresaw would be of the worst consequence in hindring the great Ends of the Gospel of Christ. The Great and Principal Design of the Gospel, is to reconcile men to *God*, and to *each Other*: to establish in the World, upon the Foundation of a just regard to *God*, universal Peace and Love and Good-Will amongst *Men*. The most dangerous Evil, and most destructive of this great Design of Christianity, is mens suffering their *Passions* and *worldly Views* to intermix with their Religion. By which means, the very things which Religion was *chiefly* intended to *prevent*, are, among ignorant and deluded men, following their *Passions* instead of their reason, *promoted principally* by what they take to be a strong Concern for Religion itself. Hence *the Salt*, (as our Saviour in a most lively comparison expresses this matter;) *the Salt*, *wherewith* things *should be seasoned*, does itself *lose its Savour*. Hence *the Light*, (as he in another p^lce most significantly expresses


expresses the same thing;) *the very Light* S E R M.
which is in men, becomes Darknes: And II.
Satan, on the contrary, is hereby trans-
formed into an Angel of Light. From
whence (says the Apostle St James) come
wars and fightings among you? that is,
 hatred, contentions and animosities among
 Christians? Come they from any real
 and serious Concern, for the Honour of
 God or for the Welfare of Mankind? No,
 saith he; but *from your Lusts that war*
in your members; that is, from your *Pas-*
sions and Worldly Views. This being so
 great and dangerous an Evil, and yet so
 very apt to spread among *all* Parties of
 Men; there is therefore no exhortation
 so often repeated, so perpetually incul-
 cated, so constantly and earnestly pressed,
 in all the Books of the *New Testament*;
 as upon *This Head*, of the obligation
 Christians are under to promote universal
 Love and Good-Will amongst Men. With
This the Apostle St Paul begins the chap-
 ter, whereof my Text is a part: ver. 1;
I therefore the Prisoner of the Lord be-
seech you, that ye walk worthy of the vo-
cation wherewith ye are called; With all
 lowli-

S E R M. *lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavouring to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.* Arguments and Motives to This, he proceeds to alledge throughout the *Whole chapter.* And with This he at the end concludes, ver. 30; *Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption: Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamour and evil-speaking be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.*

I N discoursing more particularly upon which *last words; forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you:* I shall endeavour to show, 1st, that good Christians *have their past Sins forgiven;* and that the original Ground and Motive of that Forgiveness, is the *Goodness of God: God has forgiven you.* 2^{dly}, That the *particular Method,* in which the Goodness of God has thought fit to manifest itself in this Forgiveness of Sin, is through the *intercession of Christ: God,*
for

for Christ's sake, has forgiven you. 3dly, S E R M.
That the *Condition* of this Forgiveness II.
thro' Christ, is the Supposition of *such a*
Repentance, the Fruit and Evidence where-
of is our *Readiness to forgive each other :*
Forgiving one another, even as God for
Christ's sake has forgiven you.

1st and 2d ; THE *Two first* of these,
I shall consider *Together :* That good
Christians *have their past Sins forgiven ;*
that the *original Ground or Motive* of that
Forgiveness, is the essential and eternal
Goodness of God ; and that *the particular*
Method, in which the Goodness of God has
thought fit to manifest itself in this For-
giveness of Sin, is *through the intercession*
of Christ. The Duty of rational crea-
tures, who are made capable of discerning
between Good and Evil, is to obey at all
times the Commands of God. And when-
soever they knowingly and presumptu-
ously transgress against the Light he has
given them, the natural and just Punish-
ment of such Transgression is Death.
Even upon *innocent* Beings, who may be
supposed never to have transgressed at all,
God is under *no obligation* to bestow *im-*
mortality.

S E R M. *mortality.* For He who has Power over
 II.  all, may, without wrong to Any, do what he pleases with his own; and That *Life*, which to all the intelligent Beings in the Universe is originally his Free Gift, he may freely continue to any of them for what portion of time he pleases; and when their appointed period is run out, and they have enjoyed the Effects of his bountiful Goodness in their proper Share of Being, he may, even *without* consideration of Sin, *again* as freely take it away. *Much more*, when rational Beings have *rebelled* against him, by presumptuously transgressing the Laws of everlasting righteousness; may he justly cut them short in displeasure, and by an exemplary Sentence of righteous judgment, inflict upon them the *Punishment of Death*. For, what our Saviour declares in a *particular* case, that God could easily, if he pleased, destroy the whole nation of the impenitent *Jews*, and *raise up*, even *out of the Stones* of the Street, *children unto Abraham*; is no less true *universally*, that God can at any time destroy with exemplary Judgments *Any disobedient Creatures*, and
 create

create to himself *Others*, with the same S E R M. ease as he did *Them* at first, to undergo II. a new Probation of obedience. Nevertheless, from the consideration of the divine *Goodness*, they who have formerly been disobedient, and are now convinced of the unreasonableness of being so, and are sincerely resolved to do what is right for the future; find a reasonable ground and foundation of *Hope*, that God, in his great Forbearance, will still make a further Trial of *Them*, and accept instead of Innocence their sincere Amendment. And This, which, in the Arguments of Nature, is *but Hope*; is, in the declarations of the Gospel, an assured Promise; that if a Sinner forsakes his unrighteous ways, and does for the Future That which is lawful and right, he *shall* save his Soul alive. The *original Ground* or *Motive* of this Forgiveness, is the essential *Goodness of God*. For He who has Power over all, may remit as much of his own Right as he pleases; and This, upon what Terms and Conditions he himself alone, who is under no controul, shall in his own divine wisdom think fit to appoint

S E R M. point and to accept. For if, even in
 II. *Humane* Judicatures, a Judge is not to
 condemn, or to acquit, according to the
 Affections or Expectations of the Specta-
 tors, but according to his own more per-
 fect Knowledge of the Law and of the
Fact; much more is it reasonable that
 God, whose Judgment is unerring, and
 his Knowledge infallible, should *have*
mercy on whom he will have mercy; and
compassion, not arbitrarily, but on whom he
himself sees it fit to have compassion. By
original Right therefore, God *may* appoint
 what Terms of Forgiveness he pleases.
 In *Fact*, the Method wherein the divine
 Goodness *has* thought fit *actually* to ma-
 nifest itself in the Forgiveness of Sin, is
thro' the intercession of Christ. God, for
 Christ's sake, *has forgiven you.* Not that
 God, who, by the essential Rectitude of
 his Nature, acts always according to per-
 fect Right and Reason; can be any way
changed, or have any affection moved in
 him, by the interposition of any Intercessor
 whatsoever: But that, being *of purer eyes*
than to behold iniquity, and intending to
 show the greatest possible discountenance

to Sin in the very Method of forgiving S E R M. it, he thought fit to annex the *Declarations of Pardon* to the *Death of the Mediator*. And therefore the words in the Text, which we render, *God for Christ's sake has forgiven you*; are in the Original more accurate and expressive, *God hath forgiven you In Christ*; that is, he has in the dispensation and by the Terms of the Gospel of Christ, declared his acceptance of your Repentance. From This consideration, 'tis easy to give a satisfactory Answer to the Principal and most Material Objection of Unbelievers; who, in opposition to the Great Doctrine of the Gospel, alledge, that God being always necessarily Omnipresent, and consequently *himself* at all times ready to hear the Prayers of all men, therefore there could be no need of appointing any *Mediator*; and that God being of himself, essentially in his nature, always disposed to do what is right and fit, therefore his Purposes can no way be changed by the interposition of any *Intercessor*: To This objection, I say, 'tis easy, from what has been said, to give a just and sufficient Answer.

For


S E R M. For the Design of a Mediator or Intercessor being appointed with God, was not as if God could be moved, as mortal men are, by *Perswasion* to do what otherwise he would not have thought right to be done: But the Design of it was, that God would testify his Hatred and Indignation against Sin, by consigning the Pardon of it thro' the Blood of the *Mediator*. From hence also it appears, that as on the one hand the *intercession of Christ* is not at all of the less value, because the eternal and essential *Goodness of God* was the original Ground or Motive of our obtaining Forgiveness thro' *That intercession*; so neither on the other hand is the *Goodness of God* less to be acknowledged, or the Pardon of Sin less *Free*, because the *Method* in which God was pleased to manifest this Free Goodness, was through the *intercession of Christ*. For he, who, in voluntary compliance with his Father's good pleasure, laid down his life for the redemption and salvation of Men; did *himself* love us, and give himself for us, a ransom and propitiation for Sin. And at the same time,

time, He, who having Power over all, was S E R M. pleased to appoint and to accept on our behalf this intercession of his Son; may II. with as much Truth be affirmed to have forgiven us *Freely*, of his own *Grace and Goodness*, as if he had done it *without* any intercession at all. The Scripture always expresses this matter accurately, with great and exact distinctness, and with high acknowledgment of the original and essential *Goodness* of the God and Father of all. Our Saviour himself, *Job. iii. 16*; *God* (says he) *so loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.* And the Apostle *St John* in like manner in his *1st epistle, ch. iv. 9*; *In This, says he, was manifested the Love of God towards us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the World, that we might live through Him.*

AND This is a sufficient Explication of the *two first particulars* I proposed to discourse upon from the Text; that good Christians *have their past Sins forgiven*; that the *original Ground or Motive* of That Forgiveness, is the *Goodness of God*;

S E R M. and that the *particular Method*, in which
 II. the Goodness of God has thought fit to
 manifest itself in this Forgiveness of Sin,
 is *through the intercession of Christ*. The

Third and last Observation was, that
 the *Condition* of this Forgiveness thro'
 Christ, is the Supposition of *such a Re-
 pentance*, the Fruit and Evidence whereof
 is our *Readiness to forgive each other* :
*Forgiving one another, even as God for
 Christ's sake has forgiven you*. In all Pro-
 mises of Pardon, there is always, either
 express'd or understood, a *Supposition of
 Repentance*. And by *Repentance*, is al-
 ways meant, not a *bare Sorrow for Sin* ;
 (for, *That* there cannot but be, even in
 the *Place of Torment* ;) but by *True Re-
 pentance*, is always meant, an actual *For-
 saking and Amending* of the Fault repent-
 ed of. And not *That only in particular* ;
 but it includes also that there be *in gene-
 ral* such a disposition of Mind, as *becomes*
 a penitent and forgiven Sinner : A dispo-
 sition of Mind, *desirous* to show forth
 the Sincerity of its Repentance by the
 Thankful Expressions of an *universal O-
 bedience*, and by *imitation of Him* whom

we adore for having forgiven us. One S E R M. principal part of which imitation, is our II. being ready, upon all reasonable occasions,  to forgive *Others*, even as *He* has freely forgiven *Us*. *Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against Any; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye; Col. iii. 13. And Ephef. v. 2; Walk in love, as Christ also has loved Us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God, for a sweet-smelling savour. To God himself, who is infinitely self-sufficient to his own Happiness, we are capable of making no Recompence, no Return, for all the Benefits that he has done unto us: And therefore he is pleased to accept our kind and charitable behaviour towards each other, as a Regard paid immediately to Him; and he requires it of us, as the most proper and suitable Expression of our having a due Sense of His mercy and goodness towards us all. If thy Brother trespass against thee, says our Saviour, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him: And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee,*

VOL. X. D 2 saying,

S E R M. saying, *I repent; thou shalt forgive him:*
 II. Luke xvii. 4. Nay, St Matthew adds,
 not until seven times only, but until seventy
 times seven; ch. xviii. 22. Nay, our Sa-
 viour carries this matter still further; and,
 in imitation of God who is kind to the
 unthankful and to the evil, he commands
 us, *Matt. v. 44*, to Love even our Ene-
 mies, to bless them that curse us, to do
 good to them that hate us, and to pray
 for them which despitefully use us, and per-
 secute us. Which Argument the Apostle
 St Peter enforces from the example like-
 wise of Christ; *1 Pet. iii. 9*; *Not ren-
 dring evil for evil, or railing for railing,
 but contrariwise Blessing: As Christ did;
 who, when he was reviled, reviled not
 again; when he suffered, he threatned not;
 but committed himself to Him that judgeth
 righteously.* The Meaning of all these and
 the like Precepts, is; not that Christian
 Magistrates are to neglect the punishing
 of Malefactors; not that Private Chris-
 tians are to forbear bringing publick Of-
 fenders to Justice; not that it is not law-
 ful for men to recover their private just
 Dues by such Methods of Law and E-
 quity,

1 Pet. ii.
23.

quity, as are in wise and Christian Countries appointed for the administration of Justice; nor, lastly, that in *common life*, we are in *such a sense* to forgive those who *continue* to wrong us, as that we needlessly and carelessly *trust* them, and as it were *tempt* them to wrong us *more*: But we are to forgive, until seventy times seven, (that is, perpetually,) those who *do repent*: And those who *do not repent*, but *persist* in injuring us, we are to *pray for*, and be willing to do acts of *charity and humanity* to them when need requires; and not be solicitous for *Revenge*, but much rather to desire their *Amendment*, and by all reasonable Means promote reconciliation: And if at any time we are forced by the necessity of things, to have recourse to the *Magistrate* to do us right; we are even *then* to desire *only Equity* for *ourselves*, and not *vexation* and *needless damage* to our *Adversary*: In a word; 'tis the Duty of the Disciples of Christ, to have *in general* a *kind and charitable disposition*; dealing with *Others* in all cases, and in all Circumstances, as we desire and in our daily Petitions are taught

S E R M.
II.


S E R M. to pray, that God would be pleased to
 II. deal with *Us*.

IN *This* sense, and according to *This* explication of the nature and limitations of the Duty of Forgiveness, the *Practice* of it may be enforced upon all *reasonable* persons by many *strong Arguments* and most *powerful Motives*. 'Tis *equitable* in the *nature of things*, that men conscious of their own *Frailness*, sensible of their own *Weaknesses* and *Passions*, and of their *Aptness* to be too soon and too often provoked; should be very ready to forgive and be reconciled to *Others*, *considering* (as the Apostle *St Paul* argues upon another occasion; *considering*) *Themselves*, *lest They also be tempted*. 'Tis *desirable* for the *inward Peace and Ease* of mens *own Minds within themselves*, that they should not be under the *Power* of *fretful Passions*, and the *lasting Resentments* of a *vengeful Spirit*; but that they be meek and gentle, peaceable and easy to be reconciled: Which *Sweetness* of *Disposition*, improved upon religious *Principles* into a *Habit* of *Meekness*, is a *Virtue* reflecting *upon itself*; That calm
 and


and sedate Satisfaction, which is in a S E R M.
peculiar manner a Reward to itself. Nor II.
 is it less *beneficial to the Publick*; as being
 the great *Preservative* against that
Beginning of Strife, which *Solomon* ele-
 gantly compares to the *letting out of*
Water, Prov. xvii. 14; that is, 'tis the
 Opening of a Breach which no man can
 be sure to stop, before it proceeds to the
 fatallest and most calamitous events. Up-
 on which account, excellent is the Ad-
 vice of the Author of the Book of *Ec-*
clus, ch. xix. 13; *Admonish a friend; it*
may be he hath not done it; and if he
have done it, that he do it no more. Ad-
monish thy friend; it may be he hath not
said it, and if he have, that he speak it
not again. ----- There is one that slippeth
in his Speech, but not from his heart; and
who is he that hath not offended with his
Tongue?

THERE is, further, *another Motive* to
 the Practice of this Duty, urged by the
 Apostle *St Paul*; that it is really the
 most *effectual* way, finally and upon the
 whole, of *doing ourselves right*; Rom.
 xii. 19; *Dearlly beloved, avenge not your*
 D 4 *selves;*

S E R M. *selfes;----- for 'tis written, Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord: Therefore, if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink; for in so doing, thou shalt heap coals of Fire on his Head: Be not overcome of evil; but overcome evil with good.* The Meaning is: Gentleness and Meekness and Easiness to forgive, is the most probable way of working upon men, if they be at all reasonable and capable of Amendment; and if on the contrary they be altogether incorrigible, then 'tis the certain and effectual Means of having God finally judge our cause. That This Phrase, *heaping coals of Fire upon his Head*, signifies the *Judgments of God* falling finally upon those, who maliciously and incorrigibly persist in oppressing such meek and charitable persons, as never give them any just provocation; is evident from the preceding words, *Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord*: And from the manner in which the whole Passage is express'd in the place from whence St Paul cites it, *Prov. xxv. 21; If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty,*

Of Forgiveness of Injuries.

41

thirsty, give him water to drink; For S E R M.
thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head, II.
and the Lord shall reward Thee: And from 
the other passages of Scripture, in which
the very same phrase is used; *Pf.* cxi.
10; *Let burning coals fall upon them*; And
Is. xlvii. 14; (according to the Version
of the lxx,) *They shall be as stubble, the
Fire shall burn them;---for thou hast
coals of fire to heap upon them*: And 2 *Esdr.*
xvi. 53; *Let not the Sinner say that he
hath not sinned*; for *God shall burn coals
of fire upon His head, who saith before
the Lord God and his glory, I have not
sinned.*

BUT, to draw towards a conclusion.
The last and most powerful Motive to the
Practice of the Duty before us, is the
Argument urged in the Text; that God
expects and requires it of us in the Con-
ditions of the Gospel, that we should for-
give one another, even as He, for Christ's
sake, has forgiven Us. The Reasonable-
ness of the condition, is well expressed by
the Author of the book of *Ecclus.* ch.
xxviii. 1; *He that revengeth, shall find
vengeance from the Lord, and he will
surely*

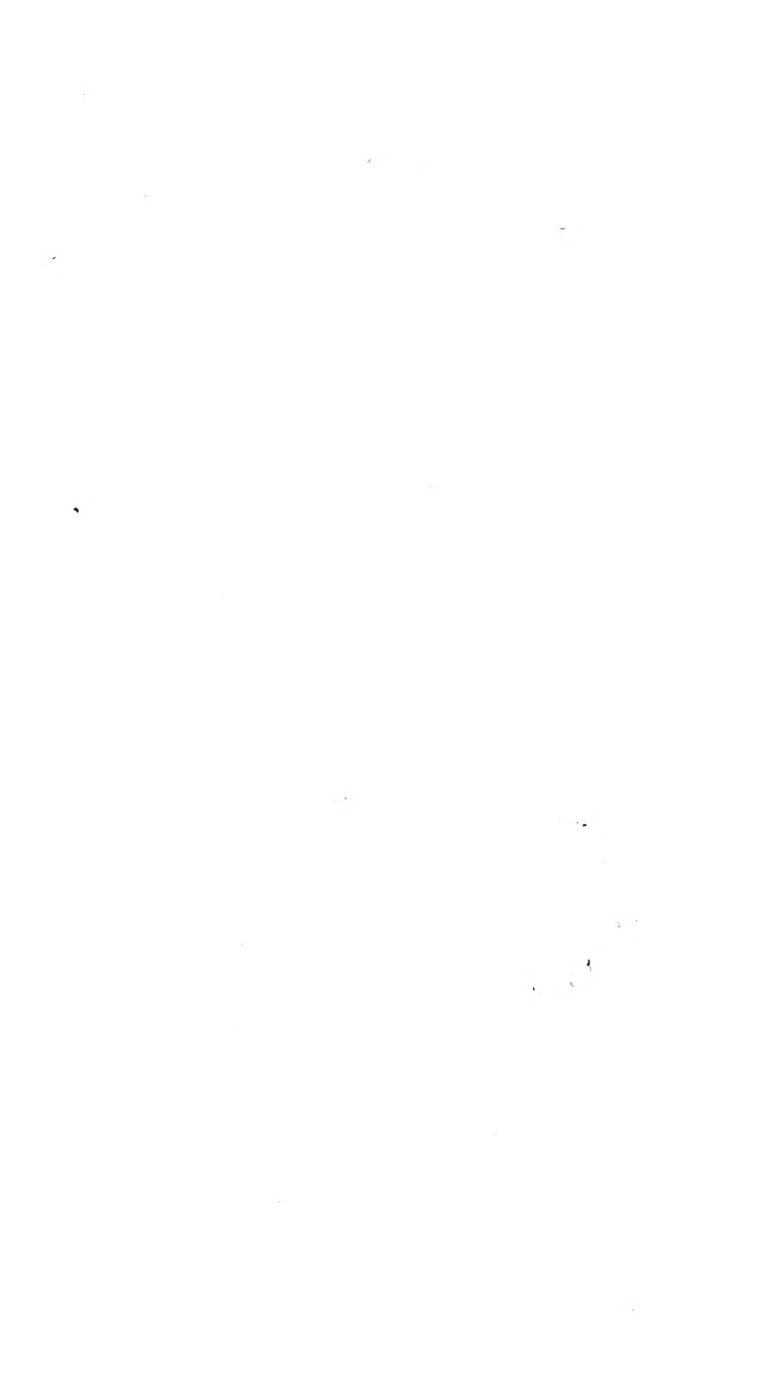
S E R M. *surely keep his Sins in remembrance. For-*
 II. *give thy neighbour the hurt that he has done*
thee; so shall Thy Sins also be forgiven
when thou prayest. One man beareth Ha-
tred against another, and doth he seek par-
don from the Lord? He sheweth no mercy
to a Man which is like himself; and doth
he ask forgiveness of his Own Sins? What
is here argued as equitable in the nature
of the Thing, is by the Apostle declared to
be the Condition of the Gospel; Jam. ii.
13; He shall have judgment without mer-
cy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy
rejoiceth against Judgment. Our Lord
himself in That Prayer which he taught
his Disciples, commanded them to say; For-
give Us Our Trespases, in like manner as
we forgive them that trespass against Us:
And at the conclusion of the Prayer, he
enlarges upon the reason of that petition;
For (says he) if ye forgive men Their
Trespases, your heavenly Father will also
forgive you; But if ye forgive not men
their Trespases, neither will your Father
forgive your Trespases. The same thing
he inculcates in the parable of the King,
who having forgiven a Servant ten thousand
 Talents,

Talents, revoked the Favour again, upon
That Servant's refusing to forgive his
fellow-servant one hundred pence, *Matt.*
xviii. 33; shouldst not thou also have had
compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I
had pity on thee? Nay, so far does our
Saviour carry this matter, as to advise
Matt. v. 23; If thou bring thy gift to
the altar, and there remembrest that thy
Brother hath ought against thee; Leave
there thy gift before the altar, and go thy
way, first be reconciled to thy Brother,
and then come and offer thy gift.

S E R M.

II.







S E R M O N III.

Of the Nature and End of the
Sabbath.




M A R. ii. 27.

And he said unto them, The Sabbath was made for Man, and not Man for the Sabbath.



IT is very remarkable in the S E R M, whole History of our Saviour, III. that in all cases where neither any *natural necessity* nor *moral obligation* intervened to the contrary, *there* he was constantly most exact and nice, in fulfilling *every particular* even of the *ceremonial* Law. Thus when he came to *John the Baptist*; though, ha-
ving

S E R M. III.  ving no Sin, he had no need of the Baptism of Repentance; and *John* accordingly *forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of Thee, and comest Thou to Me?* yet he *insisted* upon it, saying, *suffer it to be so Now; for thus it becometh us to fulfill all Righteousness;* *Matt. iii. 15.* But, on the contrary, *where-ever* any real necessity of nature, or any moral obligation, any work of Goodness, Mercy or Charity, came in competition; *there* he was always as zealous, that the work of Goodness or Charity should take place of any positive rite or ceremony whatsoever. Thus when the Pharisees reproached him, for conversing familiarly with, and instructing, persons legally unclean; he replies, *Matt. ix. 13; Go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have Mercy and not Sacrifice.* And when the Ruler of the Synagogue reviled him for healing a diseased person upon the Sabbath-day, and maliciously represented it to the people as a Breach of the Command given to keep That day Holy; he answers him, *Luke xiii. 15; Thou Hypocrite, Doth not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his Ox*
or


or his Ass from the Stall, and lead him away to watering? and ought not this Woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this Bond on the Sabbath-day? And, in the History which occasioned the words of my Text; when the Pharisees were angry at Jesus's Disciples, for plucking a few ears of Corn on the Sabbath-day, *Mar. ii. 24*; our Lord answers them by giving an Instance out of the History of the *Old Testament*, by which it appeared that *in all times* even under the Law, all *merely ritual and ceremonial institutions* always gave place to the *just and real Necessities* of Life. Immediately after which, he adds in the words of the Text, as a *general Ground* or *Reason* of the thing itself, whereof he had just before alledged an *Instance in Practice*; *The Sabbath*, saith he, *was made for Man, and not Man for the Sabbath*. That is: Duties of a *ritual* nature, and of *positive* appointment only, do not, like those *Moral Virtues*, which are of *intrinsic, eternal, and unalterable* obligation, indispensably oblige in *all Cases* and in *all Circumstances*

S E R M.
III.


S E R M. ces whatsoever; but were appointed of
 III. God, only for the present Use of Man,
 to be subservient and assisting to the more
 convenient Practice of the Great Duties
 of Religion.

FROM these words therefore of our Saviour, I shall in the following Discourse consider the *Nature and Ends* of the *original institution* of the *Sabbath*, and *to what Degrees and Purposes* it *still* continues *obligatory* among *Christians*. In general: As 'tis absolutely necessary in the first Foundation of Religion, that we know distinctly *Whom* we are to worship, and in *what manner*; so 'tis necessary likewise in the Nature of things, that some *Portion* of *Time* be allowed for *instructing* ourselves in the *Knowledge* of our Duty, and for the *Practice* peculiarly of That especial part of it, which consists in the *publick Acknowledgment* and solemn *Worship* of *God*. And *herein* consists the *general Morality* of the Sabbath, and the *eternal reason* of its having perpetually a place among the unalterable Commandments of the Moral Law. For as necessary as it is, that *Religion* should be *at all*

pre-

preserved in the World, so necessary it S E R M.
 is that *some Time* should be set apart for III.
 mens *instruction* in the *Will* of God, and 
 for their *solemnizing* his *Worship*.

BUT to be *more distinct* and *particular*: The *Ends* for which the Sabbath was *originally* instituted, and for which the Command was from time to time *renewed*; were principally as follows.

1st; THAT men might continually commemorate the works of *Creation*, and, acknowledging the *One True God* and *Author of all things*, might praise him perpetually for the things that he has made. *Rev. iv. 11*; The *Worship* paid to God in *Heaven* is thus represented to *St John* in his *Vision*; The whole multitude of the heavenly host fall down before him that sits on the *Throne*, saying, *Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power; For thou hast created all things, and for thy Pleasure they Are, and were created.* This is the employment of *Saints* and *Angels*, in the *eternal Sabbath* in *Heaven*; And that, upon *Earth*, the *Praises* of God may be celebrated on

S E R M. the same account, is the original Founda-
 III. tion of the institution of the *Sabbath*.

Gen. ii. 3; *And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it; because that in it he had rested from all his work, which God created and made.* Which reason is again repeated, *Exod. xx. 11; For in six days the Lord made Heaven and Earth, and the Sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath-day and hallowed it.* 'Tis here to be observed, that the word, *rested*, is by no means to be understood *literally*, as if the Creating of things had been any *Pains* or *Labour* to God: For 'tis *absurd*, that any thing should give any *Trouble* to *Omnipotence*. By the Word of the Lord were the Heavens made, and all the Host of them by the Breath of his Mouth; He spake the word, and they were made; he commanded, and they stood fast. The Meaning is: He made them all with as great Ease, as if it had been no Action at all, but merely a word speaking. His *Resting* therefore after it, is (I say) by no means to be understood *literally*; But God's *resting*, signifies merely, that the things

things were *finished* which he intended to make at That time, and that he *Then* proceeded no further. Likewise, things being made in *six days*, is not, that there was any thing in the Nature of Things, which *required* That *Space* of Time for their Production. For the Production of Things in *six days*, is as *miraculous*, as the producing of them in *one single moment*; and the producing of them in *one moment*, had been just as easy to God, as the creating them in *six days*. But 'tis only for the sake of *Our* greater *distinctness* of *Conception*, that things were digested in That particular Order and *Portion* of *Time*. And our perpetual Returns of Praises to God for the things that he has made, offered up to him every Sabbath, are a *Mark* or distinguishing *Character* of the Worshippers of the *True God*; a *declaration* or *continual professing* of ourselves to be Servants of the *One Almighty and True God*, the *Father* or *Author* of all things, the *Maker* of *Heaven* and *Earth*: in opposition to the *Infidelity* of *Atheists*, the *Superstition* of *Polytheists*, and the *irreligious Worship* of all the *idolatrous Na-*

S E R M. *tions of the Earth. Exod. xxxi. 13, 17 ;*
 III. *Verily my Sabbaths ye shall keep ; For it is*
 a Sign between Me and You,-----that ye
 may know that I am the Lord ; ----It is
 a Sign between Me and the children of
 Israel for ever ; For in six days the Lord
 made Heaven and Earth. Of ignorant and
 profane men, Some have imagined the
 World to exist by *Necessity of Nature* ; not
 considering, that in what arises from *ne-*
cessity, there can be *no variety or distin-*
ction : And *these* persons, cannot but be
totally void of all Religion. Others, have
 fancied the World to have been framed
 originally by *mere Chance* ; not consider-
 ing, that *Chance is nothing*, and can *do no-*
thing, being a mere *empty Word or Sound* :
 And *these* likewise, must needs be abso-
 lutely *without Religion*. Others, have per-
 swaded themselves, that the *Sun, Moon,*
and Stars, were *Gods*, or the *Habitations*
of Gods, or the *Powers that governed the*
World : And *These* were the idolatrous
 Worshippers of the *Host of Heaven*. Con-
 cerning which Crime, *Job* thus expresses
 himself with his accustomed Eloquence,
 ch. xxxi. 26 ; *If I beheld the Sun when it*
shined,

shined, or the Moon walking in brightness; S E R M. III.
 and my heart hath been secretly enticed, or
 my Mouth hath kiss'd my hand; This also
 were an iniquity to be punished by the
 Judge, for I should have denied the God
 that is above. The Great Preservative
 against every Fault of this kind, either
 idolatrous or atheistical; is the considera-
 tion that the *Whole Universe*, and all
 things therein contained, are the *Creation*
 of God; That the *Moon and Stars them-*
selves, are all of them the *work* of his
hands; and that 'tis our *heavenly Father*
 which *causeth* His *Sun* (so our Saviour
 emphatically expresses it,) he *causeth* His
Sun to shine on the Evil and on the Good,
and sendeth Rain on the Just and on the
Unjust. This is, what even by *Reason it-*
self may be strictly proved, to those who
 are capable of attending to it: *His eter-*
nal Power and Godhead, are clearly seen
by the things that are made; Rom. i. 20.
 By *Revelation*, the same Great Truth is
 clearly confirmed to persons of all *Capa-*
cities. And the first institution of the
Sabbath, was on purpose, that men pe-
 riodically celebrating the *Creation of God,*

S E R M. might thereby be preserved from *irreligion and idolatry*. Deut. iv. 19; *Lest thou lift up thine eyes unto Heaven, and when thou seest the Sun and the Moon and the Stars, even all the Host of Heaven, shouldst be driven to worship them and serve them, which the Lord thy God hath divided unto all Nations under the whole Heaven.* This was the Idolatry Mankind was apt to run into, in the *early Ages* of the World; and it continues *still* among some *barbarous Nations* even at *This day*. But the *more prevailing Vice* in these *latter Ages*, among men of *corrupt Minds* in *civilized Nations*; are *Atheistical Notions*, of *Necessity, Fate, and Nature*. The *proper Remedy* against *Both* these *Great Evils*, of *Idolatry and Atheism*; is a *ferious consideration* of the *manifold Wisdom and Excellency* of the *Works of God*, which show forth the *Praise and Glory* of their *Almighty Creator*. *O all ye works of the Lord, bless ye the Lord, praise him and magnify him for ever. Pf. cxlviii. 3; Praise ye him, Sun and Moon; praise him, all ye Stars of Light;----- Mountains and all Hills;---- Beasts and all Cattle;-----*

Fire and hail, snow and vapour, storms and wind fulfilling his Word. 'Tis a very elegant, and *expressive* Figure of Speech; to represent All, even *inanimate* creatures, as *Themselves* praising God; because the *contemplation* of them affords to reasonable *Men*, perpetual *Grounds* of Praising him. I have been the longer upon this *First* Head, because This *original* reason of the institution of the Sabbath, is of *eternal* and *unchangeable* Consideration.

2dly; ANOTHER reason, which was *added* upon occasion of *renewing* this institution to the *Jews*, was that they might *commemorate* their Deliverance out of the Land of *Egypt*, which to *That People* was as it were a *New Creation*. Deut. v. 15; *Remember that thou wast a Servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord brought thee out thence by a stretched-out arm; therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the Sabbath-day.* This *additional* reason, was *peculiar* to the nation of the *Jews only*; and consequently so were the *additional Circumstances*, which were then annexed, with regard to the *Manner* of performing the Duty. Of


S E R M. which kind, was that *absolute and strict*
 III. *Rest from every sort of Work* whatsoever,
 which was a proper commemoration of their deliverance from that Great Bondage, wherein they had in an unparalleled manner been obliged to *work* and to *serve with rigour*. And because 'twas a *Manifest Contempt* of This *Great Deliverance*, and a *presumptuously wilful despising* of a *plain Command* of God, then immediately and expressly given to That people; *therefore*, however small the *Offence* may seem as to the *Matter* of it, yet (which is always the main Circumstance of aggravation,) it being altogether inexcusable in point of *wilful presumption*, the Man in the Wilderness who did but *gather sticks upon the Sabbath-day*, was by God's especial direction commanded to be put to death; *Num. xv. 35*. It was a *presumptuous Contempt* of That *express* part of the Command given at That time to That people, *Exod. xxxv. 3, 2*; *Ye shall kindle no Fire throughout your Habitations upon the Sabbath-day; whosoever doth work therein, shall be put to death*. But this rigorous exacting of an *absolute and strict*
Rest,

Rest, was, as I have said, *peculiar* to the S E R M. Nation of the *Jews only*: As is evident III. from the *Reason* before-mentioned, relating to their deliverance out of *Egypt*; and is still more clear from the words of *St Paul*, Col. ii. 16; *Let no man judge you in meat or in drink, or in respect of the new-moon or of the Sabbath-day; Which are a Shadow of things to come, but the Body (or Substance) is of Christ*: And from the words of our Saviour himself, immediately following the Text; *The Son of man, is Lord also of the Sabbath*.

3dly; ANOTHER additional Reason, upon renewing the institution of the Sabbath to the *Jews*; was, that *Servants*, and even *Cattle appointed for Labour*, might have a proportionable time of *Rest*. This reason is express'd in the *fourth* Commandment; And again more particularly, *Exod. xxiii. 12; that thine ox and thine ass may rest, and the Son of thine handmaid, and the stranger may be refreshed*. And This reason, is partly ceremonial, partly moral. So far as the Commandment of giving Rest to *Servants*, was a Memorial to the *Israelites* of their having been them-

S E R M. *themselves* Servants in *Egypt*; so far it was
 III. part of the *ritual* Law, and its obligation
 extends not to other Nations. But so far
 as the *reason* of the Commandment is
 founded in *humanity*, and is opposite to
cruelty, severity and *rigour*; so far it is
 an *eternal* part of the *moral* Law, and
 continues to be of *perpetual* obligation.
 Unreasonable *Severity*, in exacting from
 those under our Power, more than they
 are well able to perform; is for ever a
 Breach of this Commandment, and a
 Temper altogether inconsistent with the
 Spirit and Character of a good man. *A*
righteous man, saith the Scripture, *regard-*
eth the Life even of his Beast; Prov. xii.
 10. And 'tis not without its proper Sig-
 nificancy, in order to show men what
 Spirit and Temper they should be of;
 that God, in the giving of this Command-
 ment, condescends to make mention even
 of *Cattle*; and that our Saviour assures
 us, that not a *Sparrow* falls to the ground,
 without the Notice of our Father which
 is in Heaven.

AND now from This Account of
 the *Reasons* of the *original Institu-*
tion,

tion, and of the repeated Renewals of S E R M.
 the Command concerning the Sabbath; III.
 'tis very easy to understand, how far and 
 in what sense it is a perpetual Command-
 ment, and to what Degrees and Purposes
 it still continues obligatory among Chris-
 tians.

THE moral part of the Sabbath; that
 is, so far as it is a Commandment enjoyn-
 ing the virtue of humanity, or of allow-
 ing time to those who are under our
 Power, to rest from the Labours of their
 worldly employment; and so far as it is,
 according to the original reason of its in-
 stitution in Paradise, a time set apart for Gen. ii. 3.
 the religious commemorating of God's work
 of Creation, and praising him for the
 things that he has made, and serving and
 worshipping him as the Maker of all
 things; this moral part (I say) of the
 Sabbath, is of eternal and unchangeable
 Obligation. For the solemn Publick Wor-
 ship of God cannot possibly be perform-
 ed, without particular Times be set apart
 for the performing it, and for the instruct-
 ing men in the Knowledge of their Duty.
 The more carefully this is done, the more
 accept-


S E R M.

III.

acceptable to God are our days of devotion. And they who by the *habitual* Practice of Virtue, preserve *constantly* upon their Minds a Sense of God and Religion in *all* the actions of their Lives; may be truly said, in the *Christian* sense, to keep a *perpetual* Sabbath. Upon which Account, both the *Land of Canaan*, wherein the *Israelites* were to serve God *without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of their lives*; and the *heavenly Canaan*, whereof the other was but a Type; are by *St Paul* figuratively represented under the Notion of an eternal *Sabbath* or *Rest* to the people of God, in a very *elegant Allusion*: Without attending to which, there is considerable difficulty in understanding the manner both of his expression and argument: *Heb. iv. 3*; *Although* (saith he) *the works*, the works of Creation, *were finished from the foundation of the World,----- and God did rest the seventh day from all his works*; yet This was not the True Sabbath, (but only as he elsewhere expresses it, *Col. ii. 17*; *it was a shadow of things to come*;) The
 True

True Sabbath or *Rest*, to the people of S E R M. the *Jews*, was their entering into the *Promised Land*, and *Therein* resting for ever III. from the labours they had underwent in *Egypt* and in the *Wilderness*: And *This*, he tells us, is the sense of the word, *Rest*, in those places, where God threatned and *swore* to the unbelieving *Israelites*, *that they should not enter into his Rest*; ch. iii. 11, 18. But then still he goes on, and tells us further, that even *This* final *Rest* of *Theirs*, *the promised Land itself*; even *This* also was still but a *Type* of a *further* and better *Rest*, even the *eternal Sabbath in Heaven*: For if *Joshua*, says he, (ch. iv. 8, 7,) *had given them Rest, then would not the Scripture afterward have spoken of another day*, as it does in *David*, saying *Again, To day, after so long a time. There remaineth therefore* (infers the *Apostle*,) *there remaineth still a further Rest* (or *Sabbath*) *to the People of God*, ver. 9; that is, an eternal *Rest* in *Heaven*, from *Sin*, and from *Temptation*, and from all *Misery*. For so he goes on, ver. 10; *For He that is entred into his Rest, He also has ceased from his own works, as God did from His*:

Let

S E R M. *Let us labour therefore to enter into That*
 III. *Rest, lest any man fall after the same ex-*
 *ample of Unbelief. By attending to, and*
observing This Allusion, there is very great
Light given to the Apostle's whole Dis-
course in That 4th Chapter to the He-
brews, which otherwise is difficult to be
distinctly and clearly understood. But to
proceed.

As the *Moral* part of the Commandment concerning the Sabbath, is of *perpetual* obligation; so the *ritual* or *instituted* part, which had relation (as a *particular* Memorial) to the Deliverance of the *Jews* out of *Egypt*, is abolished by the Gospel. Inasmuch that *St Paul*, in the place before-cited, *Col. iii. 16, 17*; among *ordinances of meats and drinks, and new-moons, and other shadows of things to come*, reckons up also *the Sabbath-days*. But then, instead of the *Jewish* Sabbath, there succeeded, by the appointment and Practice of the Apostles, the commemoration of our Lord's *Resurrection*. Which coming to pass upon the *first* day of the Week, the Christian *Lord's day*, instead of the *seventh* which was the *Jewish* Sabbath;

bath; it was accordingly from thenceforth S E R M. kept on the *first day of the Week*. Thus III. we read, *Acts xx. 7*; that upon the first day of the Week, when the Disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them. And *1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2*; Concerning the Collection for the Saints;----- upon the first day of the week, saith he, let every one of you lay by him in store, as God has prospered him. And *Rev. i. 10*; it is, by St John, expressed by Name: I was, saith he, in the Spirit on the Lord's day.

