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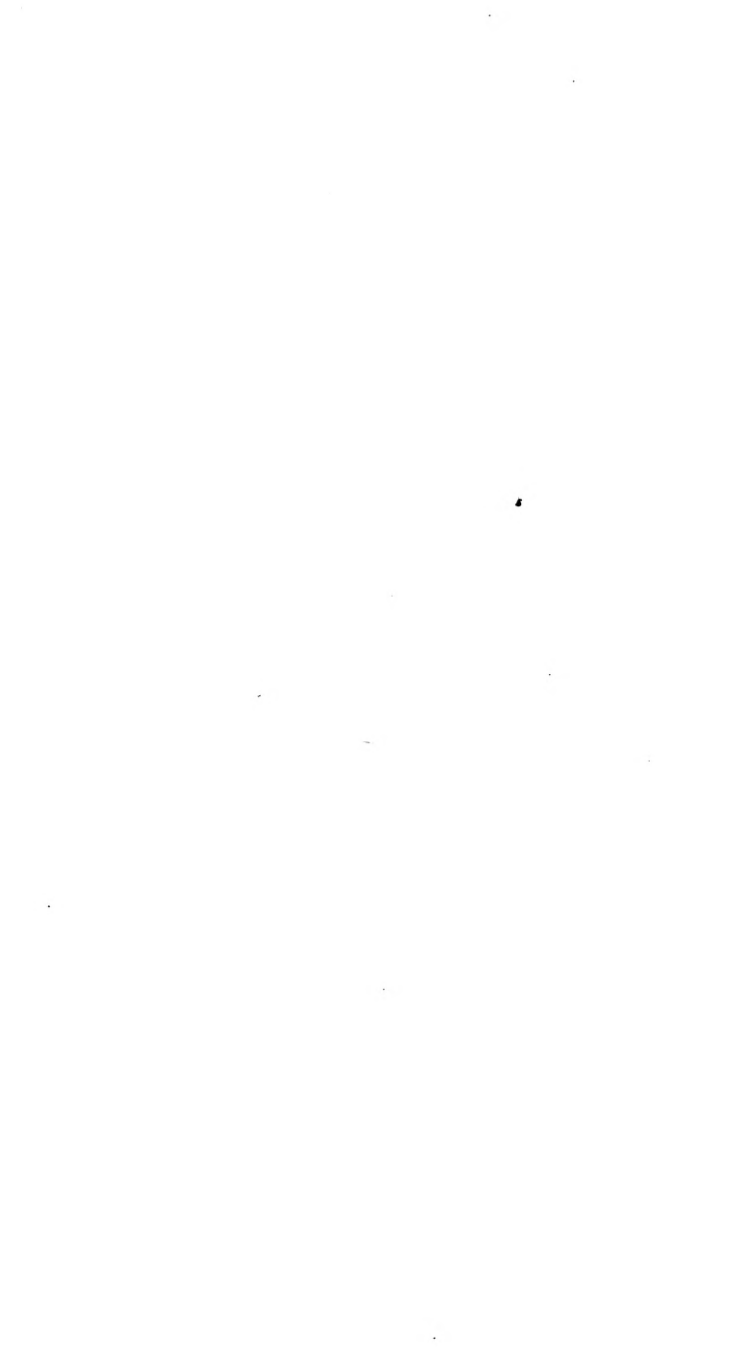
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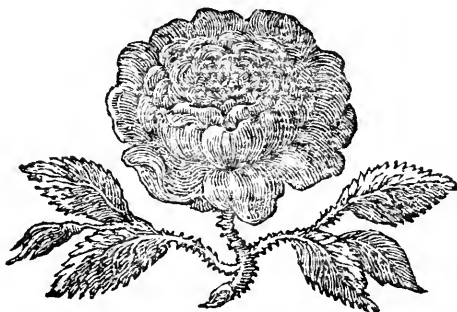
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T W E L V E
S E R M O N S
A N D
D I S C O U R S E S
O N S E V E R A L
S U B J E C T S a n d O C C A S I O N S .

By *ROBERT SOUTH*, D. D. late
Prebendary of *Westminster*, and Canon of
Christ-Church, Oxon, &c.

V O L. VI.



L O N D O N :
Printed by *J. Bettenham*, for *JONAH BOWYER*,
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M. DCC. XXVII.

To the Right Reverend Father in GOD,

G E O R G E,

By Divine Providence

Lord Bishop of BATH and WELLS.

My LORD,

SHould I but so much as think of any other Countenance or Patronage to these following Papers (as poor and mean as they are) from one either of *other* or *lower* Principles than your Lordship, it would, instead of a becoming and due Address, prove a direct Affront to your Honour.

My Lord, your Lordship was bred in two of the most eminent Seminaries for Loyalty and Learning perhaps in *Europe*, viz. in the King's School at *Westminster*, and in that Noble College of *Christ-Church* in *Oxford*, in each of which you grew up not barely as in a School or College, but as in your proper, genuine, and *connatural Element*, and accordingly took and drank in thoroughly

from thence all that they were remarkable and great for: and they, my Lord, in Requital have made your Lordship what you now so deservedly are, and what all so unanimously accounted *your Lordship* to be.

But, my Lord, it is time for me in Modesty (and that to spare your Lordship's, as well as to shew my own) to withdraw, and calmly and silently contenting myself with the naked Contemplation and Admiration of your Lordship's superlative Worth and Virtues (being utterly unable to reach the very lowest Pitch of them by the best and highest of my Expressions) I must with the utmost Deference (the only *Height* which I would aspire to) sincerely own, avow, and (both with *Hand* and *Heart*) subscribe myself,

My LORD,

Your Honour's ever Faithful,

Humble and Obedient Servant,

ROBERT SOUTH.

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B

ISAIAH

ISAIAH V. 20.

*Wo unto them that call Evil Good,
and Good Evil, &c.*

I Formerly made an Entrance upon this Text in a Discourse by it self; and after some short Explication of the Terms, and something premised by way of Introduction to the main Design and further Drift of the Words, I cast the whole Prosecution of them under these three Heads.

First, To give some general account of the nature of Good and Evil, and of the reason upon which they are founded.

Secondly, To shew, that the way by which Good and Evil commonly operate upon the Mind of Man, is by those respective Names and Appellations by which they are notify'd and convey'd to the Mind.

4 *The Second Discourse on*

Thirdly, To shew the Mischief which directly, naturally, and unavoidably follows from the Misapplication and Confusion of these Names.

These three Things, I say, I prosecuted and dispatched in my First and General Discourse upon this Text and Subject: and in this my second and following Discourses upon the same, I shall endeavour to assign the several *Instances*, in which the mischievous Effects then mentioned do actually shew themselves, and by sad Experience, are but too commonly found, and felt in most of the Affairs of human Life. And here we are to strike out into a very large Field indeed; for could all of them be recounted in their utmost Compass and Comprehension, they would spread as far and wide as even the World itself, and grasp in the Concerns of all Mankind put together. For is it not the first, and most universal Voice of human Nature, *Who will shew us any Good?* And the next to it, *Who shall deliver us from Evil?* Is it not the sole Project and Business of all the Powers and Faculties both of Soul and Body how to procure us those things that may *help*, and to ward off those that may *hurt* us? Is it not the great End of a rational Being to compass and acquire to itself the Happiness of this World

3

by

by what *it enjoys*, and to secure to itself the Enjoyment of the next World by what *it does*? And is there any third Thing alledgeable in which a Man can be concerned, besides what he is *to do*, and what he is to *enjoy*? And must not the adequate Object of both these be *Good*?

But then, as the Shadow still attends the Body, so there is no one thing, relating either to the Actions or Enjoyments of Man, in which he is not liable to Deception; *No Good*, but what, looking upon its dark Side, he may misjudge to be *Evil*; and *no Evil*, but what by a false Light, he may imagine to be *Good*: the Consequence of which will be sure to reach him by an *Effect* as *Good* or *Evil*, as its *Cause*. So that the Subject here before us, is as large as *Good* and *Evil*, as comprehensive as *right Judgment* and *Mistake*, and the Effects of both are as infinite, numberless, and inconceivable, as all the particular Ways and Means, by which a Man is capable of being deceived, and made miserable.

But since to rest here, and to take up only in Universals, would be useless and unprofitable; as on the other side to reckon up all Particulars, would be endless and impossible, we will endeavour to reduce the forementioned fatal Effects of the Misapplication of those great governing Names of *Good* and *Evil* to certain Heads, and

6 *The Second Discourse on*

those such as shall take in the principal things which the Happiness or Misery of human Societies depends upon; which I conceive to be these three.

1st, *Religion.* 2dly, *Civil Government.* And, 3dly, *The private Interests of particular Persons.*

In all which, if we find the Scene of these unhappy Effects no where so full and lively set forth as here amongst ourselves, I hope, as the Truth will be altogether as great, as if drawn from all the Kingdoms and Nations round about us; so the Edification will be greater, by how much the Concern is nearer, and the Application more particular.

1. And first for Religion. Religion is certainly in itself the best thing in the World; and it is as certain, that as it has been managed by some, it has had the worst Effects: Such being the Nature, or rather the Fate of the best things, to be transcendently the worst upon Corruption. For as much as the operative strength of a thing may continue the same, when the quality that should direct the Operation, is changed: As a Man may have as strong an Arm, and as sharp a Sword to fight with in a bad Cause as in a good. And surely a sadder Consideration can hardly enter into the Heart of Man, than that Religion, the great means appointed by God himself
for

for the saving of Souls, should be so often made by Men as efficacious an Instrument of their Destruction.

Now the direful and mischievous Effects of calling *Good Evil*, and *Evil Good*, both with respect to the general Interest of Religion, and to the particular State of it amongst ourselves, will appear from these following Instances.

1. Some Mens villainous and malicious calling of the Religion of the Church of *England*, *Popery*.

2. Their calling such as have schismatically deserted its Communion, *true Protestants*.

3. Their calling the late Subversion of the Church, and the whole Government of it, *Reformation*.

4. Their calling the Execution of the Laws in behalf of the Church, *Persecution*.
And,

sthly and *Lastly*, Their calling a betraying of the Constitutions of the Church by base Compliances, and half Conformity, *Moderation*.

In all which you have the shallow, brutish, unthinking Multitude *worded* out of their Religion by the worst and most detested Appellations fastned upon the best of things, and the best and most plausible names applied to the very worst.

And this I shall demonstrate, by going over every one of these as distinctly and as briefly as I can.

1. And first for that Master-piece of Falshood and Impudence, their calling and traducing the Reformed, Primitive, and Apostolical Religion of the Church of *England* by the Name of *Popery*, an Application of the Word *Popery* more irrational and absurd (if possible) than the Thing itself. But what do I talk of the Thing itself? when scarce one in five thousand of the loudest and fiercest Exclaimers against *Popery*, knows so much as what *Popery* means. Only that it is a certain Word made up of six Letters; that has been ringing in their Ears ever since their Infancy, and that strangely inflames, and transports, and sets them a madding they know not why, nor wherefore. A Word that sounds big and high in the Mouths of Carmen, Broommen, Scavengers and Watermen, on a 5th or 17th of *November*, when *Extortion* and *Perjury* in Place and Power, thinks fit to authorise and let loose the Rabble to try what Metal the Government is made of, under a plausible Pretence of burning the *Pope*, together with a fair Intimation of what they long to be doing to some others, whom they hate much worse. Concerning which by the way, I think that there never was so great a Compliment passed up-
on

on the *Pope* in this Kingdom, since the Reformation, as when the *Pope's* Picture and our *Saviour's* Picture were so frequently burnt by the same Hands, and upon the same Account. We very well know the Design of these Men in both, but cannot so well tell how they will be able to excuse either the Sedition of the one or the Scandal of the other; tho' as for the *Pope*, I dare undertake, that all the Hurt that these Fellows either can or will do him, shall never reach him any further than in his Picture.

But to return to the Charge of Popery made against the Church of *England*. It is certainly the most frontless, bare-fac'd Lie, and the most senseless Calumny, that ever was dictated by the Father of Lies, or utter'd by any of his Sons. And I could wish myself but as sure of my own Salvation, as I am that those Wretches stand condemn'd in their own Hearts and Consciences while they are charging this upon us. Nevertheless, since the World is Witness that they have made the Charge, and thereby drawn and abused a great Part of these Kingdoms into a cursed, Soul-ruining Schism, let us take an Estimate of the Villany of it by these two Considerations.

1st, Of the Mind and Carriage of the Church of *Rome*, both towards the Beginners and the Supporters of the Reformation of the Church of *England*.

2^{dly}, Of

2dly, Of the several Articles of the *Rö-mish* Belief, compar'd with the Belief own'd and profess'd by our Church.

And I hope by these two we shall be able to discover what is Popery and what is not.

1. And first for the Behaviour or Carriage of the Church of *Rome* towards us. Surely had she took us either for her Sons or her Friends she would not have used us as she has done. For she is too wise to think to support her Kingdom by *dividing* against herself. And as the Apostle assures us that *no Man hateth his own Flesh*, so neither does any Church anathematize, curse, burn, and destroy its faithfullest and most beloved Members. Fire and Faggot, Racks and Gibbets, are but a strange sort of Love-tokens, yet such as the Church of *Rome* has still followed the *Englisch* Reformers with. We stand excommunicated by her as Hereticks and Schismaticks, and there has not a minute passed since the Reformation in which she has not been endeavouring our Destruction. The Authors and Compilers of our *Liturgy* and Book of *Homilies* paid down their Lives for these Books at the Stake; and will the virulent, unconscionable Fanaticks charge and reproach these Books as Popish, when the Makers and Assertors of them were butchered by the *Papists* for their being so? The Fanaticks

ticks burnt the *Books*, and the *Papists* burnt the *Authors*. By the former I hope you will take notice how much the Fanaticks *abhor Popery*, and by the latter how much the *Papists love us*. Love indeed is usually compar'd to a *Fire*, but I never yet knew that the Party *beloved* was consumed by it. The *Papists* would burn us for being Protestants, and the Fanaticks would cut our Throats for being *Papists*. And now if you would learn from hence which of the two we really are, I suppose, when you consider the judging Abilities of both Parties, you will easily allow the *Papists* to understand what they do and say much better than the Fanaticks. But let us now, *2dly*, in the next place consider the several Articles of the *Romish* Belief, as compar'd with the Belief own'd and profess'd by our Church. And here,

First of all ; does the Church of *England* own that prime and leading Article of all Popery, the *Pope's Supremacy*, an Article so essential to the Grandeur of the Papacy, that without it the *Pope* himself would not care a rush for all the rest? No, the very Corner-Stone of the *English* Reformation was laid in an utter Denial and Disavowance of this Point, for which our Kings have lain under the papal Curse, and the Kingdoms been expos'd to the Ambition and Rage of Foreigners. And as we begun,

so we have continu'd the Reformation, by placing the *English* Crown and the *English* Church-Supremacy upon the same Head; and it is much if our Oath of Supremacy to the *King* should consist with an Allegiance to the *Pope*, such as the sottish, senseless Fanaticks are still charging us with.