THE Manner, in which it ought to be observed among Christians, is, in attending the Publick Worship of God, in hearing the Word, in reading the Scriptures; in instructing and assisting those, over whom we have any kind of influence, in the Knowledge and Practice of their Duty. In a word, it is to be spent in works of *Necessity*, and in works of *Charity*; and in whatsoever tends, without Superstition and without Affectation, to the real Honour of God, and to the true Interest and Promoting of Religion and Virtue in the World. Concerning works of *Necessity*; our Saviour in the
Text,

S E R M. Text, upon occasion of his Disciples
 III. plucking the Ears of Corn on the Sabbath-
 day, expressly exempts us from the Preciseness of the Pharisaical hypocrisy: *The Sabbath, saith he, was made for Man, and not Man for the Sabbath.* Concerning works of *Charity*; these are so direct and proper, so great and principal a part of true Religion, that, as if it were *on purpose* to show these to be even the *most acceptable* part of That Rest which God commanded on the Sabbath, our Saviour seems, in the whole course of his Ministry, to have industriously as it were *sought for* all possible occasions of doing things of *This nature* upon the Sabbath-day, that he might thence take opportunity to reprove the false Notions which the Pharisees had entertained, both of *God's* resting from *His* work, and of his commanding *Them* to rest from *Theirs*. The careful observing of which matter, will clear to us the Sense of an *expression* of our Saviour, which otherwise is not obvious to be understood. When the *Jews* sought to slay him, because he had healed a lame man on the Sabbath-day; the Reply he makes

makes to them, is This, *Job. v. 17; My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.* His meaning is: *Ye have a very wrong Notion of the true Sabbatical Rest which God has commanded: From his work of Creation, God does indeed Now rest; but in Acts of Providence, Preservation, Government, and doing Good to his Creatures, in These things My Father worketh Hitherto, and will work for ever; And in these instances I also work, and every good man works, both on the Sabbath-day and continually.*

THE *Extremes* to be avoided, are; An affected Judaical or Pharisaical *Preciseness* on the *one* hand, which usually proceeds either from *hypocrisy*, or from *want of understanding rightly the true Nature of religion*: And on the *other* hand, the *worse* and *more dangerous* Extreme, is, That Habit of spending any part of the Lord's-day in *Looseness* and *Idleness*, in *Gaming* and *Debauchery*, which has been encouraged by *Popery*, and which has, to so *Many* persons, been the *corruption* of their *Principles*, and the *entire Ruin* of their *Morals*. *From which and all other, &c.*



S E R M O N I V.

The Parable of the Sower explained.



St LUKE viii. 15.

But that on the good ground, are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the Word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with Patience.



THESE Words are part of S E R M. IV. that Explication of the Parable of the Sower, which our Saviour was pleased to give to his Disciples in private, after he had spoken the Parable itself publicly in the hearing of the Multitude, without interpreting it to *Them* at

S E R M. all.
IV.

The *Reasons* of his making which great Difference between his Disciples and the rest of the People, were these two. 1st, Because the Disciples were intended by our Saviour to be Preachers of the word, to teach and explain it to *others*; and therefore it was very necessary that they should first be fully and particularly instructed, to understand every thing distinctly *themselves*. This reason we find our Saviour giving, St *Matt.* xiii. 51: where the Evangelist relating the same History of our Saviour's explaining this and some other Parables to his Disciples in private, adds at the conclusion, ver. 51; *Jesus saith unto them, Have ye understood all these things? They say unto him, yea Lord: Then said he unto them, Therefore every Scribe which is instructed into the Kingdom of Heaven, is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old: That is; He had given them these particular Instructions, expecting they should take care so to lay up his Doctrines in their Minds, as that they might be thoroughly qualified to be successful Preachers of the*


the Gospel, and be able upon all Occasions to bring forth out of their Memory, as out of a well-furnished Store-houſe, inſtructions ſuited to Perſons of all Capacities. So that thoſe who at preſent had not theſe things explained to them, might afterwards, as many of them as were capable, come to receive inſtruction from the Diſciples, who were ſent forth into the World for that very End. The *other* Reaſon of our Saviour's making ſo great a difference between his Diſciples and the Multitude, in explaining all things diſtinctly to the one, and ſpeaking to the other in Parables without the interpretation; was the unworthineſs and incapacity, at preſent, of the greater part of the mixt multitude, to hear and judge of his Doctrine. This Reaſon we find our Saviour giving, in the words a little before the Text; where, upon his Diſciples asking him the meaning of the Parable, he introduces his explication with theſe words, ver. 10; *Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of God; but to others in parables; that ſeeing they might not ſee, and hearing they might not*

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S E R M. *understand.* Which words at first Sight, may seem to ascribe the cause of this different treatment, not to the different Qualifications of the Persons, but merely to the absolute Will of God, whose pleasure it was to have it so; Which would be very difficult to reconcile with the Attributes of God, who declares himself to be no respecter of persons. But in the 13th chapter of *St Matthew*, where the same History is again related, we find the same words set down more at large, and explained so, as clearly to lay the blame upon the Persons themselves, and not upon any unwillingness in God to assist them: ver. 10; *The Disciples came and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto Them in parables? He answered, and said unto them, Because it is given unto You to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven, but to Them it is not given: For, whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance; but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even That he hath: Therefore speak I to Them in parables, because they seeing see not, and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand:*

derstand: That is, to the Disciples who attended to, and considered, and were desirous to practise his Doctrine, he continually explained things more and more; *to you that hear, shall more be given*, as St Mark expresses it; but the careless and prejudiced multitude, were neither worthy nor capable of such instruction; And then he adds, ver. 14; *And in Them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive; For this peoples heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed, lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.* In this larger and fuller account of the words, given by St Matthew, the defect appears plainly to be only in the people themselves: God, is always ready to heal them upon their Conversion; but they themselves are careless, and desire not to be converted; and the Prophecy is not a declaration of what God chooses to do on *his* part, but a Complaint

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S E R M. IV.  complaint of the peoples carelessness, incapacity, and unworthiness *to receive our Lord's instruction.* And in this Sense we find St Paul expressly interpreting the same Prophetical words, *Acts xxviii. 25*; when, upon the *Jews* neglecting and obstinately refusing to attend his preaching of the Gospel at *Rome*; after much patience, he at length left them, with this protestation; *Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the Prophet, unto our Fathers, saying, Go unto this people and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand, and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive.* So that our Saviour's forbearing to explain the Parable to the multitude, must by no means be understood as proceeding from any unwillingness in *Him* to give them all necessary instruction; but it was plainly only his putting in Practice that Rule himself, which he afterwards gave in direction to his Disciples, that they should not *cast their Pearls before Swine*, that is, before prejudiced and unworthy persons; lest thereby they should expose *Themselves* to injuries, and their *Doctrine* to contempt. 'Tis the very same case, as in the instance;

of his forbearing to work Miracles in his own Country; Not that he was more unwilling to convert those of his own Country than others; but because the unreasonable Prejudices and Obstinacy of those particular persons, made *Them* unworthy, and would have rendred the *Miracles themselves* useles. This seems to be the true account of our Saviour's forbearing to interpret the Parable to the Multitude; and it shows how dangerous a thing it is, to raise Doctrines from particular and single Texts of Scripture, without comparing them with other parallel places, which more fully represent the same sense under different Expressions.

THE Parable itself, of which the Text is part of the Explication, is a lively description of the nature and manner of the Preaching of the Gospel, and of the different Effects that the Doctrine of Christ has upon different Persons, according to their different Tempers, Dispositions, and Qualifications. God sent his Son into the World, to the intent that All men through him might be saved, and come to the knowledge of the Truth: Accordingly
our

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S E R M. our Saviour sent forth his Disciples with
 IV. an universal Commission, *Go ye into all the earth, and preach the Gospel to every creature.* This is represented by a Sower's going forth to sow his seed, and scattering it in *variety* of Places. (The Similitude is suited to the Capacity of the vulgar, and agreeable to the usual method of instruction in the *Jewish* Nation; that those among the multitude, who were well-disposed, might consider and enquire and be informed in the Doctrine by degrees; at the same time that the careless and unattentive, remained wholly ignorant; and they who were prejudiced and designed to cavil, might have no handle to do it.) Now, according to the intent of the Parable; Among Them who hear the preaching of the Gospel, there is great diversity; and the Effect it has upon them, according to their different tempers, is likewise very different. Some hear or read the Gospel with so little regard and attention, that it makes no impression at all upon their minds, but they immediately forget it; and though their own Vices be particularly described, and the danger
 of

of them shown, yet they never make the application to themselves, but, as St James expresse it, ch. i. ver. 23, *are like unto a Man beholding his natural Face in a glass, who beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was*: These persons our Saviour compares to the way-side, the beaten road, into which the Seed that fell upon it never entred at all, but was either trodden under feet and destroyed by them that passed over it, or else was picked up by the Birds of the Air. Others, when they hear the Gospel preached, are indeed at first moved by it with some warmth of devotion, and embrace it chearfully; but, having no wise and settled resolutions, no firmness and constancy of Mind; upon the first Difficulties and Temptations that assault them, they very quickly fall away: These our Saviour describes under the notion of stony or rocky ground, where the Earth being very thin, and shallow, the Seed that fell into it soon sprung up indeed, but, for want of moisture and depth to take root, as soon as the Sun shined hot, it wither-

S E R M. withered away. Others, when the Gospel is preached to them, are convinced of the Truth and Reasonableness of the Doctrine, and, as often as they are exhorted to it, make some slight resolutions of obeying and living up to it: But the perpetually returning Cares and Business, the Covetousness, the Ambition and the Pleasures of the World, do so wholly take up their Thoughts and Attention, that they make no effectual improvement in the practice of Religion, and it has little or no real influence upon their Lives and Conversations: These our Saviour compares to Ground which brought forth Corn indeed, but together with it such a Number of Thorns and Weeds, as quickly over-ran and choaked it, so that it never came to any Perfection. These are the several ways, of which our Saviour warns us in this Parable, by which they who hear the constant preaching of the Gospel, may yet be guilty of a final miscarriage; through Carelessness, and Inattention; through want of Constancy, and good Resolution; through the Cares and Covetousness and Pleasures of the World:

So that there was great reason for the cau-
tion he gives his Disciples at the Con-
clusion of his Discourse upon this Subject,
ver. 18 ; *Take heed how ye hear.* Lastly ;
Others there are, who, being of a truly
good and virtuous disposition, willingly
and cheerfully embrace the Word of God,
believe it heartily, adhere to it steadily,
obey it sincerely, and show forth the ef-
fects of it in the constant practice and
persevering course of a good Life : And
These our Saviour in the Text compares
to *good ground*, which brought forth much
fruit ; *That on the good ground, saith he,*
are they, which in an honest and good heart,
having heard the word, keep it, and bring
forth fruit with Patience,

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THE general intent and meaning of
the Parable being thus explained ; the
Words themselves offer to us the following
things, worthy our particular Observa-
tion.

I. *First* ; T H A T the first and principal
thing required, to qualify a man and
make him meet for the Kingdom of God,
is an *honest and good heart*, a true and right
Disposition, an upright and sincere inten-
tion :

S E R M. tion: *That on the good ground, are they,*
 IV. *which in an honest and good Heart.* Our

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 Saviour was sent as a Light into the World, to recover men out of the Darkneſs and Slavery of Sin, into the glorious Liberty of the Children of God: But, as the Brightneſs of the *Sun* itſelf diſcovers no Objects to Them, who have no Organs of Seeing to diſcern its Light; ſo the Doctrine of the Goſpel has no effect, no influence upon Thoſe, whoſe hearts are not honeſt and ſincere, to entertain it in the Love thereof. God is not obliged to enlighten ſuch, as are wilfully blind; and which reſuſe to ſearch after and diſcern the Truth, becauſe they *have pleaſure in unrighteouſneſs*: But they who are deſirous to *do his Will*, ſhall know and underſtand it; and be enabled to praſtiſe it acceptably. There is in the temper and diſpoſition of ſuch perſons, a likeneſs and congruity, with the everlaſting Law of Righteouſneſs; The Nature and Commands of God, the Divine Life both in Heaven and in Earth, are agreeable to them; and the Doctrine of the Goſpel is embraced by them with Complacency, as  
 Truth





Truth is received by Children who have never been prejudiced thro' ill Habits, and as good Seed springs up and flourishes immediately, in its natural and proper Soil. This honest and good heart, this Innocency and Simplicity of Mind, this freedom from Malice, from evil and corrupt designs; is the disposition which our Saviour requires, and which he esteems so highly, when in the parallel place to the Text, upon the occasion of young Children being brought unto him, he declares that *of such is the Kingdom of God.* 'Tis the temper of *Nathanael*, that *Israelite* indeed, of whom our Saviour bore this Testimony, even *before* his acknowledging *Him* to be the *Messias*, that there was *no guile in him.* 'Tis the disposition of the *Bereans*; who, when Christ was preached to them by the Apostles, to be He of whom all the Prophets witnessed; immediately *they searched the Scriptures*, the Writings of the *Old Testament*, *daily*; to see *whether those things were so*, or not. 'Tis the temper of *Zachæus*, who, upon our Saviour's preaching Repentance unto Life; without delay declared, because his

Profession


S E R M. Profession had been such as in all probability had exposed him to many Temptations of Extortion, that *the half of his goods he gave to the poor, and, if he had wronged any man, he restored him four-fold.* In a word, 'tis that preparation of heart, with which St *Peter's* Auditors came, when by the strength and evidence of his Discourse, there was in one day added to the Church about three thousand Souls: concerning whom it is said, *Acts* ii. 47, that *the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved:* The original word does not signify *such as should be saved*, but *such as are or were saved*; that is, such as were disposed, (as the Apostle in the same place expresses it,) to *save themselves from that untoward generation*; such as were *ready in Order* (τεταγμένοι) (as the like persons are elsewhere described) to receive the Doctrine of eternal Life. All which, with other the like Expressions, must not be understood to signify, as if such persons were already actually indued with *all* Christian Virtues and Graces; (For these indeed are not the preparations *for*, but the Fruits and Effects

fects of the Spirit;) but they signify only the general capacity or aptness, a willingness or suitability of Disposition, to attain and improve them. Which Disposition, under the disadvantages of ignorance and want of Instruction, of prejudice and error, and of variety of Temptations without suitable assistances to overcome them; may easily lie hid, and not discover itself; nay, may sometimes seem to be extinguished in great measure, by contrary Practices; But, upon due instruction and reasonable conviction, it will not fail to appear and exert itself. Thus St *Paul* himself was once not only an Unbeliever, but a Persecutor also of the Church of God; But yet even *Then* there was a sincerity in him, which made him act zealously, though in a wrong way; and afterwards he easily found mercy, because he had done it ignorantly in Unbelief. The best and most innocent Understanding may, for want of due Instruction, be led astray with prejudices; but it will not become obstinate and incorrigible: The best and most fruitful Soil, while it continues uncultivated, may not

S E R M.  
IV.  


S E R M. *only* bring forth no good fruit, but moreover be over-run with weeds and thorns; yet being capable of amendment and just improvement, it will not fail, upon due cultivation, to discover its fruitfulness. *The earth*, as St Paul expresses it, *which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God: But that which* (after this, still) *beareth thorns and briers, is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned; Heb. vi. 7: The contrary temper, is That of those, who after all reasonable means of conviction, still continue incorrigible and unreformed; these have no principle of sincerity and upright intention in them, by which they may be recovered and saved; (these are none of the Sheep of Christ;) but their End must be, unavoidable Destruction.*

THE Application therefore of This Observation, is to All who profess the Religion of Christ. If no man, without an upright and sincere intention, can worthily receive the Doctrine of Christ, or is capable of becoming a true member of his

his *Kingdom on Earth*; What hope is there S E R M.  
for such, who *already* profess to have en- IV.  
tertained his Doctrine and to be his Dis-   
ciples, that they shall be judged worthy  
to be admitted into his *Kingdom in Hea-*  
*ven*; if, notwithstanding this Profession,  
they still continue to act with a dishonest  
and un sincere Heart? If in the *Progress*  
of a Christian life, they still want that  
first and most necessary Qualification,  
without which they could not worthily  
*begin* it, nor be duly prepared for so much  
as the *Admission or Entrance* into so excel-  
lent a State, into the Profession of so holy  
a Religion? If, instead of renouncing the  
Vanities and Temptations of the World,  
for the advantage and improvement of  
Religion; they on the contrary make Re-  
ligion only subordinate, to the Interests  
and Pleasures of the World? Surely the  
Hope of such Persons, is, as *Job* elegant-  
ly expresses it, like to a *Spider's Web*; and  
the *joy of the hypocrite, is but for a mo-*  
*ment.*

II. *Secondly*; THE *second* thing remark-  
able in the Words, is the Supposition they  
contain, that 'tis not sufficient that a man

S E R M. be of a good disposition in *general*, but  
 IV. 'tis moreover necessary in *particular*, that  
 he hear and entertain the Doctrine of  
 Christ: *That on the good ground, are they,*  
*which in an honest and good Heart, having*  
*heard the Word.* It is not sufficient that  
 the Soil be good, but it must also be sown  
 with good Seed: It is not sufficient that  
 the Eye is made capable of discerning  
 the Light, if God had not created *light*  
 in the World, to dispel that Darkness,  
 which at the Chaos sat on the Face  
 of the Deep. Christ is the true  
 Light, that is come into the World; and  
 every one that will not walk in darkness,  
 is indispensably obliged to receive His  
 doctrine. Mere Dispositions, Faculties,  
 and Capacities without improvement, may  
 possibly be very ineffectual; as is evident  
 from the extreme ignorance of some  
 whole Nations, even at this day. But  
 Learning and Instruction civilizes and cul-  
 tivates mens nature, raising it from sa-  
 vage to humane; and true religion im-  
 proves it still farther, and exalts it to di-  
 vine. Now there is no religion in the  
 World,


World, but the *Christian* only, that is at all able to furnish men with instructions sufficiently clear, with motives sufficiently weighty, with assistances sufficiently powerful, to overcome the Temptations of this present World; For, *who is he that overcometh the World, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?* and *This only is the victory that overcometh the World, even our Faith,* 1 Joh. v. 4; *Our Faith*, that is, our firm and stedfast belief and assurance, of the Pardon of past Sins through the merits of Christ, of the divine assistance for the future, of a resurrection from the dead, of a judgment to come, and of an eternal State of rewards or punishments hereafter. Nothing less than this, can effectually enable men to overcome the World: Except a man embrace therefore *This Faith, except he be born again of Water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God; Neither is there any other Name given under Heaven, by which we must be saved.* All that has been said upon This Head, must by no means be applied to any of those, to whom the Gospel was either never


S E R M.  
IV.  


S E R M. ver preached, or never faithfully and reasonably represented. For to whom *little* is given, of Them will not be *much* required: To such Persons, God will either in his own good time cause the *words* to be preached, *by which they and their houses shall be saved*; as he did to *Cornelius*, that sincerely pious and devout Centurion; or else he will finally judge them by other measures: For *the Judge of all the Earth* will do what is *right*, and with Equity shall he judge the Nations. But all such, to whom the Light of the Gospel has been manifested, are indispensably obliged to *walk by that Light*; and modern Unbelievers in Christian Nations act very unworthily, when they obstinately oppose that revealed Religion, from whence alone they have borrowed even the *Philosophy* they pretend to. For, (as is evident from the extreme ignorance of the whole Heathen World) 'tis from the *Christian Doctrine* only, that Unbelievers have Now borrowed all that knowledge, by which they would endeavour to set up mere nature (or rather absolute Scepticism) in opposition to Christ's Religion.

III. *Thirdly*;



III. *Thirdly*; THE next thing observable S E R M.  
 in the Words of the Text, is, that 'tis IV.  
 not sufficient that men hear and receive   
 the Doctrine of Christ, but they must also  
*keep or retain it*; Who *in an honest and*  
*good heart, having heard the word, keep*  
*it*: It must not be like Seed scattered  
 loose upon the Earth, which the Birds of  
 the Air pick up, or Passengers tread un-  
 der foot, or the first shower of rain  
 washes away; but it must be like that,  
 which entrencheth into the Earth, and abides  
 in it, and grows, and takes root therein.  
 It must be understood, and remembred,  
 and frequently meditated upon: The  
 Principles of Religion must be thorough-  
 ly imbibed by a man, and fixt in him,  
 and make deep and lasting impressions up-  
 on his Mind: They must be converted,  
 as it were, into the *Food and Nourishment*  
 of his Soul; and become, its very Habit  
 and Temper: They must be in him *Ac-*  
*tive* and Ruling Principles, the first springs  
 of all his Motions, and the continual  
 guides and directors of all the Actions of  
 his Life. This is what St *John* expresses  
 by the Seed *remaining* in him, 1 *Job*. iii. 9;


S E R M. *Whosoever is born of God, doth not commit*  
 IV. *Sin; for his Seed remaineth in him; and*  
 *he cannot Sin, because he is born of God.*  
 St Matthew, in the parallel place, in the explication of the same Parable, expresses it by hearing and *understanding* the Word, St Matthew xiii. 23; i. e. meditating upon it and studying it, so as to make it a principle of Life and Action; For so in Scripture-phrase, it is always to be lookt upon as a general Rule of interpretation; that the *Fear of the Lord, That only is Wisdom*; and to *depart from evil, That only is acknowledged to be Understanding*; And otherwise, he is That *foolish* person, whom our Saviour describes as building his house upon the Sand. For so, in Scripture-phrase, not Ignorant *Persons only* and Infidels, are stiled Fools and Unbelievers; but *Fools*, in Scripture-expression, more commonly signifies, such persons as *act not* according to what they *know*; and *Unbelievers*, such as *practise not* what they profess to *believe*.

IV. *Fourthly*; THEREFORE, Our Saviour adds further, that Those whom he compares to good ground, must, if they will  
 justify

justify that Character, make evidence of S E R M.  
it finally by their *bringing forth Fruit*: IV.  
*Who having heard the Word, keep it, and*  
*bring forth Fruit.* This is the only cer-  
tain and infallible Mark, of the Truth  
and Sincerity of all that is supposed to  
have gone before; the only substantial  
evidence, of their having an honest, and  
good Heart; of their embracing, and be-  
lieving the Word; of their keeping, and  
having meditated upon it. All *other* Signs  
and Proofs may fail; all *other* marks and  
characters whatsoever of a good Christian,  
may prove erroneous and deceitful, not  
only to others, but very possibly in great  
measure even to a man's self also; except  
*This* only, of his *bringing forth the Fruits*  
*of the Spirit*; that is, living in the Ha-  
bitual Practice of all Christian Virtues;  
which St *Paul* calls walking *worthy* of  
*God who has called us*, and *worthy* of the  
*vocation wherewith we are called.* And  
*This* is an evidence, which can never  
fail; For the *Effect* must always of ne-  
cessity be proportionable, to the nature  
and operations of the *Cause* that produ-  
ced it; and there can be no mistake in  
judging

S E R M. judging of the goodness of a *Cause*, from  
 IV. the excellency of its proper and immediate *Effects*. *A corrupt Tree, cannot bring forth good fruit; neither do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles;* St Matt. vii. 16. So that the Rule our Saviour gives for the tryal of true and false *Prophets*, holds still more evidently in judging of good and bad *Christians*, and especially in the judgment men are to pass upon *Themselves* and concerning their own estate; *By their Fruits* they may know it: And St *John's* determination is liable to no evasion or misinterpretation, 1 *Job*. iii. 10; *In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the Devil; Whosoever doth not righteousness, is not of God, neither he that loveth not his Brother.*

V. *Fifthly*; 'TIS observable that our Saviour concludes his Character of a good Christian, with the addition of *Patience*, as a Qualification necessary to be joined with all those hitherto mentioned: *Having heard the word, they keep it, and bring forth fruit with Patience*: i. e. As Corn sown, if it be ever likely to come

to any Perfection, must take such deep S E R M.  
and firm root in the Earth, as not to be IV.  
scorched by Heat, nor withered by Cold,   
nor washed away with floods, nor choak-  
ed and over-run with Weeds; so a good  
Christian must be armed with *Patience*,  
to resist the assaults of Persecution, the  
Temptations of the World, the Entice-  
ments of bad Company, the Allurements  
of Pleasure and Profit, and the perpetual  
Treachery of his own corrupt Affections  
and inordinate Passions; 'till at length he  
obtains a title to that Promise of our Sa-  
viour, that he *shall be saved* because he  
has *endured unto the End*. *To them who  
by patient continuance in well-doing, seek  
for glory, and honour, and immortality;  
eternal life.*

*Lastly*, and to conclude; 'Tis worthy  
of remark, that *St Matthew*, in the pa-  
rallel place of his Gospel, adds to the  
Words of the Text, that of Those who  
kept the Word, and bore Fruit with pa-  
tience, *some brought forth an hundred-fold,  
some sixty, and some thirty*. And this de-  
notes to us these two things. *1st*, that  
those who embrace and obey the Gospel

S E R M. in sincerity according to their Power,  
 IV. though they have not the Capacity and  
 Ability of doing actually so much good in  
 the World, as others have; yet shall be  
 accepted according to the Integrity and  
 Sincerity of their Intention: Thus the  
 Servant who gained two Talents, was as  
 certainly admitted into his Master's joy,  
 tho' not into the same Proportion of it,  
 as he who had gained ten; and St Paul  
 argues, that *in a great house, there are not  
 only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of  
 wood and of earth; and some to honour, and  
 some to dishonour; by dishonour, meaning,  
 not uselessness and being wholly rejected, (as  
 some understand it,) but only a less Degree  
 of value and esteem, (as the nature and de-  
 sign of his similitude plainly requires.)*  
 Which tho' they be indeed *within* the  
 house, and not wholly excluded; yet no  
 man who has a worthy Sense of religion,  
 can long content himself with being of  
 that number, without desiring any fur-  
 ther improvement. For 2dly, This dis-  
 tinction of *some bringing forth an hundred-  
 fold, some sixty, and some thirty,* as on the  
 one hand 'tis an encouragement to the

*meanest* Persons, who are sincerely religious; so on the other hand it points out a very great advantage, which God has put into the Hands of *Those of greater Abilities*. Power and Authority, Honour and Dignity, Riches and Interest, are so many *Talents* committed to mens charge; which if they make use of to the Glory of God and the publick Good of Mankind, they thereby entitle themselves to a proportionably greater and more illustrious Reward; For *they that are wise, shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; but they that turn many to righteousness,* (by great Example or Power, or any other commendable means,) shall shine with a yet brighter glory *as the stars for ever and ever.*

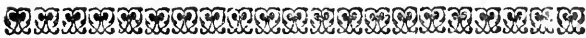






# S E R M O N V.

The End and Design of the  
*Jewish Law.*




GAL. ii. 15, 16.

*We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.*



HERE is nothing has given S E R M. V.  
greater occasion to false opinions, and unreasonable disputes  
in Religion; than the picking  
out single Texts of Scripture, and interpreting

S E R M. V.  preting them according to the first *sound* of the words, without considering the coherence and connection of the whole Discourse. Thus, *e. g.* if we search on one hand into the Ground of many of those mens Assertions, who love to aggravate the *corruption of humane nature*, and the *natural misery of mankind*; we shall find the true foundation of them, to be the applying those places of Scripture to the *whole bulk* of mankind, which are evidently and expressly spoken only of some of the *worst of men*: On the other hand the reason why others have so magnified the *natural faculties of men*, as that they have been thought to *diminish* and *detract from the grace of God*; is because they have applied those Texts to the *generality of men*, which are spoken only of the *most perfect Christians*. Again; the foundation of those mens opinion, who have extolled some *one* particular virtue in opposition to, or as an equivalent for, *all other* duties; is their having interpreted such places of Scripture concerning some *one* particular virtue, as are plainly meant of the *whole Christian Religion*: And the reason why others

others have thought *no* moral Virtues at all, necessary to be practised by Believers; is because they have applied those Texts to the most *essential* and *fundamental Duties* of the *Christian* Religion, which were intended only of the *Ceremonial* performances of the *Jewish* Law. Whoever therefore will so read and understand the Holy Scriptures, as from thence to determine truly what is necessary to be believed, and practised by Christians; must not only from single Texts, and those interpreted at pleasure, frame to himself or receive from Authority of Others, a Scheme of Religion; (for then there will be as many different Systems, as the fancies and prejudices of Men or different Bodies of Men are different;) but he must consider the nature and design of the several parts of the whole Revelation; he must consider the proper Signification of those terms and expressions, which were in use at the time when the Books of Scripture were written; and above all, he must attend to the coherence and connexion of the Author's Discourse, the occasion of his writing, and the true Scope and Intent of

S E R M. each passage, from whence he would deduce any Doctrine of Faith, or Rule of Practice. The *Gospels*, are a brief History of the Life of our Blessed Saviour; and contain in them, *1st*, the Terms of Conditions, upon which those who would *become* Subjects of the Kingdom of Christ, are to be admitted into that State; and *2dly*, the general Laws or Rules, to which those who do *already* profess themselves Christians, must conform their Lives. The Terms or Conditions, upon which men are to *become* Subjects of the Kingdom of Christ, are declared by *John the Baptist* and by our Saviour himself at his first Preaching, to be Faith and Repentance. The General Laws or Rules of Obedience, by which those who are *already* Subjects of his Kingdom, must govern their Lives; are delivered directly and principally in our Saviour's *Sermon upon the Mount*; but occasionally also urged in his *other Discourses*, and most lively expressed in the example of his Life: The *Sermon upon the Mount*, contains a particular Explication of the ten Commandments, which are the moral and eternal Law of God,

I

explain-

explaining the Duty and Obedience we S E R M.  
owe to *God*, and the Love and Charity V.  
we must perform to *men*; It contains  
also a *Vindication* of That Law, from the  
*false and corrupt* Glosses of the *Jewish*  
Doctors; and Exhortations to a more ex-  
alted, spiritual, and perfect manner of  
performing those Duties, than was before  
insisted on even by the *true* intent of the  
Law. The *Parables* and occasional Dis-  
courses of our Saviour, are chiefly to ex-  
plain the *nature*, and set forth the true  
*design* of the Gospel; which for the most  
part in those Discourses is called the  
*Kingdom of Heaven*, to express the great-  
ness and excellency of that Dispensation.  
And *lastly*, the History of his *Life*, is a  
most compleat pattern of *all Christian*  
*Virtues*, proposed plainly and familiarly  
to our Imitation: but more especially 'tis  
an example of *patience* under afflictions,  
of *resignation* to the will of God in all  
conditions, and of *contempt* of the world.  
Thus the Gospels contain a plain System  
of Christian Religion in general, enforced  
both by precept and example; and are  
therefore profitable to instruct us in all

S E R M. Righteousness, and to furnish us thro-  
 V. roughly unto all good Works. The *Acts*  
 of the Holy Apostles, contain the History of the Apostles Preaching and Doctrine, which was the same with what their Master had before taught, namely, Repentance and Obedience; together with an account of the Success of this their Ministry, and of the State of the Infant-Churches in those purest times, immediately after their being founded by the Apostles. The *Epistles* contain either *general* Exhortations to *all* Christians, in order to confirm and strengthen them in the Faith; or *particular* and *occasional* Discourses to *single* Churches, upon particular Controversies or Matters of Dispute. Those which contain *general* Exhortations to all Christians, are easy to be understood by all, who read them with a sincere Desire to be instructed in their Duty, or confirmed in their Faith: Those which are written upon *particular* questions of dispute, cannot be rightly understood, without first understanding the *matter* of those Disputes, and the *occasions* upon which the Epistles were written.

ten. Of this latter sort are many of St S E R M. Paul's Epistles, and especially This to the V. *Galatians*, and That to the *Romans*. Which because they relate almost wholly to a Controversy, that arose upon the very first planting of Christianity; they have in later times, for want of attending to the true occasion of their being written, been much misinterpreted, and by many wrested to their own destruction. And no Explication of *particular* Passages, can be of so much importance towards stating the Apostles true Sense, as giving in the first place a distinct View of the *general* Design of his *whole* Writings. In order therefore to the clearer understanding the true Design of these Epistles, it is to be observed, that before the coming of Christ, the *Jews* were the peculiar People of God, selected out of all the Nations of the earth to be the Standard of true Religion, the People among whom God would choose to place his Name, and over whom should continually watch the peculiar care of the divine Providence: *To them were committed the oracles of God*, Rom. iii. 2; *to them pertained the*

S E R M. *adoption, and the glory, and the covenants*  
 V. *and the giving of the law, and the service*  
 of God, and the promises; *Whose are the*  
*fathers, and of whom as concerning the*  
*flesh Christ came, who is over all God*  
*blessed for ever; Rom. ix. 4, 5. To them*  
*were committed the oracles of God; i. e.*  
*with them were intrusted all the Revela-*  
*tions of the Will of God, the Law and*  
*the Prophecies, as the people with whom*  
*God thought fit to deposit these things*  
*for the benefit of the World; to them*  
*they were committed as a light or stan-*  
*dard to which all Nations might flow,*  
*and in fact we find that Profelytes from*  
*all Nations attracted by the splendour of*  
*those great and mighty actions which*  
*God wrought for and among this people,*  
*did come in and embrace their Religion:*  
*To them pertained the adoption, i. e. they*  
*were honoured with the peculiar privi-*  
*lege of being accounted as the Sons or*  
*People of God, and of being accordingly*  
*under the more peculiar care and protec-*  
*tion of his providence. When the most*  
*high divided to the nations their inheri-*  
*tance, when he separated the Sons of Adam,*  
*he*



he set the bounds of the people according to S E R M.  
 the number of the children of Israel; for V.  
 the Lord's portion is his people, Jacob is  
 the lot of his inheritance; Deut. xxxii.  
 9; i. e. God so divided and settled the  
 nations of the earth, as to have the people  
 of the Jews in a more particular manner  
 under his own immediate Care and Pro-  
 tection; for the Lord has chosen Jacob un-  
 to himself, and Israel for his peculiar trea-  
 sure; Psal. cxxxv. 4. To them pertained  
 the glory; i. e. among them was the ark  
 and temple of God, the (Shecinah or) glo-  
 rious presence of the divine Majesty; In  
 Judah was God known, his name was great  
 in Israel; In Salem also was his tabernacle,  
 and his dwelling-place in Sion; Ps. lxxvi.  
 1, 2. To them pertained the covenants,  
 i. e. with them God entered solemnly in-  
 to covenant, that he would be their God  
 and they should be his people; and con-  
 firmed this covenant with the sacramental  
 seal of circumcision, and sprinkling of blood.  
 To them pertained the giving of the law,  
 and the service of God, and the promises;  
 i. e. their manner of worship was such as  
 was prescribed them in a wonderful and

S E R M. miraculous manner by God himself; and  
 V. their polity also was of divine Institution  
 and Appointment: *God shewed his word  
 unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments  
 unto Israel; He hath not dealt so with  
 any other nation, neither have the heathen  
 knowledge of his laws; Pf. cxlvii. 19, 20:*  
 To *them* was the law given, written on  
 tables of stone with God's own hand, and  
 to *them* were the prophets always sent with  
 inspired instructions. Inspired by the Spi-  
 rit of God to instruct them occasionally  
 in their duty, to warn them of impending  
 Judgments, and to exhort them to pre-  
 vent those Judgments falling upon them,  
 by a timely repentance; and to *them* par-  
 ticularly belonged all the promises contain-  
 ed in the law and in the prophets. Lastly,  
*Theirs were the fathers, and of them ac-  
 cording to the flesh Christ came, who is over  
 all God blessed for ever; i. e.* They were  
 the posterity of those Patriarchs, to whom  
 God had so often promised and sworn  
 by himself, *that in their seed should all the  
 nations of the earth be blessed;* and among  
 them was born that *Messias*, of whom so  
 great things had been prophesied and who  
 was therefore *the expectation of all the ends of*  
*the*

the earth. These great and glorious privileges, the later Jews did not make a right use of with Humility and Thankfulness, but valued themselves too highly, and despised all other Nations as Aliens from the Commonwealth of *Israel*, Strangers to the covenant of promise, and scarce worthy of the protection of the divine Providence. The establishment of their law and ceremonies they imagined to be designed of God to continue for ever; and the promises contained in the law and the prophets they thought belong'd so peculiarly to themselves, that they would not believe any other people should ever be allowed to be partakers of them. When the Messiah himself should appear, they were perswaded that he was to establish an everlasting Kingdom over the *Jewish* nation only, and so become indeed the wonder and amazement, but not the Salvation of the *Gentiles*. This error of theirs, prevailed long even among our Saviour's Disciples themselves, and began then first to be reprov'd and oppos'd, when St *Peter*, having an express command from Heaven *not to count any man common*

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S E R M. *common or unclean, Acts x. 28; went and*  
 V. *preached the Gospel to Cornelius the centu-*  
*tion; being convinced that God was of a*  
*truth no respecter of persons, but that he*  
*had unto the Gentiles also granted repent-*  
*ance unto life; and that in every nation*  
*he that feareth God and worketh righte-*  
*ousness is accepted of him. Upon This the*  
*converted Jews, who had not yet laid*  
*aside their ancient prejudices, contended*  
*earnestly for the necessity of continuing*  
*to observe the ceremonial Law; teaching*  
*the brethren every where, and saying, ex-*  
*cept ye be circumcised after the manner of*  
*Moses, ye cannot be saved; Acts xv. 1.*  
 Against whom, the Apostles, assembled on  
 purpose in a Council at *Jerusalem*, made  
 a solemn determination; as is at large re-  
 lated, *Acts xv:* and accordingly we find  
 St *Paul*, (as being the Apostle to whom  
 was particularly committed the preaching  
 of the Gospel to the *Gentiles*) in all his  
 Writings earnestly exhorting his Gentile  
 Converts not to look upon themselves as  
 bound to observe the law of *Moses*, but  
 on the contrary *to stand fast in that liberty*  
*wherewith Christ had made them free.*  
 This

This is the true State of that controversy, which at the time when this Epistle to the *Galatians*, and that to the *Romans*, were written; was the chief and almost only considerable Subject of dispute in the Christian Church. Now that there are abundance of passages in these Epistles, which so plainly relate to this Controversy, that they cannot possibly be interpreted to any other sense, is very evident. A great part of the Epistle to the *Romans* is in express Words about the casting off the *Jews*, and the coming in of the *Gentiles*; particularly the ixth, xth, and xith Chapters; and the xivth Chapter is wholly imployed in shewing the unnecessariness of the *Jewish* observation of days, and distinction of meats; *One man esteemeth one day above another, another esteemeth every day alike*, ver. 5; and *I know and am perswaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of it self, but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean*; ver. 14. In the Epistle to the *Galatians*, the same Apostle warns his Gentile converts against such as would perswade them to Judaize;

*They*

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*They constrain you, saith he, to be circumcised, only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ; For neither do they themselves who are circumcised keep the law, but desire to have you circumcised that they may glory in your flesh; ch. vi. ver. 12, 13: He assures them that in Jesus Christ neither circumcision avail-eth any thing nor uncircumcision, but a new creature, ch. vi. ver. 15: He exhorts them earnestly, to stand fast in their Christian liberty, and not to be intangled again with the yoke of bondage: He tells them also how he openly rebuked St Peter at Antioch, for withdrawing and separating himself from the Gentiles, for fear of them which were of the circumcision; ch. ii. 12. All which, and many other the like passages referring so evidently and expressly to the fore-mentioned controversy, whether it was necessary or not for the new Converts to keep the Mosaick law; are a certain guide to direct us in interpreting the other parts of these Epistles. This therefore being premised in general, we may proceed to observe more particularly; that the Apostle designing on one*

*hand*


hand to magnify the Gospel by setting S E R M. forth its sufficiency to Salvation, and on the other hand to demonstrate the insufficiency and unnecessariness of the ceremonial Observances of the Jewish Law; does all along make use of such terms to express the Christian and Jewish Religion by, as may best serve to set forth the excellency of the one, and diminish the opinion which men had taken up of the necessity of the other. And

V.  


*1st*; BECAUSE the first and most fundamental duty of the Gospel, is believing in God, and believing that most perfect Revelation of his Will, which he has made to mankind by our Saviour Jesus Christ; whereas on the contrary the principal part of that Religion which the Judaizing Christians so earnestly contended for, was an anxious observance of the burdensome rites of the ceremonial Law; therefore the Apostle calls the Christian Religion *Faith*, and the Jewish Religion *the Law*. Rom. iii. 28; *Therefore we conclude, saith he, that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law*; His meaning is, It clearly appears from what

S E R M. he had already argued, that obedience to  
 V. the Christian Religion elsewhere called the  
 obedience of Faith, is sufficient to justify  
 a man, without observing the ceremonies  
 of the *Jewish* Law: And ver. 31. *Do we  
 then make void the law through faith?  
 God forbid: yea, we establish the law; i. e.*  
 Do we then, as some men object, by our  
 preaching up the Christian Religion disan-  
 nul and make void the law of God or  
 that revelation of his will which he  
 made to the *Jews*? No, we are so far  
 from that, that by introducing Christi-  
 anity we establish, confirm, and per-  
 fect the moral and immutable part of  
 the law much more effectually, than  
 the *Jewish* ceremonies were able to do:  
 Thus likewise in the epistle to the *Gala-  
 tians*, ch. iii. ver. 2; *This only would I  
 learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by  
 the works of the law, or by the hearing of  
 faith? Or as 'tis expressed, ver. 5; He  
 that ministreth to you the Spirit, and  
 worketh miracles among you, doth he it by  
 the works of the law or by the hearing of  
 faith?* I appeal unto you yourselves, who  
 contend so earnestly for the necessity of  
 keeping



keeping up the Jewish ceremonies, was it S E R M.  
by your observing the rites of the Jewish V.  
religion that ye received the gifts of the   
Holy Ghost, or by your being converted to  
the Christian? So also, Gal. iii. 24; *The  
Law, saith he, was our Schoolmaster to  
bring us unto Christ, that we might be jus-  
tified by faith; i. e. the Jewish dispensa-  
tion was appointed by God in condescen-  
sion to the weakness of that people, to  
fit them by degrees for the reception of the  
Gospel. And ch. ii. ver. 15; the Apostle,  
having rebuked St Peter openly for with-  
drawing himself from the Gentiles at An-  
tiock, he adds, in the words of the Text,  
We who are Jews by nature and not Sinners  
of the Gentiles, knowing that a man is not  
justified by the works of the law, but by the  
faith of Jesus Christ, even we have belie-  
ved in Jesus Christ, that we might be justi-  
fied by the faith of Christ, and not by the  
works of the law; i. e. if we our selves,  
saith he, who were born and educated in  
the Jewish Religion, being convinced that  
that Religion was not able to justify us in  
the Sight of God, have thought it neces-  
sary to imbrace the Gospel of Christ, in  
hopes*

S E R M. hopes to be justified thereby; how much  
 V. less reason have you to compel the *Gentiles*,  
 who were never brought up at all in the  
*Jewish* Religion, to begin to conform  
 themselves to the manners of the *Jews*,  
 after their conversion to Christianity?

2dly, BECAUSE the Christian religion teaches us to expect salvation not from our own merits, but from the grace of God, that is, according to the terms of that new and gracious Covenant wherein God has promised to accept of sincere Repentance and Amendment, instead of perfect unfinning Obedience; whereas on the contrary the *Jews* depended upon their exact performance of the works of the law; therefore the Apostle calls the Christian religion *Grace*, and the *Jewish* he stiles *Works*; Rom. xi. 5, 6; So then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of *Grace*; i. e. though the nation of the *Jews*, having rejected the gracious offer of the Gospel, are thereupon rejected from being the people of God, yet hath God reserved to himself a remnant from among them, even those who have embraced this grace of God,  
 which

which is the Gospel of Christ. *And if it be by Grace*, says he, *then is it no more of works*; that is, if it be upon account of their having embraced the Christian Religion, that they are reckoned the peculiar people of God, then is not this privilege any longer annexed to the professors of the Jewish religion; *Otherwise grace is no more grace*; i. e. otherwise the Christian Religion is in vain, and not what it pretends to be, the grace of God. Thus also, ch. vi. ver. 14; *Sin shall not have the dominion over you, for ye are not under the law but under grace*; i. e. ye are not under the Jewish Religion, but under the Christian. So likewise in the Epistle to the Galatians, ch. v. ver. 4; *Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace*; i. e. whosoever will needs retain the Jewish Religion, he takes upon him to fulfil the whole law; forsaking the gracious dispensation of the Christian Religion, and therefore Christ shall be of no effect unto him. Again,

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S E R M. 3dly, BECAUSE the duties of the Christian Religion are almost wholly moral and Spiritual, respecting the inward disposition of the heart and mind; whereas on the contrary the ceremonies of the *Jewish* law were for the most part external; and, as the Apostle to the *Hebrews* stiles them, carnal ordinances, respecting chiefly the outward purification of the body; therefore the Apostle calls the Christian Religion *Spirit*, and the *Jewish* he stiles *Flesh*. Thus in the Epistle to the *Romans*, ch. viii. ver. 3, 4; *For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the Flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for Sin condemned Sin in the flesh, That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit; i. e.* Whereas the *Jewish* Religion, because of its outward and carnal ordinances was weak and insufficient to make men truly righteous, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to offer up himself a sacrifice for the Sins of mankind, established the Christian Religion, which purifying throughly the whole heart and

I

mind,

mind, and purging the conscience from dead works, might through the grace and mercy of God avail to justify men from all things, from which they could not be justified by the law. Thus also in the Epistle to the *Galatians* iii. 3; *Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh? i. e.* Are ye so weak as to think, that after ye have embraced the Gospel of Christ, ye can become yet more perfect by observing the ceremonies of the *Jewish* law.

THIS is evidently the true meaning of the Terms, *Faith* and *Works*, the *Law* and *Grace*, the *Spirit* and the *Flesh*, in these Epistles; and under these Terms the whole design of his discourse, is plainly nothing else but to show; *That*

*First*, THE *Jewish* Religion having proved insufficient to make men truly holy, as natural Religion also had before done, there was therefore a necessity of setting up another institution of Religion, which might be more available and effectual to that end. Now the setting up a new institution of Religion, necessarily implying the abolishing of the

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old, it follows that Christianity was not to be added to *Judaism*, but that *Judaism* was to be changed into Christianity, *i. e.* that the *Jewish* Religion was from thence forward to cease, and the Christian Religion to succeed in its room: this argument the Apostle insists upon in *ch. i. ii. v. vi. and vii.* to the *Romans*, and in *ch. i. and iv.* to the *Galatians*. In *ch. i. and ii.* of the Epistle to the *Romans*, he shows that the *Jewish* Religion had proved insufficient to make men truly holy, as the natural Religion had before done; in the *vth ch.* of that Epistle to the *Romans* and in the *1st* to the *Galatians*, he gives an account of the Institution of the Christian Religion, as more available and effectual to that end; in the *viith ch.* to the *Romans*, he shows that this new Institution of Religion necessarily implies the abolishing of the old one, and this he does from the similitude of a Woman's being bound by the Law to her Husband so long as he lives, but if her Husband be dead she is freed from the Law of her Husband; which Similitude he applies, ver. 4; *Wherefore my brethren ye also are become*

dead to the law by the body of Christ, that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God: In the ivth ch. to the Galatians he proves the same thing from the similitude of a young heir's being under a governour or tutor; ver. 1; *I say that the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a Servant, tho' he be Lord of all; But is under tutors and governours until the time appointed of the father; Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world; But when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem those that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of Sons; i. e.* The Jewish Law was an Institution of Religion adapted by God in great condescension to the weak apprehensions of that people; but when the fulness of time was come, God sent his Son Jesus Christ to institute a more perfect form of Religion, after the settlement of which in the World the former dispensation was to

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S E R M. V.  cease: And that it must needs do so, is evident also from the nature of the thing itself; For as after remission of Sin obtained by the sufficient Sacrifice of Christ, there needed no more legal Sacrifices to be offered for Sin; so in all other its ritual parts, the first Covenant was in course taken away by establishing the second; there being necessarily *a disannulling of the Commandment going before, for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof*; Heb. vii. 18. *That*

*Secondly*; T H E Summ and Essence of all Religion is Obedience to the moral and eternal Law of God. Since therefore the ceremonies of the *Jewish* Law were never of any esteem in the Sight of God, any otherwise than as they promoted this great end, and prepared mens hearts for the reception of that more perfect Institution of religion, wherein God was to be worshipped and obeyed in Spirit and in truth; 'tis manifest that when this more perfect institution of Religion was settled, the former and more imperfect one was to cease: This argument the  
Apostle



Apostle insists on in the i<sup>id</sup> ch. to the *Romans*, and in the iii<sup>id</sup> to the *Galatians*; in the i<sup>id</sup> to the *Romans* he shows that every institution of Religion, and particularly the *Jewish*, was no otherwise of any esteem in the sight of God, than as it promoted that great end of obedience to his moral and eternal Law; *For circumcision, says he, verily profiteth if thou keep the law, but if thou be a breaker of the law thy circumcision is made uncircumcision; therefore if the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision? And shall not uncircumcision which is by nature, if it keep the law, judge thee who by the letter and circumcision dost transgress the law? For he is not a Jew which is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh; But he is a Jew which is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart in the Spirit and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men but of God; ver. 25. to the end.* In the iii<sup>id</sup> chapter to the *Galatians* he argues, that the *Jewish* religion having been thus instituted only to prepare men for that o-

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bedience to the eternal Law of God, which was to be the summ and essence of the Christian Religion; it follows that when this latter and more perfect institution took place, there was no need of continuing the former: *The law, saith he, was added only because of transgressions, till the seed should come, to whom the promise was made; v. 19. and 23: and before faith came, men having been kept under the law, shut up only unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed; Wherefore the law was our School-master to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith; But therefore, after that faith was come, they were no longer to be under That Law. That*

*Thirdly; T H E Religion of Abraham was acceptable to God, before the giving of the Law; the Scripture saying expressly that the Gospel was preached before unto Abraham: and consequently it could not but be acceptable likewise, after the abolishing of the Law.*

*Lastly; T H A T by the posterity of Abraham, were not meant strictly those who descended from Abraham according to the flesh; but the chil-*

dren of the promise (that is, *as many as* S E R M. *are of the faith of Abraham*) shall be V. counted for the seed: That the true religion therefore and service of God, was not to be confined always to the nation of the *Jews*, who were the posterity of *Abraham* according to the flesh; but the *Gentiles* also, which believe, have attained to righteousness, *even the righteousness which is of faith*; That is; Those of all nations as well *Gentiles* as *Jews*, who embrace the Gospel, which is the same with the Religion of *Abraham*, shall be justified with faithful *Abraham*. And this Argument the Apostle insists upon in the *ixth*, *xth*, and *xith* chapters of the Epistle to the *Romans*, and in the *ivth* to the *Galatians*. These are the sum of the Arguments which the Apostle makes use of in these two Epistles, to prove against the Judaizing Christians, that there was no necessity of retaining the *Jewish* Religion together with the Christian. And from the largeness, strength, and force of these Arguments we have again another convincing proof, that the determination of this question is indeed the principal, if


S E R M. not the only scope and design of the A-  
 V. postle in these Epistles: For nothing can  
 be more absurd than to suppose, that the  
 Apostle should most strongly and largely  
 demonstrate a thing which he did not de-  
 sign to write about at all; or on the other  
 hand that he should design to write about  
 a thing and make it the subject of his  
 Discourse, and yet prove it by such in-  
 tricate and obscure arguments, as the  
 wisest and cunningest of men should ne-  
 ver be able to reconcile either with the  
 rest of the Scripture or with themselves.  
 And these are they, who in the *ixth* chap-  
 ter to the *Romans*, and in so many other  
 mistaken places of these Epistles, are cal-  
 led predestinate, elect, the election, and  
 the like.

AND NOW from what has been said,  
 I shall, in order to practice, draw two or  
 three useful inferences; and so con-  
 clude. And


*1st*; FROM hence it appears, that tho'  
 the essence of Religion be eternally and  
 immutably the same, yet the form and  
 institution of it may be and often has  
 been changed. The essence of all Reli-  
 gion

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gion is Obedience to that moral and eternal Law, which obliges us to imitate the Life of God in justice, mercy, and holiness, that is, to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world. This is the summ of natural Religion, as appears from the Discourses of those wiser Heathens, who were freest from prejudice and superstition; This was the summ of the *Jewish* Religion, as appears from the frequent and earnest protestations of God to that people, by his servants the Prophets; and this also is the summ of Christian Religion, as St *Paul* expressly asserts; *Tit.* ii. 12. But though Religion itself be thus immutably the same, yet the form and institution thereof may be different. When natural Religion, because of its difficulty and obscurity in the present corrupt estate of human nature, proved ineffectual to make men truly religious; God left them no longer to the guidance of their reason only, but gave them first the Patriarchal and afterwards the Mo-  
 saick dispensation; and when This also, by reason of its being burdened with so many ritual observances, proved ineffec-  
 tual

S E R M. V.  tual to the same great end, God abolished This form of Religion also, and instituted the Christian. In all which proceeding there is no reflection at all upon the immutable nature of God: For as the divine nature is in the truest and highest sense unchangeable, so Religion itself in its nature and essence is likewise unchangeable; But as the capacities, the prejudices, and the circumstances of men are different; so the institution and outward form of that Religion, which in its essence is always the same, may be and hath been changed by the good pleasure of God.

2dly; IF the whole and only design of St Paul, in these Epistles, to the *Romans* and *Galatians*, be to prove, that God *hath* indeed made this change, of the institution, of Religion from the *Jewish* to the Christian; and to vindicate his justice in so doing; then we ought never so to understand any passages in these Epistles, as if the Apostle designed to magnify *one* Christian *Virtue* in opposition to all or any of the rest; but only that he would set forth the perfection of the Virtues of the *Christian* Religion, without the ceremonies

monies of the *Jewish*. Thus when he S E R M.  
 tells us that we are justified by faith with- V.  
 out works, we must by no means inter-   
 pret it, as some have absurdly done, of the  
 Faith of the Christian Religion in oppositi-  
 on to the Works of the Christian Religion;  
 but of the Faith of the Gospel, in opposition  
 to the external works of the *Jewish* Law:  
 For so the Apostle himself expressly ex-  
 plains it; *Gal. v. 6*; *In Christ Jesus neither*  
*circumcision availeth any thing nor uncir-*  
*cumcision, but faith which worketh by love;*  
*i. e.* it is now of no importance whether  
 a man observes the works of the *Jewish*  
 Religion or no, if he maintains but the  
 faith and the obedience of the Christian.  
 But as to the Works of the Christian  
 Religion, the same Apostle every where  
 urgeth *their* necessity; and particular-  
 ly the five last chapters of the Epistle  
 to the *Romans*, are a most earnest ex-  
 hortation to be fruitful therein.

3dly; FROM hence it follows that there  
 is no contradiction between St *Paul* and St  
*James*, when the one says, that *a man is*  
*justified by faith without works*, and the  
 other says, that *faith without works can-*  
 not

S E R M. *not justify*; For the one speaking professedly of the works of the *Jewish* Religion, and the other of the works of the Christian, 'tis plain that the Faith of the Christian Religion may avail to justify a man without the Works of the *Jewish* Religion, which is the assertion of *St Paul*; though it cannot do so without the works of the Christian Religion, which is the assertion of *St James*; So that there is no other difference between these two great Apostles, than as if a man should say, that believing the Christian Religion is sufficient to salvation without obeying the law of *Moses*, but that it cannot be so without obeying the commands of *Christ*.

*Fourthly*; FROM hence we may infer, that when any two passages of Scripture seem contrary one to another, whereof the one be controversial and the other plain and moral; we must always endeavour to accommodate the controversial passage to the plain one, and not the plain one to the controversial. And the reason is evident; because the plain moral passage cannot be mistaken, being interpreted according to the most obvious and literal sense; but  
the



the sense of the controversial passage cannot be rightly understood, without understanding the particular controversy about which it was written.

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*Fifthly* and *Lastly*; IF St Paul so severely treated the Judaizing Christians, as to call them perverters of the Gospel of Christ, and esteem them as preachers of another Gospel; then let us also take heed lest on the authority of men we preach or obey at any time any other Gospel, than what Christ and his Apostles preached and obeyed. If those men, who together with the simplicity and spiritual nature of the Christian Religion, would needs retain also those ceremonial observances which God himself had appointed under the *Jewish* dispensation; were accounted so much to trouble the Church of God, that the Apostle declares that though it were an *Angel* from Heaven that should preach any such doctrine, he should be accursed: then let us take care, lest in a higher degree we be found guilty of the same crime, if with the great and moral duties, those weightier matters of the law, we not only equal the outward and ceremonial part of Religion,  
but

S E R M. but also prefer it before them ; accounting  
V. our selves sufficiently religious if we have  
but the *form* of Godliness, though we deny the *power* thereof. But let no man deceive you, saith St *John* ; He that *doth* righteousness, *and he only*, shall be accounted righteous in the sight of God.





# S E R M O N VI.

The Practice of Virtue the greatest  
Security against our Enemies.



I P E T E R iii. 13.

*And who is he that will harm you, if you  
be followers of that which is good?*




THE Apostle having in the former S E R M.  
part of this Chapter exhorted us VI.

to the practice of several particular duties; proceeds in the 10th Verse, to enforce his exhortations with *such* motives, as are apt to work *most* effectually on the minds of men: He inforces it with the consideration of the  *blessing*  and  *happiness* , that attends the performance of

S E R M. those duties. *He that will love life, faith he, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile; let him eschew evil and do good, let him seek peace and ensue it; for the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are opened unto their prayers; but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.* To which words, cited out of the 34<sup>th</sup> Psalm, the Apostle adds in the words of the text, *And who is he that will harm you if ye be followers of that which is good?* The word in the original signifies indifferently, either *will* or *shall* harm you; and so the Text plainly contains this double proposition: That if a man be a follower of that which is good, 'tis *probable* Men *will* not have any desire to harm him; and *if* they *would*, yet 'tis *certain* no man *shall* have any power to do it: 'Tis the most likely method to make all men our *friends*; and if it does not that, yet 'tis the most certain security that they shall not be able to hurt us, though they be enemies.

I. *First*; IF a man be a follower of that which is good, *i. e.* a sincere practitioner of universal righteousness, 'tis *pro-*

*greatest security against our Enemies.* I 3 I

nable no man will have any desire to harm S E R M. VI.  
him. And that for these two Reasons,   
1st, because God in the wise dispensations  
of his Providence does frequently incline  
mens hearts to be favourable to those that  
are truly and sincerely good; And 2dly,  
because Goodness does of its own nature,  
tend to the gaining mens affections and  
making them our friends.

1st, GOD himself, in the wise Dis-  
pensations of his providence, does fre-  
quently incline mens hearts to be favoura-  
ble to those who are truly and sincerely  
good; Whether he does this at any time  
directly by his own immediate power, or  
by the secret disposition of natural and  
second causes; by the interposition of more  
or fewer instruments; or without using  
any at all, is not material to enquire; for  
*natural* causes are but *his* Instruments.  
Certain it is, that he in whose hand the  
hearts of all men are, as the Scripture every  
where testifies, can, when he pleases, by  
*any* of these ways, give us favour in their  
Sight, and make even our enemies to be  
at peace with us.

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Secondly, VIRTUE and goodness does in its own nature tend to the gaining mens affections and making them our friends; it forceth necessarily a certain love and veneration from all men, and challengeth honour even from those who will not imitate what they are forced to respect; So that he who is truly and sincerely virtuous, must be, as most certainly acceptable to God, so in all probability approved of men. *Prov. iii. 3, 4; Let not mercy and truth forsake thee; bind them about thy neck, write them upon the table of thine heart: So shalt thou find favour and good understanding, in the sight of God and Man.* The practice of Virtue and true Religion, is a conformity to those eternal rules of justice and righteousness, which are as unchangeable as the difference of Good and Evil, being founded in the nature of God and of things: 'Tis also an imitation of the actions of God himself. And as no man is so stupid as not to admire the perfections of the divine nature, when he considers them abstractedly in God, so he cannot but pay a proportionable respect to whatever he sees bear their resemblance in men.

Hence

Hence virtue is of all things upon Earth S E R M.  
the most lovely and venerable; approving VI.  
itself whether men will or no, to their reason and judgment: And especially where it is most conspicuous; as in the Lives of virtuous and religious Governours, who then most illustriously appear the true Vicegerents of God, when That Power which they receive *from* him, they imploy and exercise in imitation *of* him. But 'tis likewise true in proportion, even in the *meanest* persons; that Virtue and Piety, wherever they are found, necessarily command esteem and honour: And this not only from good and religious men; but even vicious persons themselves, tho' they will not *do* righteousness, yet commonly they cannot forbear giving it its true character and commendation in others. The Officers who were sent out by the Pharisees to apprehend our Saviour, could not forbear declaring, that he spake as never man spake; and the *Roman* Governour, when he gave Sentence that he should be crucified, could not at the same instant forbear openly professing that he found no fault in him. The very worst of men cannot

SERM. chuse but have a good Opinion of that  
 VI. virtue, which the dominion of their lusts  
 will not *suffer them to practice, or which*  
*their present temporal Interest* compels them  
 to discountenance. In any business of im-  
 portance, much rather would they imploy  
 a righteous and conscientious person, than  
 any of the companions and partakers of  
 their Vices. In a Word; they cannot but  
 frequently wish that they themselves were  
 the men they are not; and pray with *Ba-*  
*laam*, that tho' they imitate not the *life*,  
 yet at least they might *die the death of the*  
*Righteous, and that their last end might*  
*be like his.*

FURTHER, Religion and Virtue *must*  
 naturally tend to the gaining mens affe-  
 ctions and making them our friends; be-  
 cause it renders a man evidently both a pro-  
 fitable member of the publick, and like-  
 wise useful to all men in whatever *private*  
 relation they stand to him. It makes him  
 modest and humble, peaceable and submis-  
 sive to his *superiours*, in all just and rea-  
 sonable instances. To his *equals* he is just  
 and faithful, using all plainness and sincer-  
 ity in his dealings: In his conversation  
 injuring



injuring and abusing no man; but with gentleness and forgiveness, melting the hearts even of his enemies, and making them to be at peace with him. To his *inferiours* he is gentle and condescending; not oppressing the weak, nor dealing hardly with those that are under his Power; but encouraging them by his example in the ways of Virtue, and in all kind of exigencies, assisting and relieving them to the utmost of his Ability. This is the behaviour of a truly religious person in all relations; a behaviour, which not only gains esteem as far as its good effects actually extend, but which raises admiration in us even when we meet with it in the History of past and far distant ages, where 'tis manifest we can have no concern for the events of things, nor prejudices concerning the Characters of Persons: Nay, which we cannot but commend, even though it happens to be *against* our present Interest; for the same reason, as on the contrary men cannot but hate base Actions and dislike unworthy Persons, even at the same time that perhaps they profit by them. But here it is obvious to inquire;

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S E R M. If these things be so, how then comes it  
 VI. to pass that good men have so often been  
 hated and persecuted in the world? How  
 comes it to pass that men zealous and  
 eminent for Piety, have in all ages suffered  
 so much upon the account of Virtue and  
 true Religion? Upon this it may be  
 proper to observe, *1st*, that All sufferings  
 even of men zealously religious, are not  
 upon the account of God and Religion.  
 If men through heat and false Zeal, facti-  
 ously at any time disturb the peace, the  
 order and quiet of their Country; if they  
 seditiously oppose lawful Authority, and  
 spread Doctrines inconsistent with civil  
 Government, or with good Manners; such  
 as are several of the principles, and has  
 frequently been the practice of the Church  
 of *Rome*; and be punished for so doing;  
 this is not suffering for Virtue's sake. *2dly*,  
 'Tis to be observed, that when the best  
 and most truly pious men are hated and  
 persecuted, 'tis not because Virtue itself  
 is not always amiable, but because the  
 persecutors mistake through their own  
 wicked prejudices, and look upon the best  
 of men as profane and irreligious. Of  
 this

this kind were all the persecutions of the best and purest Christians in the primitive times: 'Tis certain these men were eminently virtuous and religious, and 'tis certain they suffered merely upon that account; but then 'tis also as certain, that those by whom they suffered, did not persecute them because they thought them religious, but because through their own Idolatrous and wicked prejudices they took them for persons most profane. They did not persecute them because they thought them to be worshippers of the *true* God, but because they found them to be despisers of their *false* ones. This made them implacably persecute that Doctrine, the evidence and conviction, the Holiness and Excellency of which, if they would have opened their eyes, they could not possibly have resisted. Another Reason likewise why the best of Men may be insulted and persecuted, is because it may happen to serve a present private interest of those who oppress them; notwithstanding that at the same time it cannot be denied, but in their judgment and conscience they must honour and respect them. This was plainly  
the



S E R M. VI. the case, in the condemnation of our Saviour. He was manifestly innocent of the crimes laid to his charge, and *Pilate* knew him to be so; but then 'tis also manifest that he did not condemn him because he was innocent, but because he was willing to do the *Jews* a pleasure. Our Saviour's innocence was sufficient to convince the mind of his Judge, and 'twas only interest that prevailed over the force of that conviction. But 3dly, Supposing none of these to be the case; and that good men are sometimes persecuted and hated for this very reason only because they are known to *be* such; (which I think rarely happens:) yet *still*, (as in all moral Maxims, 'tis sufficient if they hold true for the greater part,) yet *still*, I say, Virtue is undoubtedly the most direct, the *most* certain and effectual means in the world, to gain the love and favour of all men, tho' possibly it may sometimes fail of obtaining that effect. *A soft answer*, saith *Solomon*, *turneth away wrath*, and 'tis certain that 'tis the most probable way to do it; though there may perhaps be some men in the world of so ill a disposition, that

that they will rather be inflamed than softened by the gentlest Entreaties. In like manner 'tis visible there may be, and 'tis too certain there have been and are some persons of so very ill a Spirit, that they will hate and persecute a righteous man for no other reason, but because they know him to be so: And therefore it must not be affirmed that religion and piety will every where at all times certainly and infallibly gain the favour and good will of all men, but only that 'tis the most probable and rational means that can possibly be used to that end, and that in most cases it really does so, though it will indeed sometimes prove otherwise. For this reason the Apostle, when he had said in the words of the Text, *Who is he that will harm you if ye be followers of that which is good?* adds immediately in the next words, *But and if ye suffer for righteousness sake, happy are ye, and be not afraid of their terrour, neither be troubled;* i. e. if ye be truly virtuous and religious, 'tis probable and you may reasonably expect that men will love and respect you; but if it should happen otherwise,

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wife, as it will sometimes do; if you should be hated and persecuted for Righteousness sake, let not this trouble or disquiet you; yea, rather think your selves happy, that you are accounted worthy to suffer for God, that is, for Virtue or Truth's sake; who can and will deliver you in his good time from your enemies, or if he does it not in this world, will reward you abundantly in the next. For,

II. *Secondly*; If we be followers of that which is good, 'tis certain no man, whatever his *will* be, shall have any *power* to do us any real harm: The Truth of which may appear from the following considerations.

*1st*, T H A T the providence of God does in a peculiar manner watch over the Righteous, to preserve them under All Events. *The Eyes of the Lord*, says Solomon, *are in every place, beholding the evil and the good*; Prov. xv. 3. As he at first created, so he still upholds, and rules all things by the word of his power; He orders and governs all the motions in the great fabrick of the world, and directs the operations of all causes to the effecting his designs. Whom he protects, no  
force

*greatest security against our Enemies.* I 4 I

force or counsel can hurt; for he break-  
eth the arms of the mighty, and bringeth  
the counsel of the wicked to nought. When

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When Sennacherib the Assyrian came against Jerusalem with that mighty host, he could put his hook in his nose, and his bridle in his lips, and cause him to return by the same way that he came; and when Balak King of Moab, trusting more to his Policy than Strength, sent for Balaam to curse the Israelites, he could turn that curse into a blessing: So that there was no enchantment against Jacob, nor divination against Israel. Indeed the whole history of the Jewish nation, from the coming out of Egypt, to their final captivity, is one continued and eminent instance of providence watching over the righteous. In the wilderness God led them like sheep, and kept them as the apple of his eye; He suffered no man to do them wrong, but reprov'd even Kings for their sake. When they came to enter into the promised Land, no force was able to stand before them; and when they were possessed of it, no nation was able to drive them out. Particularly when the whole body of them went up

to

S-E R M. to *Jerusalem* to appear before the Lord  
 VI. thrice in the year, their land was by  
 a peculiar providence preserved from  
 being invaded, as was promised them,  
*Exod. xxxiv. 24.* In a word; so long as  
 they kept God's Commandments, so that  
*he did not behold iniquity in Jacob, neither*  
*had seen perverseness in Israel*; they were  
 constantly happy and dwelt safely; and  
 though we often read indeed that they  
 were oppressed by their enemies and  
 brought to great distress, yet this never  
 happened but when they had first depart-  
 ed from their integrity; which made *Moses*  
 break out into that affectionate exclama-  
 tion, *Deut. xxxii. 30; How should one*  
*chace a thousand, and two put ten thousand*  
*to flight, except their rock had sold them,*  
*and the Lord had shut them up!* Now  
 the same Providence that preserves whole  
 nations, watches likewise proportionably  
 over single persons; For so we read of  
*David, 2 Sam. viii. 6, that the Lord pre-*  
*served him whithersoever he went;* And  
 though under the Gospel dispensation,  
 where immortality is more clearly brought  
 to light, and the promise of eternal life  
 more



more exprefs; temporal rewards and protection do not fo constantly attend the Righteous; yet does Providence by no means wholly neglect them even *here*: But God's eyes are ftill upon the ways of man, and he feeth all their goings. *Are not two Sparrows, fays our Saviour, fold for a farthing? and one of them fhall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbred; St Mat. x. 29.*

2dly; The enemies of a righteous man cannot do him any real harm, becaufe they cannot take from him any thing wherein his true and proper Happinefs confifts. His Happinefs confifts in imitating God, the Fountain and Spring of *all* Happinefs; and by copying out the divine perfections in a holy life, to become partaker of the divine nature: Nor can any thing poffibly make him miserable, but what feparates him from the favour and from the likenefs of God. Christians indeed are not Stoicks, nor can they be altogether infenfible of what happens to them in the prefent life; fo that did they wholly depend on that prefence of mind, that

S E R M. VI. that sufficiency which Virtue does of its own nature furnish the Soul with, it must after all be confessed, that the troubles and calamities of this life, notwithstanding all the boasts of some vain-glorious Philosophers, would be very grievous to them. But then if all these afflictions shall be abundantly recompensed to them both in this world and the next; if there be no man who has left father or mother, or houses or lands, for Christ's sake, who shall not in this present state receive not only equivalents but an hundred-fold, and in the end eternal life; where *then* is the real mischief of these losses? Persecution may deprive such persons of their present possessions; but it cannot despoil them of those *bags that wax not old, that treasure laid up for them in the heavens, where moth and rust corrupt not, and where thieves break not through and steal.* It may deprive them of all the comforts of this life, and even life it self; but it cannot hinder them of that eternal inheritance, the joyful expectation of which keeps them from being miserable here, as the enjoyment of it will make them for ever

*greatest security against our Enemies.* 145

ever happy hereafter. For in the

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3<sup>d</sup> and last place, whatever loss a good man sustains in the world upon the account of his concern for Truth and Virtue, shall be abundantly made good to him in that which is to come; and consequently 'tis so far from doing him any real harm, that it ought rather to be accounted a Gain than a Loss. *For our light affliction which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; 2 Cor. iv. 17: and St Paul accounts, Rom. viii. 18; that the sufferings of this present time; are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.* The new Testament is every where exceeding full and express in this matter; though indeed in the old Testament these promises are not so very clear; The reason whereof, seems to be this. The *Jews* were a peculiar nation chosen of God to be a standing instance of his providence in the government of the world, and of his rewarding Virtue and punishing Vice; the promises therefore and threatnings upon their obedience or disobedience, were made to that nation considered as a body politick, and

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therefore

S E R M. therefore must of necessity have been such  
 VI. as could belong to a nation as such, and  
 be conspicuous to the world; *i. e.* they  
 must needs have been temporal. That national Sins can be punished only with temporal punishments, is not indeed a just observation: Because national Sins are nothing but the Sins of the particular persons that constitute a Nation; and therefore *may* receive their particular punishment in a future state. But *such* rewards or punishments of a Nation, as are intended to be *Instances of God's providence in this World*, and Evidences of his governing a People, these 'tis manifest must of necessity be temporal. And this was plainly the case of the *Jews*, considered as a Nation. Of a future state, where every individual person in particular, should be rewarded or punished according to his private behaviour, they had *sufficient* proof, from those daily and undeniable evidences which they peculiarly had of the Being and Providence of God; from God's Dealings with the patriarchs; from the typical and figurative interpretation of their temporal promises; and from the preaching of their  
 Prophets.

Prophets. But now the Gospel-dispen-  
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tion not being made to any particular na-  
tion or body of men as such, but to all  
individual persons; the blessings promised  
to obedience and the curses threatned to  
disobedience were to be such as concerned  
particular persons only; and therefore  
might as well relate to the future state as the  
present. Hence rewards and punishments  
are not now so equally distributed in this  
life; that future state being more clearly  
and fully discovered, wherein all inequa-  
lities of this kind shall be set right, and  
where God has promised that they who  
suffer with Christ, shall be also glorified  
with him: So far therefore are wicked  
men from being able to hurt those who  
are followers of that which is good, that  
even when they think they have gained  
their purpose, and have it in their power  
to satisfy their malice to the utmost; they  
even then contribute to the happiness of  
those pious and religious persons, whom  
they intend to make miserable.

THE Application of what has been said,  
is evident. If by a sincere endeavour after the  
performance of our duty in the general course

S E R M. of our lives, we have made God our friend;  
 VI. we are taught not to be afraid of any thing  
 else. Let us trust in *him* for deliverance  
 under *Any* sort of affliction whatsoever,  
 who is abundantly *able*; and hath pro-  
 mised that he *will* preserve us, so that no-  
 thing shall by any means hurt us. *He*  
*that dwelleth in the secret place of the*  
*most high*, saith the Psalmist, *i.e.* he that  
 feareth God, *shall abide under the shadow*  
*of the Almighty; i. e.* under his secure  
 protection. *Surely he shall deliver thee*  
*from the snare of the fowler, and from*  
*the noisom pestilence; He shall cover thee*  
*with his feathers, and under his wings*  
*shalt thou trust, his truth shall be thy*  
*shield and buckler; Psal. xci. ver. 1: and*  
*Job v. 19, &c; He shall deliver thee from*  
*six troubles, yea, in seven there shall no*  
*evil touch thee. In famine he shall re-*  
*deem thee from Death; and in War, from*  
*the Power of the Sword. Thou shalt be*  
*hid from the Scourge of the Tongue; neither*  
*shalt thou be afraid of Destruction when*  
*it cometh. And fear ye not the reproach*  
*of men, saith the Prophet; neither be*  
*ye afraid of their revilings. For the moth*  
*shall*

*greatest security against our Enemies.* 149

*shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool; but my righteousness shall be for ever, and my salvation from generation to generation;*

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Isai. li. 7, 8. Let us therefore endeavour by sincerity and universal righteousness and goodness, to make all men our friends; or at least, if it will not have that effect, let us thereby secure our selves that they shall not be able to hurt us tho' they be enemies; Let us by a life of piety and true holiness, make our peace with God; and then we need not fear what men can do unto us: To conclude, let us secure to our selves a portion in that happiness which is to come, and then if we be not delivered from sufferings and afflictions here, they shall (which is much better than deliverance) be compensated at last by that felicity, which will go as far beyond our expectation, as all temporal enjoyments come short of it; and will exceed even our imagination no less than our hope. For *Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entred into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.*

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S E R M O N







# SERMON VII.

Of the Nature and Extent of false  
Witness.



PROV. xxiv. 28, 29.

*Be not a Witness against thy Neighbour  
without Cause, and deceive not with thy  
Lips: Say not, I will do to Him, as  
He hath done to Me; I will render to  
the man according to his Works.*



HERE is nothing generally SERMON  
more dear and valuable to VII.  
men, than their reputation or  
good Name: *Prov. xxii. 1;*  
*A good name is rather to be  
chosen than great Riches, and loving Fa-  
vour rather than silver and gold. The*

SER M. Esteem of wise and good men, is the  
 VII. greatest of all *Temporal* Encouragements  
 to Virtue; and 'tis a Mark of an abandoned Spirit, to have no Regard to it. One case indeed there is, wherein the opinion of the World is not to be regarded: Which is, when the Circumstances of things are such, that the *adhering to Truth and Virtue* will necessarily expose a man to the Reproaches of *ill* men, and to the mistaken Censures of Many also who perhaps otherwise are *good*. In *This* case, *Blessed are ye*, says our Saviour, *when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake: Rejoice, and be exceeding glad; for great is your Reward in Heaven; For so persecuted they the Prophets which were before you.* But in all other cases, Reputation or a good Name is justly to be valued. 'Tis what the wisest and best men, have always been very tender of preserving *in themselves*; and what good Christians ought therefore to make great Conscience of taking wrongfully from *Others*. In *some* Instances, a clear reputation has been esteemed more valuable


Mat. v. 11.

able even than Life itself ; and, in many S E R M. VII. circumstances, despoiling men of their good name, is in effect the same thing as defrauding them of their Property. So much *reputation*, is always so much *Power* ; and according to mens Esteem and Credit in the World, so much proportionably is their Influence and the Weight they have in it. For the same reasons therefore, that we are obliged not to injure our Neighbour in his *Person* or *Property* ; for the same reasons ought we to be very tender, of his *good name* and *reputation* : Always having a just Regard to Truth and Charity, and to the Benefit and Advantage of the Publick. *Be not a Witness against thy Neighbour without Cause, and deceive not with thy Lips : Say not, I will do to Him, as He has done to Me ; I will render to the man according to his Works.*

Who is meant by our *Neighbour*, in *This* and *all other* Precepts of the like nature ; our Saviour has explained to us in his Parable of the *good Samaritan*. Where, by declaring *Him* to be the afflicted man's *Neighbour*, who, though a *Stranger*,  
 2 though

S E R M. though a *Foreigner*, though of a *different*  
 VII. *Sect and Party* from him both in *religion*  
 and *polity*, yet assisted and saved him in  
 a time of extreme distress; he shows us  
 that our *Neighbours*, in the Sense of the  
 divine Precepts, are not Those only who  
*dwell near us*, or with whom we chance  
 to have particular *Acquaintance*, or who  
 are of the *same Sect* or denomination  
 with ourselves; but *whomsoever* among *all*  
*Mankind* we have any Concern with;  
*whomsoever* it happens at any time to be  
 in our Power either to *injure* or *do kind-*  
*ness* to; in a word, *whosoever* can in any  
 respect become the *better* or the *worse*, or  
 receive any *Hurt* or any *Benefit*, by our  
*Behaviour* towards them. This is the  
 meaning of the word, *Neighbour*, in *Script-*  
*ture-language*, and in the *religious* estima-  
 tion of things: and in *This* sense 'tis to  
 be understood in the *Text*, and in all  
 other moral exhortations; *Be not a Wit-*  
*ness against thy Neighbour without cause,*  
*and deceive not with thy Lips.*

THE word which we here render, *de-*  
*ceive*; signifies, in the original, *any da-*  
*mage*, *any inconvenience*, brought upon a  
 man

man in the way of slander, calumny, S E R M. back-biting, or any other injurious man- VII. ner of representing him. The sense of  the expression is the same, as in That *Other Passage* in the same book, ch. xxvi. 18; *As a mad-man who casteth Fire-brands, arrows, and death; so is the man that deceiveth his Neighbour,* (that is, who revileth, defameth, or leads his Neighbour into *Any Mischief,*) and saith, *Am not I in sport?*

THE Meaning of the particular Phrases in the Text, being thus explained; I shall, in the following Discourse, *First*, set forth the *Nature and Extent* of the *Sin* here forbidden; together with the proper *limitation* of the Cases and Circumstances, to which it *does* or *does not extend*. And *Secondly*, I shall alledge the suitable *Reasons and Motives*, which ought to influence our Practice in this matter. *Be not a Witness against thy Neighbour without cause, and deceive not with thy Lips: Say not, I will do to Him, as He has done to Me; I will render to the man according to his Works,*

I. *First;*

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I. *First*; IN the *first* place, the Highest and most enormous degree of the Sin here forbidden, is the deliberately giving *false evidence* in *judicial* matters, whether *criminal*, or in cases relating to *Property*. Exod. xxiii. 1; *Put not thine hand with the wicked, to be an unrighteous Witness*. This is a wickedness of so high a nature, and in which it is so impossible for any man's conscience to be deceived; that no man can be guilty of it in Any case, who has at all even the least *Pretence* or *Appearance* of Religion. We find an Instance of it in *Abab's* consenting to the instructions given by *Jezebel* against *Naboth*, 1 Kings xxi. 10; *Set two men, sons of Belial, before him, to bear Witness against him, saying, Thou didst blaspheme God and the King; and then carry him out, and stone him, that he may die*. The Character given him by the Prophet upon which account, *ver. 20*; is, that he *had Sold himself to work evil in the sight of the Lord*.