2. In the second place; do we of the Church of *England* admit of the *Pope's* *Infallibility*? No, we look upon it as a sacrilegious Invasion of an Attribute too great and high for any but God himself. And so far are we from looking upon him as infallible, that we do not own him so much as a Judge appointed by Christ to receive the last Appeals of the Catholick Church in Matters of Faith, Discipline, or any thing else; and we are as little concern'd whether he makes his Decrees, and pronounces his Decisions in *Cathedrâ* or *extra Cathedram*. As no Man has any other or better Thoughts of a Fox while he is in his Hole than when he is out of it.

3. In the third place; does the Church of *England* own a *Transubstantiation* of the Elements in the Sacrament into the natural Body and Blood of Christ, all the Accidents of those Elements continuing still the same? No, she rejects it as the greatest Defiance of Reason, and Depravation of Religion, that ever was obtruded upon the Belief and Consciences of Men, and as a
Paradox,

Paradox, that by destroying the Judgment of some about sensible Objects, undermines the very Belief of the Gospel, and the Certainty of Faith itself, the Object of which must be first taken in by Sense, and withal as a direct Cause of the greatest Impiety in Practice, which is Idolatry, and that of the very worst and meanest Kind, in giving divine Worship to a Piece of Bread, a thing so infinitely contrary to all the Principles that the Mind of Man is capable of judging by, that if it could be made appear that the Gospel did really affirm and declare this Article in the very same Sense in which the Church of *Rome* holds it since the fourth *Lateran* Council under *Innocent III.* I should be so far from believing it therefore, that I should look upon it as a sufficient Reason for any rational Man to demur to the Divine Authority of the Gospel it self. For nothing can come from God, that involves in it a Contradiction. But as to this Matter, our Church has sufficiently declared her Sense, both in her *Articles*, and in her *Liturgy*.

4. In the 4th Place. Does the Church of *England* hold the Divine Authority of *Unwritten Traditions*, equal to that of the Scriptures or written Word of God, making them together with, and as much as the Scriptures, part of the Rule of Faith. The Church of *Rome* in the *Council of Trent*, positively

sitively and expressly affirms this. But the Church of *England* explodes it as an insufferable Derogation from the Perfection of the Holy Scriptures; and withall, as a wide & open Door, through which the Church of *Rome* has let in so many superstitious Fopperies and groundless Innovations into Religion, and through which (claiming, as she does, the sole Power of declaring Traditions) she may, as her Occasions serve, let in as many more as she pleases.

5. In the 5th place. Does the Church of *England* hold *Auricular or Private Confession* to the Priest, as an integral part of Repentance, and necessary Condition of Absolution? No; the Church of *England* denies such Confession to be necessary; either *necessitate Præcepti*, as enjoyn'd by any Law or Command of God; or *necessitate mediæ*, as a necessary means of Pardon or Remission of Sins: and consequently rejects it as a Snare and a Burden groundlessly and tyrannically impos'd upon the Church; and too often and easily abused in the *Romish* Communion to the basest and most flagitious Purposes.

But so much of private Confession, as may be of spiritual use for the disburdening of a troubled Conscience, unable of itself to master, or grapple with its own Doubts, by imparting them to some know-
ing,

ing discreet spiritual Person for his Advice, and Resolution about them ; so much I confess the Church of *England* does approve, advise, and allow of. I say, it does *advise it*, and that as a sovereign Expedient, proper in the nature and reason of the thing, for the Satisfaction of Persons otherwise unable to satisfy themselves, but by no means does it *enjoin it as a Duty equally and universally* required of all.

6. In the sixth place ; does the Church of *England* hold *Purgatory*, together with its appendant Doctrine of the Pope's Power to release Souls out of it, and without which the Pope would be little or nothing concerned for it ? No, our Church rejects it as a Fable, and has quite put out this Fire, by withdrawing the Fuel that only can keep it alive ; to wit, the Doctrine of venial Sins, with that other of Merit, and of Works of Supererogation.

7. In the seventh and last place ; does the Church of *England*, either by its Belief or Practice, own that Article about the *Invocation of Saints*, and the addressing our Prayers immediately to them, that so by their Mediation they may be tender'd and made acceptable to God ? No, our Church cashier the whole Article, as contumelious to, and inconsistent with the infinitely perfect Mediatorship and Intercession of Christ, so fully declared in *1 Tim. ii. 5.*

There

There is one God, and one Mediator between God and Man, the Man Christ Jesus. A Mediator too great to need either Deputies or Co-partners in the Discharge of that high Office. Besides, that such Addresses or Prayers to the Saints cannot possibly be made by us in Faith (which yet *without Faith cannot possibly please God*) since we have no Assurance that they hear those Prayers, or have any certain and distinct Knowledge of what particularly occurs and falls out here below; tho' indeed a general Knowledge of the common constant Concerns of the Church, by reason of their having liv'd in the World, ought with great reason to be allowed them. But that is not sufficient to warrant a rational Invocation of them upon our personal and particular Occasions, since a particular Knowledge of these can by no means be inferr'd or argu'd from a general Knowledge of the other.

And thus I have gone over seven notable Branches of the *Romish* Faith, and there are many more of the like nature belonging to the same rotten Stock; but these I am sure are the principal, it being impossible for a Man to be a Papist without holding these, or to hold these without being a Papist. But now which of all these do our learned mouthing Friends of the Fanatick Party prove to be held by our Popish Church of *England*, as they call it? I confess

feels my thus going over these Particulars in our Church's Vindication, cannot but have been a needless Trouble to most of my Hearers, as well as to my self; it being but little better than bringing so many Arguments, to prove that it is not Midnight, while the Sun shines full in a Man's Face. But being to deal with the Height of Impudence and Ignorance in Conjunction, and with a Sort of Men who abound with *Ignoramus's* in the Trial of *Spiritual*, as well as *Temporal* Matters, I thought fit, for their Sake, to come to Particulars, and by a kind of an inductive Demonstration, to prove to their wonderful and profound Understandings, that Two and Two do not make Six; and that, what contradicts, overthrowes, and destroys every Article of Popery, is not, cannot be Popery. No; tho' the whole Faction should, with a *ne-mine contradicente*, vote it to be so.

And perhaps those Wretches never did real Popery so great a Service, nor gave their Popish Plot so mortal a Wound, as when tripping up the Heels of their own Narratives, by the Advice of some half-witted *Abitophels*, they began to stretch the Imputation of Popery, even to the Church of *England* too, calling all of its Communion Papists in Masquerade. But thanks be to God, that the Mask they provided for us, has pretty well took off the Mask from

themselves, and that their Wisdom has not been altogether so great as their Malice; for it is manifest that they have not acted as the wisest Men in the World, the merciful and good Providence of God very frequently ordering things so, that in great Villanies there is often such a Mixture of the Fool, as quite spoils the whole Project of the Knave.

In the mean time let Popery be as bad as any one would have it, yet for all that, let us not be deceived with Words. We are Men, and let us not sell our Lives and our Estates, our Reason and Religion, for Wind and Noise. For where the Thing exclaim'd against is extremely bad, yet if the Persons that exclaim against it are certainly much worse, worse in their Principles, worse in their Practices, you may rest assured that there is Roguery at the bottom; and that how plausibly soever Things may pass as they are heard, they would look very scurvily if they were seen. Something no doubt is designed that is not declared, but what that is, I will not presume to determine from an Inspection of Mens Hearts: Only it having been always accounted a very rational and allowed way to judge *what may be*, by *what has been*; you may remember, that about forty Years since this Word Popery served such as brandish it about the Ears of the Government now, as an effectual

tual Engine to pull down the Monarchy to the Ground, to destroy Episcopacy Root and Branch, and to rob the Church, and almost all honest Men, to the last Farthing. From which it appears to be a very easy, natural, and hardly to be avoided Inference, that the very same Means, used by the very same sort of Men, are and must be intended to compass and bring about the very same Ends once again. And if so, it is left to you to consider, whether it can become sober and wise Men (especially in such great Concerns) to be deceived by the same Cheat. And thus I have given you both the Short and the Long, the Top and the Bottom of all these enormous Outcries against Popery, together with an Account how the Church of *England* comes to be Part of the Church of *Rome*, while it stands excommunicated by it, and actually cut off from it.

2. And now in the second place to shew, that the Men whom we have been dealing with are no less Artists in calling *Evil Good*, than in firnaming *Good Evil*; as they have imposed the Name of *Papists* upon us, so they have bestowed that of *true Protestants* upon themselves; both of them certainly with equal Truth and Propriety. But they must not think to carry it off so: For how popular and plausible soever the Name of *Protestant* may sound, it is not

that which can or will credit or commend Fanaticism; but Fanaticism will be sure to embase and discredit that. For *Names* neither do nor can alter Things, but ill Things will in the Issue certainly foul and disgrace the best Names. But are these Men (who have thus dubb'd themselves true Protestants) in good earnest such mortal Enemies to Popery, and the Popish Interest, as they pretend themselves to be? If they are, they will do well to satisfy many wise and considering Men in the World about some Things that they cannot so well satisfy themselves in, nor reconcile the Reality of such Pretences to.

1. As first, how came the old Puritans and Fanaticks all on the sudden to be so more than ordinarily troublesome to the Government, when the *Spanish Armada* in 88, breathing nothing but Popery and Destruction to *England*, was hovering over our Coasts, ready to grasp us as a certain Prey? And in like manner, how came they to grow so extreemly crank and confident, and importune both upon Church and State just before and about the time of the *Powder-Treason*? Both which remarkable Passages (with some more of the like nature) have been particularly taken notice of by such as have wrote of the Affairs of those Times. Now that while the Papists were attacking the Government on the one side, the

the Puritans should fall upon it on the other, and that both these Parties should so exactly keep time together in troubling it, if there were not something of peculiar Harmony, or rather a kind of unison Correspondence between them, requires (in my poor Judgment) a more than ordinary Reach of Understanding to conceive.

2. If the Papists and the Fanaticks are really so opposite to one another, how came it to pass that while they sat together in Parliament, they constantly also voted together in all things that might tend to the weakning and undermining of our Church? both of them with one Heart and Voice promoting Indulgences and Comprehensions, and such other Arts and Methods of destroying us? So that in all such Cases our Church was sure to find an equally spiteful Attack from both Sides.

3^{dly}, If these two Parties are so extremely contrary as they pretend to be, what is the Cause now-a-days that none associate, accompany, and visit one another with that peculiar Friendliness, Intimacy and Familiarity with which the *Romanists* visit the Nonconformists, and the Nonconformists them? So that it is generally observed in the Country, that none are so gracious and so sweet upon one another as the rankest Papists and the most noted Fanaticks: Of

which I will not pretend to know the Reason, tho' I doubt not but they do.

4thly, I would gladly know what can be alledg'd why the Papists never write against the Nonconformists, tho' they are never so much reviled, and sometimes written against by them, unless it be, that the Papists know their Friends under any Disguise, and can easily pardon a few rude Words spoken against them, in consideration of many real Services done for them? However, their great Silence towards them in such Cases must needs proceed from one of these two things, either from Love, or from Contempt; if from the first, then it is evident that the Papists look upon them as their Friends; if from the latter, then they look upon them as very contemptible Adversaries. And they are free (for me) to pass under which of these two Characters they please.

5thly, If Popery and Fanaticism are so irreconcilable as our *true Protestants* would bear us in hand that they are, how come we by that extraordinary Discovery made by them of late Years, that the late blessed King *Charles I.* was murder'd by the Papists? For all that visibly acted in that hellish Tragedy, were that traiterous pack'd Remainder of the House of Commons, together with their High Court of Justice, and the Officers of their Rebel Army. The
Names

Names of all which are known, and stand upon Record. So that if the King was murder'd by Papists, it is evident that these Men were the Papists. For we all know *who they were* who cut off the King. And we are now at length beholden to the Faction for telling us also *what they were*. However, it seems many were engaged in this Murder under Masks and Vizards, besides the Executioner.

These Things I thought fit to remark to you; from which yet I will not positively affirm, that such as call themselves *true Protestants*, are either indeed Papists themselves, or by a very close Confederacy united to them. I say, I will not positively affirm it; only the fore-mentioned Objections being all of them founded upon known Matter of Fact, I shall here leave these with them; and they may if they please, and can at their Leisure, answer them.

In the mean time, there is one thing which I cannot but observe upon them, as very material, and fit to be laid in their Dish for ever; which is this: That if any Branch of the Royal Family has unhappily drank in any thing of the Popish Contagion, these who call themselves *true Protestants*, are of all Men breathing the most improper to decry, or so much as to open their Mouths against any such Person upon that

Account. For they must thank themselves for it, who forcibly pluck'd the Children out of the Bosom of the best Father, and the firmest Protestant in the World, and sent them into foreign Countries, there to converse with Snares and Traps, and to *support their* Lives with the hazard of their Faith, flying from such *Protestants* for Safety and Shelter amongst the *Papists*. A staggering Consideration (let me tell you) to Persons of such tender Years.

But had that blessed Prince been suffer'd to spin out the full Thread of his innocent Life in Peace and Prosperity, none had issu'd from his Royal Loins but what he himself would have tutor'd and bred up to such a Knowledge of, and Adherence to the Church of *England*, that it should not have been in the Power of all the Papists and Jesuits under Heaven to have shook them in their Religion.

So that the great Seducers were *Cromwell* and his fellow Rebels, who by banishing the Royal Family, cast them into the very Jaws of Popery and Seduction, and not only *led*, but *drove* them *into Temptation*. And now will these Fellows plunge Men over Head and Ears in a Ditch, and then knock out their Brains for having a Spot upon their Clothes? kindle a Flame round about them, and then with tragical Outcries reproach them for being singed? do
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all that they can, compassing even Sea and Land to make a Profelyte to Popery, and then strip him of his Inheritance for being so? O the Equity, Reason and Humanity of a true Protestant Fanatick Zeal! much according to the Devil's Method, first to draw Men to Sin, and then to damn and destroy them for it.

Upon the whole Matter, we are eternally bound to thank our good God for all of the Royal Family that have not been perverted to Popery; and to thank the Rebels and Fanaticks if any have. And so I leave these Zealots to make good their Claim to this new distinguishing Title, and to prove themselves *true Protestants*, if they can, without either *Truth* or *Protestantism* belonging to them.