ANOTHER degree of the Vice condemned in the Text, is when men bear false Testimony against their Brethren, not indeed with the Solemnity of a judicial  
accu-

accusation before the Magistrate, but after SE R M.  
 a more secret manner, in private conver-  
 sation; spreading *knowingly and malici-*  
*ously, False Reports* concerning any per-  
 son, either for some *Private Advantage*  
 to *Themselves*, or out of *Envy* towards  
*Him*, or in way of *Revenge* for some con-  
 ceived *Disobligation*. This is the case  
 supposed in the Text: *Be not a Witness a-*  
*gainst thy Neighbour without Cause: ---*  
*Say not, I will do to Him, as He has done to*  
*Me; I will render to the Man according*  
*to his Works.* But whether *Revenge*, or  
 whatever else, be the *Temptation* to the  
 Practice; the nature of the *Sin itself* is of  
 the deepest Die, and condemned among  
 the most detestable Crimes both by Rea-  
 son and Scripture. *All Lyars shall have*  
*their part in the lake that burneth with*  
*Fire and Brimstone; Rev. xxi. 8.* And  
 Our Saviour, who never spake with Se-  
 verity, but against Great Crimes; told the  
 Pharisees, when they spread false and ma-  
 licious Accusations against him, that they  
 imitated herein *their Father the Devil*,  
 Joh. viii. 44; That the *Devil* was *himself*  
*a Lyar* from the Beginning; a *Lyar*, in  
 the

S E R M. the sense of spreading *false Accusations* ;  
 VII. (so the word, Διδβολῶ, properly signi-  
 fies:) And that he was the *Father*, and  
*Promoter*, of it in *Others*.

BUT further, there are still *lower degrees* of the Fault reprov'd in the Text; which, as they are less scandalous in the eye of the World, and less shocking to inconsiderate Minds, so there is more danger of mens falling into them, and greater Care needful to preserve ourselves from the guilt of them. Of This kind, is the *careless* and *rash* Custom of spreading censorious and uncharitable Reports to the disadvantage of Our Neighbour, *without at all knowing* whether there be *any Truth* in the accusation, or any *just Ground and Foundation* for the Censure. Under which Head, come innumerable sorts of Calumny, Detraction, Slander, Evil-speaking, Back-biting, Tale-bearing, rash Judgment, and the like. In which matters, the *Occasions*, upon which it is very incident *even* to those who are *not* of malicious Tempers, to be faulty through *Negligence*, and Want of Care and Attention; the *Occasions*, I say, which lead  
 men



men to be faulty in This particular, are, in the course of common life, so *perpetually* returning ; that the Scripture represents That person as a very *perfect* man indeed, who can be continually upon his Guard against This Errour. *In many things* ( says the Apostle ) *we offend all : If any man offend not in Word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the Whole Body.* The Author of the Book of *Ecclesiasticus* had before made the same Observation, *ch. xix. 16 ; There is one that slippeth in his Speech, but not from his Heart ; and who is He that hath not offended with his tongue ?* The Psalmist in like manner, *Pf. xv. 1 ; Lord, who shall dwell in thy tabernacle, or who shall rest upon thy Holy Hill ? Even---- He that hath used no deceit in his tongue,---- and hath not slandered his Neighbour.* The Caution therefore he thought *necessary*, to preserve himself from *This Surprise*, is very remarkable : *I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I offend not with my tongue : And, Set a Watch, O Lord, before my mouth, and keep the door of my Lips ; Pf. cxli. 3.* Without great consideration and habi-

S E R M. VII. habitual seriousness, the *perpetual* Incidents of *This* temptation *will* betray men into Folly ; and *In multitude of words there wanteth not Sin* ; Prov. x. 19.

*Lastly* ; THE *Last and Lowest* Degree of the Fault we are now considering, is when men are *ensorious* towards their Brethren, in spreading abroad things *neither false nor dubious*, but *certainly true* ; yet *needlessly*, and *contrary to the Laws of Charity* : Declaring their Neighbours *real* infirmities, or *real* Faults, to his Disadvantage ; without serving the purpose of Any true Benefit, either to *Him* or *Others*. This Practice was Thus forbidden under the Law, *Thou shalt not go up and down as a Tale-bearer among thy people* ; Levit. xix. 16. And though the words of my Text, 'tis evident, have principal Regard to *false* accusation ; yet literally and very properly they extend also to *uncharitable* Truth : *Be not a Witness against thy Neighbour*, without Cause.

INDEED, in all Cases where either the Administration of *publick Justice*, or the manifest Benefit and Advantage of *Private good Christians*, requires it ; In all  
*These*

These cases, 'tis mens Duty to accuse Criminals of all Sorts, and to bear Testimony against them in Righteousness and Truth: But in *other* cases, 'tis evidently a Breach of Christian Charity, to take delight in spreading even *True* Reports needlessly, to the Damage or Disadvantage of our Neighbour. In matters of *Private Offence*, 'tis the part of a Christian, *privately* to reprove the person offending: And the Benefit of so doing, may be very great. *Ecclus* xix. 13; *Admonish a friend, it may be he hath not done it; and if he have done it, that he do it no more. Admonish thy Friend, it may be he hath not said it; and if he have, that he speak it not again. If thy Brother (says our Saviour) shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone; if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy Brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more.---- And if he shall neglect to hear Them, tell it unto the Church.* That is: Use all possible means, in the privatest and most friendly manner, to a-

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mend and reform him : But if *This Method* proves unsuccessful, then *tell it to the Church*, tell it to *the Congregation*, tell it to *a Number* of serious and well-disposed Christians ; still for the *Benefit* of the *person reprov'd* ; that by the Advice and Exhortation of *Many*, he may be brought to Repentance. This is a thing very different from publishing mens Faults in ordinary conversation ; Wherein generally there is No View, of amending the *person censured* ; but merely of satisfying the Envy, Malice, Weakness, or vain Humour, of those who are apt to imagine they can build up to *Themselves* an *Esteem* upon the *Faults* of *Others*. Nevertheless, even in common *conversation*, the Characters of Persons are not to be confounded, as if no Difference was to be made between Virtue and Vice : But the sense of what has been said, is, that Christians ought to be so *far* from bearing at any time *false* testimony against their Brethren, that, where no real Honour can be done to Virtue, or Discredit to Vice, they ought not to take pleasure even in *Truth* uncharitable and not needful to be exposed.

HAVING

HAVING thus at large explained the S E R M. *Nature and Extent* of the *Sin* forbidden VII. in the Text, and set forth the proper *Limitations* of the Cases and Circumstances to which it *does* or *does not extend*; Which was the *First* thing I proposed: It remains now in the

II. *Second* place, that I proceed to lay before you some of the principal *Reasons* or *Motives*, which ought to influence our Practice in this Matter. *Be not a Witness against thy Neighbour without cause, and deceive not with thy Lips.* And

*1st*; FROM the very *nature* and *constitution* of *humane Society*, there arises originally, in the reason of things, a strong argument why men ought to govern their *Words* as well as their *Actions*. For by the mutual intercourse of *Both*, is humane Society preserved; and by injurious *Speech*, as well as by unjust *Actions*, is That general Trust and Confidence, That mutual Charity and Good-Will destroyed, on which depends the Welfare and Happiness of Mankind. This Argument is urged by *St Paul*, Eph. iv. 25; *Putting away Lying, speak every man Truth with*

S E R M. *his Neighbour ; for we are Members one of another.* The constitution of every humane Society, bears some Analogy to the Frame of the Natural Body : And as, in the natural Body, all Division, Disagreement, and disunion of the Members, tends necessarily to the destruction and dissolution of the Whole ; so, in proportion, in all Communities and Societies of men whatsoever, the Contentions and Animosities, the Disorders and Distractions, arising from Slander, Calumny, Detraction, Uncharitableness, and other Instances of licentious Speech, are inevitably of very pernicious effect. *The Tongue, says St James, (ch. iii. 5, 8,) is a little member, and boasteth great Things : Behold, how great a matter, a little fire kindleth : ---- it is an unruly evil, full of deadly Poison.*

OF mischievous consequence it often is, to the person himself who indulgeth this Folly : *Prov. xviii. 7 ; xii. 13 ; xiii. 3 ; A fool's Mouth is his destruction, and his lips are the snare of his Soul.----- The wicked is snared by the transgression of his Lips. He that keepeth his mouth, keepeth his life ; but he that openeth wide his lips, shall*

shall have destruction. The Wise Authors S E R M. VII.  
of the Books of *Wisdom* and *Ecclus*, express themselves excellently upon This W  
Head: *The Ear of Jealousy beareth all* Wisd. i. 10.  
*things, and the Noise of Murmurings is not*  
*hid: Therefore--- refrain your tongue from*  
*Backbiting; for there is no word so secret,*  
*that shall go for nought; and the mouth*  
*that belieeth, slayeth the Soul. He that can* Ecclus. xix  
*rule his tongue, shall live without strife;* 6.  
*and he that hateth babbling, shall have less*  
*evil: Rehearse not unto another, that which*  
*is told unto thee; and thou shalt fare never-*  
*the worse: Whether it be to a friend or foe,*  
*talk not of other mens Lives; and if thou*  
*canst without Offence, reveal them not:*  
*For he heard and observed thee; and, when*  
*time cometh, he will hate thee: If thou*  
*hast heard a word, let it die with thee;*  
*and be bold, it will not burst thee. The*  
*natural Punishment therefore of a licen-*  
*tious and unbridled Tongue, is the Incon-*  
*veniencies it is very apt to bring, in the*  
*course of things, upon the Person himself.*  
*He that will love life, and see good days,*  
*(he that will avoid innumerable Snares*  
*and Troubles which careless men bring*

S E R M. upon themselves; ) let him refrain his  
 VII. Tongue from Evil, and his Lips that they  
 speak no Guile; 1 Pet. iii. 10: Otherwise,  
 he will inevitably bring upon himself an  
 uneasy and unquiet Life.

THIS is the natural *ill consequence* of this Practice, to the persons themselves who are guilty of it: But the Sefulness of it, appears principally in the *Damage* it does secretly to Others. Slander, and uncharitable Defamation, is a *Pestilence that walketh in Darkness*; and a secret Stab, against which there is many times no possibility of Defence. *Prov. xviii. 8; The words of a tale-bearer are as Wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the Belly.* Again, (ch. xxvi. 18;) *As a mad-man who casteth fire-brands, arrows, and death; so is the man that deceiveth, (the man that revileth, that defameth) his neighbour, and saith, Am not I in sport?* As a matter of *sport* or *diversion*, he may foolishly make light of it; but the ill consequences thereof are greater than can be foreseen. *The Beginning of Strife, says the wise man, is as when one letteth out Water: And, As Coals are to burning Coals,*



Coals, and Wood to Fire; so is a contentious man to kindle Strife. SERM.  
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THIS is an Argument drawn from the very Nature and Constitution of human Society in general. But

2dly; ANOTHER and a more powerful Motive to oblige men to restrain licentious Speech, is the consideration of the inconsistency of it with a due Sense of religion. If any man among you, saith St James, seem to be religious, and bridletb not his tongue, but deceiveth his own Heart, That man's religion is vain. The reason is, because a principal part of pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father, is this; that men approve themselves by a good conversation, with meekness of Wisdom. If therefore, says he, ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not and lie not against the Truth:--- For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil Work. In like manner the Apostle St Paul, among things inconsistent with, and contrary to, the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the doctrine which is according to godliness; reckons up envy, strife, railings, evil sur-  
ch. i. 26.  
ver. 27.  
ch. iii. 13.  
etc.

S E R M. VII. *misings, and the like; 1 Tim. vi. 4. And accordingly exhorts, Eph. iv. 31; Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamour, and evil-speaking be put away from you, with all Malice; And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven you. Nay, even in matters which might in themselves seem to be of smaller importance, and comparatively speaking, scarce to be taken Notice of; yet because, in consequence, they quench the Spirit of religion, and dissipate the Effect and Influence of serious consideration, therefore he reproveth with great severity such persons as learn to be idle; 1 Tim. v. 13; wandering about from house to house, being Tatlers and Busy-bodies, speaking things which they ought not.*


*3dly and lastly; Another Argument against Calumny and Detraction, and particularly against That Censoriousness which too naturally arises from Differences in opinion; is the consideration of ourselves being All of us subject to error. What our Saviour said to the Pharisees in Another case, He that is without Sin amongst you,*

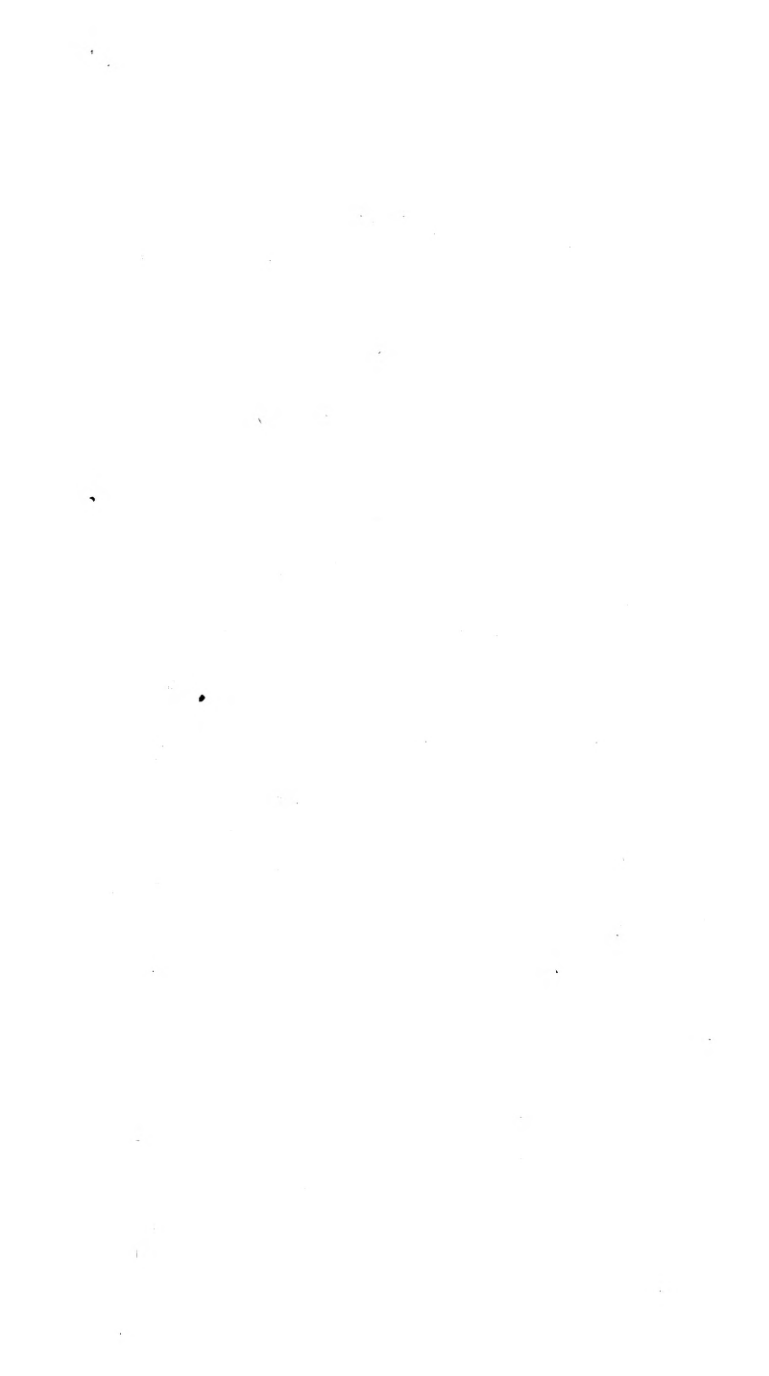
you, let him first cast a Stone at her; may no less justly be applied to *This*; He that is infallibly secured against all Errours *Himself*, let him be as censorious as he pleases upon the Mistakes of *Others*. And if it be upon matters relating to *Religion*, that the *Reproach and Defamation* is founded; the Fault is still the greater, and the more inexcusable; because 'tis presumptuously anticipating the judgment of God towards *Others*, and provoking him the more severely to judge *Us*. I speak not here of the ill Character, which is and ought to be given of all *Open Vice* and *manifest Unrighteousness*. But men who have different *Notions* and *Apprehensions* of Things, are very apt to cast *Reproach* upon each other, not for their *Vices*, but for their *Different Understandings*. And the same *Frailty*, which, in a man of the same *Seet or Party*, shall be no *Blemish* at all; shall, in a person of a different *Party*, be the most unpardonable *Crime*. The *Jews* thought every *Fault* in a *Samaritan* or a *Gentile*, to be infinitely greater than in one of their own *Nation*; and the smallest *Mote* in another's  
 Eye,

S E R M. Eye, seemed much larger to them than a  
 VII. Beam in their own. This is what St Paul  
 reproveth, *Rom. ii. 1*; *Thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest; (speaking of a Jew condemning a Gentile;) for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself.* But This relates to Real Faults. The greater and still more inexcusable degree of this Partiality is, when men cast reproach and contempt upon Others for what is truly commendable, for doing what perhaps was their Duty to do; for being wiser, or more charitable, or more scrupulous and conscientious than Themselves. Of This, St Paul speaks, *Rom. xiv. 4*; *Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his Own Master be standeth or falleth?* St James calls it, *judging the Law itself*; *ch. iv. 11*; *He that speaketh evil of his Brother, and judgeth his Brother, speaketh evil of the Law, and judgeth the Law.--- There is one law-giver, who is able to save and to destroy: Who art thou, that judgest another?* Our Saviour forbids this censoriousness towards Others, under the penalty of being more strictly judged Ourselves: *Judge not, that ye be not judged.*

judged. And if concerning opprobrious and reproachful language to a man's face, he says, *Whosoever shall say unto his Brother, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell-fire; much more* against malicious *Back-biting* and uncharitable *Detraction*, would he have used the like severity of expression. The reason is; because such kind of *Detraction* and *Defamation* is really more injurious, and more difficult to be guarded against, and of more extensive Effect, than *many other* ways of doing wrong to our Neighbour. I conclude therefore with that declaration of our Lord, *Matt. xii. 36; I say unto you, that every idle word, (that is, as appears evidently in the context, every malicious word) that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of Judgment: For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.*

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VII.







# S E R M O N V I I I .

Of the Sin of deliberate Fraud.



ACTS v. 3, 4.

*But Peter said, Ananias, why has Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this Thing in thine Heart? Thou hast not lied unto Men, but unto God.*



**I**N the three fore-going Chapters S E R M . of This Book, we have an VIII . Account given us of the Simplicity and Purity of that Primitive Church, which was planted immediately

S E R M. *mediately by the Apostles themselves upon*  
 VIII. *their being inspired with the Holy Ghost*  
 ~~~~~ *at Pentecost, and flourished in the very*  
Beginning even of Their Days. And the
Character we find of it, is such; as
contains both a most just Reproof
of the decaying Piety of Christians in
succeeding Ages, and at the same time
affords us a lovely and Venerable Idea of
the sincere and uncorrupt Manners of those
Primitive Disciples. Ch. ii. ver. 42; They
continued stedfastly in the Apostles Doctrine
and fellowship, and in breaking of Bread
and in Prayers. Ver. 44; And all that
believed, were together, and had all things
common; And sold their possessions and goods,
and parted them to all men, as every man
had need. Expecting, as it appears, a
speedy Destruction of the Jewish Nation,
and being as yet but a few scattered Peo-
ple, they agreed among themselves to sell
every one what he had, and put it into
one publick Stock, to be employed in fur-
nishing out such as were to be sent abroad
in the service of preaching the Gospel,
and to be distributed likewise for the Main-
tenance of them that continued in Jeru-
salem

Of the Sin of deliberate Fraud.

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saalem according to every man's Wants and Necessities. *Ver. 46; And they continued daily with one Accord in the Temple; their Practice being, constantly to frequent the Temple at the usual Hours of publick Prayer: And breaking bread from House to House, (In the House, it should be translated; The Meaning is; meeting together in their Private Assembly to receive the Communion among themselves, after they had prayed in publick with the Jews;) they did eat their meat with gladness and Singleness of Heart: Praising God, and having Favour with all the People; that is, by their Innocency and Simplicity of Manners, obtaining the good Opinion of all well disposed and unprejudiced Persons: According to that Admonition of St. Paul, Rom. xiv. 17; The Kingdom of God, is--- Righteousness and Peace and Joy in the Holy Ghost; For he that in These things serveth Christ, is acceptable to God and approved of Men. At the latter End of the 4th Chapter, as an Introduction to the History whereof my Text is apart, the same Character of that Primitive Apostolical Church, is repeated in other Words: Ver. 32; And*
the

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S E R M. *the Multitude of them that believed, were*
 VIII. *of one Heart, and of one Soul; living in*
 perfect Love, and entire Unity among themselves; every one being more sollicitous to provide for the Necessities of others, than to lay up any thing in store for Himself; neither said any of them, that ought of the things which he possessed, was his own, but they had all things common. Ver. 33; And great Grace, was upon them all; That is, as 'tis before expressed, *ch. ii. 47,* they had great Favour with all the People: For in the original 'tis the very same Word in both places; Great Grace was upon them all; and, they had great Favour with all the people: (Which is a Phrase of the same import, with That in *Luc. ii. 52; And Jesus increased in Wisdom and Stature, and in Favour with God and Man.*) Ver. 34; Neither were there any among them, that lacked; For as many as were Possessors of Lands or Houses, sold them, and brought the Prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the Apostles feet; and distribution was made unto every man, according as he had need. Not that there was any absolute Obligation or express
 Command

Command upon any Man so to do; But S E R M.
 expecting, as I before observed, a speedy VIII.
 Destruction of the *Jewish* Nation, accord-
 ing to our Saviour's Prophecy; and being
 themselves a scattered and persecuted Body
 of Men; and having their Hearts filled
 with a most excellent spirit of universal
 Love and Charity; they either All, or at
 least most of them, *voluntarily* agreed to
 sell what they had; and, putting it into
 the Apostles hands, they were for the fu-
 ture equally maintained out of it, as by a
 publick Stock. And great was the Sincer-
 ity and Simplicity of Heart, wherewith
 the whole Body of the first Believers ex-
 exercised this universal Benevolence. But,
 as even among the *Apostles themselves* there
 had been *One* Son of Perdition; and in the
 very best and most excellent Institutions,
 Offences *will* arise; so even *here* also there
 was an Attempt made, to introduce a
 Corruption. For one *Ananias* with his
 Wife *Sapphira*, ver. 1. of this chapter,
 having *sold a Possession, kept back part of
 the price, and brought a certain part, and
 laid it at the Apostles feet*; intending
 thereby so to impose upon the Apostles,

SERM. as to be maintained, like the other Dis-
 VIII. ciples, out of the publick Stock of the
 Church, and yet at the same time retain
 a private portion of their Estate for them-
 selves. Upon this therefore St *Peter* re-
 plies unto them in the Words of the Text;
Ananias, why has Satan filled thine Heart,
to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back
part of the price of the land; Whilst it
remained, was it not thine own? And after
it was sold, was it not in thine own power?
Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine
Heart? Thou hast not lied unto Men, but
unto God. In the following Discourse up-
 on which Words, I shall *first* consider
 briefly *in general*, what the Crime was,
 wherewith *Ananias* is here charged by the
 Apostle. *Secondly*, I shall consider the se-
 veral *Circumstantial Aggravations* of the
 Crime, in *His Case in particular*. And
Thirdly, I shall draw some *practical* Ob-
 servations, which may be of perpetual
 Use to us, from the several Expressions con-
 tained in the Text.

I. *First*; I am to consider *in gene-
 ral*, what the Crime was, wherewith
Ananias is here charged by the Apostle.
 And this is so plainly exprest in the Words
 of

of the Text, that I suppose no man, who S E R M.
has read this History without a Comment, VIII.
ever mistook it. The *Foundation* of his
Crime, was *Covetousness*; the *Effect* of that
Covetousness, was *Diffidence*, or a *Dis-*
trust of that Maintenance, which he was
to enjoy in common with the whole
Church; and the actual *Crime itself*, which
that Diffidence or covetous Disposition put
him upon committing, and which in the
Text is more immediately charged upon
him, is *Fraud*: A *Fraudulent Attempt*
to deceive the Apostles, and the whole
Church, by putting himself upon them to
be maintained out of the Publick Expence,
whilst at the same Time he retained pri-
vately to himself, that which ought to have
been put into the publick Stock, in order
to intitle him to receive out of it his com-
mon Proportion. *Others* brought *all* that
they had, and put it into the Apostle's
Hands; and were by Them accordingly
taken care of, as those who had nothing
left in their private Possession: *This Man*,
to make a double Advantage to himself,
kept back *one half*, perhaps *more*, to him-
self; and yet expected to have been taken

S E R M. care of by the Apostles, as one that had
 VIII. given All to the Publick, and had left nothing of his own. This is so plainly and clearly the intent of the History, that it might almost seem needless so much as to repeat it; and it can hardly be set forth in more full expressions, than it is declared in the very Words of the Text itself. Yet, I know not whence it comes to pass, many of the most learned Commentators have made a shift to mistake it; and with much Difficulty have found means to make That appear hard and intricate, which in reality was most easy and obvious. For whereas the Apostle charges *Ananias* with the *Deliberateness* of the *Fraud*; and aggravates it with the Consideration of his having been under *no Necessity* to make any *Profession* of parting with his Estate *at all*, if he was not willing to do it *in reality*; For *whilst it remained*, says he, *was it not thine own? And after it was sold, was it not in thine own Power? Why hast thou then conceived this thing in thine Heart?* Whereas This, I say, is evidently the Apostle's meaning; Many, on the contrary, have contended, that *after it was sold*,
 it

it was by no means any longer *in his own Power*; because selling it with an *Intention* to give it to the Apostles, they imagine was equivalent to an *Actual solemn Vow*; and *That*, could not be broken without plain *Sacrilege*: And therefore those Words, *after it was sold, was it not in thine own Power?* They interpret to signify, *Was it not in thy Power to have brought us the full price of it, and so to have compleatly accomplished thy Vow?* But, besides That this is a very forced and unnatural Interpretation of these *particular Words*; 'tis moreover very harsh *in the general*, to suppose a *solemn Vow*, whereof there is not the least mention made, either in the Text or in the whole History; and to fix the *main Crime* upon *such a Circumstance*, for which there does not in the Text appear to be so much as *any Foundation* at all. On the other side, St Peter's Words, in the obvious and literal Sense, seem to be very easy and natural; that *Ananias* might, if he had pleased, have kept to himself, either his *Estate* or his *Money*; For, who compelled him to sell it at all? And, after it *was sold*, if he

S E R M.
VIII.
~~~~~

S E R M. had a Mind to have kept the Price of it  
 VIII. to himself, *Who* compelled him to de-  
 posit it in the Apostle's hands? But when  
 he *professed* to bring the whole Money in-  
 to the publick Stock of the Church, and  
 so have a Right to be maintained out of  
 that Stock; then at the same time to keep  
 back part of it by a Fraudulent Lie, and  
 with intent to deceive the Apostles and  
 impose upon the whole Body of the Dis-  
 ciples, This was evidently a very crying  
 Sin, and (without the needless Supposition  
 of a *Vow*) even no less than *Sacrilege*.

AND This, concerning the 1<sup>st</sup> particu-  
 lar, *viz.* *What* the Crime in general was,  
 wherewith *Ananias* is here charged by the  
 Apostle.

II. *Secondly*; I PROPOSED in the 2<sup>d</sup>  
 place, to consider the several *Circumstantial*  
*Aggravations* of the Crime, in *His* Case in  
*particular*. And here we may observe,  
 first, that *deliberate* or *contrived* *Fraud*,  
 is *in itself* a Crime of the deepest Malig-  
 nity, and of the most pernicious conse-  
 quences: A Sin which tends to destroy all  
 human Society, all Trust and Confidence  
 among Men, all Justice and Equity which  
 is



is the Support of the World, and without which no Society of Mankind can subsist. And the breaking through this Obligation by deliberate Fraud, is, of all other Sins, one of the most open Defiances of Conscience, and the most wilful Opposition to right Reason, that can be imagined: A Sin, for which a Man can find no Excuse, nor Extenuation in his own Mind; into the Commission of which, he can be led by no Error, by no wrong judgment, by no mistaken Opinion whatsoever; but he must of Necessity, at least for That Time, have abandoned all true Sense of Religion; and depend entirely upon the Fact's not being discovered, for the concealment of his Shame. Then, for *a Christian*; a man that Professes a pure, and more Holy Religion; a Religion that commands not only common Justice and Equity, but singular Love and Good-will towards our Neighbour; and requires not only Abstinence from the Unjust Things of the World, but also a Contempt and Indifference even for its innocent Enjoyments; for a man who professes *such a Religion*, to be guilty of a contrived and deliberate Fraud, which the

N 4.                      Conscience



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Conscience even of a good *Heathen* would abhor; this is a *greater* Aggravation of the Crime. Further yet; to defraud *that* Stock, which was intended principally for the Support and Maintenance of the *Poor*, in a Time of great Trouble and Persecution; This was an additional Increase of his Guilt. And 'tis no inconsiderable Circumstance, that This was done at a Time when the whole Church were of *one heart and of one Mind*, with the utmost Simplicity and Sincerity of Manners; when there were no ill Examples to corrupt or seduce the Man, but every one contributed with the *utmost Chearfulness* to the Support of their Brethren; and with all readiness put all that they had, into the hands of the Apostles. Beyond All This; 'Tis observable that *Ananias*, excepting the Covetous Disposition of his *own* Mind, had *no Necessity, no Occasion, no Temptation* put upon him *from without*, to drive him into the projecting of such a Deceit. For this selling of their Estates, and laying them at the Apostle's Feet, was not a matter of *Compulsion*, but of *Free Choice*; not a Duty required of them of Necessity  
and

and by Constraint, but an Instance of vo-  
luntary Liberality and of the most publick-  
spirited Charity. *Ananias* therefore could  
not alledge, that there was any Hardship,  
any Constraint put upon him in selling  
his Estate, which might tempt him to do  
it in a deceitful manner; but the Whole  
being *voluntary*, his Transaction was from  
the beginning, originally, and in its whole  
Progress, without any Colour of Excuse,  
a deliberately-projected, wilful, and con-  
tinued Fraud. And this I conceive to be  
the meaning of *St Peter's Manner* of  
aggravating his Crime, by that severe re-  
proof and Appeal to his *own* Conscience  
in the Words of the Text; *Whilst it re-  
mained, was it not thine own? And after  
it was sold, was it not in thine own Power?  
Why hast thou then conceived this thing in  
thine Heart?* Lastly, There is still a far-  
ther Aggravation of his Crime, above all  
that has been yet said; and That is, the  
*presumptuousness* of attempting to deceive  
those persons, whom he believed and knew  
to be inspired with the *Spirit of God*: the  
Holy Ghost having so lately descended  
upon them in that extraordinary and mi-  
raculous

S E R M. raculous manner at Pentecost. To lie to the Apostles in This case, was lying to the Holy Ghost, by whom the Apostles were inspired; and lying to the Holy Ghost, was in effect Lying to God himself, who had given unto them his Holy Spirit. *Why hath Satan filled thine Heart to lie to the Holy Ghost?----Thou hast not lied unto Men, but unto God?* The Word which we render, *lie to the Holy Ghost*, signifies properly, not only affirming an Untruth, or denying a Promise, but, somewhat more fully and emphatically, *deceiving, cheating, or imposing upon* a Person. By imposing upon the Apostles, *Ananias* attempted, as much as in him lay, to deceive the Holy Ghost; and deceiving the Holy Ghost, is the very same thing, as undertaking to impose upon God himself, who dwelt in the Apostles by his Holy Spirit. The Scripture frequently speaks in this manner: 1 Cor. vi. 19; *Your Body, saith St Paul, is the Temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God; i. e. which God has given you: and 2 Cor. vi. 16; Ye are the Temple of the Living God. In the one place he calls them Temples of the*

the *Holy Ghost*; in the *other* he calls them *Temples of the Living God*. The Reason of these *two* different manners of speaking, is expressed in *one*, Eph. ii. 21; ye are *an holy Temple in the Lord*,---*an habitation of God, thro' the Spirit*; and 1 Cor. iii. 16; *Ye are the Temple of God*;---*for the Spirit of God dwelleth in you*. *Ananias's* lying therefore to the *Holy Ghost* which dwelt in the *Apostles*, was the very same thing, as lying to *God himself*, who dwelt in the *Apostles* by his *Holy Spirit*. And this was the highest *Presumption*, and the most daring *Insolence* in the *World*.

WHY hath Satan *filled thine Heart*? The meaning of the *Word*, according to the import of the *Hebrew Idiom*, is, *Why has Satan made thee so presumptuous?* For so we find the same *Phrase* to signify, *Esth. vii. 5*; *Where is he that durst presume in his Heart to do so?* In the *Margin* 'tis literally, according to the *Original*, where is he *whose Heart has filled him* to do this *Thing*? And *Eccles. viii. 11*; *Because Sentence against an Evil Work is not executed speedily, therefore the Hearts of the Sons of Men is fully set in them to do evil*; In the *Original* it is, *their Heart has*

S E R M. *has filled them, they are presumptuous, to*  
 VIII. *do evil.*



AND this likewise is the meaning of the following Words of St Peter to Sapphira, ver. 9; *How is it that ye have agreed together to Tempt the Spirit of the Lord? The Word, Tempt, does not signify, as it sounds in the English, to Try, or to make Tryal, whether God could discover them or no; but, according to the Hebrew Language, and as 'tis very frequently used in the Old Testament, it signifies presumptuously and with a high hand to provoke God; as if Men meant to Try whether they were stronger than he, when they disobey him knowingly and with perfect choice. Thus Num. xiv. 22; Because all those men which have seen my Glory, and my Miracles which I did in Egypt and in the Wilderness, and have Tempted me now, i. e. have rebelled against me, these Ten times, and have not hearkened to my Voice; Surely they shall not see the land which I swear unto their Fathers; neither shall any of them that provoked me, see it. Here, That which is called Tempting of God, in the beginning of the Sentence; is at the*

the latter End explained by the Word, *provoked*. It may justly be wondered, how a man that had seen the Apostles Miracles and the Power of the Holy Ghost, and had been just converted thereby to the Belief of the Gospel, could be so absurd as to hope to impose upon them by so gross a Fraud. But so it always is, that Sinners have Eyes and see not, and understandings and yet will not understand: And, as *Balaam* was so foolish, that when he found God would by no means permit *Israel* to be cursed, yet he would still persist, and go to Another Hill, and try if he could prevail to curse them from thence; so Wicked men will never be convinced that *God is not to be mocked*, 'till they perish finally in their incorrigible Presumption. The great Aggravation therefore of *Ananias's* Sin, was This presumptuous setting himself against the clearest Manifestation of God's Power and Glory in the Apostles. For, what our Saviour declared in general to his Disciples, that *he that despises you, despises me, and he that despises me, despises him that sent me*; was, in a more eminent and particular manner, true of  
This

S E R M. This Person; who, by lying to the *Apo-*  
 VIII. *stles* at a Time when he saw them evi-  
 dently inspired, did in reality presume to  
 lie to the *Holy Ghost* which inspired them;  
 and, by lying to the *Holy Ghost*, did con-  
 sequently lie to *God* himself, whose Spirit  
 he defied. And as his Crime was thus pe-  
 culiarly great, so also accordingly was his  
 Punishment. In which nevertheless, since  
 others afterwards were not so punished,  
 'tis reasonable to suppose, that the Ground  
 of that particular Severity was This; that,  
 as at the first setting up the *Jewish* insti-  
 tution, *Uzzah*, for but touching the Ark,  
 was struck dead; and *Achan*, for prefer-  
 ving some of the Spoils of *Jericho*, was  
 stoned to Death; and the man who did  
 but gather sticks upon the Sabbath-day,  
 was by God's express Command to be  
 put to Death; So, at the beginning of  
 the Gospel, the first Transgression was,  
 for *Terror* and *Example's* sake, punished  
 with a singular and peculiar Temporal  
 Severity.

III. IT remains in *the Third* and last  
 place, that I proceed to draw some useful and  
 practical



practical Observations, from the several S E R M.  
 Expressions contained in the Text. And VIII.

1<sup>st</sup>, FROM hence we may learn how great a Crime, *Deliberate Fraud* is, which God in this Case of *Ananias*, was pleased to punish with so very exemplary and remarkable a Punishment.

2<sup>dly</sup>, WE may observe in the Text, that the Scripture ascribes *all* great Sins to the Influence of the *Devil*; Why has *Satan* filled thine Heart? The *Devil*, is the Head of Apostacy and Rebellion against God: And therefore, as all *Good* is ascribed to *God*, because 'tis an imitation of his Nature, is performed by his Assistance, and is agreeable to his Will: so all *Evil* is ascribed to the *Devil*; because 'tis a following of his Example, 'tis performed at his instigation, and is agreeable to his Desires. 1 *Job*. iii. 8; *He that committeth Sin, is of the Devil; for the Devil sinneth from the beginning; ---whosoever is born of God, doth not commit Sin; ---In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the Devil.* Hence 'tis said, that *Satan* provoked David to number Israel; that *Satan* taketh away the Word sown in mens

*Hearts;* 1 Chron. xxi. 1. Mar. iv. 15. 1 Pet. v. 8. Ephes. vi. 12.

SERM. VIII. *Hearts; that our Adversary the Devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour; and that we wrestle against Principalities, against Powers, against the Rulers of the Darkneſs of this World, against ſpiritual wickedneſs in high places. Nay even all Natural Evils alſo, for the ſame reaſon are in Scripture ſometimes aſcribed to the Devil; becauſe he is the great Promoter, the Head, the Deſigner and the Lover of Evil. Thus, concerning the Woman that was bowed together, St Luc. xiii. 11; 'tis ſaid that Satan had bound her theſe eighteen years; Likewiſe, that Satan bindeth St Paul from coming unto the Theſſalonians; that an affliction ſent him in the Fleſh, was the Meſſenger of Satan to buffet him; and that the Devil ſhould caſt ſome of the Saints into Priſon.*

Luc. xiii.

16

1 Th. ii.

18

Rom. i.

13, 15, 22.

2 Cor. xii.

7.

Rev. ii.

10.

3dly; 'Tis observable in the Text, that the Scripture's aſcribing all great Sins to the Influence of the Devil, is not by way of *Excuse*, but always on the contrary an *Aggravation*. *Ananias, Why hath Satan filled thine Heart?* 'Twas not any *Extenuation*, but the *Greatneſs* of his Fault, that he ſuffered Satan to fill his Heart.

Indeed,

Indeed, where either the Devil or Man S E R M. find means to *deceive* a Person, and lead VIII. him really into *Error*; there the *Error*, or the being *deceived*, must and ought to be looked upon as some Alleviation of the Fault: But where the Crime is *plain*, and there is no room for Error of the *judgment*, as in the Case of *deliberate Fraud*; there the being tempted by the *Devil*, is no more an Excuse, than the being tempted by the *Profit* or the *Gain* of the Sin; Because, in such Case, the Temptation of the Devil is in reality nothing more, but his laying before a Man the Gainfulness of the Sin: And the Person's being prevailed upon by That Temptation, is so far from being an Excuse, that 'tis indeed the very Essence and formal Nature of the Crime; his *consenting to yield* to that Temptation, which could have had no Power over him but by his own Consent. This is the *very* thing, which 'tis the proper Business of a Christian to overcome. And as 'tis his Duty always to *grow in grace*, and to take heed not to *resist* and *grieve the Holy Spirit*; so likewise on the contrary 'tis his Duty, to *resist the*

S E R M. *Devil*; And 'tis in his *Power* to do so, VIII. for he shall *flee from him*; nor can any  
 Eph. iv. man be made to sin, but *when he is drawn*  
 27. away of his own *Lust*, and *enticed*. For  
 James iv. so the *Scripture* always speaks; declaring  
 7. i. 14. even concerning *Judas*, that 'twas through  
 his own *Covetousness* that the *Devil* entred  
 into him, and put it into his *Heart* to  
 betray his *Master*; and concerning the  
 1 Cor. vii. *Corinthians*, that *Satan* could not tempt  
 5. them, but through *their own incontinency*;  
 Even in like manner as *St Peter* in the  
 Text reproves *Ananias*, *Why hath Satan*  
*filled thine Heart?*

4thly, and lastly; FROM what has been  
 said in explication of *These Words*; whilst  
 it remained, was it not thine own? And  
 after it was sold, was it not in thine own  
 Power? it appears that *Ananias* was not,  
 as has been generally supposed, under any  
 Vow; Neither is there in This, or in any  
 Other Passage in the whole New Testament,  
 any mention of any Christians making any  
 Vows at all. In the Old Testament, among  
 other legal Rites and Customs, there is  
 Acts xviii. indeed frequent mention of *Vows*; and in  
 18, 21, 23. the History of the *Acts* of the Apostles,  
 there

there is an Account of certain *Jews* that lay under *Vows*; and of Converts that lay under *Vows* made before their conversion. For when they *are* made, the Matter of them not being unlawful, they are of Necessity to be kept; *For God hath no pleasure in Fools; Pay that which thou hast vowed; Eccles. v. 4, 5.* But even under the Law itself in the *Jewish* State, there was no Necessity of *making* them; *For if thou shalt forbear to Vow, it shall be no Sin in thee; Deut. xxiii. 22.* And under the Gospel, there is not only no precept, but even not so much as any one Example of any such Thing in the whole New Testament. Baptism indeed and the Lord's Supper, are solemn *Vows* of Obedience towards God; But the Matter of them is such, as was, *before*, our indispensable Duty; And such solemn renewing our Holy Resolutions of doing what is of absolute Necessity to be done, is undoubtedly of great and perpetual Use. But in other Cases, *Vows* are at best nothing but needless Snares upon Men; and generally, (as, in the Church of *Rome* their *Vows* of *Single Life*, of *perpetual Poverty*, and the like) generally, I say, they are of superstitious


S E R M. and unwarrantable Practice. The Young  
 VIII. man in the Gospel, who not content with  
 being told that by keeping the Commandments he should live, would needs recommend himself by putting our Saviour upon requiring more of him; departed wholly from Christ through his own needless importunity; and may well be a warning against aiming at Works of Superelevation. What is fit to be done, may be done without laying upon ourselves unnecessary Obligations; and such Obligations can be of no Benefit, but needlessly to involve men in Snares and Scruples. Even in the Old Testament itself, excepting, as I said, some particulars in matters of *Legal* performance; 'tis observable that the *Vows* we most frequently read of, were not such as the Word now generally signifies, but only *solemn Resolutions* of universal Obedience. *Jacob's Vow*, Gen. xxviii. 20; *If God will be with me, and keep me in the way that I go, --- then shall the Lord be my God*; was nothing more but a devout Prayer, that God would be pleased to preserve *him*, that *he* might glorify God by professing the true Religion

ligion in the midst of Idolatrous Nations. S E R M.