3dly, A third misapplied Word, by which these Men have done no small Mischief to Religion, is, their calling the late sacrilegious Subversion of the Discipline, Orders, and whole Frame of our Church, by the Name of *Reformation*; a Word which (as taking as it is to the Ear) has yet some Years since raised such a War in the State, and caused such a Schism in the Church, as hardly any Place or Age can parallel; a Word which has cost this Kingdom above 100000 Lives, which has pull'd down the Sovereignty, levell'd the Nobility, and destroy'd the Hierarchy, and filling
all

all with Blood, Rapine and Confusion, reformed the best of Monarchies into an Anarchy, and the happiest of Islands into an *Aceldema*; and doubtless that must needs be a blessed Seed that can thrive in no Soil, till it be plow'd up with War and Desolation, and watered with the Blood of its Inhabitants.

But if we will needs be at this reforming Work once more, it will concern us to consider first what we are to reform from; but that is quickly answered, that the old Plea must proceed upon the old Pretence; and that we must reform from Popery and Superstition; but for this we have already shewn, by going over the principal Parts of Popery, that not one of them all can be found in our Church; and if so, where and how then shall we be furnished with Popery for *Reformation Work*? Why, I will tell you; there are certain Lands and Revenues which the Church is yet possessed of, and that with as full Right as any Man does or can hold his temporal Estate by, which an old surfeited Avarice, not well able to gorge any more, either for Shame or Satiety, thought fit to leave remaining in the Church still. And this is the Popery that with Men of a large and sanctified Swallow we stand guilty of, and ought by all means to be *reformed* from. For with a certain sort of Men there can be no such thing

thing as a *thorough Reformation* till the Clergy are all clothed in *primitive* Rags, and brought to lick Salt at the end of their Table, who think the Crumbs that fall from it much too good for them. But Thanks be to God it is not come to this pass yet, nor till the Government falls into such Hands as grasped at it some Years since (which God forbid) is it ever like to do.

Well, but if we are thus at a loss to find any thing like Popery, besides the *Popery of Church Lands*, for us to be *reformed* from; let us in the next place consider who are to be our *Reformers*. And for this, such as appear foremost, and cry loudest for Reformation, are a sort of Men greatly branded with the infamous Note of Atheism and Irreligion, Debauchery and Sensuality, Lust and Uncleanness; so that altho' we cannot see what we are to be reformed *from*, yet we may fairly perceive what we are like to be reformed *to*. A Reformation proceeding in such Hands being in all Probability likely to prove much after the same rate, as if upon those Disorders and Abuses mentioned to have been in the Church of *Corinth*, St. Paul should of all others have singled out and wrote to the incestuous *Corinthian* to reform them.

But to give you a remarkable Instance of what kind of Sense of Religion these Reformers

formers of it have had from first to last. When that Reproach and Scandal to Christianity, *Hugh Peters*, held a Discourse with the Arch-Rebel his Master upon the mutinying of the Army about *St. Albans*, and things then seem'd to be in a scurvy doubtful Posture, this Wretch encouraged him, not to be dismay'd with the Discontents of the Soldiery, but accosting them resolutely to go on, as he had done all along, and to *Fox them a little more with Religion*, and no doubt he should be able to carry his Point at last. A blessed Expression this, *Fox them with Religion!* and fit to come from the Mouth of a noted Preacher of Religion, and a prime Reformer of it also, but however very suitable to the Person that uttered it, who died as he lived, with a stupified seared Conscience, and went out of the World *foxed* with something else beside *Religion*.

4thly, A fourth abused Name or Word, by which the Faction is every day practising upon the Church, and the Government of it, is, their mis-calling the Execution of the Laws made in behalf of the Church, *Persecution*. Now since the ten Persecutions of the primitive Christians by the Heathen Emperors, in the first Ages of Christianity, the Word *Persecution* is deservedly become of a very odious and ill Import. And therefore without any more ado,
our

our Fanaticks (who are no small Artists at disguising Things with Names which belong not to them) presently clap this vile Word, like a Fireship, upon the Government and the Laws, and doubt not by this to blow them up or burn them down in a little time. And indeed with the brutish Rabble, who take Words not as they *signify*, but as they *sound*, the Artifice has gone very far, the great Disturbers of the Church by this Sophistry passing for innocent, and the Laws themselves being made the only Malefactors.

But setting aside Noise and Partiality, I would gladly know why such as suffer capitally by the Hand of Justice at *Tyburn*, should not be as high and loud in their Clamours against Persecution as these Men? If you say that those Persons suffer for Felony, but these for their Conscience; I answer, that there is as much Reason for a Man to plead Conscience for the Breach of one Law, as for the Breach of another, where the Matter of the Law is either good or indifferent, and both one and the other stand enforced by sufficient Authority.

And possibly the Highway-man will tell you that he cannot in Conscience suffer himself to starve; and that without taking a Purse now and then he must starve, since *dig he cannot, and to beg he is ashamed*. But

now if you will look upon this as a very unsatisfactory Plea to the Judge, the Jury, and the Law, as no doubt it is a very insolent and a very senseless one; I am sure upon the same Grounds all the Pleas and Apologies for the Nonconformists (though made by some Conformists themselves) are every whit as senseless and irrational.

But as to the Plea of Conscience, I shall only say this, that I will undertake to demonstrate to any one possessed of the least Grain of Sense and Reason, that there neither is nor can be any such thing as Government in the World, where the Subject is allowed to plead his private Conscience in bar of the Execution of the Laws. For if while the Prince is to govern by Law, the Law is to be govern'd by the *Subject's Conscience*, wheresoever the Name and Title of Sovereignty may be lodg'd, the Power is undoubtedly in those who over-rule the Law.

And now if this pitiful Sham and Term of Art, *Persecution*, shall be able to skreen those spiritual Riots and seditious Meetings, that look so terribly upon the Government, from the Justice of it, how can it possibly be safe? For the Design of Conventicles is not to worship God in another and a purer Way (as they *cant* it) but to adjust the Numbers, to learn the Strength, and to fix the Correspondence of the Party,
and

and thereby to prepare and muster them for a new Rebellion; and the Design of a Rebellion is, for those that have not Estates to serve themselves upon those that have. This is the Sum total of the Business. And thus much for this other Trick that the Faction would trump upon the Government of the Church, by loading the Execution of its Laws (which is the vital Support of all Governments) with the abhorr'd Name of *Persecution*. But now, in the

Fifth and last place, let us come to the principal Engine of all, which is their prosecuting the worst of Designs against the best of Churches, under the harmless gilded Name of *Moderation*, than which can any thing look milder, or sound better? For as Justice is the Support of Government, so *Moderation* and Equity is the very Beauty and Ornament of Justice itself. And what is all Virtue but a Moderation of Excesses? a Mean that keeps the Balance of the Soul even, neither suffering it to rise too high on one side, nor to fall too low on the other? And does not *Solomon*, the wisest of Men, commend it, by condemning the contrary Quality, in *being righteous over much*? Eccl. 7. 16. And is not also one of the best of Men, and one of the greatest of the Apostles, *St. Paul* himself, alledged in Praise of the same? *Phil. iv. 5. Let your Moderation be known unto all Men.* And possibly some
 Bibles,

Bibles, of a later and more correct Edition, may by this time have improved the Text, by putting *Trimming* into the Margin. So that you see that there could not be a more plausible nor a more authentick Word to gull and manage the Rabble, and to carry on a Design by, than this of *Moderation*.

But have we never yet heard of a Wolf in Sheep's Clothing? nor of a sort of Men who can smile in your Face while they are about to cut your Throat? And for these Fellows, who have all along hitherto handled our Church with the *Hands of Esau*, how come they now all on a sudden to bespeak it with the *Voice of Jacob*? Certainly therefore there is something more than ordinary couch'd under this beloved Word of theirs, *Moderation*. And if you would have a true and short Account of it, as by *Persecution* they mean the Execution of those Laws that would suppress Nonconformity, so by *Moderation* they mean neither more nor less than the encouraging and supporting of Nonconformity, by the Suppression of those Laws. This is the Thing which is meant and driven at by them.

But then you are still to understand, that this is to be done dextrously and decently, and in a creeping, whining, sanctified Dialect, and such as may not too much alarm the Government, by telling it plainly and roundly what they would be at; for that
would

would be more Haste than good Speed. As for instance, to break in rudely and downright upon the Church, and to cry out, “ Away with your superstitious Liturgy ; “ we will have no flinting of the Spirit : “ Away with your Popish Canons, we are “ a free-born People, and must have our “ Liberty, both as Men, and as Christians : “ Away with your Gowns, Hoods, and “ Surplices, and other such Rags and “ Trumpery of the Whore of *Babylon* : “ Down with Bishops and Archbishops, “ Deans and Chapters ; we will have nothing of them but *their Lands* : Repeal, “ abrogate, and take away all Laws for “ Conformity, and against Conventicles, “ which are held as a Rod over the good “ People of God, *the sober, industrious, trading Part of the Nation*.” Now I say, tho’ a *gracious Heart* (as they call their own) is big with all and every one of these Designs, yet it is not Time nor Prudence to *cry out*, till there be *Strength to bring forth* : And therefore instead of all these boisterous Assaults, the same thing is much better and more hopefully carried on in a lower Strain and a softer Expression. As, “ *Pray use “ Moderation, Gentlemen*. Moderation is “ the Virtue of Virtues. Moderation bids “ fair to be a Mark of Regeneration, it is “ an healing, uniting, Protestant-reconciling Grace ; and therefore since by our

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“ good Will we would neither obey the
 “ Laws, nor suffer for disobeying them, be
 “ sure above all things that you use *Moderation.*” Well, the Advice you see is good, especially for those that give it: But how is this to be done? Why thus: Suppose one, in the first place, a Church-Governor, and that he comes to understand that such and such of his Clergy exercise their Ministry in a constant Neglect of the Rules, Rites, and Orders of the Church? Why, with great Prudence and Gravity he is to take no notice of it. Is the Surplice and the Ecclesiastical Habit laid aside? Why, still he is to practise the Grace of Connivance, and to wink hard at this too. Is the Service of the Church read brokenly, slovenly, imperfectly, and by halves? Why, he is to suffer this also, and to make no Words of it. Does any one presume to preach Doctrines quite contrary to some of the Articles of the Church? Why, in this Case, if the *Preacher* offends, the *Bishop* is to *silence* only *himself*. And if at any time there happens a Contest between a Clergyman and some potent Neighbour, about the Rights and Dues of his Living, he is presently to cajole and side with that potent oppressing Neighbour, and to snub and discountenance the poor Clergyman for not suffering himself to be oppressed, defrauded, and undone quietly, and without

out Complaint. And this is some (tho' not all) of that *Moderation* which some now-days require in a *Church Governor*, and which in due time cannot fail to have the very same Effect upon the Church, which the continual hewing and hacking at a Tree must naturally have towards the felling it down.

Well, but in the next place we will suppose, *another Man a Justice of Peace?* And if so, let him not concern himself to lay this or that factious Conventicle-Preacher by the Heels; as the Law, and his Office require him to do. But if he must needs, for Shame or Fear, sometimes make a Shew at least, of searching after this *precious Man*, let him, however, send him timely Notice thereof underhand, that so the Justice may fairly and judiciously search for that which he is sure not to find; according to that of the Poet, *Istud quero, quod invenire nolo*. Moreover, if there chance to be a Conventicle or unlawful Meeting just under his Nose, let him not disturb or break it up; for alas! those that are of it are a Sort of *peaceable well-meaning People, who meet only to serve God according to their Consciences*. Possibly indeed some of the Chief of them may have fought their King heretofore at *Edgehill, Marston-Moor, Naseby, or Worcester*, but that is past long since, and they are resolved never to do so again, till they are

better able than at present (to their Sorrow) they find themselves to be. And this is some of the *Moderation* which is required to a Magistrate or *Justice of Peace*, so called I conceive for sitting still, *holding his Peace*, and doing nothing.

But then, lastly, if a Parliament be sitting, O! that above all others is the proper Time for such as are Men of *Sobriety and Zeal, and understand the true Interest of the Nation* (forsooth) to manifest a Fellow-feeling of the Sufferings of the Brotherhood, and in the Behalf of their old Puritan Friends to pimp for Bills of *Union, Comprehension, or Toleration*. And this you are to know is a principal Branch of that *Moderation* which has been practis'd by several *worthy and grave Men of the Church of England*, as they are pleas'd (little to the Church's Honour I am sure) to stile themselves; and which is more, it was practis'd by them at a certain critical Juncture of Affairs, not many Years since, when a Clergyman could hardly pass the City-Streets without being reviled, nay spit upon, as several (to my Knowledge) actually were. And I hope, tho' we Churchmen had been blind before, so much Dirt and Spittle so bestow'd might (without a Miracle) have opened our Eyes then.

And now, when both Sense and Experience, as broad as Day-light, has shewn us
what

what the Party means by *Popery*, what by *true Protestantism*, and what by *Reformation*, and the like; is this a time of Day for any who profess and own themselves of the Church of *England* to play fast and loose, to *trim* it and *trick* it, and prevaricate with the Church by new *Schemes* and *Models*, new Amendments and Abatements of its Orders and Discipline, in favour of a restless implacable Faction, which breathes nothing less than its utter Destruction? Has not the Church of *England* Cause, above all other Churches in the World, to complain and cry out, “ *These are the Wounds which I*
 “ *have received in the House of my Friends?*
 “ My Constitution is undermined, and
 “ weakened, my Laws broken, my Liturgy
 “ despised, my Doctrine impugned, and a
 “ kind of new Gospel brought in, and
 “ millions of Souls drawn from my Com-
 “ munion; and all this Dishonour done
 “ me, not only by my open avowed Ene-
 “ mies, but chiefly and most effectually
 “ by such as have subscribed my Articles
 “ and Canons, such as have eat my Bread,
 “ and worn my Preferments; these are
 “ the Men who have brought me to this
 “ low, languishing, and consumptive Con-
 “ dition, by their treacherous Compliances,
 “ and their false Expedients, while I was
 “ still calling for their Help and Support,
 “ by that which only under God could or

“ can preserve me a strict, thorough, and
“ impartial Observation of my Laws.” For
this I say, and will maintain, that the
Church of *England*, as to its external State
and Condition in this World, stands upon
no other Bottom, and can be upheld by
no other Methods, but a vigorous Execu-
tion of her Laws on the one side, and a
constant, uniform, unreserved Conformity
to them on the other. And all other Ways
are but the palliated Remedies, and the fal-
lacious Prescriptions of Quacks and Moun-
tebanks, and spiritual *Ponteus's*, such as
wise Men would never advise, nor good
Men approve of; and such as, by skinning
over her Wounds for the present (tho' prob-
ably not so much as that neither) will be
sure to cure them into an After-rottenness
and Suppuration, and infallibly thereby, at
length, procure her Dissolution. And for
my own Part, I fully believe that this was
the very Thing design'd by these Men all
along. For I dare aver, that if that one
Project of *Union*, as it was laid, had took
place, it would have done more to the
breaking our Church in pieces, and to the
bringing in of Popery by those Breaches,
than the Papists themselves have been able
to do towards it, since the Reformation.
So that whatsoever the Danger may have
been to our Church heretofore, from Church
Papists,

Papists, I am sure the great Danger that threatens it now, is from *Church Fanatics*.