The same is the meaning of the peoples VIII.

Vow, *Num. xxi. 2; Israel vowed a vow unto the Lord, and said, If thou wilt indeed deliver this people into my hand, then will I utterly destroy their Cities, i. e. have no friendship with the Idolaters. And that of Absalom, 2 Sam. xv. 8; If the Lord shall bring me again indeed----, then I will serve the Lord. And to the same purpose of holy Resolutions of Obedience only, are those frequent Expressions, Is. xix. 21; In that Day the Egyptians shall know the Lord;----yea, they shall vow a vow unto the Lord, and perform it: And, the men feared the Lord,----and made Vows; Jonah i. 16; ii. 9. And Ps. l. 14; Offer unto God thanksgiving, and pay thy Vows unto the most High: lvi. 12; Thy Vows are upon me, O God; I will render Praises unto thee: lxi. 5, 8; Thou, O God, hast heard my Vows; thou hast given me the heritage of those that fear thy Name; So will I sing praise unto thy Name for ever, that I may daily perform my Vows: And Ps. cxvi. 13; I will receive the Cup of Salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord;*

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S E R M. *I will pay my Vows unto the Lord, now*  
VIII. *in the presence of all his People.* In these,  
 I say, and many other places, the Word  
*Vow*, signifies nothing more, but *solemn*  
*Resolutions of universal Obedience.* From  
the right understanding of all which pas-  
sages in the *Old Testament*, and the want  
of any mention of any Vows at all in the  
*New*; 'tis very apparent what is the best  
direction to be given to *Christians* concern-  
ing that matter; even never to intangle  
themselves in any other obligations at  
all, but only take care to *keep* those sacred  
Vows and Resolutions, which they solemn-  
ly enter into at *Baptism*, and the *Supper*  
*of the Lord.*

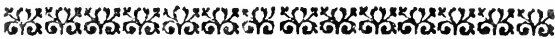
S E R M O N





# S E R M O N IX.

Of the Heinousness of the Sin of  
wilful Murder.



E X O D. XXI. 14.

*But if a man come presumptuously upon his neighbour, to slay him with guile; thou shalt take him from mine altar, that he may die.*



Every *Thing* that God has created, is *good*; and nothing becomes *Evil*, but by some Corruption or Abuse: So every natural *Action* is in itself *innocent*, and becomes *immoral* merely from the *Circumstances* that attend it, or from the *intention* that produces it. *Ta-*

S E R M.  
IX.



S E R M. *king away the Life of a Man*, is an Act  
 IX. absolutely, and in the nature of the thing  
 itself, neither good nor evil. In *some* cases  
 and circumstances 'tis *just*, 'tis *righteous*,  
 'tis *praise-worthy*, according to the Laws  
 both of God and Nature. In *other* cases,  
 'tis one of the greatest of All *Crimes*, and  
 least likely to find Pardon either with *God*  
 or *Men*. The explication of this *One In-*  
*stance* in its full extent, may be useful not  
 only with regard to the *Particular* un-  
 der consideration; but *in general* also it  
 may proportionably be instructive, as set-  
 ting forth the nature of *Morality* and *Im-*  
*morality* in most *other* Instances whatso-  
 ever. The *Law itself* is thus express'd,  
*ver. 12; He that smiteth a man, so that he*  
*die, shall surely be put to death.* Yet to  
 show wherein the *Crime*, wherein the  
*Immorality* consists, there follows in the  
 very next words a *Distinct* Explication,  
*ver. 13; If a man lie not in wait, but*  
*God deliver him into his hand, then I will*  
*appoint thee a place whither he shall flee.*  
*But if a man come presumptuously upon*  
*his Neighbour, to slay him with Guile;*  
*thou shalt take him from mine Altar, that*  
 he

*he may die.* The *Essence* of All Sin, lies S E R M. in the *presuming* to transgress. Men know IX. in their own conscience, that such or such an action *ought not* to be done; and yet they *presumptuously* take upon them to do it. This is what justly provokes the Anger of God; and according to the degree of the *presumption*, is the degree of the *Offence*. This is universally the case, in *All kinds* of Sin; and the reason of the *General Doctrine* will most clearly appear, by considering it in the Case of so remarkable a *Particular*, as is the Instance of *taking away the Life of Man*. Now a man's life may be taken away,

1st, *By Chance*; without *any* evil intention *at all*, in Him that does it. And where This is *truly* and *perfectly* the Case, there is *No Crime* or Offence committed. For the nature of every action, with regard to Good or Evil, is determined by the Intention; and where there is no Intention, there can be no Morality nor Immorality in the Action. The Meaning of which is, not that the want of evil intention will excuse an action intrinsically Evil in its own nature; (For in things

SER M. things *intrinsically* and *unalterably wicked*  
 IX. in their own nature, no man's conscience  
 can be *innocently* deceived;) But the Meaning is, that where there is no intention of doing the Action *at all*, (as in the present Case,) there the Effect is not indeed (properly speaking) the Action of the Moral and Intelligent Agent. The case is put, *Deut. xix. v; As when a man goeth into the wood with his neighbour to hew wood, and his hand fetcheth a stroke with the Ax to cut down the Tree, and the Head slippeth from the Helve, and lighteth upon his Neighbour that he die.* Nevertheless, even in *This* case, where there is *no intention at all* of the Event that comes to pass; there may yet be, in *another* respect, *some degree of Faultiness* for want of *Care*. For one man ought not to suffer, through Another's *Heedlessness* or *Negligence*. And therefore all *reasonable precaution* to prevent even *accidental* Evils, is a Duty of real moral Obligation. Upon which Account God was pleased to appoint under *the Law*, that whosoever had the misfortune to slay a man by Chance, should be obliged to the Trouble of fleeing unto a  
 City

*City of Refuge.* The observation naturally arising from which commandment, is, that 'tis a *general Duty* in all cases, not only to forbear every evil Act, which is of *malicious intention*; but to be careful moreover to avoid, as far as our short Foresight can extend, whatever may *accidentally* be the Occasion even of an *undesign'd* Evil. Not that any man is at any time to forbear doing a *plain Duty*, because *other men* may from thence take an *Occasion* of doing *evil*: (For then the Gospel itself ought never to have been preach'd, because wicked men make it an occasion of bringing in a *Sword* instead of *Peace upon Earth* :) But in all cases where *Truth* and *Right* are *not* concerned, it is the Duty of a Christian in all his Actions to have regard to the probabilities even of *accidental* ill Consequences.

2dly; THE Life of a man may be taken away, in necessary and unavoidable *Self-defence*. In which case, not he that *takes away*, but he that *loses* his life, is guilty of the Transgression. For in all *moral* estimation of things, 'tis an universal Rule; that, *not* always He who

2 perhaps

S E R M.  
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SERM.
IX.

perhaps *does* the action, but He always who is the real and *criminal cause* of it, is answerable for the Evil. *Contentions, Animosities, and Divisions* among Christians, are very great and pernicious immoralities: Yet not always He who *divides*, (as in the case of Protestants separating from the Church of *Rome*;) but He who *causes* the division, and makes it *necessary*, and by *whose Fault* it is that the *Offence cometh*, He only is truly answerable for the Crime. And the same holds true, even where *Life itself* is concerned. *Exod. xxii. 2*; *If a Thief be found breaking up, and be smitten that he die, there shall no Blood be shed for him.* In like manner, where men fall by the Hand of *Justice*, for capital Crimes; not the *Magistrate*, nor the *Executioner*, but the *Criminal himself* is guilty of his own Blood. And, in all just and necessary *Wars*; not they who *slay* the Enemy, but they who by *Tyranny and Oppression*, by unsatiable *Avarice*, by *Ambition and Pride*, are stirred up to ravage and destroy the World; upon These comes the Blood of Thousands and of Ten thousands, and of all that are slain upon the Earth.

FROM

FROM these and the like Instances it clearly appears, why the word, *presumptuously*, is added in the Text. 'Tis in *This*, as in all other Cases, not the bare material Action, but the Circumstances of the Intention, on which depends the Morality or Immorality of what is done. Not always He, who takes away the Life of a man, is a Murderer; But if a man come Presumptuously upon his Neighbour to slay him with guile, Him (says God in the Text) shalt thou take from mine Altar, that he may die.

IT may well be thought, that, in a Christian Congregation, there can be no great need of enlarging upon a Crime, which at first sight startles every man's natural conscience. But as, in all other Instances of Wickedness, there are very many degrees, between being guilty of the highest or most capital Crime, and preserving the Habit of that contrary Virtue, to which the Prohibition was intended to be a Guard or Fence; so, in the present Particular, there are many Degrees, between being guilty of the presumptuous Murder condemned in the Text, and main-

S E R M. maintaining on the contrary That Habit
 IX. of Charity, of mutual Love and Good
 Will, of universal Benevolence and Care
 for each other's Benefit, which the Com-
 mand, *Thou shalt not kill*, was, in its full
 extent, intended to secure. Thus our Sa-
 viour himself explains the matter; *Matt.*
v. 21; *Ye have heard that it was said by*
them of old Time, Thou shalt not kill; and
whosoever shall kill, shall be in danger of
the judgment: (That is, The Jewish Ca-
 suits confined the Command of God to
 its most limited and restrained sense :) *But*
I say unto you, Whosoever is angry with
his Brother without a cause, shall be in
danger of the judgment; And whosoever
shall say to his Brother, Raca, shall be in
danger of the Council; But whosoever shall
say, Thou Fool, shall be in danger of Hell-
fire. His Meaning is; that, proportionable
 to the degree of the Offence, shall be the
 nature and kind of the Punishment.

Now of all crimes that a man is
 capable of committing, that which is
 condemned in the primary and literal
 sense of the Text, is the most enormous;
 because 'tis, in the nature of the thing,
 irre-

irreparable; and which no after-act can S E R M.
make any Amends for. For, what recom- IX.
pence can be given a man in exchange

for his Life? Or what satisfaction can *He* make for destroying the *Image of God*, who, far from restoring life, is not able to *make one Hair white or black*, or to *add One Cubit unto his Stature*? By the Law of *Nature* therefore, this Crime was always pursued with the most extreme vengeance: Which made the *Barbarians* to judge, *Acts xxviii. 4*, when they saw *St Paul* upon the point, as they thought, of dying a sudden and unnatural Death: *No doubt this man is a Murderer, whom, though he has escaped the Sea, yet Vengeance suffereth not to live.* By the Laws of *all civilized Nations* in all parts of the World, it has always been punished with Death. And by the Law of *God himself*, it is of *All Offences* declared to be the most unpardonable. (*Gen. ix. 5*; and *Num. xxxv. 31*;) *At the hand of every man's Brother, will I require the life of Man: Whoso sheddeth man's Blood, by man shall his Blood be shed. Ye shall take no satisfaction for the life of a Murderer:---*

be

S E R M. *he shall surely be put to Death.--- So ye shall not pollute the Land wherein ye are: For blood defileth the Land; and the Land cannot be cleansed of the blood that is shed therein, but by the Blood of him that shed it. For which reason 'tis recorded in the History of Manasseh with particular emphasis, 2 Kings xxiv. 4; xxi. 16; that He filled Jerusalem with Blood from one end to the other, which the Lord would not pardon. And in the words of the Text, peculiar directions are given, that whosoever is guilty of innocent blood, should upon no account be suffered to escape: Thou shalt take him from mine Altar, that he may die.*

IT has been a very ancient imagination in persons guilty of the most crying Immoralities, that the Regard men are apt to have for the relative Sacredness of Places dedicated to the most solemn part of God's Worship, should be a sort of Refuge to them, and Protection from Justice. Thus we read, 1 Kings ii. 28, that Joab (who had fallen upon two men more righteous and better than himself, and had slain them with the Sword, ver. 32;) fled unto the Taber-



Tabernacle of the Lord, and caught hold on the Horns of the Altar. But, even under the *Jewish* dispensation, (where *God himself* had appointed the very minutest Forms and Ceremonies of their Religion, and had laid great Stress even upon the nicest Particularities in the manner of Consecrating either Persons or Things or Places, as being *Types* and *Representations* of things spiritual and heavenly: Even under the *Jewish* dispensation *itself*, I say,) *God* was pleased, where-ever *real Virtue* and *Morality* were concerned, expressly to declare, as in *the Text*, that no point of external and ceremonious institution, should in any wise interfere with matters of Eternal Justice, Righteousness, and Truth; and that no pretence of outward appointment in matters of Religion, no Sacredness of Place or Thing, no Worship or Sacrifice at His Altar, should upon any account be a *Cover* or *Protection* to any Vice or Immorality whatsoever. How much more absurd therefore is it under the *Christian* dispensation, (which, in its whole nature and design, is the accomplishment of all types and figures in

S E R M. the Practice of real and intrinsic Virtue
 IX. and Holiness ; How much more absurd is
 it *Here,*) to set up, as the Church of
Rome has done in innumerable Instances,
 Superstitious Observances preferably to
 moral Virtue, and, particularly, to va-
 lue themselves upon the *Immunities* (as
 they call them) granted to religious
 Places ; by which, under pretence of be-
 ing dedicated in a more sacred manner to
 the Service of God, they are very often
 made in a great degree a Protection to
 Criminals of the Highest kind, not ex-
 cepting even *Murderers* themselves ! But
 to proceed.

W H A T Scripture and Nature and Reason teach, concerning the Crime of attempting *another man's* life ; is applicable in proportion to the Folly of a man's deliberately, and upon Discontent with Providence, bereaving himself of his *own* life. For as no man knows all the Ends and Designs, for which the Divine Providence appointed him his Station, whatsoever it be, in this present World ; so no man has a Right to remove himself therefrom ; to anticipate the Time of
 God's

God's calling him to Judgment, or to de-
prive the Publick of a Member. There is
no need to add any thing more upon This
Head, than the words of a wise Philoso-
pher among the Heathens. *All pious men,*
says he, ought to have patience to remain
in the Body, so long as God, whose Temple
and Palace this whole World is, shall please
to continue them there; and not force them-
selves out of the World, before he calls for
them; lest they be found Deserters of the
Station appointed them of God.

S E R M.
IX.

Cic.
Somn.
Scipion.

THESE are Crimes of a very High Nature; I wish I could also add, altogether *unexampl'd*. But 'tis further to be observed, as I have already intimated; that, in the case before us, as in almost all *other* Instances of Wickedness; between being guilty of the presumptuous Sin condemned in the Text, and maintaining on the contrary That Habit of Charity, of mutual Love and Good Will, of universal Benevolence and Care for each other's Benefit, which the Commandment, to which my Text has reference, was, in its full extent, intended to secure: between These two things, I say, there are very many

S E R M. Degrees, in which the Command given in
 IX. the *Law*, as explained by our Saviour in
 the *Gospel*, (in his Sermon upon the Mount,) may in different manners be transgressed. As

1st; I N many civilized Nations, and Nations which at the same time profess Christianity too; from a wrong notion of *Honour*, not regulated by the Limits of true Virtue, there has prevailed a Custom, unknown in ancient times to virtuous nations, even who had not received the Light of the Gospel; a Custom for men of unsuspected Courage and Greatness of mind, men useful to their Country in Posts of the greatest Consequence, and capable of the noblest Actions, needlessly to expose their Lives, on a sudden Transport of Passion, in vindication frequently of a very small Affront, or sometimes perhaps even of a Mistake only. A matter wherein *Human Laws*, and the Execution of Justice among *Men*, have oft-times been very apt to incline to the favourable side; where the *Laws of God*, and the Reason of the *thing itself*, seem not to have left Any room for such Allowances. For if (as I
 before

before observed) God was pleased to appoint under *the Law*, that whosoever had the misfortune to slay a man by Chance, without Any sort of ill intention at all, should be obliged to the Trouble of fleeing to a *City of Refuge*; that every degree even of *Negligence, Heedlessness*, or want of *Care*, whereby our Neighbour might possibly receive Damage, might (as far as possible) be prevented: How much *more* reasonable is it, that Transports of *Passion* and even of the most *sudden* Provocation, should not be allowed in excuse of an irreparable Damage! a Damage, not only irreparable in *This World*, but of unspeakable ill consequence with regard also to that which is *to come*; For persons in these Circumstances generally leave the World, without any real *Forgiveness* of *each other*, and without any possibility of effectual *Repentance and Amendment* towards *God*.

2dly; THE Laws of God, relating to the Life of our Neighbour; taking them according to their real Design, and in their true Extent; are transgressed by all real *Mischiefs and Injuries* whatsoever, done by

S E R M. One man to *Another*, or brought by any
 IX. man, through the means of any unlawful
 Action, consequentially upon *Himself*. They
 are transgressed by All *Debaucheries*,
 whereby men destroy *Themselves*; or which
 they draw *Others* into, to the Ruin of the
Health of their *Bodies*, and the *Reason* of
 their *Minds*. They are transgressed by all
 wilful *Frauds*, and deliberate *Adultera-*
tions, of things made use of either in *Food*
 or *Medicines*; and, in a word, by *every*
 thing, (*out of the way* of a man's plain
 Duty,) in consequence whereof any man
 receives detriment in his Person. Nor is
 it, in any of these cases, a sufficient Ex-
 cuse, in point of morality, to alledge, that
 the Evil which follows, was not *intended*.
 For, though no man is answerable for
 any accidental ill Consequences, which he
 may possibly be the occasion of in the
 Performance of his *Duty*; yet whenever
 any man does any *unlawful* Action, he is
 undoubtedly *answerable*, (in different *de-*
grees indeed, according to different Cir-
 cumstances; but *answerable* certainly he
 is,) not only for the Evil he *directly in-*
tended, but also for the *accidental* ill Con-
 sequences

sequences of That Action, which it was S E R M.
his direct Duty *not* to have performed. IX.

3dly and *Lastly*; W THE Precept of the *old Law* referred to in my Text, as explained in the *Gospel-sense* by our Saviour in his Sermon upon the Mount; is transgressed by all *Wrath, Malice, Strife, Contentiousness,* and *Hatred* towards our Brethren. 1 *Job.* iii. 15; *Whosoever hateth his Brother, is a Murderer; and ye know that no Murderer hath eternal Life abiding in him.* The Ground of the Apostles expressing himself after this manner, is; not only because the Beginnings of wrath and animosities, in event often extend to great and unforeseen Effects; as *Cain's* causeless Anger against his Brother, which the Apostle alludes to in the foregoing verses, ended at length in taking away his Life; But also because, in the very nature of the thing, all Hatred and Malice, all Contentiousness and Animosity, is in it itself unchristian, and is the Spirit of the *Devil*, who was a *Murderer from the Beginning.* For which reason our Saviour, in the *place before referred to*, explaining the Ancient Law upon this head, enlarges

S E R M. it Thus. *Ye have heard that it was said*
 IX. *by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill :*
 --- *But I say unto you, Whosoever is Angry*
with his Brother without a cause, shall be
in danger of the Judgment ; And whoso-
ever shall say to his Brother, Raca, shall
be in danger of the Council ; But whosoever
shall say, Thou Fool, shall be in danger of
Hell-fire. The words are an allusion to
 three different degrees of Punishment, in
 three several Courts of Judicature among
 the *Jews*. And the Sense of them is, that
 every degree of *Hatred, Malice, and Un-*
charitableness towards our Brethren, shall
 finally receive from God a proportionable
 Punishment, a Punishment proportionable
 to each degree of the Offence ; whereas
 the *Old Law* (according to the *Jews* in-
 terpretation of it,) extended not to these
 things at all, but forbid only *Murder* and
 outward Injuries. *Whosoever shall say,*
Thou Fool, shall be in danger of Hell-Fire :
 The Meaning is ; not that, in the strict
 and literal sense, every such rash and pas-
 sionate expression shall be punished with
 eternal damnation : (For who then should
 be saved ?) But that at the exact Account
 in

in the judgment of the Great Day, every *S E R M.*
Word and *Work*, nay, every secret *Thought*
and *Intent* of the *Heart*, shall have its *IX.*
just *Estimation* and *Weight*, in determi-
ning the *degrees* of *Happiness* or *Punish-*
ment, which shall be assigned to every
man in his final and eternal State.

D I D men frequently and seriously con-
sider these things as they ought ; there
would not be found among Christians such
Strifes and Contentions, such Hatred and
Animosities, such Violence and Unchari-
tableness, as there is ; altogether incon-
sistent with that Meekness and *Love*, which
the Apostle declares to be *the Fulfilling of*
the Law ; and directly contrary to That
Spirit of universal Benevolence, Good
Will, and mutual Forbearance, which
the Scripture every where represents as
of much greater Value in the Sight of God,
than all the Sacrifices offered up to him
upon his Altar in the *Jewish State*, and
than all the external Worship paid to him
even in the *Christian Church* itself.





S E R M O N X.

Of the several Sorts of Hypocriſy.



J O B xiii. 16.

He alſo ſhall be my Salvation, for an Hypocrite ſhall not come before him.



THE occasion of theſe Words, S E R M. X.
 was Job's Friends urging a-
 gainſt him, that becauſe God
 had grievouſly afflicted him,
 therefore he muſt needs have
 been a very wicked man. To this, Job
 conſtantly replies, by maintaining his own
 Innocency; and inſiſting, that God the
 ſupreme Governour of all things, afflicted
 him for *other* Reaſons according to his
own

S E R M.

X.

own good pleasure, and not for any wickedness or unrighteousness found in *Job*, *cb. xxvii. 5*; *'Till I die I will not remove my Integrity from me: My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go; my Heart shall not reproach me so long as I live: For what is the Hope of the Hypocrite, when God taketh away his Soul?* The meaning of which Defence of himself, was not that he claimed to be entirely *without Sin*; For, on the contrary, when he speaks in *This* Sense, of being *Sinless* towards God, he expresses himself in a quite different manner; *If I justify my self*, saith he, *my own mouth shall condemn me; if I say, I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse*; *ch. ix. 20.* But with regard to *great Crimes*, such Wickedness as his Friends collected, from his state of Adversity, that he must needs have been guilty of; from *these* he constantly clears himself with the greatest Steadiness; and proves that they argued very wrongfully for God, when they supposed that God could no otherwise be justified in afflicting *Job*, than by *Job's* having been a very wicked man.

ver.


ver. 7. of this xiiiith chapter; *Will you speak wickedly, saith he, for God; and talk deceitfully for Him? Will ye accept his Person? Will ye contend for God? Though he slay me, (ver. 15,) yet will I trust in him; but I will maintain my own ways before him: That is, Though he afflict me to Death, yet will I trust that he does not expect from me a false confession, or that I should endeavour to justify his Proceedings by any wrong Supposition. And then he adds in the words of the Text; He also shall be my Salvation, for an Hypocrite shall not come before him: That is, I know that after all this, he will at length deliver me; and will in the End distinguish his faithful Servant, from the Destruction of a Hypocrite.*

THE word *Hypocrite*, is here plainly used in opposition to such a sincere person as can *maintain his own ways before God*; so *Job* expresses it: Or, in *St John's* phrase, to such a good man, who, because *his own Heart condemneth him not, has therefore Confidence towards God*. In which matter, because there is oftentimes very great Deceit; and frequently very ill men think

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S E R M. think themselves *not to be Hypocrites*, because they are not so in the grossest and most literal Sense of the word; I shall therefore in the following Discourse endeavour to set this matter in a clear Light, and point forth distinctly the several sorts of men, which are in Scripture charged with the Denomination of *Hypocrites*. The Use of which Discourse will be, that we may learn, *not to judge our Neighbours*, whose Hearts we cannot discern; any further than they open themselves by manifest Actions: But that every man may seriously examine his *own Heart* by the Rule of Scripture, and find whether there be not often in it *more* of what the Scripture styles *Hypocrisy*; than careless persons are apt to be aware of.

I. *First* then; T H E *greatest and highest* degree of *Hypocrisy*, is when men, with a formed Design and deliberate Intention, endeavour under a Pretence of Religion and an Appearance of serving God, to carry on worldly and corrupt Ends. Of *This* sort, were those whom our Saviour describes, *Mat. xxiii. 14; Wo unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, Hypocrites; For ye devour*

devour widows Houses, and for a pretence S E R M.
make long Prayers; therefore ye shall re- X.
ceive the greater damnation. And ver. 27; 

Wo unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, Hypocrites; for ye are like unto whited Sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but within are full of dead mens bones, and of all uncleanness; Even so Ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity. The Words next following to which, have in the manner of expression, a difficulty which deserves particular explication: Ver. 29; Wo unto you, says our Saviour, because ye build the Tombs of the Prophets, and garnish the Sepulchres of the righteous; And say, if we had been in the days of our Fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the Blood of the Prophets: Wherefore ye are witnesses unto yourselves that ye are the children of them which killed the Prophets. The same words, as recorded by St Luke, are still more remarkable, ch. xi. 47; Wo unto you; for ye build the Sepulchres of the Prophets, and your Fathers killed them; Truly ye bear witness that ye allow the deeds

S E R M. deeds of your Fathers; for They indeed
 X. killed them, and Ye build their Sepulchres.

The Question here is, how our Saviour pronounces a Wo against these Pharisees, for building the Sepulchres of the Prophets; and how he infers, that they allowed the deeds of their Fathers, by that very action whereby they professed to disclaim and disallow them. Now in order to explain This difficulty, 'tis needful only to observe, that in some languages, and in That of the Jews particularly, 'tis both usual and elegant to suppress part of the proposition, which yet by necessary inference is always plainly understood. Thus Rom. vi. 17; God be thanked, saith St Paul, that ye were the Servants of Sin; but ye have obeyed the doctrine that was delivered you. His meaning plainly is; God be thanked, that, notwithstanding your strong Prejudices against the Gospel, by having been formerly habitual Sinners, yet at length ye were convinced and embraced the Truth. In like manner here, the Pharisees well understood the force of our Saviour's reproof, and that his intention was This, to declare that notwithstanding

their professing to disclaim the Deeds of S E R M.
 their Fathers who killed the Prophets, yet X.
 in reality they were as truly in the *moral*
sense the children of these men by *Likeness*
and Imitation of Manners, as they acknow-
 ledged themselves to be descended from
 them by *natural Birth*; and that, *not-*
withstanding their pretending to show great
 Respect for the Memory of the Ancient
 Prophets, by building and adorning their
 Tombs; yet in reality this Respect was
 only shown to those Prophets because they
 were *Dead*, and could no longer reprove
 and shame them for their Vices; whereas
 the *Living Prophets* were *persecuted* by
 them, just as the *Ancient Ones* had been
 by their *Fore-fathers*. These men there-
 fore were guilty of the *first* and *highest*
 degree of *hypocrisy*, carrying on wicked
 designs deliberately under the pretence of
 Religion.

OF the same kind were Those in the
 xvth of St *Matthew*, ver. 1; who after
 our Saviour had in their presence worked
 many Miracles upon *Earth*, perversely
 and impertinently (as if the *Place* were of
 more moment than the *Greatness* of the
 VOL. X. Q Work)

S E R M. Work) urged him to *show them likewise* some Miracle *in the Heavens*. To whom he replies, *ver. 3*, with suitable Sharpness; *O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the Face of the Sky, but can ye not discern the Signs of the Times?*

UNDER the same denomination also, come Those mentioned in the *xxiid ch.* of the same Gospel, at the *17th verse*; who asked our Saviour, *Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar, or not?* meaning to accuse him as a *Betrayer of the Liberty of the Jews*, if he should say it *was* lawful; or, on the contrary, as a *mover of Sedition against the Romans*, if he should say it *was not* lawful. To whom therefore he accordingly replies with a deserved Sharpness, *ver. 18*, *Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites?*

Lastly; UNDER the same rank and character, (of hypocrites of the *worst* sort, *such* as have *no manner* of Regard either to *God* or to *True Virtue* in all their Pretences to Religion;) under *This* rank, I say, may justly be placed Those Pharisees, against whose Practices our Saviour warns his Disciples, *St Matt. vi*; 2, 5,
16;

16; *When thou dost thine alms, do not* S E R M.
found a Trumpet before thee, as the hy- X.
pocrites do, in the Synagogues and in the
Streets, that they may have Glory of Men.
And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be
as the Hypocrites are; for they love to
pray standing in the Synagogues, and in
the Corners of the Streets, that they may
be seen of Men. And when ye fast, be
not as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance;
for they disfigure their faces, that they
may appear unto Men to fast. This Cor-
ruption was, in our Saviour's time, grown
in a manner so universal, among the most
Eminent Men of the Jews; that, as if
it had been the known and proper charac-
teristick of some of their principal Sects,
he sometimes, without mentioning the
particular, thought it sufficient to admo-
nish and caution his Disciples in those ge-
neral words, *St Matt. xvi. 6; Take heed*
and beware of the Leaven of the Phari-
sees and of the Sadduces; Of the Leaven,
that is, (as the Evangelist explains it, *ver.*
12;) of the Doctrine of the Pharisees and
of the Sadduces; and *St Luke* still more
VOL. X. Q 2 expressly,


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S E R M. expressly, *ch. xii. 1*; *The Leaven of the*
 X. *Pharisees, which is Hypocrisy.*

AFTER our Saviour's time, the *Apostles* describe to us the *same* kind of *hypocrisy*, in the characters of the *worst* men who were in following Ages to arise in the Church. The *Times shall come*, saith *St Paul*, *2 Tim. iii. 2*, when *men shall be lovers of their own selves*,----*more than lovers of God*; *Having a Form of Godliness, but denying the Power thereof*;----*creeping into houses, and leading captive silly women, laden with Sins, led away with divers Lusts*. His meaning is, to describe *such* persons, as under pretence of *Sanctity* and a *Form* of *Godliness*, or with great zeal for certain *Rites* and *Ceremonies* and *Appearances* of Religion, either cheat and defraud men in their *dealings* without *Truth* and *Justice*, or corrupt mens manners, and seduce men and women into the *Practise* of *Immoralities*, as if *not inconsistent* with Religion. Our Saviour has given us a never-failing Rule, to discover this *hypocrisy*: *By their Fruits*, says he, *ye shall know them*; *Mat. vii. 16*. Not by their *Zeal*, not by their *Fierceness*, for

This

This or the other particular *Opinion*, for S E R M.
This or the other particular *Form* of God- X.

liness; but by their *Fruits*, says he, by 
the general and habitual Tenour and
Course of their Lives, by *This* ye shall
know them. For, as a good Tree can
no otherwise be distinguished from a bad
one, but by the Fruit it bears; so in mat-
ters of Religion, *whatever*, under *any*
pretence whatsoever, has *any other* ten-
dency, than to promote Truth and Justice,
Plainness and Simplicity, Sobriety and
Righteousness, Meekness and Equity, Cha-
rity and universal Good-will amongst Men;
whatever (I say) has *any other* Tendency
than This, is, by our Saviour's Rule, most
certain Hypocrisy: 'Tis *Professing to know*
God, but *in Works denying him*, Tit. i.
16: From hence we may easily judge,
under what Head are to be placed the
gainful Doctrines of Purgatory, of *Mas-*
ses for the Dead, of *private Confessions*
and Absolutions by the Power of the Priest,
of *Prohibitions of Meats by the Authority*
of the Church, in order to grant *Indul-*
gences for the Churches Profit; and the
like. Concerning which kind of things,

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S E R M. St Paul speaks prophetically, 1 *Tim.* iv. 2;
 X. *seducing Spirits*, saith he, *speaking lies in*
 hypocrisy; *having their conscience seared*
with a hot iron; Forbidding to marry, and
commanding to abstain from meats; and
so on: And Tit. i. 11; Teaching things
which they ought not, for filthy Lucre's
sake. Which sort of Doctrines, because
 they are naturally accompanied with a *fac-*
tious and *contentious* Spirit, without which
 they can never be supported; and because
 they are of such a Nature, as can never
 proceed from mere Error of the *Under-*
standing, but always arise from some Per-
 verseness of the *Will*, inconsistent with
 the sincerity and good conscience of a
 Christian; therefore they are by the Apo-
 stles stiled *Factions* or *Heresies*; that is,
 corrupt Notions propagated by wicked
 men for wordly and factious Purposes,
against the conviction of their own Con-
 sciences: *Tit.* iii. 10; *A man that is an*
Heretick, reject; knowing that he that is
such, is subverted, and sinneth, being con-
demned of himself: And 2 *Pet.* ii. 1;
They shall bring in damnable Heresies, even
denying the Lord that bought them: That

is, departing from God, (who redeemed or *bought* them to himself with a price, even with the precious Blood of Christ,) they shall *through Covetousness*, saith he, (that is, through the Love of this world, through Ambition, or the Desire of Temporal Power and Profit,) *with feigned words make merchandise of you; ver. 3.*

THIS, is the *first* and *highest* degree of *hypocrisy*; when men thus, with a formed Design and deliberate Intention, endeavour under a Pretence of Religion, and an Appearance of serving God, to carry on wordly and corrupt Ends. And because the word *hypocrisy* is Now generally used in This *worst* Sense; therefore, if men know themselves to be free from this greatest and most hateful degree of it, they are too apt immediately to flatter themselves, that they are consequently in no sense chargeable with being Hypocrites at all. But the Scripture frequently uses the same word in several *lower* senses, which deserve carefully to be taken notice of; when it describes men, not indeed *profligate* as the fore-going, but yet, in their

S E R M. several degrees, justly charged with being
 X. guilty of *Hypocrisy*.

II. *Secondly* THEREFORE; those who not absolutely mean to cast of all Religion, nor dare in their own hearts totally to despise it; but yet willingly content themselves with the *formal* part of it, and, by zealously observing certain outward Rites and Ceremonies, think to atone for great Defects of Sobriety, Righteousness and Truth; *These* also the Scripture always includes, under the character and denomination of *Hypocrites*. *These*, the presence of the Ark of God, preserved not, in the days of *Saul*, from falling into the hands of the *Philistines*. *These*, the Temple of God, and the Sacredness of the place wherein he had chosen, above all the Nations upon Earth, to place his Name there; delivered not from the desolations brought upon *Jerusalem*, by the *Chaldeans* and the *Romans*. *These*, all the Promises made by Christ in the New Testament to his Church, rescued not, in the days of the Christian Emperors, from the overflowing deluge of barbarous Nations, of *Goths* and *Vandalls*, from *abroad*;
 nor


nor from the growing corruption of ido-S E R M.
latrous Ceremonies, and Saint-worship, X.
from *within*. *These*, each in their several
Ages, were zealous for the *Name* of their
Religion, but not for the *righteousness*
thereof; and therefore God removed, their
Candlestick out of its place. This, is
That species of Hypocrisy, for which
Samuel reprov'd *Saul*, 1 Sam. xv. 22 ;
Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt-
offerings and Sacrifices, as in obeying the
Voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey, is
better than sacrifice ; and to hearken, than
the fat of Rams : And for which the Pro-
phet *Hosea* thus reprov's the people of
the *Jews* in *His* time, *ch. vi. 6 ; I desired*
Mercy, and not Sacrifice ; and the Know-
ledge of God, more than Burnt-offerings.
This also was, in our Saviour's days, the
case of the *better* sort of Pharisees, of
Those who seem, *not to have been* wholly
profligate and void of all Religion in
their Hearts, but *superstitious* with regard
to *small* things, to the Neglect of *Greater*.
Such, as he stiles *hypocrites ; for teaching,*
as Doctrines, the Commandments of Men ;
St Matt. xv. 9 : For contributing super-
stitiously

S E R M.
X.

stitiously, to the adorning and beautifying of the Temple, that particular Portion of their Goods, which they ought to have employed in maintaining their poor and indigent Parents; *ver. 5*: For being zealous in the observation of the *traditionary* Ceremonies of their Fore-Fathers, in the frequent *washing of hands*, and *cleaning of Cups*, and other outward *Purifications*; to the neglect of true Virtue, and *inward* moral Righteousness; *Mat. xxiii. 25*: For being precise in *tithing mint, anise and cummin*; and *omitting the weightier matters of the Law, Judgment, Mercy and Faith*; *Faith*, that is, Faithfulness or Fidelity in all their Dealings with men, *ver. 23*: Lastly, for being *more solicitous*, in keeping the *positive* Law of their *Sabbath*, (which ought not indeed to be left undone; But he accuses them for being *more* solicitous in attending to This,) than in works of *mercy, goodness, and charity*, which are of eternal and unalterable Obligation; *St Luke xiii. 15*; *Thou hypocrite*, says our Saviour to the Ruler of the Synagogue, *Ought not this woman, being a daughter of*

of

of Abraham, to be loosed from this Bond, S E R M.
 (from this *Disease*;) on the Sabbath-day? X.

OF the *same* Species of hypocrisy, are 
They guilty in *All* Ages, who make the
 Advancement of Religion, and the In-
 crease of the Kingdom of Christ, to con-
 sist chiefly in the *external, temporal, or*
worldly Prosperity of those who are called
 by his Name; in Pomp and Splendour, in
 Riches and Dignities, in Authority, Pow-
 er and Dominion. *Not* perhaps that they
 go upon the Principles of *Atheism and*
Infidelity, (which is the case of the *first*
 and *highest* degree of Hypocrites, mention-
 ed under the fore-going Head;) but, by
 a *secret* Deceitfulness of Sin, and a Love
 of this present World, their Judgment is
perverted to be more concerned for the
 Authority of *Men*, than for the Com-
 mands of *God*; and they judge of the
 State of Religion, by the measure of such
 worldly Advantages, as perhaps have *no*
 relation to true Piety: Whereas indeed
 the True Prosperity of the Church of
 God, or the Increase of the Kingdom of
 Christ on *Earth*, can consist in nothing
 else, but in the things which will increase
 the


S E R M. the Number of his Subjects in *Heaven* ;
 X. And *That* can only be done, by the *Prevalency* of *Truth*, by *Simplicity* of *Doctrine*, and by *Righteousness* of *Practice*. For, *Not* they that *say* unto him, *Lord, Lord* ; that is, not they who make outward profession of *Christ's Religion* ; shall enter the *Kingdom of Heaven* ; but they that do the *Will of his Father* which is in *Heaven*. Without which real *Righteousness* ; as the *Body without the Spirit is dead*, so *Faith without works is Dead* also. For, *He is not a Jew*, saith *St Paul*, *Rom. ii. 28* ; (neither is He a *Christian* ;) which is one outwardly ; neither is *That circumcision, which is outward in the Flesh* : But he is a *Jew, which is one inwardly* ; And *circumcision is That of the Heart, in the Spirit, and not in the Letter* ; whose *Praise is not of Men but of God*.

III. *Thirdly* ; A lower Degree of *Hypocrisy*, (but still included under *That Name*, according to the *Scripture-notion* of the word,) is the *Behaviour of Those*, who have indeed *very right Notions* of *Religion*, truly judging it to consist principally in *righteousness and holiness of Life*,

Life, and accordingly being duly sensible of the necessity of Virtue and of moral Obedience; but yet content themselves with vain resolutions of *future* Repentance, and for the *present* live securely in the Practice of Sin. Against *This* Hypocrisy, this *secret* hypocrisy, this *Deceitfulness* of Sin, with which men impose upon *themselves* rather than upon *others*; our Saviour affectionately warns us, *Matt. xxiv. 42*; *Watch therefore*, says he, *for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come*: --- *But be ye Always Ready*; *for in such hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh*: --- *Blessed is That Servant, whom his Lord when he cometh shall find so doing*: --- *But if that Evil Servant shall say in his Heart, my Lord delayeth his Coming*; and shall begin to smite his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the Drunken; The Lord of that Servant shall come in a day that he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of; and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites.

IV. *Fourthly*; THE last and lowest degree of hypocrisy, (described under That character

S E R M. character in Scripture,) is of *Those*, who
 X. *not only* have right *Notions* of Religion,
 and a due Sense of the indispensable Necessity of Repentance and Reformation *hereafter*; but even *at present*, have some imperfect Resolutions of *immediate* Obedience; and even *actual*, but yet *ineffectual*, Endeavours after it. These, are the Persons described, *Rom. vii. 19; The Good that they would, they do not; but the Evil which they would not, That they do.* They are the *stony ground*, on which the Seed was sown in our Saviour's Parable, *Matt. xiii. 5; who with joy receive the word, ver. 20; But for want of deepness of earth, and not having root in itself, it dureth only for a while; and either upon the Approach of Persecution, or upon the Assault of Temptation from some beloved Sin, they very quickly fall away.* Their *Heart*, as the Scripture expresses it, is not *Whole, or Right, with the Lord*; but they *serve Two Masters*, and their Affections are divided between *God and Mammon*. To these, *St James* declares, that *He who offendeth in One point, is guilty of all*; meaning, not that all Sinners are *equally Sinners*,
 but

but that whoever allows himself in any S E R M.
one known Sin, is thereby justly denomi- X.
nated, and will be punished as being a 
Transgressor of the Law. And our Savi-
our admonishes them, *Luke* xiii. 24; that
Many shall seek to enter in at the strait
gate, and not be able; meaning, that so
long as they continue in the Practice of
any *one* Vice unreformed, and are not able
to prevail with themselves to forsake a
darling Sin, their Endeavours to obtain
the Kingdom of God cannot but be inef-
fectual. 'Tis *no better*, than a secret *hy-*
pocrisy; to account themselves *righteous*
for not being guilty of *other* Faults, while
their False Heart indulges itself in any *one*
habitual known Sin, and speaks Peace to
itself by attending only to *one part* of its
own character. If they never forsake this
One beloved Lust, the words of *Zophar*
in the Book of *Job* are but too applicable
to them, *ch.* xx. 5; (and viii. 13;) *The Joy*
of the hypocrite, is but for a Moment, and
his Trust shall be a Spiders Web.

NEVERTHELESS, such Persons as
These, must by no means be compared
with those *much worse* Sinners, mentioned
under

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S E R M. under the fore-going Heads. For, though

X. These *are* indeed at present in an *Evil* State, yet there is in them a Root of some Love to Virtue, which affords great Hope that it may in time spring up unto righteousness, and unto Life eternal. They are the *bruised Reed*, which ought not to be *broken*; and the *smoking Flax*, which ought not to be *quenched*. They are, what the Apostle calls, *Heb. xii. 13, the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; the Lame*, which ought not to be *turned out of the way, but that it rather be healed*. They ought not to be terrified, and driven into despair; but, with all meekness and compassion, to be continually exhorted, that they finish their Repentance, and make hast to mortify every inordinate Lust, before *the Night cometh when no man can work*.

T H U S have I briefly described to you, the several *sorts* and *degrees* of *hypocrisy*. The two *first* kinds; namely, the endeavouring deliberately, under a Pretence of Religion, to carry on *worldly and corrupt Ends*; and the presuming, by the observation of certain *Forms and Ceremonies* of
Any

Any kind, to make amends for the want of Truth and Righteousness, of Virtue and Goodness; these Two, are what the Scripture calls an *Abomination to the Lord*, or the highest possible Provocation of his Displeasure. The two latter sorts; namely the intending in some particular Instances to amend our lives *hereafter*, or the endeavouring it *at present* but faintly and ineffectually, through the Deceitfulness of Sin; these are the hypocrisy, (or the Falseness *indeed* more to *Themselves* than *Others*;) which belongs to the character of *such* persons, whom God usually corrects with his judgments, and gives them space of *Repentance*, and invites them by his *Mercies*, and bears long with them thro' his *Patience*; 'till either at length they deliver themselves by a *thorough Amendment* out of the Snare of the Devil, or become finally *hardened* and given up as *incorrigible*.

THE Use of what has been said, is, (as I observed at the Beginning,) that from hence every Man may learn, not to judge his *Neighbour*, who to his own Master standeth or falleth; but to exa-

S E R M. mine seriously the state of his *Own Heart*.

X. Which, whosoever does, carefully and impartially, and with the true Spirit of a Christian; will find little reason to be censorious upon *Others*. *Matt. vii. 5; Thou hypocrite, says our Saviour, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the Mote out of thy Brothers eye.*





S E R M O N XI.

Who are the true Church of GOD.



GAL. iv. 22, 23, 24.


For it is written, that Abraham had Two Sons, the one by a bond-maid, the other by a free-woman. But he who was of the bond-woman, was born after the Flesh; but he of the free-woman, was by Promise. Which things are an Allegory: For These are the two Covenants.




IN discoursing upon these words S E R M.
of the Apostle, I shall *first* confi- XI.
der *What* the *Doctrin*e is, which
he here asserts and illustrates. ~~~~~
Secondly, I shall show, that 'tis
a *Doctrin*e founded in the universal Rea-
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SER M. son and Nature of Things, and inculcated
 XI. in every part of Scripture. And, *Thirdly*,
 I shall endeavour to explain, *wherein* lies
 the Strefs and Force of That particular
 Argument, which the Apostle here draws
 from That Historical Similitude, which
 he stiles an *Allegory*.

I. *First*; IN order to understand clearly
 and distinctly, *What* the *Doctrine itself* is,
 which the Apostle is here asserting and
 illustrating; 'Tis to be observed, that as
Good and *Evil* are *themselves* essentially
 and necessarily distinguished, by the un-
 alterable Nature and Reason of *Things*;
 and *Good* and *Evil* Men are, in the Mo-
 ral sense, likewise essentially and necessa-
 rily distinguished from each other, by
 their *Doing* what is *Good* or *Evil*: So *God*,
 who can never possibly be deceived in
 judging, either of the *Nature of Things*
 or of the *Characters of Persons*; must con-
 sequently, in his *Government* of the *ra-
 tional and moral* World, be continually de-
 termined by the consideration of these ne-
 cessary and essential Distinctions. For,
What things really *Are* in themselves;
That, to an unerring Understanding, they
 must

must always necessarily *Appear* to be: And S E R M.
Whatsoever is, in *its own* nature, *Praise-* XI.
worthy or *Blameable*; cannot but, by an 
All-powerful and Impartial Governour, be
distinguished accordingly. *Virtuous* and
Vicious Men therefore, cannot but be in
the *Favour* or under the *Displeasure* of
God; in proportion to the degree of their
respective *Qualifications*. Consequently,
the *Sum Total*, the *Congregation* or *Gene-*
ral Assembly, of all *virtuous and good* men
from the *Beginning* of the *World*, are the
True universal Church or *City of God*, the
heavenly Jerusalem: And all *Impenitent*
Sinners of all kinds, are *Reprobates*, or the
Sons of Perdition. But because in *This*
present *World*, where the *Hearts* of men
are not discernable to each other, 'tis im-
possible men can be *sorted* according to
these *Real* distinctions; therefore of ne-
cessity *Here*, the *true Church of God* must
be *represented by*, and in the *Sight of Men*
be esteemed to Be, All Those who *make*
Profession of being, and in *Appearance*
are, what they *really* ought to be: And
even of *God himself*, so far as concerns all
Publick Temporal Dispensations, they must

S E R M. be look'd upon as his *Church* and his
 XI. *People*. The *Families*, the *Cities*, the
 Nations worshipping the True God; are
 Those to whom all *General Declarations*,
Promises, and *Threatnings*, relating to
 God's Church on Earth, must of neces-
 sity be addressed. Men of corrupt minds,
 insensible of the essential and indispen-
 sable necessity of true virtue, in order to
 be pleasing to God; have from hence al-
 ways been apt to deceive themselves, as
 if being Members of the True Church of
 God, and Professors of the True Religion,
 would be of real Advantage to them,
 without That inward Holiness and true
 Goodness of the Heart and Mind, which
 as certainly shows forth itself in the habi-
 tual Practice of a virtuous Life, as a Good
 Tree from a Sound Root will not fail to
 bring forth Good Fruit. The *Jews*, in
 the time of our Saviour and his Apostles,
 were almost universally fallen into this
 Great Error, in the highest Degree and
 in the most remarkable manner. The *Fa-*
family of Abraham, had distinguished itself
 in an extraordinary manner from all *other*
Families; and the *Nation of the Jews*,
 from

from all *other Nations*; by being Publick S E R M.
Worshippers of the *One True God*, the XI.
God of the Universe; while all *other people* 
were overspread with the absurdest and
most barbarous Idolatries. And God ac-
cordingly had been pleased to distinguish
That Family and Nation, with repeated
Promises of the Greatest and most Lasting
Blessings; with *Promises*, that *He* would
be *Their God*, and *They* should be *His*
people; and that among *Them* should final-
ly be established a *Kingdom*, which should
have *no End*. 'Tis evident at first Sight,
that God cannot be the *God* of the *Dead*,
but of the *Living*; and that therefore all
these *Promises* to *Abraham* and his *Poste-*
rity, and to the True Worshippers of God
in *All Ages*, could be no better than mere
Mockery, if God were not able to raise
them from the Dead, that they might per-
sonally be Inheritors of the Promised
Kingdom, when the Time of its Estab-
lishment should be fulfilled. Upon This
ground therefore, the *Jews* had universally
an expectation of a *future Life*: And, as
being the Posterity of those Worshippers
of the True God, to whom all the Promises

S E R M. were made; they appropriated to *Them-*
 XI. *selves* all expectation of the *Eternal*, as
 well as of the *Temporal*, Favour of God.
 And so far as they were *truly*, what they
professed to be, *sincere Practicers* of This
 True Religion; *so far indeed* they had rea-
son to appropriate to themselves the *pro-*
mitted Blessings of God's *peculiar people*.
 But, by degrees, separating the *Letter* of
 God's Promises from the declared *Intent*
and Reason of them, they fell into an
 imagination, that the Promises made to
 God's Church and People, were appropri-
 ated to Those who were the Posterity of
Abraham literally and by *natural Descent*,
 and not to Those who were his Posterity
 in the *spiritual* and *religious* Sense, that
 is, who inherited his Faithfulness in ad-
 hering to That True Religion, upon *ac-*
count of which the Promises were made to
 him. This error of the *Jews* it was,
 that St *Paul* in this Epistle sets himself to
 oppose. And the *Doctrine* he asserts in
 opposition to it, is; that though the Pro-
 mises of God were indeed made to the
Posterity of Abraham, as his *Church and*
People; yet it was always understood, that
 this

this Posterity of *Abraham* in the *literal* S E R M.
sense according to the *Flesh*, was but the XI.
visible or *Earthly Church*, the *type* or re-
presentative of the *real invisible Church*
of *God*, the *true Children* of *Abraham* in
the *spiritual* and *religious Sense*, the *Suc-*
cessors and *Followers* of the *Patriarch* in
his *True Religion*, in his *Faithfulness* and
Obedience towards *God*. *Know*, saith he,
ch. iii. 7, *that they which are of Faith,*
the same are the children of Abraham;
and, *are Blessed with Faithful Abraham.* ver. 9.
For, *God's Covenant* having been made
with *Abraham* before his *Circumcision*,
which was but the *eternal Sign* or *Token*
of the *Covenant*; 'tis evident the *Founda-*
tion of the *Covenant*, was *That Faith* and
Obedience; in which whosoever followed
the *example* of *Abraham*, and *walked in* Rom. iv.
his steps, though he were not of *That li-* 12.
neal Descent which was commanded to be
distinguished by the *External Sign*, yet in
the *religious sense*, he was, in *God's esti-*
mation, a *child of Abraham*. *Ver. 28;*
There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is
neither Bond nor Free; ---- for ye are all
One in Christ Jesus: And if ye be Christ's,
then

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S E R M. *then are ye Abraham's Seed, and Heirs according to the Promise.* If ye be Christ's; that is, if ye be obedient to the everlasting Gospel, to That Gospel which was preached before unto Abraham, ver. 8; then are ye Abraham's Seed, and Heirs according to the Promise. For, in Christ Jesus, saith Gal. vi. 15. *he, neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a New creature, (that is, Faith which worketh by Love :) And as many as walk according to This Rule, Peace be on them, and Mercy, and upon the Israel of God. This is the Doctrine, which the Apostle at large asserts in this Epistle. And he illustrates it particularly in the words of my Text, by a Similitude drawn from what happened in the Family of Abraham himself. As Abraham, says he, had two Sons; the one by a Bond-maid, the other by a Free-woman: And as the Son of the Bond-maid, though, according to the Flesh, as truly his Natural Descendant as the Other, yet was not to be Co-heir with Him who, by the Promise of God, was appointed to inherit: So, says he, the Jerusalem which Now is, and is in Bondage with her children; the*
visible

visible earthly Church, which received the external ceremonial Law from *Mount Sina*; is not, by That *outward general* denomination, intitled to the eternal Favour of God; But the *Jerusalem which is above*, which is the *Mother of us all*, of *All* who by True Faith and sincere Obedience are pleasing to God; This *heavenly Jerusalem*, this *spiritual invisible Church or City of the Living God*, this *general assembly and Church of the First-born which are written in Heaven*; This it is, to which all the Promises of God, made to his *Church*, are, in reality, originally and finally appropriated. This is the *Doctrine asserted and illustrated* in the Text: Which was the *First thing* I proposed to show.

II. *Secondly*; THIS DOCTRINE (I say) is a Doctrine founded in the *universal Reason and Nature of Things*, and inculcated in every part of *Scripture*. That 'tis a Doctrine founded in the *universal Reason and Nature of Things*, appears sufficiently from what has been already said, under the *foregoing Head*, in opening the *Nature*, of the *Doctrine itself* laid down in the
Text;

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S E R M. Text ; Where I have shown, that all the
 XI. Promises of God, made at all times to
 his Church, to the *visible Society* of his
Professed Worshippers on Earth; must of
necessity, in the *nature of the Thing*, be un-
 derstood to be made to Them, *merely* con-
 sidered as the *Type or Representative* of the
real invisible Church of God; that is, of
 Those who, by the *sincere Practice of True*
 Religion and Virtue are, in the *Spiritual*
 Sense, *really* acceptable to God: *Rom. ix.*
8; *They which are the children of the*
Flesh, these are not the children of God;
but the children of the Promise are count-
ed for the Seed. That the same Doctrine,
 is moreover inculcated in *every part of*
Scripture; is very plain in the *Whole Se-*
ries both of the *Old and New Testament.*
 The *original Promise itself* made to *Abra-*
 ham, was not to *Him and his Posterity*
 alone, but that *in his Seed All the Fami-*
 lies of the *Earth* likewise should be *blessed.*
 And in a little time after This Promise,
 'tis recorded, that meeting with *Melchise-*
 dek King of *Salem*, a *Worshipper and*
 Priest of the most High God, that is, one
 who professed and maintained the True
 Reli-

Gen. xii. 3.

Gen. xiv.
18.

Religion in the City over which he ruled; S E R M. XI.
though his Family was not found in the *Genealogy* of the Patriarchs, as the Author of the Epistle to the *Hebrews* observes; yet *Abraham* acknowledged him as a Worshipper of the same God with himself; And not only so, but moreover, upon account of the Dignity of his Office, he paid to him, even as to a Superiour, the Tenth of all the Spoils, that he had taken in a War with the neighbouring Cities: From whence in the *New Testament* this person is justly represented, as having been a Type of Christ himself. In following Ages, when the Nation of the *Jews* were settled in the Land which God had promised to *Abraham*, and God had himself given them a particular Law, by the Observance of which they were to be kept distinct from all the Nations of the Earth; it was still constantly declared, that their Observation of *That Law* was no further acceptable to God, than as it was accompanied *with*, and became a Peculiar Obligation *to*, a more perfect Obedience to the eternal *Moral Law* of Righteousness: *Hath the Lord as Great Delight in burnt-offerings*

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S E R M. *ings and Sacrifices, as in obeying the voice*
 XI. *of the Lord? Behold, to obey, is better*
 ~~~~~ *than Sacrifice; and to hearken, than the*  
*Fat of Rams; 1 Sam. xv. 22. The Preach-*  
*ing of the Prophets, through the whole*  
*period of the Jewish State, was to the*  
*same Effect; to warn That People against*  
*relying upon their being children of Abra-*  
*ham, and Followers of Moses; if they*  
*were not, in the Practice of real Virtue*  
*and Righteousness, as well as by the ob-*  
*servance of external Ceremonies, God's*  
*distinguished and peculiar People. And*  
*very plain Intimations are given in several*  
*Passages of the Prophets, of God's inten-*  
*tion to accept, out of All nations, those*  
*who worked Righteousness; when, of his*  
*own peculiar people, who professed to be*  
*Alone his True Worshipers, every wicked*  
*person should finally be rejected by him.*  
*Mal. i. 11; From the Rising of the Sun*  
*even unto the going down of the same, my*  
*Name shall be great among the Gentiles;*  
*and in Every place, Incense shall be of-*  
*fered unto my Name, and a Pure Offering;*  
 ---- *saith the Lord of Hosts. In the New*  
*Testament, our Lord's Fore-runner John*  
 the



*the Baptist began his Preaching, with exhorting those who came to his Baptism, Think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our Father; But bring forth Fruits meet for Repentance. And our Lord himself, to the same sort of Persons who relied upon Abraham's being their Father; replied, Job. viii. 39; that they could not be, in the religious sense of the Phrase, Abraham's children; unless they would Do the Works of Abraham. Again: Upon occasion of the Centurion's showing so great a Faith, as Jesus had not before found, no not in Israel; he declares, that Many shall come from the East and West, and shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the Kingdom of Heaven; but the Children of the Kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness. And concerning his Own Disciples in particular, the Professours of his True Religion under the Gospel-state; he saith; Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the Kingdom of Heaven; but he that Doth the Will of my Father which is in Heaven. And the Apostles accordingly in All their Writings, are perpetually warning men, that as God*

S E R M.  
XI.

Mat. iii 9.

Mat. viii.  
11.

Mat. vii.  
21.

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S E R M. *is no Respector of Persons, but in every Na-*  
 XI. *tion he that feareth him, and worketh righ-*  
 Acts. 34. *teousness, is accepted with him ; so, on the*  
 Gal. vi. 7. *Other hand, whatever mens Profession of*  
 Rom. x. *true Religion be, God will not be mocked ;*  
 12. *but, according to each one's Real Beha-*  
 Col. iii. 11. *viour and Practice, whatsoever a man sow-*  
 1. *eth, That shall he also reap. That, with*  
 1. *God, there is no difference between the Jew*  
 1. *and the Greek ; for the same Lord over all,*  
 1. *is rich unto all that call upon him. That*  
 1. *in the Gospel-estimation of persons, there*  
 1. *is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor*  
 1. *uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond*  
 1. *nor free ; but Christ, ( that is Obedience*  
 1. *to the Commands and Doctrine of Christ, )*  
 1. *is All in all. That Circumcision is nothing,*  
 19. *and Uncircumcision is nothing, but the keep-*  
 1. *ing of the Commandments of God. And*  
 Rom. ii. *that He is not a Jew, which is one outward-*  
 28. *ly ; (the Apostle intended it should be ap-*  
 1. *plied by parity of reason, that He like-*  
 1. *wise is not a Christian, who is one out-*  
 1. *wardly ; ) neither is That circumcision,*  
 1. *which is outward in the Flesh : But He is*  
 1. *a Jew, which is one inwardly ; and cir-*  
 1. *cumcision is That of the Heart, in the Spi-*  
 1. *rit,*

*rit, and not in the letter; whose Praise is not of Men, but of God.*

S E R M.

XI.



HAVING therefore shown This to be a Doctrine evidently inculcated in every part of *Scripture*, as well as founded in the *universal Reason and Nature of Things*: It remains that I proceed now in the

III. *Third* place, according to the Method proposed, to explain *Wherein* lies the Strefs of *That particular Argument*, which the Apostle, in confirmation of This Doctrine, draws from *That Historical Similitude* in the *Text*, which he stiles an *Allegory*. *Abraham had Two Sons, the One by a bond-maid, the other by a free-woman: And These* (says he) *are the two Covenants*. Now the Force of this Argument, to any one who carefully considers the Context, will appear plainly to be This. The Doctrine the Apostle contends for in This Epistle, is; that Christians of the *Gentiles*, who obeyed the Gospel; being *circumcised with the circumcision --- of Christ*, as he expresses himself, *Col. ii. 11*; were entitled to the Blessings of God's peculiar people, equally with *Those of the literal Circumcision*, who observed the Ceremo-

S E R M. nies of the Mosaick Law. And the Ground  
 XI. of This his Assertion, is; that not *Circumcision* or *Uncircumcision*, not one or another *particular Dispensation*; but *Obedience to the Commands of God*, whatsoever those *Commandments* be, and under whatever *particular Dispensation*; is what the *Divine Favour* is constantly annexed to. In opposition to This, the *Jews* in the *Apostles* days, were possessed with a very strong and settled *Prejudice*; that since to the *Israelites* confessedly pertained the *adoption*, and the *Glory*, and the *Covenants*, and the *Giving of the Law*, and the *Service of God*, and the *Promises*; since *Theirs* confessedly were the *Fathers* or *Patriarchs*, to whom all the *Promises of God* were originally made; it could not possibly be true (they thought,) nor consistent with the *Promises of God* made to their *Fathers*, that these *Israelites* who had been all along the *peculiar people* or *Church of God*, should at last be rejected for not receiving the *Gospel*; and that *Believers* from among the *Gentiles of all Nations*, should be received in their stead. Now in Answer to This *Prejudice*, the *Apostle* argues

Rom. ix.

4.

gues very justly and strongly, not only (as I have before shown) from the nature and reason of the Thing, and from the general Notion of the Divine Attributes; but moreover in particular, from the Analogy of God's Method and Manner of proceeding, in the giving of those very Original Promises to the Patriarchs, upon which This Prejudice of the Jews was founded. Tell me, says he, ye that desire to be under the Law, do ye not hear the Law? That is; Will ye not attend to the Analogy of God's method of proceeding, in Those very Promises on which ye depend? For it is written, that Abraham had two Sons, the one by a Bond-maid, the other by a Free-Woman. That is to say: Even originally, the Promise was not made to all the children of Abraham, but to Isaac only: Which was, from the Beginning, a very plain Declaration, that God did not principally intend his Promise, to take place in Abraham's Descendants according to the Flesh; but in Those who, by a Faith or Fidelity like His, were in a truer and higher sense the Children and Followers of that great Father of the

S E R M.  
XI.  
~

S E R M. Faithful. In like manner, and for the  
 XI. same reason, the Promise was not made to  
 Both the Sons of *Isaac*; but to *Jacob* only. And, among the Posterity of *Jacob*, All were not *Israel*, which were of *Israel*; but, in *Elijah's* days, seven thousand only were the True *Israel*; and, in the time of *Isaiah*, though the number of the children of *Israel* was as the sand of the Sea, yet a Remnant only was to be saved; and in *Hoseah*, God says, *I will call Them my people, which were not my people; and Her beloved, which was not beloved.* The Strength therefore and Force of the Apostle's Argument in the Text, lies plainly Here. What ye yourselves, (says he,) who are so zealous for the observation of the Mosaick Law, cannot but acknowledge to have been originally and always true; the same (says he) is true Now. What was true concerning the Two Sons of *Abraham*, and likewise concerning the two Sons of *Isaac*; who were the *Patriarchs* with whom God's Covenant was originally made; is, by continuance of the same Analogy, true concerning the Covenant established with the Families, and with the Nation of the  
 Jews,

*Jews, descended from those Patriarchs ; 'tis true concerning the Church of God, through all successive Ages ; 'tis true concerning the Jerusalem that Now is, and concerning That which is to come. As Abraham had Two Sons, the one by a Bondmaid, the other by a Free-woman : And as the Son of the Bond-maid, though, according to the Flesh, no less truly his Natural Descendant than the Other, yet was not to be Co-heir with Him who, by the Promise of God, was appointed to inherit : So, says the Apostle, the Jerusalem which Now is, and is in Bondage with her children ; the visible earthly Church, which received the external Ceremonial Law from Mount Sina ; is not, by that outward general denomination, intitled to the eternal Favour of God ; But the Jerusalem which is above, which is the Mother of us All, of All who by True Faith and Sincere Obedience are pleasing to God ; This heavenly Jerusalem, this Spiritual invisible Church or City of the Living God it is, to which all the Promises of God, made in All Ages to his Church, are, in reality, originally and finally appropriated.*

S E R M.  
XI.  
~~~~~

S E R M. THIS Argument, is a direct, full, and
 XI. strong Answer, to *That Jewish Prejudice*; which the Apostle, through this Whole Epistle, is endeavouring to remove. It clearly and distinctly obviates their *Grand Objection*, drawn from the Immutability of the Divine Promises to their Fathers; and entirely takes away the very Ground and Foundation of it.

AND from hence we may observe, how *unreasonable* it is, as well as profane, to imagine or represent the Apostle, as founding the *Truth* of a Doctrine upon an *Allegorical Proof*. The *Allegory* or *Similitude* he here makes use of, is not alledged as a *Proof* of the *Truth* of the *Doctrine* he is asserting, but as a *Proof* of the *Falseness* and *Groundlessness* of a *particular Objection* urged by the unbelieving *Jews* against it. The *Doctrine itself* is at large proved to be *True*, from the *Nature and Reason of the Thing*, from the *Perfections of God*, and from the *Whole Tenour of Scripture*: But a *particular Allegation* of the *Jews* against it, is, with the greatest justness and strength of Argument, proved to be *false and groundless*, from the *Analogy of*
 a like

a like case acknowledged by *Themselves*, in S E R M.
which the *Reason of the thing* is the same. XI.

AND from hence therefore, *further*,
we may observe; that *Proofs* brought by
the Apostles frequently to the *Jews in par-*
ticular, differ from *Proofs* brought to the
Gentiles, in *This*; not that they were at
any time Arguments drawn from things
acknowledged by the Jews, in *themselves*
otherwise *inconclusive*; but that they were
drawn *justly and strongly*, (as I have shown
particularly concerning the Argument in
the Text,) from things *well known* among
the *Jews*, though what the *Gentiles* were
Strangers to.

THE evident *Application* of what has
been said, is; that as, in the times of the
Jews and of the Patriarchs from the Be-
ginning, *all were not Israel*, which were of
Israel; and the Son of the bond-maid,
though equally the Seed of *Abraham*, yet
was *not to be Heir with the Son of the Free-*
woman; and all along, *he that was born*
after the flesh, persecuted him that was born
after the Spirit: Even so it is Now.
All are not *Christians*, who are called af-
ter the Name of *Christ*: And not the Mem-

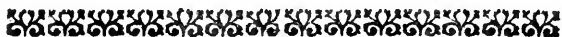
S E R M. *bers of Christ's visible Church on Earth, but*
XI. *they only who do the Will of his Father*
which is in Heaven, shall inherit the Pro-
mises. They only, who live in the Prac-
tice of true Virtue, Righteousness and
Goodness; shall, in the Spiritual Sense,
be counted for the Seed.





S E R M O N XII.

Rebellion against God as malignant as Witchcraft.



I S A M. XV. 23.

*For Rebellion is as the Sin of Witchcraft,
and Stubbornness is as Iniquity and Idolatry :-----.*



THE Occasion of these Words S E R M. XII.
was this. *Saul* being anointed King over *Israel*, was sent of God upon the following Message delivered to him by the Prophet *Samuel*, *Ver. 2*, of this chapter : *Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, I remember that which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid wait for him in the way when*
be

S E R M. *be came up from Egypt; Now go, and*
 XII. *smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that*
 they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and Ass. It may justly be esteemed a Question of some Difficulty, whence it might come to pass, that God should give so very severe a Command; to do that, which, without such an express Commission, could not but have been censured as an unreasonable Cruelty. And indeed there cannot happen any case, wherein it would be justifiable for any mortal Power, upon his own Authority, to take upon him to deal in such a manner with any Enemy whatsoever. But God, who is the Supreme Author and Lord of all, and who has an unquestioned Right to take away that Life which he himself at first freely gave; and who alone can without error judge when a Nation has filled up the measure of their iniquity, and deserves to be destroyed by an exemplary and universal Judgment; and who *in the Life to come* can without respect of Persons distinguish equitably the Case of every Individual Person, which in the exemplary

exemplary Severity of a National Judgment was not so proper to be distinguished S E R M.
here; *he* may, very consistently with Justice and Equity, command such universal Judgments to be inflicted when and where he thinks fit; there being in reality no difference, whether *he* commands a whole Nation, without distinction of Persons, to be destroyed by the *Sword*; as in the present Case of *Amalek*, and that of all the Nations of *Canaan*; or whether he consumes them by a *Flood*, as at the *universal Deluge*; or by *Lightning* from Heaven, as in the Case of *Sodom*; or by a sudden *Earthquake*, as when the Earth opened her Mouth and swallowed up *Dathan and Abiram*, with their whole Families at once; or by *Pestilential Diseases*; or by a *natural Death*. All these things, in the hand of *God* who ruleth over all; and who has an undoubted Power and Right over that Life, which he himself gave; and who in the World to come can make that exact Distinction of Persons, which there is no Necessity should be made here; in *his* hand (I say) all these things are equally proper Instruments of
Justice;



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Justice; and, without all question, *he* may destroy a wicked Nation by what means he himself thinks fit. *Saul* therefore being sent of God with an express Command, to destroy every thing in *Amalek* utterly and without exception; executes this Command *in part*, as we read, *ver. 7, 8; And Saul smote the Amalekites, ---and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the Sword.* But 'twas *in part* only, that he executed his Commission. For in the same place 'tis recorded, that, contrary to the Command of God, *Saul and the people spared Agag the King of the Amalekites, and took him alive, and the best of the Sheep and of the Oxen, and of the Fatlings, and the Lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them; but every thing that was vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly.*

HERE *Saul* was guilty of *Two* very great Faults; 1st, of *Covetousness*, in preserving for himself the Best of all those Spoils, which God had expressly commanded to be destroyed utterly; And herein he was the more inexcusable, because the Wrath of God had been before executed

executed upon the like Occasion, in an S E R M. exemplary manner, upon *Achan* who at XII. the destruction of *Jericho* had been guilty of the very same Offence. 2dly, He was guilty of *Vanity and Ostentation*, in taking *Agag* the King of *Amalek* alive, and bringing him with him in Triumph; when God had peremptorily commanded him to destroy them All. 'Tis said indeed in the Text, that he spared *Agag*; as if it had been an Act of *Mercy and Compassion*. But this is only *his own* false representation of the Action. For he who made no difficulty of destroying even the *Women and Children* without Distinction; 'tis evident, spared the wicked and tyrannical King, of whom it is said by way of eminent cruelty, that his *Sword had made Women childless*; 'tis evident (I say), that *Saul*, who had made no Scruple of destroying even the *Women and Children* of the *Amalekites*, spared at the same time their Wicked King, not out of any tenderness and commiseration, but for *Vanity and Ostentation*, to triumph over him; or perhaps out of too great an inclination and readiness to enter into *Friendship* with him; And then his
Case

S E R M. Case was the same with that of *Abab* afterwards, who, being commanded of God to destroy *Benhadad* King of *Syria*, after he had taken him Prisoner called him Brother and made a League with him; upon which the Lord sent a Prophet to him, saying, *Because thou hast let go out of thy hand a man whom I appointed to utter Destruction, therefore thy life shall go for his life, and thy people for his people; 1 Kings xx. 42:* In like manner, in the present Case of *Saul*, God spake unto *Samuel*, (saying) *ver. 11th of this Chapter, It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be King; for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my Commandments.*

AND as he thus grossly transgressed in the first *principal Action*, so in the following *Circumstances*, as one Sin naturally draws on another, he fell into other continued provocations. For when *Samuel* came down to meet him, *ver. 13*, he presumptuously declares, (as if either his Obedience had been entire, or the Defect of it could have been concealed from the Prophet;) Behold, *I have performed the Commandment of the Lord.* The Falsity of which declaration,

declaration, when it was immediately laid open, by the Spoils, which he had taken, beng there present before him; he then *first* endeavours to transfer the Fault from *himself* to *Others*, ver. 15; *The People*, says he, *spared the best of the Sheep and of the Oxen*; As if what the *people* did, was not done by *His* direction and Authority: Which being too apparent to be denied, he *next* adds an Excuse, drawn from a pretence of *Religion*, ver. 15, 21; *The people took the chief of the things which should have been destroyed, to Sacrifice unto the Lord thy God*; Which is as much as to say: *We have disobeyed the Commandment of God, in order to serve him.* To This the Prophet makes a *double* reply; first convincing him of his false notion of *Religion*, and then severely reproving him for his stubborn Disobedience. First, he convinces him of his false Notion of *Religion*, ver. 22; *Hath the Lord as great delight in Burnt-offerings and Sacrifices, as in obeying the Voice of the Lord; Behold, to obey, is better than Sacrifice; and to hearken, than the fat of Rams.* And then he severely reproves him for his

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S E R M. his stubborn Disobedience, in the Words
 XII. of the Text; *For Rebellion is as the Sin
 of Witchcraft, and Stubbornness is as Iniquity and Idolatry*: To rebel against the direct Command of God, to disobey in the instance of a plain and positive precept, to transgress against the clearest Light and most express Declaration of the Will of God; This is an Action of the *like* Malignity, even as the Sin of Witchcraft: And the persisting stubbornly in such Disobedience, is like the Practice even of Idolatry itself. The Word we here render, *Witchcraft*, signifies the following of Divinations and Inchantments, which were Superstitions forbidden with the severest Penalties under the Law; and were justly looked upon as a renouncing of God, by having recourse to other real or imaginary Powers in opposition to Him. When therefore a Crime is said to be *as the Sin of Witchcraft*; the meaning is, that 'tis a Fault of so deep a Die, of so heinous and provoking a Nature, that the obstinate Commission of it is altogether inconsistent with all true Principles of Religion,

Religion, and, in effect, a total renunciation of them. S E R M.
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THE Word, *Iniquity*, in the latter part of the Text, is *Iniquity towards God*, the forsaking his Worship, the denying him his true Honour, the turning from him to false Gods, or joining them with him; and therefore 'tis expressed by Two words together, *Iniquity and Idolatry*. Which Two words in this place, do not signify Two distinct Things; but are of the same import as if it had been said in One, *the Iniquity of Idolatry*, the Perverseness or Unrighteousness of serving False Gods. And so the latter part of the Text, is, according to the frequent Stile of Scripture, only a repeating and strengthening of the Assertion laid down in the *former* part, by expressing the same thing in other Words in the *latter*: *Rebellion is as the Sin of Witchcraft, and Stubbornness is as Iniquity and Idolatry*: Rebelling, by obstinate Disobedience, against the *True* God, is like serving a *False* one; and Stubbornness in obeying God partially, or serving him only after our own way or

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S E R M. humour, is the same thing as not serving
 XII. him at all.

THIS is the Proposition contained in the Words of the Text; and 'tis a Doctrine, of the greatest Importance in Religion. For, as among the *Jews* of *old*, so *now* also among *Christians*, most men have an extreme Abhorrence of direct *Idolatry*, or serving of False Gods. And because they hate a *False* Religion, therefore they are presently apt to cry out with *Saul*; *Behold, I have obeyed the Commandment of the Lord.* But alas! when it comes to be examined, *how* they have obeyed him; or when perhaps their own Consciences come, in the days of Sickness, to put them upon making *themselves* a strict inquiry into their own Actions; then it appears how *partial* their Obedience has been. Possibly they *have*, with *Saul*, destroyed the *Amalekites*; have constantly opposed the open and declared Enemies of Religion. Moreover perhaps, *whatever was vile and refuse, That they have destroyed utterly.* Whatever Sins did not easily beset them, nor offer them strong Temptations, from
 their

their Constitution, their Interest, or their Friends; these Sins they have both heartily avoided themselves, and severely condemned them in other Men. But the Best *of the Sheep and of the Oxen*; the things which were dear to them, like a Right-hand or a Right-eye; the Sins which laid before them strong Temptations, of Profit, Honour, or Pleasure; These they could not but *spare*, and be unwilling wholly to root them out. And yet, as *Saul* endeavoured to transfer the Blame from *himself* upon the *People*; so, in the other Case also, 'tis not the Men themselves, 'tis not their Reason and Judgment, that chooses the Sin; but their inferiour Appetites, their Passions and Affections choose it for them, and drive them into it even perhaps in a manner against their Wills; And these they are willing should bear the Blame of it, as being a *Law in their Members, warring against the Law of their Minds, and bringing them into Captivity to the Law of Sin.* But further; they can still strengthen their Excuse, by alleging, as *Saul* did, that they do *Sacrifice* also unto the Lord their God;

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S E R M. They are diligent perhaps in all the external Forms and Ceremonies of Religion, and zealous for promoting its *temporal* Power and Authority in the World; And yet, while at the same time they live in the habitual Practice of any one known Sin, of Uncleanness or Drunkenness, of Injustice or Uncharitableness, of Fraud or Violence, or in the plain Breach of any other of the express Commandments of God; notwithstanding all their Observation of the outward Forms of Religion, notwithstanding all their Zeal for the Temple of the Lord, notwithstanding all their Appearances of Piety, not only to others, but perhaps by a secret and careless Fallacy, even to *themselves* also; yet This their Disobedience in any one known Instance of Immorality, This their *Rebellion*, is as the Sin of Witchcraft; and their *Stubbornness*, is as the Iniquity of Idolatry. Their refusing to obey the *True* God, whom they profess to worship, is like serving a *False* one; Or their Stubbornness in obeying him partially, and serving him only after their own way or humour, is the same thing as not serving him

at all. For wherein consists the Iniquity S E R M. of Idolatry, and the Wickedness of serving XII. false Gods ; but in This, that it derogates from the Majesty of the True God, and denies him That honour which is *his Alone* peculiar due ? And is it not in a manner the same thing, to deny the *Authority* of a supreme Governour ; or to acknowledge his Authority, and yet disobey his *Laws* ? to refuse to serve him at all ; or to serve him only partially, not in the way which he requires and commands, but according to our own Pleasure or Fancy ? *St Paul*, makes them that *Know not God*, and them that *obey not the Gospel* ; *i. e.* those that acknowledge not the True God at all, and those that do acknowledge him without obeying him ; he makes them equally liable to the same *Vengeance* ; *2 Thess. i. 8.* Nay, if we consider things with exactness, there will appear much more Excuse for even the *greatest Errours*, in the Profession of a *Falsè Religion* ; than for *Disobedience*, under the Knowledge of the *True*. The *only Reason*, why the Wrath of God is so often and so severely denounced in Scripture against

S E R M. gainst the *unbelieving Nations*, is *because*  
 XII. of Those things, upon account of which  
 the Apostle calls them, at the same time,  
*Children of Disobedience*: And what our  
 Saviour in *One Gospel* threatens as the se-  
 vereft of Punishments, that a man shall  
 have his *Portion assigned him with the Un-*  
*believers*; is in *Another* expreffed, that it  
 fhall be assigned him with the *Hypocrites*.  
*Hypocrify* therefore is as the Sin of *Unbe-*  
*lief*, and *partial Obedience*, like *not obey-*  
*ing at all*. Not that there are not *Degrees*  
 of *Disobedience* in rebelling againft God;  
 but that a wilful *Stubbornnefs* in any *par-*  
*ticular Disobedience*, is absolutely inconsis-  
 tent with the *Favour of God*; and that  
 there may be a *Perverfenefs* in perfifting  
 habitually in fingle Sins, even like to the  
*Perverfenefs* of a *total Apostacy*. One *Mor-*  
*tal Wound* deftroys a man, as certainly as  
 many; and incorrigible *Obftinacy* in the  
*Practice of Any Sin*, may be of equal *Ma-*  
*lignity* even as *Idolatry* itfelf. Equal, not  
 perhaps as to the *Degree*, of the particu-  
 lar Punifhment it fhall bring upon him;  
 but equal as to the *Certainty* of its bring-  
 ing him in general to *Condemnation*. God  
 requires,



requires, that men should serve him with S E R M. their *whole* Heart; and he that said, *Thou* XII.  
*shalt not commit Adultery*, said also, *Thou*  
*shalt not Kill*. But the Folly of Wicked  
men, will distinguish where there is no  
Distinction; and they will serve God in  
what *manner* only, and in what *Instances*  
they please. This is that great Deceitful-  
ness of Sin, that secret Hypocrisy, which  
insensibly leads men into a *Rebellion* like to  
the Sin of *Witchcraft*, and into a *Stub-*  
*bornness* like to the *Iniquity of Idolatry*.  
The external, the formal, and ceremonial  
part of Religion, they will possibly be very  
fond of; but the inward and real Virtues  
of the Mind, Meekness and Purity, Hu-  
mility and Charity, Equity, Simplicity  
and true Holiness, for these they would  
gladly commute, and make amends with  
any Compensation. This is the great and  
general Corruption; This has in all times  
and in all places been the *first* and the *last*  
Errour in matters of Religion. *Saul*, would  
needs *Sacrifice unto the Lord his God*, out  
of those very spoils, which he had pre-  
sumptuously taken, against God's express  
Command. But *Samuel* reproves his Folly,

S E R M. in the Words before the Text; *Hath the*  
 XII. *Lord as great Delight in Burnt-Offerings*  
 and *Sacrifices, as in obeying the Voice of*  
*the Lord? Behold, to obey, is better than*  
*Sacrifice; and to hearken, than the Fat of*  
*Rams.* In following Ages, the whole Na-  
 tion of the *Jews*, would in like manner  
 be always very diligent, in offering their  
 Sacrifices and Oblations; as if *That* would  
 make amends, for the Viciousness of their  
 Lives. And yet *how* often did the Scrip-  
 ture admonish them to the contrary! *Pf.*  
*l. 13; Thinkest thou that I will eat the*  
*Flesh of Bulls, or drink the Blood of Goats?*  
*Nay, but Offer unto God Thanksgiving, and*  
*pay thy Vows unto the most High.* *Eccles.*  
*v. 1; Be more ready to hear, i. e. to Obey,*  
*than to give the Sacrifice of Fools; for they*  
*consider not, that they do evil.* *Is. i. 11, 16;*  
*To what purpose is the Multitude of your*  
*Sacrifices unto Me, saith the Lord? ----*  
*Wash you, make you clean,----cease to do*  
*evil, learn to do well;----if ye be willing*  
*and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the*  
*Land.* *Hof. vi. 6; I desired Mercy, and*  
*not Sacrifice; and the Knowledge of God,*  
*more than Burnt-Offerings.* And, to mention  
 but

but one Passage more, *Mic. vi. 6*; *Where- SERM.  
with shall I come before the Lord, and XII.  
bow my self before the High God? Shall  
I come before him with Burnt-Offerings;  
with Calves of a year old? Will the Lord  
be pleased with thousands of Rams, or with  
ten thousands of Rivers of Oil?---He hath  
shewed thee, O man, what is good; and  
what doth the Lord require of thee, but  
to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk  
humbly with thy God? Even in our Savi-  
our's Time, after all these repeated Ad-  
monitions; the *Pharisees*, which were the  
strictest Sect of the *Jews*, still continued  
to value themselves upon their mere exter-  
nal Performances; and yet that very Scribe  
who was sent to tempt him, could not but  
acknowledge to our Lord, that he had *said  
the Truth*, in affirming, that for a man to  
love God with all his Heart, and ---his  
Neighbour as himself; was more than all  
whole Burnt-Offerings and Sacrifices; *St  
Mar. xii. 33*: They would Fast twice in  
the Week, and pay Tithes of all that  
they had, and for a Pretence make long  
Prayers; while at the same Time, they se-  
cretly devoured Widows Houses. They  
would*

S E R M. would with a specious appearance of Piety  
 XII. dedicate to the *Corban*, that is, give to  
 the Service of the Temple, as much as  
 was expected they should bestow in cha-  
 ritable Uses ; only with intention to de-  
 fraud their Parents and poor Relations, of  
 that Support, which they had Reason ac-  
 cording to the Laws both of God and Na-  
 ture, to expect from them. They would  
 with great Superstition wash the outside  
 of their Cups and Pots, while the inside  
 of their own Hearts, was full of unright-  
 eousness and all uncleanness. In a word,  
 they would do *Anything* rather, than what  
 was *Right and ought* to be done ; and  
*therefore* our Saviour declares, that *except*  
*our Righteousness exceeds the Righteousness*  
*of the Scribes and Pharisees, we shall in*  
*no case enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.*  
 Among the several Corrupters of *Christi-*  
*anity* likewise, What is it that men have  
 not been willing to undertake ; what Jour-  
 neys and Pilgrimages ; what Hardships  
 and Abstinences ; what voluntary Humi-  
 lities, and uncommanded Austerities ;  
 what profuse Gifts to Monasteries or Re-  
 ligious Societies, and unbounded Zeal for  
 propa-

propagating what they call Right Opinions, that is, such as *happen* to prevail, or be in Fashion amongst them; instead of serving God with Simplicity of Devotion, and Loving their Neighbours as themselves? Not considering the Admonition of St Paul, that *if a man strives for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully*; if a man runs in a Race, yet if he takes a shorter Way to the Mark, and runs not in that Course which is by the Rules appointed and marked out, his Labour is in vain; And if a man professes to serve God, yet if he serves him not in That Method of Obedience which *God himself* requires, but will go a nearer Way to Heaven, either according to his own Humour and Fancy, or in the Way of Any human Invention whatsoever, following the Authority of *Men, of Popes, or Fathers, or Councils, or Churches, or even That of an Angel from Heaven,* (as St Paul expresses himself,) in stead of the *plain Rules of Reason and Scripture*; he may justly fall short of his Reward. By conceited Obstinacy in this way of compensating for the Breach of God's plain Commands,

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<sup>2</sup> Tim. ii.  
<sup>5</sup>.