And thus I have at length done with the first grand Instance of the three, in which the Abuse and Confusion of those great controuling Names of *Good* and *Evil*, has such a pernicious Effect; and that is, in the Business of Religion, and the Affairs of the Church; and particularly as they stand here amongst ourselves, where both have infinitely suffered by the malicious Artifice of a few misapplied Words. But *Wo* to those villanous Artists by whom they have been so misapplied! good had it been for the Church of *England*, and perhaps for themselves too, that they had never been born; and may the great, the just, and the eternal God, judge between the Church of *England* and those Men who have charged it with Popery; who have called the nearest and truest Copy of primitive Christianity, Superstition; and the most detestable Instances of Schism and Sacrilege, Reformation; and, in a word, done all that they could, both from Pulpit and Press, to divide, shatter and confound the purest and most apostolically reformed Church in the Christian World; and all this by the venomous Gibberish of a few paltry Phrases instilled into the Minds of the furious, whimsical, ungoverned Multitude, who

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have

have *Ears to hear*, without either *Heads or Hearts to understand*.

For I tell you again, that it was the treacherous Cant and Misapplication of those Words, *Popery, Superstition, Reformation, tender Conscience, Persecution, Moderation*, and the like; as they have been used by a Pack of designing Hypocrites (who believ'd not one word of what they said, and laugh'd within themselves at all who did) that put this poor Church into such a Flame heretofore, as burnt it down to the Ground; and will infallibly do the same to it again, if the Providence of God, and the Prudence of Man, does not timely interpose between her and the villanous Arts of such Incendiaries. For we may, and must, pronounce of this vile *Cant*, what a great and learned Man said of common Prophecies and Predictions, usually vented and carried about to amuse the Minds of the Vulgar; to wit, that in Point of any Credence to be given to them, in respect of their Truth or Credibility, they are utterly to be despised and slighted; but in Point of the Influence they may have upon the Publick, by perverting the Minds of the People, no Caution can be too great to be used against them, no Diligence too strict, no Penalties too severe to discourage and suppress them. For even the silliest and most senseless Things may sometimes conjure up more Mischief to a Government,

Government, than the wisest and the ablest Statesmen in the World can conjure down again.

And to give you one terrible Instance, how far the Minds of Men are capable of being canted and seduced into the most violent and outrageous Courses, as they are managed by some *Pulpit Impostors*, you may all remember that the great Engine of Battery which broke and beat down our Church, was the *Scotch Covenant*. But how did it do this Execution? Why, by those spiritual *Boutefeus* calling this wretched thing, from the Pulpit, to the deceiv'd Rabble, *the Covenant of God*. And so strangely had they beat this Notion into their addle Heads, that there was not one Text in the whole Book of God about *the Covenant between God and the Israelites*, in which the brainless Rout did not immediately, upon the bare Clink of the Words, conclude the *Scotch Covenant* to be meant and pointed at thereby. Such were all the Texts in which God calls upon the *Israelites to keep his Covenant*; and all the Texts in which he reproaches and expostulates with them for having broke and *been false to his Covenant*. In all which the stupid, schismatical Herd, by the Help of those Hypocrites, those Perverters of Scripture, and Murderers of Souls (if ever there were any such upon the Face of the Earth) I say, by the fraudulent

dulent and fallacious Infusions of those Seducers, the abused Vulgar reckon'd *the Scotch Covenant*, by clear and irrefragable Evidence of Scripture, bound inviolably fast upon their Consciences. And can any thing in Nature be imagined more profane and impious, more absurd, and indeed romantick, than such a Persuasion; and yet as impious and absurd as it was, it bore down all before it, and overturned the equallest and best framed Government in the World. So that it was not for nothing that a sanctified Dunce of the Faction compared the *Covenant* to the Ark of God, brought into the *Temple of Dagon*, and *Dagon* thereupon falling prostrate upon his Face before it. For thus says he, “ No-
 “ thing wicked or superstitious could stand
 “ before this other *Ark of God, the Cove-*
 “ *nant*, but presently upon the bringing of it
 “ into *England*, *Popery* fell down before it,
 “ *arbitrary Power* fell down before it; *Pre-*
 “ *lacy* fell down and gave up the Ghost at
 “ the Feet of it.” And why did not the Man of Allusion, while his Head was hot, and his Hand was in, add also, that *Sense* and *Reason*, *Law* and *Religion*, *Justice* and *common Honesty*, and in a word, all that was enjoin'd by God, or approved by Man, *fell down and gave up the Ghost before it*? For it is certain that wheresoever the very Breath of the *Covenant* came, it blasted and consumed all these.

And

And now, was it not high time, think you, to tie up the Tongues of those Seducers, who could arm meer Cant and Nonsense to such a formidable Opposition to the Government, as to make one despicable Word, villanously misapplied, and sottishly misunderstood, a fatal *Beesom of Destruction*, to sweep away all before it, Civil or Sacred, Legal or Established, both in Church and State?

Certainly there can be no truly *pious*, or indeed so much a truly *English* Heart, but must bleed, when it looks back upon that *Abomination of Desolation*, which was seen in all our *holy Places* in those Days, and consider, both *by whom* all this was brought upon them, and *how*. That the best and surest Bulwark of Protestantism, the Glory of the Reformation, and the express Image of the purest Antiquity, should be run down and laid in the Dust by the meanest of Cheats, managed by the worst of Men. This has been done once, and God grant that we may never see it done again.

To which God, the great Lover of Truth, Peace and Order in his Church, be rendered and ascribed, as is most due, all Praise, Might, Majesty, and Dominion, both now and for evermore. Amen.

The Second Grand Instance of the mischievous Influence of Words and Names falsely applied, in the late Overthrow of the *English* MONARCHY, compassed chiefly hereby, in the Reign of King *Charles* I. and attempted again in the Reign of King *Charles* II. being the third Discourse from those Words in *Isaiah* v. 20.

ISAIAH V. 20.

*Wo unto them that call Evil Good,
and Good Evil, &c.*

I Formerly discoursed twice upon these Words, the whole Prosecution of which I cast under these four Heads.

First, To give some general account of the nature of Good and Evil, and of the reason upon which they are founded.

Secondly, To shew, that the way by which Good and Evil commonly operate upon the Mind of Man, is by those respective Names and Appellations by which they are notify'd and convey'd to the Mind.

Thirdly, To shew the Mischief which directly, naturally, and unavoidably follows, from the Misapplication and Confusion of these Names.

Fourthly, and *Lastly,* To shew the grand and principal Instances in which the Abuse
or

or Misapplication of those Names has so fatal and pernicious an Effect.

The three first of these I dispatch'd in my first Discourse, and in my second made some Entrance upon the fourth, to wit, the *Assignment of those Instances*, &c. concerning which I shew'd, that if we should consider them in their utmost Compass and Comprehension, they would carry as large a Circumference as the World itself; and grasp in the Concerns of all Mankind put together; being in their full Latitude as numberless, various, and unconceivable as all the particular Ways and Means by which Men are capable of being miserable. And therefore, since to reckon up all Particulars would be *endless*, and to rest only in Universals, would be equally *fruitless*, I chose to reduce the fore-mentioned fatal Effects of the Misapplication of those great governing Names of *Good* and *Evil* to certain Heads, and those such as should take in the principal Things which the Happiness or Misery of human Societies depends upon.

Now those Heads were three.

1st, Religion, and the Concerns of the Church.

2^{dly}, Civil Government. And,

3^{dly}, The private Interests of particular Persons.

The first of which three relating to *Religion* and the *Church*, I have fully treated of already in my last Discourse, and shall now proceed to the

Second, Which is, to shew the direful and mischievous Influence which the Abuse or Misapplication of those mighty operative Names of *Good* and *Evil* has upon *Civil Government*, or the Political State of the *World*.

In treating of which, I will not be so arrogant and impertinent as to presume to discourse of the Rules and Arts of Government, or to prescribe to those whom I am called to obey; Government being the greatest, the noblest, and most mysterious of all Arts, and consequently very unfit for those to talk magisterially of, who never bore, nor affected to bear any Share in it.

For tho' some have had the Face and Confidence to be meddling with Religion, and reforming the Church, reversing her Canons, and new forming her Liturgy, who were much fitter to have been learning their Catechism at Home, and dealing with their Tenants in the Country, if they had any; I say, tho' Religion and Divinity have the ill Luck to be so meanly thought of, that every half-witted *Corporation-Block-head* thinks himself a competent Judge of the deepest Points of its Doctrine, and the Reason of its Discipline, so as to be new-modelling

modelling of both at his insolent, but senseless Pleasure ; yet the Learning which qualifies for the Pulpit teaches more Sense and better Manners.

But tho' it be above our Sphere to reach the Rules and Arts of governing, and to direct those how to *steer* who sit at the *Helm* ; yet I am sure it is not above us to help and assist them in their Government, by declaring the Villany of those Practices which would subvert it. Any one may kill Wasps and Hornets, and other Vermin which infest a Garden, without pretending to the Skill and Art of a Gardiner. And a Watchman may do much towards the Defence of a City, tho' he offers not to govern it. In like manner, for a Preacher of the Word to denounce the Wrath of God against Faction and Sedition, and by all the spiritual Artillery of the Word (as I may so call it) to prosecute and run down those Sins which both disturb Government and destroy Souls, cannot justly or properly be called his *meddling with Matters of State*. And therefore when some very gravely tell us, that the sole or chief Business of a Preacher is to preach up *a good Life*, and to preach down *Sin*, I heartily assent to them ; but withal must tell them, that I take Obedience to Government to be a principal Part of a *good Life*, and Faction and Rebellion to be some of the worst, the blackest, and most damning Sins that Men can be

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guilty of; and consequently, that it is the direct, unquestionable Duty and Business of a Preacher with all imaginable Zeal to testify against Crimes of so high and clamorous a Guilt, wheresoever he finds them; since the same divine Commission which commands him to *instruct*, equally impowers him to *reprove*; and I know no Privilege or Condition under Heaven which can warrant a Man to sin without Reproof or Controul. This indeed is the proper Post in which every Preacher and spiritual Person ought to serve the Government; and how much soever such Men may be despised, I am sure no sort of Men are able to *serve*, or *differve* it more; the infamous Pulpits between the Years Forty and Sixty having been but too convincing a Demonstration of the *one*, and the loyal Clergy ever since Sixty as effectual a Proof of the *other*.

This I thought fit to note briefly beforehand, to obviate that insolent Objection of some irreconcilable Haters of the Ministry, who still call the preaching of Obedience to Government, the ripping up of Faction and Sedition, a *meddling with Matters of State*; as I question not but St. *Paul* himself would have incurr'd the very same Censure, from the same sort of Persons, for what he says and teaches in the 13th Chapter to the *Romans*, about the Necessity of *every Souls being subject to the higher Powers, and that there is*

no Power but from God, and that such as resist shall receive to themselves Damnation. Would not such as we have to deal with now a-days have cried out against him, What ails this pragmatistical Pulpiteer thus to talk of Government and Obedience? Shall he presume to teach the Commons of *Rome* how to behave themselves to their Prince? Does he understand their Privileges, which *pass all Understanding* but their own? Trounce him, goal him, and *bring him upon his Knees*, and declare him a Reproach and Scandal to his Profession; that so he may learn for the future (as one wisely advised upon the like Occasion) *to preach and to say nothing*. For what has he to do to lay the Law of Subjection and Loyalty to the *free-born People of Rome*, when, for reasons of *State*, the *Wisdoms of the Nation* shall think fit to take their Prince by the Throat with one Hand, and to wrest his Scepter from him with the other?

Nor is *St. Paul* the only troublesome Person in this Case, but we shall find that *S. Peter* also will needs *be meddling with Matters of State*, 1 Pct. ii. 13, 14, 15. where he presses all, without Exception, to *submit themselves to every Ordinance of Man for the Lord's sake, whether it be to the King as Supreme, or unto Governors, as unto them that are sent by him, &c.* together with an earnest Exhortation in five or six Verses together to the

now antiquated Duty of *Passive Obedience*. For tho' the Duty of Patience and Subjection, where Men suffer wrongfully, might possibly be of some force in those Times of primitive Darknes and Imperfection, yet in Times of Light and Revelation those *beggarly Elements of Loyalty and Subjection* vanish; and *Buchanan's* modern and more improved Christianity teaches, that then only Men are bound to *suffer*, when they are not able to *resist*. A worthy Doctrine no doubt, and such as none but *Rebels* were ever the better for, and none but such as love *Rebellion* ever approved of.

But must not that Government (think you) be all this time in a very hopeful Case, where a Company of popular Demagogues are let loose to poison and inflame the Minds of the People with the rankest Principles of Rebellion; and those whose proper Office, Duty and Calling is to teach and to inform, to undeceive and disabuse Men, must not in the Behalf of the Government warn them against such Persons and Principles as would debauch them from their Allegiance, for fear of being loaded with the odious Imputation of *meddling with Matters of State*? No doubt that Flock must needs be in a safe and good Condition, where the *Shepherds* must never *cry out*, nor the *Dogs bark*, but when the *Wolves* shall give them leave.

But

But I hope no Clergyman of the Church of *England* will ever debase and prostitute the Dignity of his Calling so far, as to want either Courage or Conscience to serve the Government, by testifying against any daring, domineering Faction which would disturb it, tho' never so much *in favour with it*; no Man certainly deserving the Protection of the Government, who does not in his Place contribute to the Support of it; as on the other side, those who at their utmost Peril have spoke, and others who have fought for the Support of it, surely of all others have least cause to be discouraged or forsok by it, howsoever it has sometimes happened otherwise.

And thus much by way of Introduction to our main Subject, which is to shew how our old Gamesters have been, and still would be playing the same game upon the State, which they had done upon the Church, and that by the very same libellous Disguise, and false Representations of Things and Persons, blazoning out the worthiest Men and the best Actions under the foulest and most odious Colours; and the vilest Persons and the wickedest Designs under the most popular and taking; one of the most pestilent Ways certainly of calling *Good Evil*, and *Evil Good*, that the Publick can suffer by. For still the prime and most effectual Engine to pull down any Government, is, to alienate

the Minds of the Subjects from it ; it being a never-failing Observation, that when a Governor comes to be generally hated, he is not many Steps from being assuredly ruined. By which old, long practised, lying, diabolical Artifice, as the worst of Rebels mounted heretofore into the Throne of the best of Princes, so no doubt they hope to do the same again ; and it is not long since that they had fair for it.