SERM. XII. Commands, a *rebellious* and disobedient Disposition grows upon men by degrees, till it becomes like *the Sin of Witchcraft*; and their *Stubbornness*, 'till it be like the *Iniquity of Idolatry*. But no *Description* of the Perverseness of this sort of Sinning, can set it forth in so lively a manner, as the giving some *Historical Examples* of it; And I shall mention Two, which contain a more exact representation of the nature of this Stubbornness, than any *Explication of it in Words* could do. The *One*, is the Behaviour of *Saul*, in the *other* Actions of his Life, besides That referred to in the Text: The *Other*, is the Behaviour of the people of the *Jews*, in their passage thro' the Wilderness, towards the promised Land. In the first place, *Saul* after his Anointment, being commanded to wait r Sam. 10 8. *seven days* 'till *Samuel* should come to instruct him what do, and offer Sacrifice xiii. 8. for him; partly through Fear and Distrust, partly through Presumption, offers a Sacrifice himself; which was expressly contrary to God's Commandment. For xv. 8. which, being severely reproved by the Prophet, yet in the very next instance, when he

he was commanded utterly to destroy S E R M.  
the *Amalekites*, he transgresses again; and, XII.  
contrary to a like express Command, co-  
vetously spares the best of the Spoil, to  
do Sacrifice ( it seems ) unto the Lord his  
God. After This, he unworthily at-  
tempts to kill *David*, because he percei- xviii. 11;  
ved that the Lord was with him, and had 12, 15, 28,  
appointed him to succeed in the Kingdom: 29.  
And having failed of slaying him with  
his own hand, he sends him against the  
*Philistines*, in hopes he might be slain by  
*Them* ; and gives him his Daughter to  
Wife, on purpose to be a *snare unto him*,  
and that *the hand of the Philistines might*  
*be against him*. After This, being con-  
vinced of *David's* Innocency, he swore  
to *Jonathan*, *As the Lord liveth, he shall*  
*not be slain* ; and yet presently after, at-  
tempts again to slay him with his own  
hand ; and, upon his escaping, sends Mes-  
sengers to kill him in his House. This  
not succeeding, he attempts the third time  
to slay him with his own hand ; and,  
when he had escaped, pursues him with  
an Army ; and cruelly killed fourscore  
and five Priests, and destroyed their whole

17;

21,

25.

xix. 6;

10,

11.

xx. 33.

xxii. 17;


19.

I

City,

S E R M. City, for giving him refreshment in his  
 XII. journey. After This, continuing to pursue  
 David with *three thousand men*, he providentially fell *himself* into the Hands of Him whom he pursued; and when *David* spared his Life, and sent him away unhurt, he seemed convinced of his own unreasonableness, and confessed to  
 xxiv. 2. *David, Thou art more righteous than I; For thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil.* Yet immediately after, he relapses anew into his Folly, and pursues him again, to destroy  
 xxvi. 2. him; and falling a *second* time into the Hands of him whose Life he sought,  
 21. *David* releases him *Then also* unhurt, and he seems to repent again, saying; *I have sinned; return, my Son David, for I will no more do thee harm, because my Soul was precious in thine eyes this day; behold, I have played the Fool, and have erred exceedingly.* Yet even after *This* the History tells us, that the only reason why he pursued him not yet *again*, was because *David* had escaped further into the Land of the *Philistines*. At last, finding himself forsaken of God, for his repeated



peated Follies ; though he had *Himself* S E R M.  
 cut off all the Wizards out of the Land, XII.  
 yet he takes pains to search out and apply   
 himself to a Woman reputed to have a  
 Familiar-Spirit ; Probably a *Cheat*, like xxviii. 6,  
 the rest of the Diviners : For when 7.  
 instead of the Woman's practising her de-  
 lusive Arts, God thought fit, in reproof  
 of *Saul's* Wickedness, to cause *in reality*  
 a Likeness of *Samuel* to appear ; the Text  
 tells us that the *Woman herself* was affright- 12.  
 ed at the unexpected Appearance, and *cried*  
 out *with a loud voice* in great Surprize  
 when she saw *Samuel*. Which seems to be  
 a plain evidence that her *Art* was a Cheat ;  
 and that the Reality, unexpected to *Her*,  
 was God's own extraordinary Interposi-  
 tion. And This takes away the whole  
 Foundation of all those Vain Questions,  
*Whether the Devil had Power to disturb*  
*Samuel or not*, and *how he could foretel*  
*such future events*, and the like. The E-  
 vent was, that *Saul* went away in despair ;  
 and the next day, having lost a Battle, xxx1. 4.  
 killed himself. It may well be wondred,  
 how *Saul*, after so many repeated admon-  
 itions, could so often relapse so foolish-

S E R M. ly: But the Answer is, that Sin takes a-  
 XII. way the Heart and Understanding of a  
 Man; and that, in another Sense than is  
 meant in the Text, a Rebellious Disposition  
*is as the Sin of Witchcraft, and Stubbornness as the Iniquity of Idolatry.*

T H E Other instance I mentioned, is  
 the Behaviour of the *Jews* in that passage  
 through the Wilderness. In the first  
 Pf. cvi. 7. place *they remembered not God's wonders in*  
 Ex. xiv. 11. *Egypt, but provoked him at the red Sea,*  
*saying, Because there were no graves in*  
*Egypt, thou hast taken us away to die in*  
*the wilderness.* Then, when he had car-  
 ried them through the Sea by a Miracle,  
 Ex. xvii. 2. they *wanted water to drink;* and he had  
 Numb. xx. brought them over the *Sea* (it seems,) *to*  
 3. *kill them with thirst.* Upon which he  
 fetch'd water for them out of the *Rock:*  
 Pf. lxxviii. And Then they said; *He smote the stony*  
 21. *rock indeed, that the water gushed out, and*  
 Numb. xi. *the streams flowed withal; but can he give*  
 3. *bread also, or provide Flesh for his people?*  
 Pf. lxxviii. To satisfy *This* their lusting, he command-  
 25, 28. ed the clouds above, and opened the doors of  
 Numb. xi. *Heaven; He rained down manna upon*  
 6. *them for to eat, and gave them food from*  
*Heaven;*

Heaven; And Then they said, *There is nothing at all besides this Manna before our eyes.* Nay, he rained also flesh upon them as thick as dust, and feathered fowls like as the sand of the Sea: But for all This, they sinned yet more, and provoked the most high in the WilderNESS: They envied Moses, in the case of *Dathan and Abiram*; and angred Aaron the Saint of the Lord: They made a calf in Horeb, and worshipped the similitude of a Calf that eateth Hay: They joined themselves also unto Baal-peor, and ate the Offerings of the Dead. Lastly, when they came to the Land of Canaan, and were commanded to enter into it; then they despised that pleasant land, and gave no credit unto his Word; then the land was a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof, and it was defended by Giants, and had Cities great and walled up to Heaven, and could not be conquered. But when, upon This, God commanded them to return back into the WilderNESS; then on the contrary they would go up into the land which the Lord had promised them, and would fight for it presumptuously, and were defeated.

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PF. lxxviii.  
32.

Deut. ix.  
7, 24.

xxxii. 27.  
Pf. cvi. 16,  
19.

Ex. xxxii.  
1.

Pf. cvi. 28.  
Num. xxv.  
2.

Pf. cvi. 24.  
Num. xiii.  
32.

Deut. i. 26,  
43.

S E R M. In all these Instances, *their rebellious disposition was as the Sin of Witchcraft, and their Stubbornness like to the Iniquity of Idolatry.*

XII.

THE Application is very easy, to the case of every stubborn Sinner *in particular*: And St Paul has expressly applied it for us *in general*; 1 Cor. x. 6; *These things, saith he, were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted; Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them;----neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed; neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted;----neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the Destroyer: For all these things happened unto them for examples, and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.*



## SERMON XIII.

All Sin proceeds from some Mis-  
apprehension of God.



JER. V. 4.

*Therefore I said, Surely these are poor, they  
are foolish; for they know not the way  
of the Lord, nor the judgment of their  
God.*



IN the following Discourse, I SERM.  
XIII.  
shall consider some of the  
principal Instances, wherein  
men become *poor* and *foolish*  
in matters of Religion, be-  
cause *they know not the way of the Lord,*  
*nor the judgment of their God.* And

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*First*; SOME there are, who indulge a *sceptical* Humour, and do not believe God's particular providence and inspection over all events. This was the opinion, of a certain Sect among the ancient Philosophers; and accordingly as they thought the life of *God* consisted merely in ease and doing nothing; so they willingly persuaded themselves that the Happiness of *Man* consisted, in nothing but Vanity and Pleasure: They thought that *God* had no regard to what good or evil was done by men on earth; and accordingly *they themselves* had no regard to any thing, but Luxury and Pleasure; They said in their hearts, *God hath forgotten, he hideth away his face and he will never see it. Tush, say they, does God perceive? Is there Knowledge in the most High?* The Psalmist speaks of such persons, not who were absolute Atheists and thought God knew not what they did at all; but who thought it *beneath* his divine Majesty, to *regard* what men did.

NOW from what sort of Misapprehension concerning God this proceeded, is not difficult to discover: They thought,

and so far indeed very justly, that God S E R M.  
could not but be a perfectly Happy Being, XIII.  
*infinitely* removed from all that care and labour, those difficulties and anxieties, which make a great part of the misery of humane Nature; But must he therefore be altogether an *unactive* Being? Cannot he with the same ease wherewith he *made* the World, (a work of infinite Power, Wisdom and Counsel;) cannot he with the same ease *govern* it also and preside over it? Cannot he who at one view sees and observes all things that are done in the World; cannot he concern himself for the *benefit* and *well-government* of his Creatures, by punishing the Evil and rewarding the Good; without diminishing from his own infinite Happiness? Especially since Justice and Holiness are no less essential to him, than Happiness, and even *That* Happiness itself consists, not in Rest and doing nothing, but in exercising and displaying those Perfections, of infinite Wisdom, Holiness and Justice. 'Tis manifest therefore, that the folly of such persons as these, proceeds from a very weak and indeed *ridiculous* Misap-

S E R M. prehension of the Happiness of the divine  
 XIII. Nature; that they *know not* at all *the way*  
 of *the Lord*, nor have *any* right understanding of the Perfections of *God*.

*Secondly*; OTHERS there are, who though they cannot deny God's particular Providence and Inspection over all things, yet will not believe that he has so great a Concern, about the *moral* good or evil actions of Men. This is the case of those Libertines, who though they pretend indeed to *acknowledge* the obligations of *Natural* Religion in Opposition *only* to *Revelation*, yet in reality 'tis plain they have no true Sense of the difference of moral Good and Evil at all, nor any just and worthy Apprehension of the Moral Attributes of God. The marks of infinite Knowledge, Power and Wisdom, in the contrivance of this Fabrick of the World, and in the disposing all things in that order and harmony, which men may admire and adore, but can never perfectly understand and comprehend; are such convincing and undeniable Proofs of the *Being* of God, and of the *Natural Perfections* of his essence, that they cannot indeed




indeed deny that there is such a *Powerful* and *Wise* Being; But that he is indued also with those *moral* Perfections of infinite Justice, Goodness and Truth; and that consequently he cannot be pleased with any Creature, which does not endeavour, in its proportion and capacity, to imitate these divine perfections; this they are by no means willing to grant, as being inconsistent with those vicious courses, from which they are resolved not to depart. Now These also are manifestly *poor* and *foolish* in the notions they frame to themselves concerning God; as if his *moral* Attributes were not necessarily connected with his Natural ones, and as if it were possible that he might be infinitely Wise and Powerful, without being Holy, Just and True. For are there not as evident footsteps of the *Justice* and *Goodness* of God's government of the World; as there are of the *Power* and the *Wisdom* of it? or is it possible that *He* should be an All-powerful and All-wise Governour, whose Government is not settled on Justice, Goodness and Truth? What are Wisdom and Knowledge, without Justice and Veracity,

S E R M.  
XIII.



S E R M. OF Dominion and Power, without Holiness, Righteousness and Goodness; but  
 XIII. Qualifications that may belong to the worst, and most hateful Being in the World? So that to bereave the divine Majesty of those *moral* Attributes, is to take away from it entirely the nature and notion of God. In a Word; that Justice and Truth are in themselves things good and excellent, and *fit* to be the Rules of Government; the Adversaries of Religion themselves cannot deny. If then God be *Wise*, that he cannot but *know* what is fit; if he be *all-powerful*, that he cannot be *compelled*; if he be *all-knowing*, that he cannot be *deceived*; it follows that he *will* also do what is fit; and then there *must* be a difference made between Good and Evil, and a reward or punishment appointed for Virtue or Vice.

*Thirdly*; T H E R E are some Others, who though they are very sensible of the particular Regard God has to the morally good or evil actions of men, yet so far are they from having any right knowledge of *the way of the Lord*, and of *the judgments of their God*, that considering the absolute

lute Sovereignty and Dominion of God, S E R M.  
they are so suspicious of things being be- XIII.  
fore determined by an unalterable Fate,   
that they cannot but be remiss and fall  
short of that diligence in governing the  
actions of their Lives, which is requisite  
to the making men truly virtuous. And  
this hath been the case of many among  
Christians; who, though they are firmly  
perswaded both of the *justice and goodness*  
of God *in general*, yet being suspicious  
of things being originally fixed by they  
know not what secret and unalterable fa-  
tality, they have remitted of their dili-  
gence in a virtuous course. And undoubt-  
edly it cannot but cut the Sinews of all  
diligence in virtue, if men be suspicious  
at the same time, that possibly they may  
not profit thereby: It cannot be, that a  
man should with hearty diligence and pa-  
tient continuance in well-doing endeavour  
to work out his own Salvation with fear  
and trembling, who is not perswaded that  
God has *really* given him power both to  
will and to do, and that he shall be ac-  
cepted according to his diligence and con-  
stancy, in exercising that power. The  
con-

S E R M.  
XIII.

contrary errour has plainly sprung, from a mistaken notion of the Absolute Sovereignty and Dominion of God. For though God is indeed absolute in Dominion and infinite in Power, yet he can no more make use of these Prerogatives to deal hardly with any of his Creatures, than he can exercise one Attribute in opposition to another. God may do with his creatures whatever he wills or pleases; but his will and pleasure is always regulated by the eternal Laws, of Justice and Goodness. Since therefore he has placed Man here upon earth as in a State of probation, and set before him Life and Death as the reward of Virtue and the punishment of Vice; exhorting him, encouraging him, intreating him, *in* his Gospel and *by* his Ministers, to chuse Life and to refuse Death; it cannot possibly be, that any one who is sincere in his endeavours can fail of being truly religious, or that any one who is truly religious, can fall short of eternal Life. So that whatever determinations in Other respects God may have made, secret and unknown to us; yet This we are as sure of, as we are of the

the

the Truth and Faithfulness of God, that there cannot possibly be any determination with him, whereby a virtuous man shall be excluded from Happiness, or a wicked man secured from eternal Misery.

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XIII.  
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*Fourthly and Lastly*; OTHERS there are, who instead of *knowing* and understanding the *judgment of God*, as the Scripture exhorts; on the contrary persuade themselves, that the Threatnings of God are not so terrible, as the Scripture seems to represent them; or that he will not be so severe in the execution of them, as the Gospel teaches us to apprehend. And This proceeds plainly from a false Notion, concerning the Mercy and Goodness of God. Men who profess themselves Christians, make no doubt but there *is* a God, who created all things by the word of his Power, and upholds and governs them by the wisdom of his Providence: They make no doubt also, but that God inspects all the actions of his Creatures, and that he *will reward* the Good, and in some measure *punish* also, at least some kinds and degrees of evil: But then, that his threatnings are so terrible, as the Scripture re-

2 presents

S E R M.

XIII.



presents them ; and that he will be so severe in the execution of them, as the Gospel teaches us to apprehend ; this they can very hardly persuade themselves to believe. They know the Mercy of God is infinite ; and therefore they hope it will swallow up his Justice : They know the Goodness of God is unexhaustible ; and therefore they hope he will not punish *wickedness* so severely as he has threatned, nor exact so *much virtue* as he has required in his Gospel : and upon these grounds they go on in a course of Licentiousness, hoping that God will either accept their Repentance when they have served themselves of Sin all the best part of their Lives ; or at least that he will have some Mercy and Compassion on them, and not punish them with such Severity as the Gospel seems to threaten.

N O W in order to lay open the vanity of these false hopes, I shall endeavour to show briefly ; *1<sup>st</sup>*, That God's Mercy, however infinite, yet is not so great as to interfere with his Justice ; *2<sup>dly</sup>* ; That we have no reason in the world to expect, that God will be less severe in the execution

tion of his punishments, than he has S E R M.  
been in his threatenings rightly understood; XIII.  
and 3dly, That God will not accept any  
less degree of Righteousness and Virtue,  
than he has declared in his Holy Gos-  
pel.

I. *First*; GOD's Mercy, however infi-  
nite, yet is not so great, as to interfere  
with his Justice. God is as merciful, as  
is consistent with the Holiness and the  
Purity of his Nature, and with the Ho-  
nour of his divine Laws: His Mercy  
therefore extends itself to all penitent Sin-  
ners, that is, to all who reform and a-  
mend; but it can never possibly be recon-  
ciled to Sin, nor extend itself to any one  
who continues wicked. To go on there-  
fore in a course of any known Sin,  
in hopes that notwithstanding our impe-  
nitence God will finally be merciful and  
have compassion upon us, is, when pardon  
is offered with some particular Limita-  
tions, to put ourselves voluntarily in the  
number of those, who are expressly ex-  
cepted from the benefit of that indul-  
gence: And to continue in a wicked State  
*for the present*, with a design to deliver  
our-

S E R M. ourselves *at the last* by Repentance; is  
 XIII. wilfully to suffer Shipwreck, in hopes of  
 being saved at the last by a Plank. Our  
 natural reason teaches us, that God is infinitely Merciful; but it teaches us also that he is perfectly Just: and the Scripture is not more large, in describing the Bowels of the divine Mercy, than it is in setting forth the Severity of his Justice. It teaches us that God is indeed full of Compassion, Long-suffering, and of great Pity; that he loves not to grieve the children of Men, nor takes any delight in the destruction of a Sinner; that he is willing to forgive, yea earnestly desirous that men would be led by his Mercies, or driven by his Judgments to Repentance: But then it tells us also, that our God is a consuming Fire; and that our Saviour himself, who gave himself a ransom for all those who believe and obey him, shall come *in flaming fire to take vengeance on them that know not God and that obey not his Gospel*; That the Wrath of the *Lamb himself* shall be insupportable, as well as the Face of Him that sitteth on the Throne. It assures us that the Gospel, that Last  
 and



and gracious Covenant of Mercy and For-  
giveness, is yet the revelation of the righ-  
teous judgment of God, wherein the wrath  
of God is most expressly revealed from  
Heaven against all ungodliness and un-  
righteousness of men: It tells us of a *lake  
that burneth with fire and brimstone; of  
the worm that dieth not, and of the fire that  
is not quenched*: that they who obey not  
the Gospel, *shall be punished with ever-  
lasting destruction from the presence of the  
Lord, and from the glory of his power;*  
and that *it shall be more tolerable for So-  
dom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment,*  
than for those who neglect this great Sal-  
vation, and do despite unto the Spirit of  
grace.

II. Secondly; WE have no reason in  
the World to expect, that God will be  
less severe in the execution of his punish-  
ments, than he has been in his threatnings  
rightly understood, and not misapplied by  
melancholy or enthusiastick Apprehen-  
sions. God has threatned Death and ever-  
lasting Destruction, as the Punishment of  
incorrigible disobedience in *general*; and  
in *particular*, to every sort and degree of  
Wicked-

S E R M. Wickedness, a proportionable *sort* and *de-*  
 XIII. *gree* of Torment, *in* that State of ever-  
 lasting Destruction, or of final exclusion  
 from the Kingdom of God: And if men  
 notwithstanding all the mercies and the  
 gracious invitations, notwithstanding all  
 the judgments and the terrours of the  
 Lord, will continue incorrigible; they  
 have no reason to expect but he will re-  
 ally condemn them. God's Goodness is  
 infinite and perfect; but 'tis also so tem-  
 pered with Wisdom and Justice, as makes  
 a more compleat character of the Judge  
 of all the earth, than an infinite indul-  
 gence would do. His Love to Mankind  
 is sincere, and he really designs our hap-  
 piness, if we hinder it not ourselves;  
 He has given us abundant evidence of  
 That; and especially in his sending to us  
 his own Son, to reveal the grace of the  
 Gospel for our Salvation: But then he has  
 also as effectually discovered to us, that  
 his Tenderness towards Mankind is not so  
 great, as his Love of true Virtue and his  
 Hatred of Vice; and if we *will* be wick-  
 ed, he has given us satisfactory proof that  
 it is not contrary to the Goodness of his  
 Nature

Nature to permit us to be miserable. The Angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he has reserved in everlasting Chains under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day: Those great and powerful Spirits, when by an unreasonable and ungrateful Disobedience they had made themselves unworthy of that Glory and Happiness, in which God had created them; he would not dishonour his Laws and his Government by suffering them to continue happy in their disobedience, but immediately banished them from the seat of blessedness into the regions of eternal darkness: And can *we* be so weak as to imagine, that God has a greater Tenderness for mortal Man, than he had for those glorious and immortal Spirits; that he should remit *our* punishment without our forsaking our Sins? So *far* indeed as *our* Nature is more infirm and pitiable than *theirs*, so far God *has* made a proportionable allowance in the Terms of the Gospel: But that he should spare obstinate and impenitent men, and suffer *Them*, more than Angels, to *defy* his divine Majesty; for This, there

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XIII.

S E R M. is *no* Reason in nature. When he had  
 XIII. created the Earth perfectly good, and  
 every way fitted for a happy life, he  
 cursed it because of Sin, and blasted the  
 Beauty of this glorious Fabrick, because  
 man was not worthy to continue in so  
 happy a Seat. Again, when the wicked-  
 ness of men was grown great upon the  
 earth, God swept them away with a  
 flood; and though vain men would not  
 be convinced by *Noah's* preaching, but  
 that God was more merciful than to de-  
 stroy a whole World; yet This threaten-  
 ing was really executed upon them. After  
 this, the people of *Sodom* and *Gomorra*,  
 were destroyed with fire and brimstone  
 from Heaven; and set forth an example,  
 suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.  
 The *Jews* also, when they rebelled against  
 God, how were they destroyed with  
 Sword and Fire, with Famines and Pesti-  
 lences, with Wars and strange Desola-  
 tions? These things are all written for  
 our ensamples, upon whom the ends of  
 the World are come. And if these will  
 not convince us of the just Severity of  
 God; we may consider the Miseries  
 which

which happen in our own Age and Sight. S E R M.  
All the Afflictions and Troubles that fall XIII.  
upon Mankind; Pains and Diseases of  
Body; and the deeper griefs of wounded  
Spirits and despairing minds; are all di-  
rectly or indirectly the consequences of  
Sin. And if our own eyes convince us  
that these things are done in the *green  
tree*; if we see that God executes these  
judgments in this present World, and up-  
on mixt multitudes, where the righteous  
and the wicked must needs frequently  
be involved in the calamity together;  
what greater Miseries must we suppose  
are reserved in store against That time,  
when the Judge of the whole Earth shall  
have separated the Goats from the Sheep,  
and shall pour out his fury upon the  
wicked by themselves? His Punishments  
indeed, will not be greater than the wick-  
ednesses of Men deserve; neither will they  
*even Then* in that final perdition be *pro-  
miscuous*, or *disproportionate* in the *parti-  
cular* to the case of every single person's  
proper demerit; but in general, however  
*we* may presumptuously rely upon the  
infinite Mercy of God, we see it is not

S E R M. inconsistent with the Goodness of his di-  
 XIII. vine Nature, to make wicked men mi-  
 ~~~~~ ferable.

III. *Thirdly* and *Lastly*; G O D will not accept any less degree of Virtue and Holiness, than he has required in his holy Gospel. He has required that we be holy and virtuous, universally and constantly; And as 'tis certain he will not accept a *partial* obedience, so we have no good reason to expect he will be satisfied with a *late* and ineffectual Repentance. His Mercy extends itself to all that heartily repent, and for the future obey the laws of the Gospel; But it does not oblige him to reward those who obey him but in part, or who may seem to repent when 'tis too late to renew their obedience. In vain therefore do *They* hope to become Subjects of the Mercy of God, who either live in the breach of any one plain Commandment while they observe the rest, or who intend to observe them *all*, when they shall no longer have any temptation to break *any*. The Gospel, is indeed a Covenant or Declaration of Grace and Mercy to Mankind; but 'tis also a revelation

of the righteous Judgment of God *against* S E R M.
all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men; XIII.

Rom. i. 18 : And a very groundless mis-
apprehension of the divine Mercy it is, to
expect that it will prevent the execution of
those just judgments, which are denounced
with the greatest terrour in the very co-
venant of Mercy.

LET us not then deceive ourselves
with vain imaginations, but be vigilant
and careful, that our Repentance be time-
ly, and our obedience universal ; So shall
we become fit Subjects of the Mercy of
God, and meet to be partakers of the in-
heritance with the Saints in light.





SERMON XIV.

Of Religious Melancholy.



J O B vi. 4.

For the Arrows of the Almighty are within me, the Poison whereof drinketh up my Spirit ; The Terrours of God, do set themselves in array against me.



THESE Words are part of S E R M. XIV. the Complaint of *Job* under that great Affliction, which God was pleased to send upon him, for the Trial of an exemplary and unshaken Virtue : And because it was sent upon him for *That Reason* only, and not as any Mark of the divine Displeasure ; therefore, how

X 4

great

S E R M. great soever the Calamity was in all other
 XIV. respects, yet was it by no means insupportable; because there still remained to him the great Foundation of Comfort, in the Assurance of a good Conscience, and the Expectation of God's final Favour. *He had been all his days a perfect and an upright man, one that feared God, and eschewed evil, (ch. i. 8;) And he had in his own Mind, even in the midst of his Affliction, the Satisfaction to reflect with Pleasure upon his past Behaviour, and to strengthen his Resolutions of continuing in the same Course for the Future. As God liveth, saith he, who has taken away my judgment; and the Almighty, who has vexed my Soul; All the while my Breath is in me, and the Spirit of God is in my Nostrils; My lips shall not speak Wickedness, nor my tongue utter deceit.----'Till I die, I will not remove my integrity from me; My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go; my heart shall not reproach me, so long as I live; (ch. xxvii. 2.) And (Ch. xiii. 15;) Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him; but I will maintain my own ways before him; He*
also

also shall be my Salvation, for an hypocrite shall not come before him. He knew, and maintained it against the Opinion of all his Friends, that God was not angry with him, even at the Time he afflicted him. He knew, that after a short Tryal, God would restore him to his former Prosperity. And if not; yet he knew that his Redeemer lived, and was to stand at the latter day upon the Earth; and though after his Skin, Worms destroyed his Body, yet in his Flesh should he see God; Whom he should see for himself, and his eyes should behold, and not another; though his reins were consumed within him. These considerations very much alleviated, even that singularly great and unparallelled Affliction, wherewith God was pleased to try this righteous person, and make his Patience exemplary to all succeeding Generations. Wherefore though, in the Nature of the Thing itself, in the Circumstances of the external Affliction, no Calamity could well be heavier than that of Job; yet, when the Disposition of the Person comes also to be taken into the Act, there is a Trouble far greater than

His:

His: Namely, when the Storm falls where there is no preparation to bear it; when the Weight is laid, where there is no Foundation to support it; when the Assault is made from *without*, and *within* is nothing to resist it. And *That* is, when the Judgments of God fall upon a *wicked* Person; when the Providence of God smites him from *without*, and his own Conscience torments him *within*; when *That* which *should* be his only Comfort and Support in the day of Trouble, proves *itself* the greatest and most insupportable part of his Calamity: This is indeed, a truly miserable Case; and can be exceeded by nothing, but *That* whereof it is a Part and a Fore-runner, even the Stingings of the Worm that never dieth. In all *other* Cases, the *Spirit* of a man will sustain his *Infirmity*; But when the *Spirit* itself is thus wounded, *who* can bear it? Then 'tis doubly true, what the Text emphatically describes, that *the Arrows of the Almighty are within* them, *the poison whereof drinketh up their Spirits*; *The Terrours of God, do set themselves in array against* them. They cannot

not say with *Job*; shall we receive good S E R M.
at the hands of God, and shall we not XIV.
receive evil? The Lord gave, and the Lord
has taken away; Blessed be the Name of
the Lord: But the Remorse of an impenitent Conscience drives them to despair; and, having no serious Thoughts of an effectual Repentance, their Mind is, like *Judas's*, tormented with an inextricable Perplexity. The Scripture represents the Misery of such a State, by very elegant Similitudes: *The wicked are like the troubled Sea when it cannot rest, whose Waters cast up mire and dirt*; *Eccl. lvi. 20.* And in the *second Book of Esdras*, *ch. xvi. 77*; *Wo be unto them that are bound with their Sins, and covered with their Iniquities; Like as a Field is covered over with Bushes, and the Path thereof covered with Thorns, that no man may travel through; It is left undressed, and is cast into the Fire, to be consumed therewith.* There is still a *Third State*, most melancholy, and truly pitiable; and that is of those, who neither by the immediate Appointment of *Providence*, as in the Case of *Job*; nor by the proper Effect

S E R M. feſt of their own *Wickedneſs*, as in the
 XIV. Caſe of an *Evil Conſcience*; but by their
 own *Imagination* and groundleſs *Fears*,
 by Indispoſition of *Body* and Diſorder of
Mind, by *False Notions* of *God* and of
Themſelves, are made very miſerable in
 their own *Minds*. They fancy, though
 without ſufficient reaſon, that *the Arrows*
of the Almighty are within them, the poi-
ſon whereof drinketh up their Spirits; And
that the Terrours of God, ſet themſelves in
array againſt them. This is indeed a
 Caſe, which deſerves the higheſt Pity and
 Compaſſion, and ought to be treated with
 the utmoſt Tenderneſs. For, according
 to the different Circumſtances of the Per-
 ſons, and the different Occaſions from
 whence the Diſtemper proceeds; ſo ought
 we to endeavour, to apply different and
 proper Remedies. 'Tis very difficult, in
 a Matter wherein there is ſo great Vari-
 ety, to enumerate the ſeveral Caſes that
 may happen; and yet, without diſtin-
 guiſhing them in ſome meaſure under
 their proper Heads, general Directions
 can be but of ſmall uſe, and of very un-
 certain Application in Practice. The Prin-
 cipal

Principal Instances therefore that most usually occur, and the Chief Occasions of such Melancholy Apprehensions, are such as follow. 1st; A mere Indisposition or Distemper of Body: 2^{dly}; A Complaint of Want of Improvement under the Exercise of Religious Duties, and Want of a fervent Zeal and Love towards God: 3^{dly}; An Apprehension of being excluded from Mercy, by some positive Decree and Fore-appointment of God: 4^{thly}; A Fear of having committed the Sin against the Holy Ghost: 5^{thly}; An Uneasiness arising from Wicked and Blasphemous Thoughts: And *Lastly*, a Terrour arising from the Consciousness of past Sins, and from the Want of Assurance of their being certainly pardoned.

1st; THE *First* and the most usual Cause of Religious Melancholy; which is *sometimes* the *only* and *entire* Occasion of it; and which almost *always* *accompanies* and *increases* it, when it arises from any of the *Other* Causes; is *Indisposition or Distemper of Body*. And This, though it is not properly and immediately of religious consideration, yet 'tis by no means to be neglected, slighted, or despised. For as
the

S E R M. the Mind operates continually upon the
 XIV. Body, so the Body likewise, whilst they
 continue united, will of necessity influence
 and operate upon the Mind. And 'tis
 not unusual, to see the good Understanding
 even of a *reasonable* person, born
 down and over-burdened by Bodily Disorder.
 This therefore is a Matter, which
 must by no means be made light of; but
 Advice must be given suitable to the Case,
 and proper Remedies applied to the Disorder.
 The Chief Difficulty in such Cases generally is,
 to persuade the Person, that That Trouble,
 which he conceives to be in his *Mind*, is more truly
 and properly an Indisposition of *Body*.
 But he may most likely be prevailed upon
 to seek for proper Assistance in that
 Respect, by considering that even where
 there is *real* ground for Trouble of Mind,
 yet That being usually augmented by
 concurrent Disorder of Body, Application
 of suitable Remedies may with best Success
 be at the same Time made for Both.
 And it is not easy to imagine, how upon
 remedying One, even sensible Persons
 have, beyond what they could possibly
 have

have expected, found themselves relieved S E R M.
in the Other. The principal Sign, by XIV.
which we may judge when the Indisposition is chiefly or wholly in the Body, is This; that the Person accuses himself highly *in general*, without being able to give any instances *in particular*; that he is very apprehensive, of he does not well know what; and fearful, yet can give no Reason why; that he thinks very ill of himself, and yet has been guilty of no Great Faults; and fears that God also will condemn him, and yet is not sensible by what presumptuous Transgression he has merited such Displeasure. In These Circumstances, the Trouble, though without sufficient Cause, may be very great; and the Misery real, though without good Foundation; and therefore it deserves the greatest Pity and Compassion, and is not to be let alone to increase by Neglect; but all endeavours ought to be used, to remove the Bodily Indisposition; and the Person at the same time perswaded as much as possible, that All Disturbance of Mind, not arising from any particular, distinct, known Occasion, is chiefly owing

S E R M. to such Indisposition, and will be removed together with it.

XIV.

2dly; THE next Cause of Uneasiness and Disturbance of this Kind, is a Complaint of *Want of Improvement* under the Exercise of Religious Duties, and *Want of a fervent Zeal and Love* towards God. As hardened and obdurate Sinners, do by the open Neglect and Contempt of Religious Duties, apparently *grow worse*, and run perpetually into more Ungodliness; so, many piously and well-disposed Persons, but of timorous and melancholy Constitutions, are under continual Apprehensions that they do *not grow better*; that they make little or no *Improvement*, in the Ways of Religion; and that they cannot find in themselves such a *fervent Zeal and Love* towards God, as they think is necessary to denominate them good Christians. Now if by *Want of Improvement*, these persons mean, that, notwithstanding their constant Attendance upon the external Duties of Religion, yet they do not find their *Obedience* to the Commands of God more uniform, their Passions more subdued, their Lives more sober


sober and regular, their good Temper towards all men more universal, their Temptations to Sin more constantly and more strongly resisted; This indeed is such a Want of Improvement, as they have just reason to be troubled at; and nothing can or ought to remove This Trouble of Mind, but such an actual Amendment of Life and Reformation of Manners, as the Gospel indispensably requires; and the promoting of which, is the main End and ultimate Design of all the outward Acts of Religious Devotion. But if by Want of Improvement, they mean only Want of *Warmth and Affection* in the Performance of their Duty, which Duty they nevertheless do perform sincerely and carefully; then there is no just ground for Trouble of Mind upon That Account: but they must be taught to comfort themselves by considering, that the different degrees of Affection with which *different* Persons serve God, depends much more upon the accidental Difference of their Constitutions of Body, than it is any true Measure of the Goodness of their Minds; that in *one and the same* person, there will

S E R M. unavoidably be different degrees of Affection at different Times, according to
 XIV. the present Temper of his Body, the Order or Disorder of his Spirits, the natural Passions and Commotions of his Mind, without any real change in his moral Dispositions; that no man can at *all times* keep up an *equal* vigour of Mind; and those who are the *most* zealous, and the *most constantly* so, are oftentimes not the best men; their Zeal being frequently without knowledge, their eagerness often bent upon wrong things, and the warmth of their Affections fixed most strongly upon matters of the least importance: nay, that where the Affections are most rightly directed, and fixed upon their true and properest Object; yet even There, those who serve God upon *rational and solid Motives*, and steddily obey his Commandments upon the calm and strong Motives of a *right Understanding*, seem to act upon a higher and more excellent Principle, than those who are led into his Service with the warmest *Passions* and with the strongest *Affections*. In like manner, if by Want of *Love* towards
 I God,

God, any man means that he has not settled in his Mind such a just Regard towards God, as determines him carefully to observe his Laws; This indeed is the greatest and most reasonable Cause in the World, of Disturbance of Mind; and such Trouble of Mind can be removed by nothing, but by immediate Repentance, and better Obedience. But if by Want of *Love* towards God, he means only, that, notwithstanding his best endeavours in the course of a virtuous life, yet he cannot find in himself that *Passionate Love* of the Supreme Good, which he finds some Writers have described in a sublime, poetical, and perhaps indeed in an unintelligible manner; This is no just Ground of Uneasiness at all. For he may be directed to consider, that the Scripture speaks otherwise concerning the matter; telling us plainly and intelligibly, that *the Love of God is This, that we keep his Commandments*; And if any man fancies that he loves God in a lofty and abstract manner, while at the same time he hates and is uncharitable towards his Brother, or lives in the Breach of any other of the



SER M. Divine Commands ; the Apostle assures us
 XIV. that such a one is a Liar, and the Truth
 is not in him. On the contrary, whoever
 sincerely *obeys* the Commandments of *God*,
 in the Course of a virtuous and religious
 Life, needs no other Mark or Proof of
 his *Love* towards him. For the best and
 most infallible *Sign or Token* of any thing,
 is the *Thing signified* itself; And he that
 by his Works makes evidence of the Re-
 ality of the *Thing*, needs not much trouble
 himself to compare and examine it by De-
 finitions of *Words*. Whatever Principle
Obedience proceeds from, even though it
 be but the *Fear* of Punishment, and
 Dread of the Divine Wrath; which some
 have without reason imagined to be so fla-
 vish and sordid a Passion, that God would
 not accept the Services which spring from
 so ignoble a Principle; even this Fear (I
 say) of Punishment, and Dread of the
 Divine Wrath, if it is not indeed the
bighest and noblest Principle of Obedience,
 yet it is undoubtedly a *very just and rea-
 sonable* Motive to it; If it is not indeed
 the most *excellent* Pitch of Virtue, yet 'tis
 at least a *very proper Beginning* of it;

If it is not indeed a *Part* of the most *ex-* S E R M.
alted Love of God; and Love when it is XIV.
 become *perfect*, casteth out Fear; yet 'tis 
 at least very consistent with its whole
Progress in *this* Life, and a necessary Part
 of that *Regard* towards God, which is due
 to him from us as our Supreme Gover-
 nour. And since God himself has given
 it us as a Motive to Obedience, the Obe-
 dience cannot be unacceptable to him,
 which proceeds from that Motive. Fear
 is one of the natural Passions which God
 has implanted in our Souls; and our Sa-
 viour does not command us to root it out,
 but only to direct it towards its right
 Object; *Fear him, who is able to destroy*
both Soul and Body in Hell; yea, I say
unto you, fear him. The Laws of God
 are enforced in every part of Scripture, by
Threatnings as well as by *Promises*; and
 the Apostles thought fit to persuade men
 by the *Terrours of the Lord*, as well as
 by the gentler Motives of his *Love and*
Compassion. Vain Suspicions therefore,
 that our Obedience proceeds not from a
 right Principle, from a true and unfeign-
 ed Love of God; are by no means any

S E R M. just Occasion for Uneasiness of Mind ; pro-
 XIV. vided always that we make but sure of
 the thing itself, that we sincerely perform
 that Obedience, by a Life of Virtue and
 True Holiness.

3dly; A *Third* Cause of Trouble of
 Mind to melancholy pious Persons, is an
 Apprehension that possibly they may be
 excluded from Mercy, by some *positive*
Decree and Fore-appointment of God.
 From *Nature* and *Reason*, This Appre-
 hension cannot arise; because 'tis abso-
 lutely contrary to all our natural Notions
 of the Divine Attributes, to conceive that
 the infinitely merciful and good God,
 whose tender Mercies are over all his
 Works, should for his own pleasure, and
 not for any Wickedness of theirs, eter-
 nally decree any of his Creatures to be
 miserable. Neither in *Scripture* indeed,
 any more than in the Reason of Things,
 (but only in the Writings of some un-
 skilful Interpreters) is there *Any* Foun-
 dation for any such Apprehension. For
 supposing there *be* some few obscure Texts,
 which unstable Persons may be apt to
 misinterpret to their own and others Dis-
 quiet;

quiet; yet, is it not fit that the whole *Tenour*, S E R M.
 the whole *Design* and perpetual *Aim* of XIV.
 Scripture, should be the Interpreter of particular passages? And is not this the whole
Current of Scripture from one End to the other, to declare, that *Far be it from God,*
that he should do Wickedness; and from the Almighty, that he should commit iniquity;
For the Work of a man shall be render unto him, and cause every man to find according
to his ways? that the Judge of all the Earth, will do what is right? that he will
render to every man according to what he has done, whether it be good or evil? that
with righteousness shall he judge the World, and the people with Equity? that God made
not Death, neither has he pleasure in the Destruction of the Living? And if this were not
 the whole *Tenour* of Scripture; yet, is it not undeniable, that the particular *Texts*, which
 speak after this manner, are infinitely clearer and plainer, and less possible to be
 misapplied, than those which are imagined to look the contrary way? Does not God swear by himself; *As I live, saith*
the Lord, I have no pleasure in the Death of him that dieth, but rather that he should

S E R M. *turn from his Ways and live?* Does not
 XIV. the Apostle *St Peter* declare, that God is
 not willing that any perish, but that all
 should come to Repentance? and *St Paul*;
 that God would have all men to be saved,
 and to come to the Knowledge of the Truth?
 And is it not fit that these plain Texts which
 cannot be mistaken, should be the Rule
 by which the *obscurer* ones are to be in-
 terpreted; rather than that the *obscurer*
 places should cause the *plain* ones, to be
 perverted or neglected? And yet indeed
 even the *obscure* ones, are not so much so
 in themselves, as by our want of attending
 to their true meaning. The *ixth* chapter
 of the Epistle to the *Romans*, which has
 sometimes perplexed the Minds of well-
 meaning Persons, was by all Christians in
 the first Ages without difficulty, and is
 Now again by all rational men, who at-
 tend to the Scope of the Apostle's Argu-
 ment, more than to the Schemes of mens
 own inventing, clearly understood to be
 written, not concerning God's choosing
 some *particular persons*, and rejecting o-
 thers from *eternal Salvation*, but con-
 cerning his rejecting the *nation* of the
Jews, and receiving in the Gentiles to
 be

be partakers of the *benefits of the Gospel*: S E R M.
 And the *elect* there spoken of, are the XIV.
whole Christian Church, whereof *all* never-
 theless do not attain unto Salvation; and the
reprobate there mentioned, are the *whole*
Nation of the unbelieving *Jews*, where-
 of *all* nevertheless were not finally cast
 off: And where God's fore-determination
 of *particular Persons* is spoken of, 'tis not a
 fore-appointment to eternal Happiness or
 Misery, but always to some *temporal Office*
 or Advantage only. Thus of *Jacob and*
Esau it was determined, before either of
 them was born, or had done either good
 or evil; that the purpose of God accord-
 ing to election might stand, it was deter-
 mined, what? only that the Elder should
 be Servant to the Younger. And when
 it was fore-appointed that our Saviour
 should be betrayed; it was likewise fore-
 appointed, not that *Judas* should betray
 him, but that our Lord should chuse on
 purpose into the number of his Apostles one
 such Person as *Judas*, whose own Wicked-
 ness he saw would make him a proper In-
 strument of accomplishing that Design.
 And when St *Paul* asks, *Who maketh thee*
to differ from another? he does not speak
 of

S E R M. of *moral* Dispositions, but of *miraculous*
 XIV. *Qualifications* for Offices and Dignities in
 the Church; as is evident from the Con-
 text. And when God hardened *Pharoab's*
 heart, 'twas not that God originally made
 him Wicked; but his own obstinate Wick-
 edness made him worthy to be judicially
 hardened, and a fit person to be raised up
 by Providence for the manifestation of
 God's Glory in his exemplary Destruction.
 'Tis evident therefore there is no Ground
 in Scripture, for any pious person, to ap-
 prehend that possibly he may be excluded
 from Mercy, by any positive Decree or
 Fore-appointment of God.

4thly, ANOTHER Cause of Uneasiness
 in the Minds of some melancholy pious Per-
 sons, is a Fear of having committed *the Sin*
against the Holy Ghost. And these may be
 satisfied, by considering, that there is no such
 thing at all mentioned in Scripture as the
Sin against the Holy Ghost, but only the
Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost; And
That was, such a *reviling* the greatest of our
 Saviour's Miracles, as to ascribe them to
 the *Devil*; And This, by those that *saw*
 them with their *own Eyes*, and who con-
 sequently could have no greater Conviction,

no new means offered them, to bring them to Repentance; And these very Persons were declared unpardonable, not upon account of the single *Act* itself of Blapheming, but because *such* Blaphemy in *such* persons in *such* Circumstances, was an evident and certain Sign of an incurably wicked and malicious Disposition; As appears from the Words immediately following those which declared the Pharisees unpardonable, St *Matt.* xii. 33; *Either make the Tree good, and his Fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his Fruit corrupt; for the tree is known by his Fruit: O Generation of Vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things!* From all which it sufficiently appears, how impossible it is for any truly sincere and well-meaning person to be guilty of This Malignity, or to have any reason of apprehending he can possibly have fallen into it.

5ly; THE next Cause of Trouble, to the Minds of some pious and melancholy persons, are *Wicked and Blaphemous Thoughts*; which because they cannot but detest and abhor, therefore they are apt to imagine them to be very sinful; and the more sinful they think them,

S E R M. them, and the more they are afraid of
XIV. them, the more apt they are to return.

Now in reality, for this very reason, because they detest and abhor them, and are afraid of them, and cannot avoid them; for this very reason (I say) so far are they from being great and crying Sins, or Tendencies towards the Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, that in reality they are not so much as any Sin at all, but merely Weaknesses of Imagination arising from Infirmary of Body, and, if they be of any moral Consideration, they are on the contrary rather, by the Uneasiness which they cause, certain Signs of a tender Conscience and of a pious disposed Mind. For profligate and profane Persons, are not disturbed at such things as these. The proper Remedy, (next to the curing the Bodily Disorder,) is, to consider the true Nature of Sin; that all Sin, lies in the *Will* only; and consequently *those* Thoughts only can be sinful Thoughts, which are either Designs and Contrivances of Wickedness, or at least which take some Pleasure and Delight in the Imagination of it. But these which offer themselves involuntarily

tarily to the Imagination, not only without any Delight, but with Abhorrence and Detestation; can no more be any Sin in the Person whom they disturb, than one man's accidentally seeing another's Wickedness or hearing his Blasphemy, can be Sin in the Person that hears or sees it. God himself sees and hears all the Wickedness that is done in the World; and yet it diminishes nothing from his infinite Purity. And could melancholy pious persons once persuade themselves, that Thoughts, which they do not chuse, are (in the moral Sense) not their own, and that they are to be slighted and neglected accordingly; this in all probability would soon effectually cure them and prevent their return; for the same reason, as too much Fear and Dread of them, naturally causes them to be almost always present.

Lastly; THE last usual Cause of Trouble of Mind, is the Conscience of *past* great Sins, and of *present* remaining Infirmities. Now if by *Infirmities*, be meant such as are unavoidable; and, if not perfectly unavoidable, yet such as are always incident even to good men; and always sincerely striven against;



against; and generally Omissions rather than Commissions; these are constantly allowed for in the whole Tenour of the Gospel, and the Forgiveness of them annexed to our daily Prayers. But if by *Infirmities* be meant *plain Transgressions* of God's Commands, and manifest Sins willingly chosen upon the offer of a Temptation; these are and ought to be such a Trouble of Mind, as nothing but effectual Repentance and Amendment can remove. Which Amendment when it has really taken place; then the Sorrow for what is past, may reasonably be relieved by the Assurance of Pardon. For though the great and principal Promise of Pardon, is made indeed to Unbelievers at their Conversion and being baptized; yet there is also sufficient encouragement given, even to relapsing Sinners to repent. *Brethren, saith St James, If any of you do err from the Truth, and one converteth him, Let him know, that he which converteth the Sinner from the Errour of his Way, shall save a Soul from Death, and shall hide a Multitude of Sins:* And our Saviour threatens some very corrupt Christians, *Rev. ii. 21;*
that

that because he gave them space to repent, S E R M. and they repented not, therefore he would XIV. cast them into a bed of Sickness, and kill their children with Death; yet still adding, except they repent of their deeds. And St. Paul, having severely punished a very wicked person among the *Corinthians*, yet at length writes to forgive and comfort him, lest perhaps he should be swallowed up with overmuch Sorrow. And the Texts which seem to speak otherwise, yet have not really a different meaning. For when the Apostle says, 'tis impossible for them that fall away, to be renewed to Repentance; he does not mean to take away the Comfort of true Repentance, but to express the difficulty of bringing Apostates to such Repentance. And when he says there remains no more Sacrifice for Sin, he does not mean that true Penitents shall not be forgiven; but that those who by Apostacy reject the Sacrifice of Christ, can expect no new Sacrifice to be instituted for them. And when he says that profane Esau found no place for Repentance, though he sought it carefully with Tears; his meaning is This only, that the
vain

S E R M. vain Sorrow and Prayers of Men continuing
 XIV. Wicked, (for he calls him profane,) shall not move God to repent and reverse their Sentence. And when St *John* speaks of a *Sin unto Death*, he does not mean that repentance cannot remedy it; but that some Sinners are as unlikely to *repent*, as some Diseases of Body are unlikely to be *cured*.

I SHALL conclude with this one practical consideration. If, where there is *no* real ground for trouble of Spirit, yet the mere Phantom of a deluded Imagination can be so terrible as men sometimes find it; *What* then is the *reality* of God's insupportable Wrath, lying upon the mind of an impenitent and despairing Sinner! Therefore take heed of real and habitual Wickedness.



SERMON XV.

Of publickly Denouncing Curses
upon Sinners.



DEUT. xxvii. 26.

Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this Law to do them; And all the people shall say, Amen.



THE Proper Design and Use SERMON
XV.
of all publick or private Seasons of Humiliation, is, to recollect and examine carefully the State of our Lives; to confess our past Sins, with a just Sense of our own unworthiness in committing them; humbly to ask pardon
VOL. X. Z of

S E R M. of God, for the breaches of his Law we
 XV. have been guilty of ; to imprint upon our
 ~~~~~ Minds a deep Sense, of the reasonableness  
 and obligation of our Duty ; to acknow-  
 ledge the Justice and Righteousness of  
 God's indignation, denounced against im-  
 penitent Sinners ; and to form within  
 ourselves strong and solemn Resolutions, of  
 better obedience for the future. To this  
 end it is, that the Law of God is held  
 forth unto us, recommended with all the  
 Blessings, and fenced in with all the  
 Curses, that are written in his Book. To  
 this end it is, that the Prophets in the *Old*  
*Testament*, and the Apostles in the *New*,  
 represent unto us in such sublime expres-  
 sions, the Happiness of Obedience ; and  
 on the other hand set forth in such mo-  
 ving and affectionate descriptions, the  
 wrath of God expressly revealed from  
 Heaven against all ungodliness and un-  
 righteousness of Men. To this end it is,  
 that our Saviour has appointed his Mini-  
 sters to continue, even unto the End of  
 the World, perswading men to Repentance  
 both by the Love of God, and by the  
 Terrours of the Lord. Which as it is at  
 all

all Times their perpetual Duty, so more especially at such Seasons as are thought proper to be set apart for Fasting and Humiliation. The proper and Christian Observation of which Times, does not consist in superstitious Distinctions of Meats, for which there is no foundation either in the Law of God or in the nature of things; but it consists in such general Abstinence, as every serious person finds by his own Experience best to promote the performance of his whole Christian Duty. In which matter, because the Temper and Constitution and other accidental circumstances of every particular person, are different from Others; therefore no general Rules can be given for all persons; but every one for himself must in particular, with the Prudence and Sobriety of a Christian, determine the Measure and Degrees of that Abstinence, which the Law of God *has not* determined, and the Laws or Customs of Men have in Reason *no Power* to determine. But *some things* there are, very proper for *all persons*, and wherein the *whole Church* may join without distinction: Such are,

S E R M.  
XV.  


S E R M. confessions of Sin, publick acknowledgments of the righteousness of God's Laws, and solemn Deprecations of his Judgments. Which Acts of Devotion, as they are *always* proper; So it has wisely been judged, that the performing them with greater *Solemnity*, at certain periods or seasons set apart for publick Humiliation; may be very advantagious and helpful, towards the keeping up a publick Spirit of Religion in a Nation. And there was the more reason so to judge, because God himself, when he brought the Children of *Israel* over *Jordan*, was pleased by an express Command to appoint the Blessings and Curses of the Law to be read in a solemn manner to the whole Body of the People; and that the People, at the repeating of each Curse, should, by way of *acknowledgment* of the *righteousness and reasonableness* of God's Judgments denounced against impenitent Sinners, distinctly and solemnly say, *Amen*. Of This we have a large account, in this *xxviiith* Chapter of the Book of *Deuteronomy*; in which, from the *15th* verse to the End, is set down a distinct Denunciation of the  
Curse

Curse or Wrath of God, against several S E R M.  
*particular* Instances of great Wickedness; XV.  
and it concludes or sums up all, with that  
more *general* Denunciation in the words  
of the Text, *Cursed be he that confirmeth  
not all the words of this Law to do them;  
and all the People shall say, Amen.* In  
discouraging upon which words; because  
they have sometimes by weak persons been  
so misunderstood, as if by joyning with  
or repeating this Curse, Men were in  
danger of being led into some degree of  
uncharitable censure, or to express any  
hard Wish, against such persons as they  
know to be guilty, or whom they see live  
in the practice of any of those Crimes to  
which the Curse is here annexed; I shall  
therefore endeavour to show, *1<sup>st</sup>*, That  
the repeating the Curse in this and the  
like Texts, is not expressing any unchari-  
table *Wish*, or *desiring* that any Evil  
should befall the Persons against whom  
it is denounced; but only an *acknowledg-*  
*ment* of the *Reasonableness* of God's de-  
nouncing such Threatnings in order to  
bring men to Repentance, and a *confession*  
of the *Justice and Righteousness* of God in

S E R M. punishing such as (notwithstanding those  
 XV. Threatnings) continue obstinately impenitent: And 2dly, I shall endeavour to show, That this publick acknowledgment of the Righteousness of God's Judgments upon impenitent Sinners, is very *reasonable* to be made in this manner by all Christians.

I. *First*; I AM to show, that the repeating the Curse in this and the like Texts, is not expressing any uncharitable *Wish*, or *desiring* that any Evil should befall the persons against whom it is denounced; but only an *acknowledgment* of the *Reasonableness* of God's denouncing such Threatnings in order to bring men to Repentance, and a *confession* of the *Justice and Righteousness of God* in punishing such as (notwithstanding those Threatnings) continue obstinately impenitent. And This will appear, both by a careful consideration of the words of the Text itself; and by comparing them with other expressions in Scripture, of the like import and signification. In the words of the Text itself, *Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this Law to do them, and all the*



the people shall say, Amen; 'tis observable S E R M.  
 in the first place, that in the very first XV.  
 expression, *Cursed be he*, the word, *be*, is  
 not in the original; and, for that reason,  
 in our *English* Translation, is printed in  
 a different character: So that the words  
 might as truly, and indeed *more* truly,  
 have been rendred, *Cursed is he*, or *Cursed*  
*shall be He, that confirmeth not all the*  
*words of this Law to do them.* Which  
 is manifestly, not an expression of *Desire*,  
 in him that pronounceth the words; but  
 merely a declaration of *Truth*, that the  
 Wrath of God is actually revealed against  
 Sinners. And 'tis remarkable, that these  
 very Words are expressly quoted by St  
*Paul* from this passage in *Deuteronomy*, ac-  
 cording to *that latter* manner of Rendring;  
*Gal. iii. 10*; *As many, says he, as are of*  
*the Works of the Law, Are under the curse;*  
*For it is written, Cursed is every one that*  
*continueth not in all things which are*  
*written in the Book of the Law to do*  
*them.*

IN the next place; the same thing ap-  
 pears from the use of the following word,  
*confirm*; *that confirmeth not all the words*

SERM. of the Law to do them. For as He who  
 XV. Obeys the Commandments of God, does  
 not add thereby any Strength to the Law  
 itself; but yet is said in the Text to *con-*  
*firm* it, only by *assenting* to the rea-  
 sonableness of it in his *life and practice*:  
 so He who *pronounceth* Those accursed,  
 whom the Law of God hath expressly  
 condemned; doth neither thereby take  
 upon himself any *Power* of passing cen-  
 sure on his brethren; neither doth he ex-  
 press any *Wish or Desire* of his own; but  
 only makes *confession* of the Justice and  
 Righteousness of God, in declaring his  
 indignation against Sinners.

*Lastly*; As to the following words,  
*and all the people shall say, Amen*; 'tis to  
 be observed, that this phrase has in Scrip-  
 ture *two* Significations. At the conclu-  
 sion of *Prayers and Thanksgivings*, it sig-  
 nifies a *Wish or Desire, So be it*: But  
 when it is added to an *Affertion or Decla-*  
*ration of Truth*, it signifies only an *Ac-*  
*knowledgment* of the *Truth and Certainty*  
 of what is so declared. Thus when our  
 Saviour uses the word, *Amen, Amen*; as  
 he does so frequently in St *John's Gospel*;

it plainly signifies, as we rightly translate S E R M. it, Verily, Verily, *I say unto you*; that is, XV. the words which I speak, shall *certainly and assuredly* be accomplished. And when St Paul tells us, 2 Cor. i. 20, that *all the Promises of God, in Him, are Yea and Amen*; his meaning is evident, that they are sure, infallible, and to be entirely depended upon. And when our Saviour declares concerning himself, Rev. i. 18; *Behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen*; 'tis manifest, the word, [*Amen,*] does not there express any *Wish* or *Desire*, (which would have been very improper in That place;) but 'tis a strong *assertion* of the infallibility of That Truth, that he is *alive for evermore*. And the Character by which the Spirit describes him, Rev. iii. 14; *these things saith the Amen*, is distinctly explained in the words next following, *the faithful and true Witness*. From these Uses of the word, *Amen*, in Scripture; it appears very clearly, that if the *former* part of the Text be rendered (as it may well be) not, *curst* be *he*, but, *curst* is *he*, *that confirmeth not all the words of This Law to do them*; the meaning

S F R M. ing of the latter part, and let all the  
 XV. people say Amen, will be *This* only; let  
 the people publickly profess their acquiescence in, and acknowledgment of, the Justice and Righteousness of the divine Threatnings. And *This* Sense of the words is the more certain, because in the Book of *Jeremy*, where the words of the Text are again repeated, *Cursed be*, (or, *Cursed is*) *the man that obeyeth not the words of this covenant*, Jer. xi. 3; the Prophet immediately replies, *ver. 5, Then answered I, and said, Amen, O Lord*; Which Reply being made by him of his own accord, and without any Command; shows plainly that the word, [*Amen*], ought not there to have been rendred, as in the form of a severe condemnatory Prayer, *So be it*; but, as a form of acquiescence only in God's righteous Sentence, *Even so, O Lord, Righteous and True are thy judgments*.

AND thus much, from the consideration of the expressions used in the *Text itself*. The same thing will appear further, by comparing these with other ways of speaking used in Scripture, of the like import

import and signification. In the last words SERIAL that *Jacob* spake to his Sons, *Gen. xlix.*, XV. we find This expression concerning *Simeon and Levi*, ver. 7; *Cursed be their Anger, for it was fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel.* It cannot be imagined that *Jacob* intended to *curse* his Sons, or bring any *imprecation* upon them, as of his own Desire; but the words are only a declaration of what he was inspired to foresee *would* come upon them hereafter: And therefore in the very same verse he changes his style, and goes on in the Prophetick manner of speaking; not, do Thou *divide* them, but, *I will* (says he) *divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel.* And This, (especially if we consider that it was to take place, not so much in *Themselves* as in their *Posterity*,) leads us to the true explication of those many Passages in the *Psalms*, which in our *Translation* seem to be expressed in the form of Curses or Imprecations, but in the *Original* are plain Predictions only of future Events. To give One instance out of Many: *Pf. cix. 8; Let his days be few, and let another take his Office; Let his children be fatherless,*

S E R M.  
XV.

less, and his Wife a Widow. These words being spoken by the Psalmist, not as a private person, concerning his own particular Enemies, but as a *Prophet* concerning Him who was to betray our Lord; are plainly, not an *imprecation*, but a *prediction*: And almost all the like expressions in the whole Book of *Psalms*, carry with them sufficient Marks, of their being intended only as propheticall denunciations of the Wrath of God, against prophane Men and Enemies of Religion in all future Generations. Again: *Deut. xxvii. 12*; When *Moses* commanded six of the Tribes to stand upon Mount *Gerizim* to *bleſs the people*, 'tis added in the next verse that the other six should stand upon Mount *Ebal* to *curſe*: He does not continue to speak in the same phrase, that as the one were to *bleſs the people*, so the other should *curſe the people*; but only that they should stand upon *Mount Ebal* to *curſe*; that is, to publish aloud the denunciations of God's Wrath against Sinners, and the Threatnings of what calamities *Would* certainly befall that nation if they departed from God. And This is what  
*Moses*

Moses himself often did in a more vehement manner and with more solemn words, than when it was expressed barely in the form of a Curse: *Deut. iv. 25; When you shall corrupt yourselves, and do evil in the Sight of the Lord thy God, to provoke him to Anger; I call Heaven and Earth to witness against you this day, that ye shall soon utterly perish from off the land: and ch. viii. 19; If thou forget the Lord thy God, and walk after other Gods, I testify against you this day, that ye shall surely perish.* From this form of expression, which is really much more vehement and emphatical, than that in the Text, and yet manifestly contains nothing of *imprecation* in it, but merely a *warning* to deter men from Apostacy; 'tis evident that the words of the Text, though expressed in the form of an imprecation, yet must of necessity be understood in no other sense, than as a *like warning* to deter men from Sin. And This is the more evident, because both from the places now cited, and from the whole *Book of Deuteronomy*, it appears, that all the Curses in that Book were denounced not only against wicked persons

*then*


SERMON. *then present, but also in all succeeding generations; with respect to whom, 'tis plain they could be understood no otherwise, than as comminatory Exhortations. For as the Apostle declares concerning the Blessing, Acts ii. 39; that the Promise was to Them and to their Children, and to them that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call; so Moses expressly declares concerning the Curse likewise, (Deut. xxix. 14, 15, 19; and iv. 25;) Neither with you only do I make this Covenant and this Oath; But with him that standeth here with us this day, and also with him that is not here with us this day; For when thou shalt beget children, and childrens children, and shalt have remained long in the land; and it come to pass that one heareth the words of this Curse, and despiseth it; the Lord will not spare that man, but all the Curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him. The Meaning is evident: If any man despises the Threatnings of God, instead of being moved by them to Repentance; upon Him shall those Threatnings finally be executed.*



IN the *New Testament* likewise, we S E R M. sometimes meet with the same manner of XV. speaking. *Rom. ii. 8, 9; Unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the Truth, but obey unrighteousness; indignation and Wrath: Tribulation and Anguish upon every Soul of Man that doth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile. In the original, 'tis expressed as an entire Sentence of itself, Indignation and Wrath be upon them: But yet, from the whole scope of St Paul's discourse, 'tis plain his intention was nothing more, than as if he had only in one continued Sentence gone on with the fore-going declaratory manner of speaking; God will render to every man according to his deeds; To them that patiently continue in well-doing, eternal life; but to them that obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath.*

THE Apostles were intrusted by our Saviour, with the Doctrine of Life and Death; with delivering to men the Terms, upon which their Sins should be forgiven or not forgiven; *Whosoever Sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever Sins ye retain, they are retained:*

Yet


S E R M. Yet when they *retained* any mens Sins,  
 XV. as in the case of shaking off the *dust of*  
 *their feet* against the unbelieving Cities;  
 'tis plain they did it not as an Act of *Power*, nor as a Signification of any *Will or Desire of their own*, that those people should be accursed; but, as our Saviour himself expresses it, *Mar. vi. 11*; 'twas to be *for a Testimony against them*, a *Protestation* of their unworthiness to receive the Gospel: just as *Moses testified* against the children of *Israel* in the passages before-cited; and as *St Paul* against certain wicked persons among the *Theſſalonians*, *1 Eph. iv. 6*; *The Lord is the avenger of all such*; as we have also fore-warned you, and testified; and as *St John*, against any man that should corrupt his Prophecies in the Revelation, *ch. xxii. 18*; *I testify*, saith he, unto every such person, that *God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this Book*. From all these parallel passages it abundantly appears, that the solemnly repeating the Curse in the Text, or any other the like denunciations in Scripture, is not expressing any uncharitable *Wish*, or *desiring* that any Evil



should befall the persons against whom it is denounced; but only an *acknowledgment* of the *Reasonableness* of God's denouncing such Threatnings in order to bring men to Repentance, and a *confession* of the *Justice and Righteousness* of God in punishing such as (notwithstanding those Threatnings) continue obstinately impenitent. It remains that I proceed to show briefly in the

II. *Second Place*, that such a publick acknowledgment of the Righteousness of God's Judgments upon impenitent Sinners, is very *reasonable* to be made in *this manner* by all Christians. And This is extremely evident from what has been already said. For since reciting the Curses written in Scripture, is not *wishing* or *desiring* any Evil to any man; but the reason of *continuing* to recite them, is only the same as the reason of God's *first commanding* them to be written; namely, to move both those that *bear* them, to repent; and to convince those that *recite* them, of the necessity of avoiding those Crimes, against which they acknowledge with their own Mouths the Curse of God to be due; 'tis

S E R M. very plain, that this is not doing *Hurt*,  
 XV. but *Good*, to our Neighbours; being indeed nothing else, than *fore-warning* them of a Danger, in order to their *escaping* it. The *righteousness* of the Law of God, is attested to by the natural Sense of every man's own conscience; even *the Gentiles which have not the Law*, being a Law *unto themselves*, and showing the work of the Law written in their hearts. The judgment of God therefore, against them who commit such things as their own consciences condemn, is according to Truth, *Rom. ii. 2*; that is, 'tis according to *Right and Equity*; as the Phrase is afterwards explained, *ver. 5*; where 'tis stiled more expressly *the revelation of the righteous judgment of God*: *Righteous*, in condemning *those only*, who must by all men be confessed to be worthy of *Death*; (as *St Paul* expresses it,) *Rom. i. 32*; *who knowing the judgment of God*, (in the original, *the just judgment of God*,) *that they who commit such things are worthy of death*, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them; or, (as it is found in some of the most ancient Copies,) *who knowing*

knowing the righteous judgment of God, S E R M.  
yet do not consider, that they who do such XV.  
things are worthy of Death, and not only   
They that do them themselves, but they also  
who countenance others that do them. Now  
what the Equity of the Thing itself thus  
compels every man's conscience secretly  
to acknowledge within him, the Glory  
of God and the Benefit of Men makes it  
reasonable should be publicly professed  
before the World; that God may be justi-  
fied in his saying, and clear when he is  
judged, (Ps. li. 4;) and that Men may be  
moved to Repent, by considering that, if  
they do it not, they will have no Apology  
to make for themselves, but every mouth  
will be stopped before God, Rom. iii. 19;  
and at the day of judgment it will be  
said to every impenitent person, *Thine  
own Mouth condemneth thee, and not I,  
yea thine own lips testify against thee*; Job  
xv. 6. Not that by making such Profes-  
sion, any man shall be more liable to be  
condemned, than if he made it not; but  
that the righteousness of God's Judgment  
shall be manifested in condemning men  
for such things only, as either they them-

S E R M. <sup>XV.</sup> selves professed, or (which is the same thing) could not deny, to be worthy of *Death*. By which Phrase, being worthy of *Death*, 'tis not to be understood only, that such Crimes *may* be so punished *without any Injustice*; but also that 'tis *necessary*, in the government of the World, that they *should be* so punished. God himself therefore, the infinitely good and merciful Governour of the Universe, pronounces Curses against the wicked, not as taking any *Delight* so to do; but the Scripture always represents him doing it, as *unwillingly*, as with *reluctance*, and as his *strange Work*; *Isaiah xxviii. 21.* And our Saviour also *himself*, who loved us, and gave himself for us, and laid down his own Life to redeem us from Death; yet even *He* shall say, to those who impenitently reject his gracious Offers of Life, *Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels*; *Matt. xxv. 41.* And, *in the presence of the Holy Angels, and in the presence of the Lamb*, who assuredly can take no pleasure in beholding any Punishment but what is necessary, *shall they be tormented*

*tormented with Fire and Brimstone; Rev. S E R M. xiv. 10. And the Saints in Heaven, who XV. are far from having in them any Revenge, or any Uncharitableness, but only a right Sense of the necessary administration of Justice in God's Kingdom, are described after the following manner, Rev. xix. 1; I heard a great voice of much people in Heaven saying, Allelujah, Salvation and Glory and Honour and Power unto the Lord our God; For true and righteous are his judgments; for he hath judged the great Whore, which did corrupt the Earth with her fornication; and hath avenged the Blood of his Servants at her hand: And again, (ch. xvi. 5;) I heard the Angel of the Waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus; For they have shed the blood of Saints and Prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink, for they are worthy; And I heard another out of the altar say, even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments. The Sense of all these places is nothing else, but that 'tis reasonable all the World should make acknowledgment of the Righteous-*

S E R M.  
XV.

ness of God's judgments ; and of the necessity there is in the nature of Things, and in the Government of God, that Wickedness should finally be destroyed. And though it be in great Variety of Expression, that the Scripture sets forth this Truth ; yet by comparing the several expressions one with another, 'tis plain they all terminate only in the same Thing. What *Solomon* thus expresses, *Prov. xvii. 15 ; He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, they Both are an abomination to the Lord ;* is in the Prophet *Isaiab* thus, *ch. v. 23 ; Wo unto them which justify the wicked, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him ;* and *Prov. xxiv. 24 ;* in a still more severe manner of speaking, *He that saith unto the wicked, thou art righteous, him shall the people curse, nations shall abhor him.* Yet the meaning of all these places, is still evidently One and the same ; And the Nations cursing such a person, plainly signifies nothing more, than an universal acknowledgment of the Reasonableness and Necessity of the Threatnings denounced of God against him.






him. In the Book of *Habakkuk*, the figure is carried still higher, *ch. ii. 11, 12*; *The very Stone shall cry out of the Wall, and the beam out of the Timber shall answer it; Wo to Him that buildeth a Town with Blood, and stablisheth a city by iniquity: And in that pathetical expression of our Saviour, Luke xix. 40; if These should hold their peace, the Stones would immediately cry out: 'Tis a highly figurative and very elegant manner, of expressing only the Reasonableness and Necessity of the Thing to be done. And because the Design and End of All these ways of speaking in Scripture, is This only, to convince men of the necessity of coming to Repentance, of reforming their manners, and of obeying the Law of God; 'tis therefore very evident, that as showing men the Penalties threatned in humane Laws, is a kind and friendly office, as only giving them warning in what manner to avoid them; so reciting, with the same intention, the Curses of God set forth in Scripture against all impenitent Sinners, is likewise doing, not Hurt, but Good, to our Neighbours.*

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THE only *Inference* I shall draw at this Time from what has been said, and wherewith I shall conclude, is This; that if, when the *general* Denunciations of the Wrath of God against Sinners are recited, there be and ought to be a great *Tenderness* used in applying them *in particular*; and the Design of repeating them publickly upon solemn occasions of Humiliation, is, that every man may apply them seriously to his *own* conscience, and not that any man should judge his *Brother*; (For *who art Thou that judgest another man's Servant? To his own Master he standeth or falleth* : ) From hence we may learn the extreme Wickedness of Those mens *pretended Catholick Religion*, who presumptuously taking it for granted, that All who receive not their absurd Doctrines, shall be eternally punished by God; take upon them to anticipate that unrighteous Sentence, which they profanely pass in the Seat of God; and destroy mens *Bodies* for no other Reason, but because they have first with impious and antichristian Uncharitableness presumed to give judgment of condemnation

demnation against their Souls. Come out S E R M.  
of her, my people, that ye be not partakers XV.  
of her Sins, and that ye receive not of her   
plagues; For in her is found the blood of  
Prophets and of Saints, and of all that are  
slain upon the Earth.

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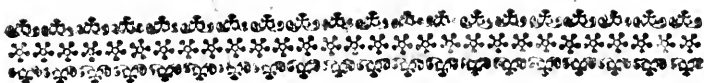
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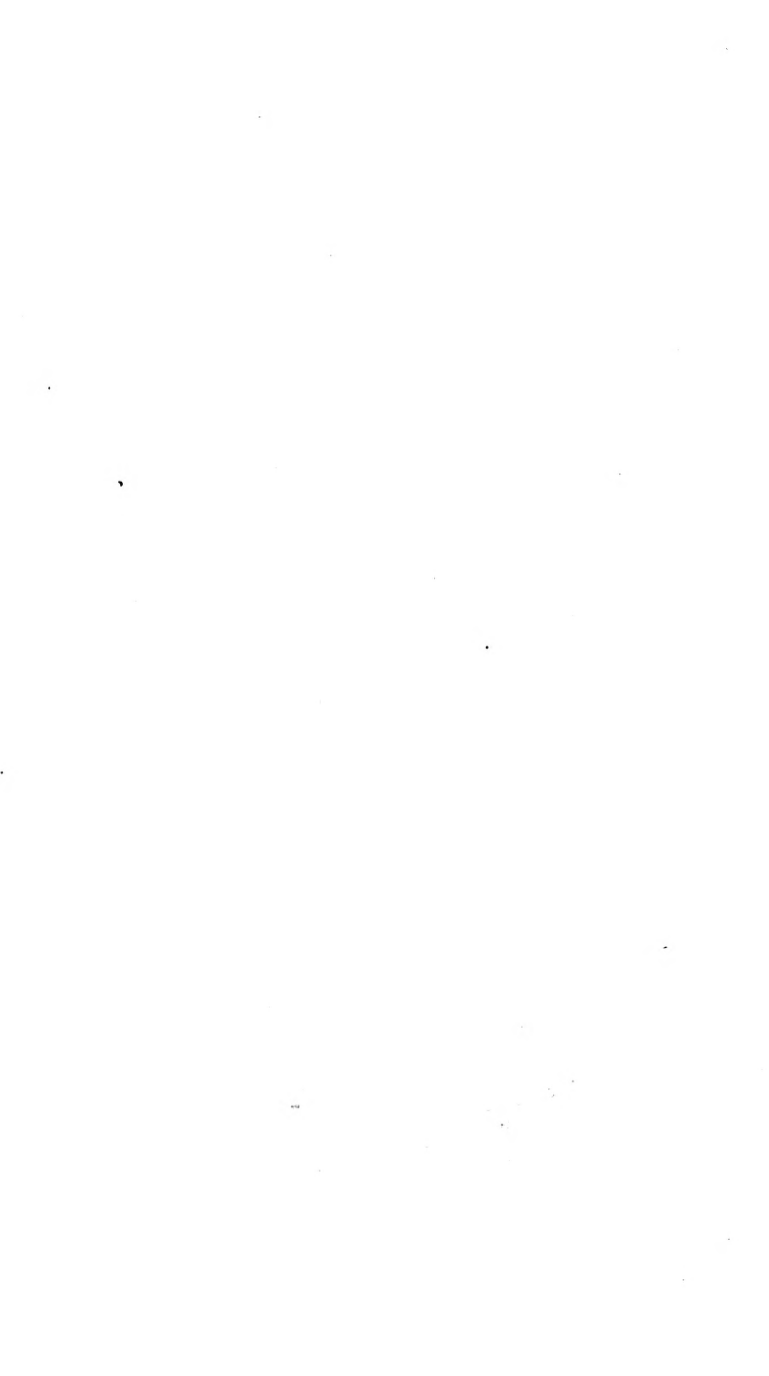
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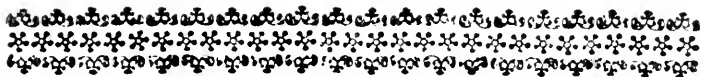


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