Now those artificial Words, by the Misapplication and Management of which, these Overturers of all above them have done such mighty Execution, being much too many for a present Rehearsal ; as I formerly cull'd out *five* of the chief and most venomous, by which those Wretches ruined and overthrew the *Ecclesiastical State* amongst us ; so I shall now pitch upon *four of the principal*, by which they did, and hope to do the same Feat again upon the *Monarchy* and *Civil Government* ; it being the usual Fate of that and the Church to be supported and run down by the same Methods.

1st, The first is their traducing and exposing the mildest of Governments, and the best of Monarchies, by the odious Name of *arbitrary Power*.

2dly, Their blackening and misrepresenting the ablest Friends and Assistants of their Prince in his Government with the old infamous Character of *evil Counsellors*.

3dly, Their

3dly, Their setting off and recommending the greatest Enemies both of Prince and People, under the plausible, endearing Title of *Publick Spirits, Patriots, and Standers up for their Country.*

4thly, and lastly, Their couching the most malicious, selfish, and ambitious Designs, under the glorious Cover of *Zeal for Liberty and Property, and the Rights of the Subject.*

These four rattling Words, I say, *arbitrary Power, evil Counsellors, publick Spirits, Liberty, Property and the Rights of the Subject,* with several more of the like Noise and Nature, used and applied by some State Impostors, (as *Scripture* was once quoted by *the Devil*) are the great and powerful Tools, by which the Faction hope to do their Business upon the Government once more. For since (as I observed in the first Discourse upon this Subject) the generality of Mankind are wholly governed by *Words and Names,* having neither Strength of Judgment to discern, nor Leisure to enquire into the right Application and Drift of them; what can be expected, if a Company of bold, crafty, designing Villains, shall be incessantly buzzing into the Rabbles Ears, *Tyranny and arbitrary Power, Pensioners, and evil Counsellors* on the one hand; and pointing out themselves for the only Patrons of their Country, the only Assertors of *Liberty and Property,* and *Redressors of Grievances* on the other?

I say, if the Rout be still followed and plyed by them with such *Mouth Granadoes* as these, can any thing be expected, but that those who look no farther than *Words*, should take such Incendiaries at their *Word*; and there-upon presently kindle and flame out, and throw the whole Frame of the Government into Tumult and Confusion?

And therefore I shall go over every one of these Rabble-charming Words, which carry so much Wild-fire wrapt up in them, and lay open the true Meaning and Design of them as distinctly as in so short an Exercise I can.

1. And first let us begin with the highest and loudest, and that which leads the Van in all Clamours against the Government; namely, that of *arbitrary Power*, Twin to that other great and noted one of *Popery*, treated of by me heretofore; *arbitrary Power* being of much the same Import, with reference to the *State*, that *Popery* is with relation to *the Church*; indeed they always go Hand in Hand, the Cry of one still accompanying the other; and as it is hardly possible for a Man to *spit*, but at the same time he must *breathe* too, so I believe hardly any foul Mouth ever opened against the *Church*, in the Slander of *Popery*, which did not likewise discharge itself against the *Monarchy*, in the *Slander of arbitrary Power*.

But

But since there has been so much Noise made of it, I think it may be no less than requisite for us to see and state what *arbitrary Power is*: And in the true Sense of it, *it is a Prince's or Governor's ruling his People according to his own absolute Will and Pleasure, either without Law or against it.* Such a kind of Power was that vested in the *Roman Emperors* by the *Lex Regia*, that the *sole Will of the Emperor* should in all Things obtain the Force of a Law. And such an one more properly is at this Day the Power of the *Grand Signior, or Turkish Emperor*, and generally of all Eastern Princes. But when was such a Power ever claimed by, or where does the least Footstep of it appear in the very worst of our Kings, who have reigned since the Conquest? And therefore it is strange that it should be charged upon the very *best*.

For tho' every Statute-Law is the Product of the King's Will, it being the Royal Assent that properly enacts or stamps it a Law; yet our Kings have consented to such a Limitation of the Exercise of this their Power, as to the Matter of all Laws, that they claim not now a Power to make what Laws they please; but still the Matter of them, or the Thing which is to receive that authorizing Sanction from the Royal Hand, is first to be prepared and tendred to it, by the Choice and Consent of the Subjects themselves, acting by their *Representatives*. So that as the
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King has always a Negative upon the *Sanction*, so the Subject has still a Negative upon *the Matter* of the Law.

And can there be a greater Privilege enjoyed by any Subjects under Heaven, than to be the Chusers of their own Laws? Or did any of our Princes, especially those of the present Race, ever go about to ravish or extort it from them? And have not those Laws been as free and uncontroll'd in the Execution, as they were benign and wholesome in the Composition? And lastly, have not those Laws, that have made the *English* Government so easy, so equal, and so beneficial to the Subject, even to the Envy of all Nations round about us, been the Effects and Issue of that Princely Goodness, which induced our Kings to pass them into Laws, and without which they could never have been Laws; but after all would have remained an useless *Caput Mortuum*, without either Life or Force in them?

The Truth is, we have been so governed for above these hundred Years, that it is hard to decide, whether the Government or the Governor has been the milder of the two. For as to the Government itself, can any Constitution in Nature be imagined gentler, and further from the least Shadow of Oppression, than that, in which, as to all Matters of Right, the *Subject* stands upon the same Ground with his *Prince*, so as to be
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allowed legally to contest his Right with him in his own Courts, they being free and open; and Judges appointed to umpire the Matter in Contest between them, and to decide where the Right lies? And can there be any thing arbitrary or tyrannical, where Justice has so free and uninterrupted a Course; and where the King is understood neither to do, nor so much as to command any thing, but what he does or commands by his Laws, and those such, as for the most part are more in favour of the Subject, than of the Prerogative?

And if so, can we imagine that any one in his Wits, who designs to fight, would first suffer, or rather cause his own Hands to be tied? Yet this is not a greater Absurdity, than to suppose a Prince setting up for *arbitrary Power*, just after he himself had passed those Laws, which make the Exercise of such a Power in a Prince ruling by Law, utterly impossible. And yet this was eminently the Case of the two last Kings, with reference to this Slander cast upon them by the Republican Faction, after they had passed more Laws to assure the Right of the Subject, and to the limiting the Prerogative, than all their Predecessors since the Conquest had done before them. And so much was once acknowledged of King *Charles I.* by that very Faction which ruined him, nay even while they were actually ruining him; and we
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know his Son in such Acts of Grace rather out-did than came behind him. Indeed both of them parted with so much of their Royal Power and Prerogative, to gratify and content their People, that many wise Men have fear'd that the Crown may have hardly enough left it in all Cases to protect them. Which, should it be so, is the chief Thing that looks like a *Grievance to the Subject* of any that I know; and if it be, they know whom they may thank for it; especially when those Laws were made in the Reign of two such Princes, that tho' they had never been made, the very Temper and Disposition of the Men had been a superabundant Security to the Subject against all their Fears; Princes who had nothing arbitrary or violent either in their Nature or their Family; Princes of such an unparallell'd Clemency, that I dare confidently aver, that it was solely and wholly owing to their surpassing Mildness, that there was so much as one Wretch in all their Dominions either able or willing to do them Hurt.

But there cannot be a greater Demonstration that there is no such thing as *arbitrary Power* in this Kingdom, than that Men have been endured so commonly and so freely to charge the Government with it. What a Noise was there of *arbitrary Power* in the Reign of the two last Kings, and scarce any at all during the Usurpation of *Cromwell*!

Of

Of which I know no Reason in the World that can be given but this ; namely, that under those two Princes there was no such thing, and under *Cromwell* there was nothing else. For where arbitrary Power is really and indeed used, Men *feel* it, but dare not *complain* of it, for fear their Complaints should be answered, as the *Aegyptians* answered those of the *Israelites*, by increasing their Tasks, and redoubling their Burdens. And besides all this, what an hideous Outcry was, not many Years since, raised by an insolent, impudent Company of Men against *arbitrary Power*, while themselves were practising it upon their Fellow-Subjects ; and that at such a rate, as none of our Kings ever so much as pretended to. And yet if ever it should so please God as to punish the Nation with an arbitrary Oppression for complaining of it when there was none, surely it would be much more tolerable to groan under the arbitrary Will of a noble, royally descended Monarch, than under the lawless Will and Tyranny of a Pack of spiteful, mean, merciless Republicans ; as without question it would be a much nobler Death to be torn in pieces by a Lyon, than to be eaten up by Lice.

And thus much for the first groundless, senseless, and shameless Calumny upon the Government, to wit, that of *arbitrary Power*; a Calumny which more than sufficiently

contradicts and confutes itself by this one irrefragable Argument; that any Subject who has presumed to libel and reproach his Prince with it, is seen alive and well, nay, rich and thriving, after he has done so. Of which sort of Arguments this Kingdom 'tis well known) affords no small Plenty and Variety.

2dly, The next Word of Art and Malice, by which the Faction would undermine the Government, is, *evil Counsellors*. For sometimes it is not found either to safe or so expedient for popular Rage and Rudeness to discharge itself immediately upon the Person of the *King* himself, and therefore they chuse to make their Approaches more artificially, and first to attack those about him. But as in a Siege the taking in the Out-works is in order to the taking of the main Fort at last, so Faction never strikes at any of a Prince's Ministers, but with a Design that the Blow should go round, and reach him in the end. When the Wolves intended to destroy the Sheep by way of Parley, and making Peace with them, it would have been a very impudent, and a senseless thing, to have told them in plain Terms that they had a Design to devour them; and therefore they made a more dexterous and politick Proposal, and promised to live peaceably and neighbourly with them, upon Condition that they would deliver up their Dogs. So when the late Re-
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bel Faction had designed the Destruction of the King and Monarchy, they were not such Sots as to profess and declare so much at first; no, they were only for removing his *evil Counsellors*, that is, for sucking the Blood of his best Friends, and stripping him of his faithfulest Ministers, and such as were most able both to serve and support him; and then let them alone to make him as *great and glorious* as in the issue (you all know) they made him.

And in like manner, when the true Brood and Spawn of the same Republican Cabal was about to play the same Game upon the Son, which their Predecessors had done upon the Father, this and that *Counsellor* was to be removed from his Counsels, and banished from his Royal Presence for ever. And then if he would but part with *his Guards* too, he could not with any Reason have doubted of his Safety, having cast himself into those Hands which had brought him so many *dutiful Petitions*. For no Man questions but they (good Men) would have done all they could to have *secured him*. Nay, I dare undertake for them, that they would not have thought any Castle in the Kingdom too good or strong to have bestowed him in. But he should have had all the Security that *Holdenby-House*, or *Hampton-Court*, or *Carisbrook*, or *Hurst*, or *Windsor-Castle* could have afforded him; and 'twere much if he could

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not have been *secure* in all these: But yet if these could not have made him so, they had one way more left, which would have followed of course, and would infallibly have done it.

Only there was indeed this difference in the Proceedings of the Faction formerly against the Father, and lately against his Son, that the Faction first imprison'd the Father, and then address'd to him; whereas the late Managers of the same Design against the Son, libell'd him with their Addresses first, hoping to be able to imprison him afterwards. And this difference, let me tell you, was very material, and (Thanks be to God) produced a very different Issue and Success to the whole Proceeding. It being no small Favour of Providence to Kings and Princes, that their Enemies had sometimes rather shew their Anger than employ their Wit.

But however, you see, by reflecting upon what has pass'd, that the Clamour against *evil Counsellors* was an old trusty Tool, equally managed both against Father and Son. And I hope such as have Eyes and Ears, and common Sense to judge by, do by this time sufficiently understand both the Engine itself, and the Persons who use to manage it; especially since they have been so extremely kind to the World, as by printing their Politicks to inform not only this,
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but all future Ages, how honestly they designed Matters, and how wisely they carried them.

Well, but if *evil Counsellors* must needs be removed, what must be done next? Why, that is a needless Question. For what should be done, but to take in those in their stead who were so earnest and active to remove them? For do you think that these Patriots are so fierce and zealous against Ministers of State, and other high Officers, for any other Reason in the World but to get into their Places? Or that they pitch upon this Course of crying out against others, for any other End, but because they judge it the most likely and effectual to promote themselves? It would indeed be too gross, too fulsome, and too shameless a Request, for any one to come to his Prince and say, *Sir*, I will not be quiet unless your Majesty will make me *Treasurer* or *Chancellor*, *Chief Justice*, or *Secretary of State*, *Attorney-General*, or the like; and if you will not give me such or such a great Office, I will never leave troubling you, never give over *petitioning*, *addressing and protesting*; never cease crying out, *Grievances*, *Popery*, *Pensioners*, and *evil Counsellors*, till the whole Nation rings of it again; and therefore your Majesty will do very prudently, and consult both your Ease and Safety, by removing such a great Officer, and putting me your worthy *Peti*

tioner into his room; and by this you will also wonderfully please and gratify your People, whom in truth I care as much for as I do for the Dirt under my Shoes.

These Things I confess are very gross and scandalous, but as gross as they are, assure yourselves, that whensoever you hear any one clamouring against *evil Counsellors*, this is as really and truly his Sense and Meaning, as if he had wrote his Mind upon his Forehead, and used every one of the fore-mentioned Expressions *to a Tittle*.

3dly, The third Battery which the Faction plants against the Government, is, their recommending the most mortal Enemies both of Prince and People under the plausible endearing Title of *publick Spirits*; that is the Word, but *private Interest* is the Signification. But pray, what has any private Man to do to concern himself for the *Publick*, but in his *private* Station? What has this *Extortioner*, or that *Lace-seller*, to do to mistake his Prince for his Apprentice, and to undertake to instruct him? What has this or that *Joyner* to do to leave his Shop, and to *guard the Parliament*? These, and the like Matters, belong properly to the Sovereign Prince, and to those whom he shall be pleased to employ under him. For surely none can be so fit to be entrusted with the Publick Weal of the Nation, as he who gives the surest Pledge of his Concern for it,

it, by having the greatest Interest and Share in it.

And therefore he who sets up for his *Country*, against his *Prince*, goes about to make the Body thrive by the Decay and Ruin of the Head. Assuredly no Man shews his Zeal and Love for his Country, so much as he who does all he can to enable his *Prince* both to *govern* and *protect* it; which I am sure cannot be done, either by weakning or impoverishing him, by disgracing or misrepresenting him. This indeed has been the Course taken by those great Factors for Sedition, who have shot that odious Distinction, like a fiery Dart, at the Government, of the *Court Party*, and the *Country Party*; for which the Country may perhaps one Day have as little Cause to thank them, as they have at present to thank themselves. For I do not find that by all their Noise and Heat they have made themselves so considerable, as to be thought worthy to *be taken off*. But whether they succeed this way or no (as it were much if the same Cheat should always find the same Success) they know however that to be still mouthing out, *the Interest of the Country! the Interest of the Country!* is a Sort of plausible well-receiv'd Cant, and a sweet Morfel, which never fails to be readily swallowed by the gaping Rout, who always love those Men best who abuse them most.

But for all this, I would have those State Vermin know, that *King* and *Country* are hardly Terms of Distinction (in the fore-mentioned Kings I am sure they were not) and much less of Opposition, since no Man can serve his Country without assisting his King, nor love his King without being concerned for his Country. One involves the other, and both together make but one entire, single, undivided Interest. God has joined them together, and cursed be that Man, or Faction of Men, which would disjoin or put them asunder.

And therefore (Friends) suffer not yourselves to be imposed upon, but rest assured that all who come to you with those glossing Pretences of *publick Spirits* and Zeal for their Country, if they do it with the least Reflection upon their Prince, or his Government, are all that time mocking and making a Prey of you; they are *smiting the Shepherd*, and that uses to be the way *to scatter the Flock*. Alas! their Design is not to preserve their Country, but to prefer themselves; nay, they are making all this hectoring Bustle for *the Country*, only to get themselves into *the Court*. They are *holding up their Heads* to see what the Government will *bid for* them; and if their Pretences are found too old and stale to be marketable, or worth buying, you shall find them retreat, and sneak away with all that Odium and Contempt which

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is justly due to baffled, discovered Cheats. And then the *publick Spirit* vanishes immediately, and the *Country*, after all this high flown Zeal for it, is left to shift for itself.

For we must know, that when this *publick Spirit* is once raised, there are but two ways of *laying* it again, and those the very same which we use to take to rid ourselves of restless, importunate Beggars; namely, either to give them what they desire, or resolutely to reject and give them nothing. Now the first of these is that which *Beggars* and *publick Spirits* do most desire. For still you must observe, that the *publick Spirit* here spoken of has always this strange Property with it, that when it is most boistrous, furious, and troublesome, it is then also most desirous to be *conjur'd down*, provided it be done skilfully and *privately*. For as *Solomon* says, *Prov. xxi. 14. A Gift in secret pacifieth Anger*, and has a wonderful Ascendant over all *evil Spirits*, but over the *publick one* especially; which, tho' it has all the Poison of the Adder, yet has nothing of the Deafness of it, forasmuch as it never *stops its Ear against the Charmer, if he does but charm wisely*; that is, if he applies the fore-mentioned Charm liberally and privately too. This being a Rule always to be remembered, that the more *publick the Spirit* is, the more *private* must be the Exorcism, for Spirits being invisible Things, must be dealt with after an

invisible manner. So then this is one Way of exorcising or conjuring down a *publick Spirit*, and recovering those that are possessed with it, which some of late Years have called *a taking them off*. Tho' some Governments have another Way of taking such off, which they find much more effectual. For as in the Case of Beggars before hinted, so here also we must observe, that tho' this way of Gratification or Giving may rid the Government of the Importunity of the *publick Spirit* for the present, yet the same Spirit will be sure to return upon it again, and perhaps with seven more in its Company worse than itself, that they also may be exorcised and taken off the same way. As the very same Relief which stops a Beggar's Mouth, and sends him away at one time, will certainly bring him, and many more with him, to the same House at another; it being not to be imagined that such Customers will forsake a Door only because they use to be fed at it. And therefore Governors will never find this way of laying the *publick Spirit* successful; but just like a Man's drinking in a Fever, which may be some Refreshment at present, but an Increase of Torment in reversion.

From whence it follows, that the other Way for the Government to dispossess and cast out these *publick Spirits*, is certainly the wisest and most effectual, which is to give them

them nothing, but to defy their Rage, and to despise their Pretences, and to answer them as a Man in Place and Power would answer the Craving and Clamour of a restless Beggar, with Authority and Correction. For if Men come once to find that nothing is to be got by being *troublesome* to the Government, they will quickly alter their way of Traffick, and come to *fawn* upon it, instead of *barking* at it; which, tho' it be not of much Worth, I confess is yet the better *worthless* thing of the two. Let a Governor take up such as trouble him and his People, with Rigor and Resolution, and make them know, if he can, that he neither *fears* nor *needs* them, and I dare undertake that he shall not be long troubled with them. If an Horse grows resty, headstrong, and apt to throw his Rider, surely to pamper him cannot be the way to tame him; but the Discipline of the Whip and Spur will bring him to hand much sooner and surer than the Plenties of the Rack and Manger.

But now, after all, what is the Thing which really lies under the Disguise of this plausible Word *public Spirit*? Why, if you would have the whole Truth of it, *Name and Thing* together, it is Faction and Sedition rampant; it is a Combination of some insolent unruly Minds, to snatch the Scepter out of their Prince's Hand; it is their thrusting themselves into his peculiar Business, and so

in effect into his Throne ; it is their confounding the essential Bounds and Limits of Sovereignty and Subjection, and consequently a Dissolution of all Government. For where such upstart aspiring Mushrooms assume a Right to *govern*, I am sure it can be no Man's Duty to *obey*.

And thus much for this sham Pretence of *publick Spirits*, which has proved so troublesome to our *publick* Peace ; the fatal and malign Influence of which, I think, cannot be better expressed, than by telling you, that this Pretence of a *publick Spirit*, has been as hurtful and mischievous to Government, as that of the *private Spirit* has been to Religion.

4thly, The fourth and last mighty misapplied Word which I shall mention, with which the Faction has of a long time been fighting against the Government, is, *Liberty, Property, and the Rights of the Subject*. And so loud and tragical has the Outcry about these been, that a Man unacquainted with this sort of People, could imagine no less by what he had heard, than that almost all the Houses in the Nation were emptied into the Goals, and that there were scarce a Foot of Land in the Kingdom but what was seized on by the Crown. And yet after all this Noise, there is not a freer and a richer People upon the Face of the Earth, than the *English* ; nor were they themselves ever so free

free and so rich before, as they have been in the Reigns of those two excellent Princes, whom they were perpetually baiting with Complaints about their *Liberties* and *Properties*; Princes so far from wronging the Subject upon either of these Accounts, that as to the Point of Liberty, the Crown has almost parted with its Power of imprisoning the Subject; and as for Property, it has been so far from encroaching upon the Subjects Lands, that it has very near the matter parted with all its own. But I hope by this time the Crown perceives that such *sturdy Beggars* are not to be dealt with this way, and that it is neither Wisdom, Mercy, nor Charity, to feed a bottomless Pit.

But to adjust the true and proper Measures of Liberty; there is no People so free as those who live under a just Monarchy, there being no Slavery in the World comparable to that of having many Masters. And those State Mountebanks, who would persuade People that there is no such thing as *Freedom of the Subject* under a Monarchy, let them go seek for it in *Holland*, and *Venice*, and other Republicks, and there they shall find a *free* People indeed; that is, *free* to undergo any Penalty which their Governors shall be pleased to inflict, and *free* to pay any Tax which they shall think fit to impose, and that without either Remedy or Redress, be it never so grievous. And as
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for any other kind of Freedom, you must look for it elsewhere, if you would find it, for it is not a Commodity of the Growth of those Countries.

And to shew further how falsely, how partially, and unjustly this Reproach has been cast upon Monarchical Government, that of *England* especially; I have heard of a certain sort of Men not far off, who when they had tied up their Prince from detaining any dangerous or seditious Subject in Prison, thought it yet very reasonable for themselves to imprison whom they pleased, and as long as they pleased, according to that unerring Rule of Equity and right Reason (forsooth) their *own Pleasure*. So that (it seems) it must pass for Slavery for a Subject to be kept in Prison by his Sovereign, but Liberty for the same Person to be held in Durance by his fellow Subjects. Oh! the Tyranny and Impudence of some Men!

But what is that *Liberty* which they thus cry out for? Why, they would have a *Liberty* to act those things against a Prince, which some have took a *Liberty* to write and speak. They would have a *Liberty* to set their insulting Feet upon the Necks of their fellow Subjects, and those for the most part better Men than themselves. They would have a *Liberty* to plunder and fight other Men out of their Estates, and themselves into them. So that in short, the *Liberty and Property*

Property that these Men are so zealous for, is a *Liberty* to invade and seize other Mens *Properties*. For as it has been appositely and truly observed, none are generally so loud and clamorous for the Security of our Religion, as Atheists and Republicans, who have none at all. None such zealous Advocates for Liberty, as those who, when they are once got into Power, prove the arrantest Tyrants in Nature. And none such mighty Champions for *Property*, as those who have neither a Groat in their Purse, nor an Inch of Land which they can call their own; but are a Company of beggarly, broken, bankrupt Malecontents, who have no other considerable *Property* in the World, but never to be satisfied.

And thus I have gone over some of those popular abused Words, those sly and maliciously infused Slanders, by which an implacable, unruly Faction has been perpetually weakning and worrying the Civil Government, and that with such Success, that it has destroyed the very Being of it once, and the Settlement of it ever since.

And now, by way of Consequence and Deduction from the foregoing Particulars, what can be so naturally inferr'd as this? that as the Text denounces a Curse to those who call *Evil Good*, and *Good Evil*; so it equally imports it to be a Duty, and implies a Blessing belonging to it, to call *Good Good*,
and

and *Evil Evil*. It is the best Oblation which we can make to Truth, and the greatest Charity that we can shew the World. For how can Government, and consequently the Peace of Mankind, fence and guard it self against *Knaves*, passing under the Guise and Character of honest Men, when Faction and Sedition shall be called Activity, and *Fitness for Business*, (forsooth) and Loyalty and Conscience be sneered at, as Softness and Indiscretion? Never think that either Church or State can thrive upon these Measures.

And here give me leave to utter a great Truth, whether it please or not please, for my Business here is not to please Men, but to convince them of what concerns them. And it is this. That there has not been any one thing since the Restitution of our Church and Monarchy, that has contributed more to the weakning of both, and the strengthening the Hands of the Faction against both, than the general Discouragement and Restraint of Men upon all Occasions, and especially from the Pulpit, from giving the late villanous Times and Practices, and the guilty Actors in them, boldly and impartially their own. This only Use being made by them of all this Tenderness, or rather Tame-ness towards them, that by never hearing of their *Guilt*, they have forgot that they were ever *pardoned*. They take heart, and insult and usurp the Confidence which be-
 longs

longs only to the Innocent. Nay, they have *grown*, they have *thriven*, and *become powerful*, by this Usage, it being what above all things in the World they wish'd for and desired, but could not (I dare say) have been so impudent as to hope for. For what could a Thief or Robber desire more, than having seized the Prey, and possessed himself of his base Booty, to carry it off both safely and quietly too; nay, and to see the Person robb'd by him, not only with his Hands fast ty'd from recovering his Goods, but with his Tongue ty'd also, from so much as crying out *Thief?*

But for all the fallacious State Mists which have been cast before our Eyes, Men have both seen and felt enough to know, that for Persons of Honour, Power, or Place, to caress and sooth up Men of dangerous Principles, and known Disaffection to the Government, with Terms and Appellations of Respect, is manifestly for the Government to knock under-board to the Faction, to infuse Courage into it by courting it, and to make its shrewdest Enemies strong and considerable, by seeming to fear those, who may be *suppress'd*, but can never be *won*. Besides, that this must needs grieve the Hearts and damp the Spirits of those, who in its greatest Extremities were its best, or rather its only Friends, and (if Occasion requires) must be so again, or it must have none.

And

And therefore I will be bold to affirm, that the great long Rebellion, being in the whole Carriage of it so very black and foul, so reproachful to Religion, so scandalous to the whole Nation, and so utterly incapable, not only of Excuse, but even of Extenuation, especially in that last and hellish Scene of it, the King's Murder; I say, upon all these accounts, it cannot be too frequently, too severely, and too bitterly, upon all publick Occasions, ripp'd up and reflected upon. All the Pulpits in the King's Dominions ought to ring of it, as long as there is a Man alive who lived when the Villany was committed. Preachers, in their Sermons to their Congregations, and Judges, in their Charges to the Juries and Justices of the Country, ought to inculcate, and lay before them the horrid Impiety and Scandal of those Proceedings, and the execrable Mischief of the Principles which caused them. Especially since we have seen such new Rebellions springing out of the Ashes of the old; a sufficient Demonstration, doubtless, that the Fire is not yet put out. And believe it, this, if any, is *the likeliest way*, both to atone the Guilt of those crying Sins, and to prevent the like for the future. And if this Course had been vigorously and heartily followed, can you imagine that such devilish, audacious Libels, and such seditious Coffee-house Discourses, could have flown in the Face of the Govern-

ment, as have done for above twenty Years together? I tell you, that neither Mens Courage nor their Conscience would have served them to have ventur'd upon their Prince, or attack'd his Government at such a daring Rate. Nay, let this Course be but taken yet, and the People all over the Kingdom be constantly and warmly plied from the Pulpits, upon the Particulars here spoken of, and I doubt not but in the Space of three Years the King shall have quite another People, and his People be taught quite another kind of Subjection, from what they have practis'd any time these threescore Years.

And therefore let none think that those seasonable Rebukes which I here encourage and plead for, proceed from any Hatred of the Persons of those Wretches (how much soever they deserve it) but from a dutiful Concern for, and Charity to the Publick, and from a just Care and Commiseration of Posterity, that the Contagion may not spread, nor the Poison of the Example pass any further. For I take Reproof no less than Punishment, to be rather for *Prevention* than *Retribution*; rather to *warn the Innocent*, than to *reproach the Guilty*; and by thus warning them while they are innocent, in all probability to preserve and keep them so.

For does not St. *Paul* himself make this the great Ground and End of all Reproof?

1 *Tim.*

1 Tim. v. 20. Them who sin (says he) rebuke before all, that others also may fear. And in Titus i. 13. Rebuke them sharply. Where let us suppose now that St. *Paul* had to do with a Pack of Miscreants, who had by the most unchristian Practices dethroned and murdered their Prince, to whom this Apostle had so often and so strictly enjoined absolute Subjection, plundered and undone their Brethren, to whom the said Apostle had so often commanded the greatest Brotherly Love and Amity; and lastly, rent, broken and torn in pieces the Church, in which he had so earnestly pressed Unity, and so severely prohibited all schismatical Divisions; what (I say) do we think now? Would St. *Paul* have rebuked such new-fashion'd extraordinary Christians, or would he not? And if he would, do we imagine that he would have done it in the modern treacherous Dialect? *Touch not my Rebels, and do my Fanaticks no Harm.* No *Moderation-monger* under Heaven shall ever persuade me that St. *Paul* would have took such a Course with such Persons, or have taught *Timothy*, or *Titus*, or any other Gospel Preacher, to do so, for fear of spoiling their Promotion, or Translation, or offending any powerful Faction of Men whatsoever.

And pray, do you all consider with yourselves, whether you would be willing to have your Children, your dearest Friends

and Relations, grow up into *Rebels, Schismatics, Presbyterians, Independents, Anabaptists, Quakers*, the blessed Off-spring of the late Reforming Times? And if you would not, then leave off dawbing and trimming it, and plainly, impartially, and severely declare to your Children and Families, the Villany and detestable Hypocrisy of those which are such. And assure yourselves that this is the likeliest Way to preserve them untainted with the same Infection.

To all which Considerations, I shall add this one more, as an unanswerable Argument, why the cursed Authors of our late sad Distractions, should not be suffered to carry off their Rogueries with the sneaking Silence and Connivance of all about them; namely, that by this means, about fourscore or an hundred Years hence, the Faction (if it continues so long, as no doubt with *good keeping* it may) will, from denying the Impiety and the Guilt, come to deny also the very History and Being of the long great Rebellion. This perhaps, at first hearing, may seem something odd and strange to you. But if you consider, that in the Space of forty Years the Faction has had the Face to shift off that Rebellion and Murder of the King from themselves upon the *Papists*, is it at all unlikely that in the Compass of three-score or fourscore Years more, they may

utterly deny that there was ever any such thing at all? This, I am sure, is not impossible; and considering the Boldness and Falseness, and brazen Confidence of the Faction, I cannot think it so much as improbable. But I am sure also, that it is no less than a National Concern, that following Ages should not be so far ignorant of what has passed in ours, as thereby to want so great and so irrefragable an Argument against Disloyalty and Rebellion.

And therefore, as it is said that the King *never dies* upon a *legal* Account, so it is vastly the Interest of the Government, that the *Murder* of the King should *never die* upon an *historical*. To which Purpose, let strict, naked, and undisguised Truth take place in all things; and let not *Evil* be dignified with the Title of *Good*, nor *Good* libelled with the Name of *Evil*, by a false and fraudulent Appellation of Things and Persons. But as the Merit of Mens Works must and will follow them into another World, so (in all Reason and Justice) let the true Name of their Works accompany and go along with them in this; that so the Honest and the Loyal may not be degraded to the same Level with Knaves and Rebels; nor Knaves usurp the Rewards and Reputation, which none but the Honest and the Loyal have a Claim to.

Which

Which God, the Eternal Fountain of Truth, and Great Judge of all Things, vouchsafe to grant; to whom be rendered and ascribed, as is most due, all Praise, Might, Majesty and Dominion, both now and for evermore. Amen.



The Third Grand Instance of the same mischievous Influence of Words and Names falsely applied, with reference to the Interests and Concerns of private Persons in common Conversation; being the fourth and last Discourse from those Words in *Isaiah* v. 20.

ISAIAH V. 20.

*Wo unto them that call Evil Good,
and Good Evil, &c.*

I Must beg your Pardon that I here resume the Prosecution of a Subject, which I have formerly discoursed of in this Place, and for some Reasons since intermitted, in the Courses immediately following.

The Discussion of these Words I first cast under these four Heads.

First, To give some general account of the nature of *Good* and *Evil*, and of the reasons upon which they are founded.

Secondly, To shew, that the way by which *Good* and *Evil* commonly operate upon the Mind of Man, is by those respective Names and Appellations by which they are notify'd and convey'd to the Mind.

Thirdly, To shew the Mischief which directly, naturally, and unavoidably follows, from the Misapplication and Confusion of these Names. And,

Fourthly,

Fourthly, and *Lastly*, To shew the grand and principal Instances in which the Abuse or Misapplication of those Names has such a fatal and pernicious Effect.

The three first of these I dispatch'd in my *first Discourse* upon the Words, and in my *second* made some Entrance upon the *fourth* and *last*, to wit, *the Assignment of those Instances*, which I shew spread as far and wide as the Universe itself, and were as infinite and numberless as all those various Ways and Accidents by which a Man is capable of being miserable. To recount all which in particular, since it was impossible, and yet to rest in Universals equally unprofitable, I found it necessary to reduce those fatal Effects of the Misapplication of these great governing Names of *Good* and *Evil*, to certain Heads, and those such as should comprehend and take in the principal Things, upon the good or bad Estate of which the Happiness or Misery of human Societies must needs depend.

Which Heads were three.

1st, Religion, and the Concerns of the Church.

2^{dly}, Civil Government. And,

3^{dly}, The private Interests of particular Persons.

Now the first of these three, to wit, *The Concerns of Religion and the Church*, I fully

treated of in my *second Discourse*, and that with particular Reference to the State of both amongst ourselves, where I shew, that our excellent Church had been once ruined, and was like to have been so again, only by the mischievous Cant and Gibberish of a few paltry misapplied *Words and Phrases*; five of which I then instanced in. As,

1st, A malicious calling the Rites, Ceremonies, and Religion of the Church of *England, Popery*.

2^{dly}, A calling the schismatical Deserters of it, *true Protestants*.

3^{dly}, A calling the late Subversion and Dissolution of our Church, *Reformation*.

4^{thly}, A calling the Execution of the Laws in Behalf of the Church, *Persecution*. And,

5^{thly} and lastly, A calling all base, trimming Compliances, and half Conformity, *Moderation*.

All which five I then insisted upon at large, and shall not now trouble you with any further Repetitions.

After which, the *second general Head* to be treated of was, *Civil Government*; under which I had designed to shew, how our admirably-well-temper'd Monarchy had been once shook in Pieces by the Faction, under the best of Monarchs, King *Charles I.* and was in a fair way to have run the same Fate under his Son, King *Charles II.* both of them Princes of glorious and happy Memory.

And

And all this by the same villanous Artifice of a few popular misapplied Words; by the senseless insignificant Clink and Sound of which, some restless Demagogues and Incendiaries had enflamed the Minds of the sottish *Mobile* to a strange unaccountable Abhorrence of the best of Men and Things, and to as fond and furious an Admiration of the very worst. Of which sort of Words we may reckon these four following.

1st, Their traducing the best of Monarchies, and the easiest of Governments, by the odious Name of *Arbitrary Power*.

2^{dly}, Their blackning the King's ablest and best Friends, with the old and infamous Character of *Evil Counsellors*.

3^{dly}, Their setting off and recommending the greatest Enemies, both of Prince and People, under the plausible endearing Titles of *Publick Spirits, Patriots, and Standers up for their Country*. And,

4^{thly} and lastly, Their couching the most malicious, selfish, and ambitious Designs, under the glorious Cover of *Zeal for Liberty and Property, and the Rights of the Subject*.

Which four rattling, Rabble-charming Words (I say) *Arbitrary Power, Evil Counsellors, Publick Spirits, Liberty and Property and Rights of the Subject*, with several others of the like Noise and Nature, being used and applied by some State-Impostors, (as
 Scripture

Scripture was once quoted by the Devil) I undertook to prove, were the great and powerful Tools, by which the Faction having so successfully overturned the Government once, was in full hopes to have given it as effectual a Turn once more. The Prosecution of all which, (as well as I was able) I gathered into one entire Discourse by itself.

But since all Discourses in Behalf of the Government, partly thro' the Guilt of some, and the false Politicks of others, have seldom any other Effect, but to recoil upon the Person who makes them, I shall wave and pass over mine, and thereby escape the Vanity of a thankless Defence of that which is so much better able to defend itself.

And so, I now come to the *Third* and *Last* of these three general Heads; which is, *To shew the mischievous Influence; the Abuse and Misapplication of those mighty operative Names of Good and Evil, has upon the private Interests of particular Persons.* And here also, I am sensible how boundless a Subject I should engage in, should I attempt to give a particular Account of all those Names or Words, by the artificial Misapplication of which, Men promote or ruin the Fortunes of one another. The Truth is, I might deal them forth to you by Scores or Hundreds, but I shall single out and insist upon only some few of the most remarkable and mischievous. As,

1st, An outrageous, ungoverned Insolence and Revenge, frequently passing by the Name of *Sense of Honour*. Honour is indeed a noble Thing, and therefore the Word which signifies it, must needs be very plausible. But as a rich and glittering Garment may be cast over a rotten, *fashionably-diseased* Body, so an illustrious, commending Word, may be put upon a vile and an ugly Thing; for Words are but the Garment, the loose Garments of Things; and so may easily be put off and on, according to the Humour of him who bestows them. But the Body changes not, though the Garments do.

What is Honour, but the Height and Flower, and Top of Morality, and the utmost Refinement of Conversation? But then every Ruffian and drunken Sot is not a competent Judge of it; nor must every one who can lead a Midnight-Whore through the Streets, or scoff at a Black-Coat or Clergyman, or come behind a Man and run him through, and be pardoned for it, have presently a Claim to that Thing called *Honour*; which is as much the natural Result, as it is the legal Reward of Virtue. Virtue and Honour are such inseparable Companions, that the Heathens would admit no Man into the *Temple of Honour*, who did not pass to it thro' the *Temple of Virtue*. It is indeed the only stated, allowed
Way,

Way, it is the high Road to Honour, and no Man ever robs or murders upon *that Road*.

And yet, in spite of Nature and Reason, and the Judgment of all Mankind, this high and generous Thing must be that in whose pretended Quarrel almost all the Duels of the World are fought. Oh! *my Honour is concerned*, says one. In what, I pray? Why, he gave me the Lie. That is, he gave you what perhaps was your own before. But as Truth cannot be made Falshood by the worst of Tongues, so neither can a Liar be made a true Man by forcing a Coward to eat his Words, or a Murderer become an honest Man by a lucky (or rather unlucky) Thrust of a lawless Sword. Ay, but he spoke slightly and reflexively of such a Lady. That is, perhaps he treated her without a Compliment, and spoke that of her which she had rather a great deal practice, than hear or be told of. In short, he might represent her in her true Colours; and surely there is no Reason that such should be always their own *Painters*; and while they live by one Measure, describe themselves by another. What Right have the Votaries, or rather Slaves of Pleasure, to wear the Badge and Livery of strict and severe Virtue?

Princes indeed may confer Honours, or rather Titles and Names of Honour. But they are a Man's or Woman's own Actions, which

which must make him or her truly honourable. And every Man's Life is the Herald's Office, from whence he must derive and fetch that which must blazon him to the World. Honour being but the Reflection of a Man's own Actions, shining bright in the Face of all about him, and from thence rebounding upon himself.

And therefore, what Plea can the Bully and the Hector, the Champion of the Tavern or the Stews, have to this divine and ennobling Character? And yet, who is it who so often, so zealously, and so implacably claims it? But the Truth is, the Name must serve such, instead of the Thing; and they are therefore so highly concerned about the one, because they know themselves wholly void of the other.

But such a quarrelsome, vindictive Impatience of every Injury or Affront, is not properly *Sense of Honour*; for certainly *Sense of Honour* does not take away *Sense of Religion*; and that, I am sure, teaches us much other Things. It teaches a Man not to revenge a contumelious or reproachful Word, but to be above it. And therefore, it was greatly spoken by *Caius Marius*, a Man of another sort of Mettle and Valour from our modern Town-Blades. "*Me quidem ex*
animi mei sententiâ ledere nulla oratio po-
test; quippe vera, necesse est, benè prædi-
cet, falsam vita moresque mei superant."

He

He said, he valued not what Men could say of him, for if they spake true, they must needs speak honourably of him; if otherwise, his Life and his Manners should be their Confutation. And doubtless, it is a truer and nobler Vindication of a Man's Honour, to clear off and confute a Slander by his own Life, than by another Man's Death; to make his Innocence and his Virtue his Compurgators, and not *to fight*, but *live* down the Calumniator.

And therefore this *Duelling* Practice (what Thoughts soever some may have of it) proceeds not from any *Sense of Honour*, but is really and truly a direct Defiance and Reproach to the Laws and Justice of a Government; as if they could not, or would not, protect a Man in the dearest Concern he has in the World, which is his Reputation and good Name; but left every slandered Person to carve out his own Satisfaction, and so to make himself both Judge in his own Case, and Executioner too. To prevent which, and to strip this insolent Practice of all Shadow of Excuse, it must be confessed, that no Government can be too strict and cautious, even to the Degree of Niceness, in setting a Fence about Mens *good Names*; and that in order to it, it were better a great deal to cut the Tongue out of the Slanderer's Mouth, than not to wrest the Sword out of the Dueller's Hand.

But

But it is to be feared, that even our Law itself is something defective in this Particular. For if the slandered Person comes to that, to right him against the Slanderer, What Damages (says the Law) have you sustained by the Slander? Prove how far you have been endamaged, and so far you shall be repair'd. To which I answer, that it is impossible for any Man living to know how much he is endamaged by a Slander: for like some Poisons, it may destroy at *two, five, seven, ten,* or perhaps *twenty* Years distance; and the Venom of it, in the mean time, lie festring and rankling in the Mind of some malicious Grandee, whose malign Influence upon the slandered Person, like a Worm lying at the Root of a Tree, shall invisibly wear, and waste, and eat him out of his greatest Interests and Concerns all his Life after; and the poor Man all this while never know from what Quarter this fatal Blast which consumes him, blows upon him. And therefore I affirm, that if *the Law* would assign a Punishment commensurate to *a Slander*, according to the true Proportions of Justice, it must take its Measures, not from the Mischiefs which the Slander is known actually to do, but from the Mischief which according to the Nature of the Thing it may do.

This I thought fit to remark, being desirous to cut off all Excuse from Duellers,

and to take from those Sons of *Shame* their usurped Pretences of *Honour*. And indeed, when I consider how we are ridiculed Abroad, as making ourselves *Apes*, or rather *Monkies* to the *French*, by a fond Imitation of their Fashions, it may justly seem strange, that in all this time *Duelling*, which has been proscribed amongst them, should not have grown out of Fashion amongst us. Especially since it is too, too manifest, that these Pests of Government cast a greater Blot upon it by the *Blood* they *shed*, than it is possible for them to wash off with *their own*. And thus much for the first mischievously abused and misapplied Word, *viz. Honour, or Sense of Honour*.

2. Bodily Abstinence, joined with a demure, affected Countenance, is often called and accounted *Piety and Mortification*. Suppose a Man infinitely ambitious, and equally spiteful and malicious; one who poisons the Ears of great Men by venomous Whispers, and rises by the Fall of better Men than himself; yet if he steps forth with a *Friday* Look and a *Lenten* Face, with a *blessed Jesu!* and a mournful Ditty for the Vices of the Times: Oh! then he is a Saint upon Earth; an *Ambrose*, or an *Augustine*; I mean not for that earthly Trash of Book-learning; (for alas! such are above that, or at least that's above them) but for Zeal, and for Fasting, for a devout Elevation of the
Eyes,

Eyes, and an holy Rage against other Men's Sins. And happy those Ladies and religious Dames characterized in 2 *Tim.* iii. 6. who can have such self-denying, thriving, able Men for their Confessors! and thrice happy those Families where they vouchsafe to take their *Friday* Nights Refreshments! and thereby demonstrate to the World, what Christian Abstinence, and what primitive, self-mortifying Rigour there is in forbearing a Dinner, that they may have the better Stomach to their Supper.

In fine, the whole World stands in Admiration of them; Fools are fond of them, and wise Men are afraid of them; they are talked of, they are pointed at; and as they order the Matter, they draw the Eyes of all Men after them, and generally something else.

But as it is observed in Greyhounds, that the Thinness of their Jaws does not at all allay the ravening Fury of their Appetite, there being no Creature whose Teeth are sharper, and whose Feet are swifter when they are in Pursuit of their Prey; so Woe be to that Man who stands in the way of a meagre, mortified, fasting, sharp-set Zeal, when it is in full Chase of its spiritual Game. And therefore as the Apostle admonishes the *Philippians*, *Phil.* iii. 2. *to beware of Dogs*, so his Advice cannot be too frequently remember'd, nor too warily observed, when we

have to deal with those, who are always *fawning upon some, and biting others*, as shall *best serve* their Occasions.

3dly, Some have found a Way to smooth over an implacable, unalterable Spleen and Malice, by dignifying it with the Name of *Constancy*. There are several in the World (and those of no small Note for Godliness too) who take up Disgusts easily, and prosecute them irreconcilably; not by way of *Revenge* (tho' even that is utterly contrary to Christianity) for Revenge, in the Nature of it, supposes an Injury first done; whereas this generally has nothing of Retaliation in it, but commences entirely upon Humour, Fancy, and false Apprehensions, and the Man, in the whole Course of his Spite, is perfectly the Aggressor.

And in this Case, when once his boiling Rancor has, by Error and Misapprehension, created itself an Object to work upon, then presently to work it goes; and no Civilities shall be able to mollify such an one, no Respects shall gain him, nor Obligations take him off; but his Spite being fed by a perpetual Fountain, is also carried out with a perpetual Motion, raging and raving without End or Measure; so that if the Man himself could be immortal, his Malice would certainly be so too. Nay, and some such have been known to take the Sacrament every Week, with this diabolical Ferment work-

ing and fuming in their Breast, eating the Body and drinking the Blood of Christ with a Mind ready to suck that of their Neighbour.

And if these Wretches, in the Prosecution of their malicious Rage, chance to find themselves (as they do very often) mistaken in their main Ground and first Motive of it; yet, rather than own a Mistake, and not seem infallible, as well as implacable, they will be sure to follow their Blow, and the Injury must still go on, till it becomes infinite and unmeasurable. And this some call *Constancy, Greatness, and Firmness of Mind*, and a kind of Approach to Unchangeableness; thus in effect clothing a devilish Quality with a divine Attribute. For it would sound but scurvily, to say in plain Terms, “ That such an one is a Person of an obstinate, inexorable, impregnable Malice; take heed of him, have nothing to do with him.” And therefore it strikes the Ear much softer and better, to say, “ He is one of great Constancy and Steadiness, always like himself, and not apt to change or vary from the Rule which he has once pitch’d upon to act by.” Tho’ the real, naked Truth, which lies under all this Disguise of Words, is, that the Person so set off is a kind of Devil incarnate, void not only of Religion, but Humanity; his Ignorance

first apprehends, and makes Injuries, and then his Malice pursues them.

And thus you see *Samuel's Mantle* cast over the *Devil*, and (according to the Apostle's Phrase) a long and large *Cloke* provided for and fitted to *Maliciousness*. Not that this ill thing does yet so wholly tie itself to this convenient sort of Garment, but that sometimes it can wear a *Gown* as well as a *Cloke*, that being often found both to keep it warmer, and to conceal it better. But Wo unto the Souls of those pharisaical hellish Hypocrites, if the God whom they pretend such a peculiar Relation to, and who is indeed unchangeable in his Nature, should borrow some of their Constancy, and shew himself such in his Wrath also!

The Schoolmen speaking of the State of the fallen Angels, or Devils, say, that they are *Confirmati in summâ malitiâ*. Which, according to the Notion now before us, you may, if you please, interpret *Constancy*. And our Saviour, describing the Torments of Hell, and the Punishments of the Damned, expresses them by *the Worm that dies not, and the Fire that is not quenched*. So that here is another sort of *Constancy* also. And surely, if we compare them both together, and so pass a right Judgment upon the whole Matter, there seems to be all the Reason in the World, that such as practise the Constancy of

of the former, should at length be rewarded *with the Constancy* of the other.

4thly, A stanch resolved Temper of Mind, not suffering a Man to sneak, fawn, cringe, and accommodate himself to all Humours, tho' never so absurd and unreasonable, is commonly branded with, and exposed under the Character of *Pride, Morosity, and Ill-nature*; an ugly Word, which you may from time to time observe many honest, worthy, inoffensive Persons, and that of all Sorts, Ranks, and Professions, strangely and unaccountably worried, and run down by. And therefore I think I cannot do Truth, Justice, and common Honesty better Service, than by ripping up so malicious a Cheat, to vindicate such as have suffered by it.

Certain it is, that amongst all the Contrivances of Malice, there is not a surer Engine to pull Men down in the good Opinion of the World, and that in spite of the greatest Worth and Innocence, than this Imputation of *Ill-nature*; an Engine which serves the Ends, and does the Work of Pique and Envy both effectually and safely; forasmuch as it is a loose and general Charge upon a Man, without alledging any particular Reason for it from his Life or Actions, and consequently does the more Mischief, because as a Word of course, it passes currently, and is seldom look'd into or examined. And

therefore as there is no Way to prove a Paradox or false Proposition, but to take it for granted; so such as would stab any Man's good Name with the Accusation of *Ill-nature*, do very rarely descend to Proofs or Particulars; it is sufficient for their Purpose that the Word sounds odiously, and is believed easily; and that is enough to do any one's Business with the Generality of Men, who seldom have so much Judgment or Charity as to hear the Cause before they pronounce Sentence.

But that we may proceed with greater Truth, Equity and Candour, in this Case, we will endeavour to find out the right Sense and Meaning of this terrible confounding Word, *Ill-nature*, by coming to Particulars.

And here, first, Is the Person charged with it false or cruel, ungrateful or revengeful? Is he shrewd and unjust in his Dealings with others? Does he regard no Promises, and pay no Debts? Does he profess Love, Kindness, and Respect to those, whom underhand he does all the Mischief to that possibly he can? Is he unkind, rude, or niggardly to his Friends? Has he shut up his Heart and his Hand towards the Poor, and has no Bowels of Compassion for such as are in Want and Misery? Is he insensible of Kindnesses done him, and withal careless and backward to acknowledge or requite them?

them? Or, lastly, is he bitter and implacable in the Prosecution of such as have wrong'd or abus'd him?

No, generally none of all these ill Things (which one would wonder at!) are ever meant, or so much as thought of, in the Charge of *Ill-nature*; but for the most part, the clean contrary Qualities are readily acknowledged. *Ay*, but *where* and *what* kind of thing then is this strange occult Quality called *Ill-nature*, which makes such a thundering Noise against such as have the ill Luck to be taxed with it?

Why, the best Account that I, or any one else can give of it, is this; that there are many Men in the World, who, without the least Arrogance or Self-conceit, have yet so just a Value both for themselves and others, as to scorn to flatter and gloss, to fall down and worship, to lick the Spittle and kiss the Feet of any proud, swelling, overgrown, domineering Huff whatsoever; and such Persons generally think it enough for them to shew their Superiors Respect without Adoration, and Civility without Servitude.

Again, There are some who have a certain ill-natur'd Stiffness (forsooth) in their Tongue, so as not to be able to applaud and keep Pace with this or that self-admiring, vain-glorious *Thraso*, while he is pluming and praising himself, and telling fulsome Stories in his own Commendation for three

or four Hours by the Clock, and at the same Time reviling and throwing Dirt upon all Mankind besides.

There is also a sort of odd *ill-natur'd* Men, whom neither Hopes nor Fears, Frowns nor Favours, can prevail upon to have any of the *cast, beggarly, forlorn Nieces* or *Kinswomen* of any Lord or Grandee, spiritual or temporal, trump'd upon them.

To which we may add another sort of obstinate *ill-natur'd Persons*, who are not to be brought by any one's Guilt or Greatness to speak or write, or to swear or lye as they are bidden, or to give up their own Consciences in a Compliment to those who have none themselves.

And lastly, there are some so extremely *ill-natur'd*, as to think it very lawful and allowable for them to be sensible when they are injured and oppressed, when they are slandered in their good Names, and wrong'd in their just Interests, and withal to dare to own what they find and feel, without being such Beasts of Burden, as to bear tamely whatsoever is cast upon them, or such Spaniels, as to lick the Foot which kicks them, or to thank the *goodly great one* for doing them all these back Favours. Now these, and the like Particulars, are some of the chief Instances of that *Ill-nature* which Men are more properly said to be guilty of towards their Superiors.

But there is a sort of *Ill-nature* also that uses to be practis'd towards Equals or Inferiors; such as perhaps a Man's refusing to lend Money to such as he knows will never repay him, and so to straiten and incommode himself only to gratify a Shark; or possibly the Man may prefer his Duty and his Business before Company, and the bettering himself before the humouring of others; or he may not be willing to spend his Time, his Health, and his Estate, upon a Crew of idle, spunging, ungrateful Sots, and so to play the *Prodigal* amongst an *Herd of Swine*; with several other such unpardonable Faults in Conversation (as some will have them) for which the fore-mentioned Cattle, finding themselves disappointed, will be sure to go grumbling and grunting away, and not fail to proclaim him a *morose, ill-condition'd, ill-natur'd* Person in all Clubs and Companies whatsoever; and so that Man's Work is done, and his Name lies groveling upon the Ground in all the Taverns, Brandy-shops and Coffee-houses about the Town.

And thus having given you some tolerable Account of what the World calls *Ill-nature*, and that both towards *Superiors*, and towards *Equals* and *Inferiors* (as it is easy and natural to know one Contrary by the other) we may from hence take a true Measure of what the World is observed to mean by the

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contrary Character of *Good-nature*, as it is generally bestowed.

And first, When Great Ones vouchsafe this endearing Elogy to those below them, a good-natur'd Man generally denotes some slavish, glavinging, flattering Parasite, or Hanger-on, one who is a mere Tool or Instrument, a Fellow fit to be sent upon any malicious Errand; a Setter or Informer, made to creep into all Companies; a Wretch employ'd under a Pretence of Friendship or Acquaintance, *to fetch and carry*, and to come to Mens Tables to play the *Judas* there; and, in a word, to do all those mean, vile, and degenerous Offices, which Men of Greatness and Malice use to engage Men of Baseness and Treachery in.

But then, on the other hand, when this Word passes between Equals, commonly by a *good-natur'd Man* is meant, either some easy, soft-headed Piece of Simplicity, who suffers himself to be led by the Nose, and wip'd of his Conveniences by a Company of sharpening, worthless Sycophants, who will be sure to despise, laugh, and droll at him, as a weak, empty Fellow, for all his ill-plac'd Cost and Kindness. And the Truth is, if such Vermin do not find him *empty*, it is odds but in a little time they will make him so. And this is one Branch of that which some call *Good-nature* (and Good-nature let it be) indeed so *good*, that according to the
wise

wife *Italian Proverb*, *it is even good for nothing.*

Or, in the next place, by a *good-natur'd Man*, is usually meant, neither more nor less than a *good Fellow*, a painful, able, and laborious Soaker. But he who owes all his Good-nature to the Pot and the Pipe, to the Jollity and Compliances of merry Company, may possibly go to Bed with a wonderful Stock of Good-nature over-night, but then he *will sleep it all away* again before the Morning.

stbly, Some would needs have a pragmatical prying into, and meddling with other Mens Matters, a *Fitness for Business* (forsooth) and accordingly call and account none but such Persons, *Men of Business*; a Word which of late Years carries with it no small Character, tho' the Thing really intended by it most commonly imports something mischievous, and justly to be abhorred. To be *fit for Business*, is no doubt a just Commendation to any Man; but then let it be the Business which a Man's Station, Condition or Profession, properly calls him to; that is, in other Words, let it be his *own* Business, and not *another* Man's.

As for instance: What has a Divine to do to act the Part of a Courtier or a Merchant, and much less of an Informer or a Solicitor? Is the Court, or the Exchange, or every Man's House, except his own, the
fittest

fittest Place for him to study and bestow his Time in? And yet many both value themselves, and are valued by others, only for such preposterous, absurd, unbecoming Practices; too just an Apology (God knows) for the sacrilegious Inroachments of the late Times of Confusion. For why might not Laymen and Mechanicks then invade the Pulpit, as well as Men of the Pulpit at any Time intrude into the secular Employments of Laymen? And I cannot see how that sly, specious (but now stale and silly) Pretence of *doing Good* (tho' set off with never so much devotional Rapture and Grimace) can warrant any Man to spend his Time there where he has nothing to do. For tho' Philosophy teaches that no Element is heavy in its own Place, yet Experience shews, that out of its own Place it proves exceeding burdensome. And this Observation will be found to reach something further than the four Elements, which the Peripateticks affirm the World to be composed of.

But to return to our *Men of Business*. There are some, whose restless, insinuating, searching Humour, will never suffer them to be quiet, unless they dive into the Concerns of all about them; they are always outward bound, but homeward never; they are perpetually looking about them, but never within them; they can hardly relish or digest what they eat at their own Table,
unless

unless they know what and how much is served up to another Man's; they cannot sleep quietly themselves, unless they know when their Neighbour rises and goes to-bed; they must know who visits him, and who is visited by him; what Company he keeps; what Revenues he has, and what he spends; how much he owes, and how much is owed to him. And this, in the Judgment of some, *is to be a Man of Business*; that is, in other Words, to be a Plague and a Spy, a treacherous Supplanter and Underminer of the Peace of all Families and Societies. This being a Maxim of an unfailing Truth, *That no Body ever pries into another Man's Concerns, but with a Design to do, or to be able to do him a Mischief.* A most detestable Humour doubtless, and yet as bad as it is, since there is nothing so base, barbarous, and dishonourable, but Power joined with Malice will sometimes make Use of it, it may, and often does, raise a Man a Pitch higher in this World, tho' ('tis to be feared) it may send him a large Step lower in the next.

But what says the Scripture to this meddling, inquisitive, way-laying Temper? Why, St. Peter gives his Judgment of it plainly enough, in 1 Peter iv. 15. *Let none of you (says he) suffer as a Murderer, or a Thief, or an Evil-doer, or as a Busy-body in other Mens Matters.* But what? Does this great Apostle range these *Men of Business*, the great
 Probab-

Probationers for all that is honourable, both in Church and State, amongst *Thieves and Murderers*? Certainly this shews that St. *Peter* was neither a *Man of Business* himself, nor ever desired to be so; and yet for all that, Christ thought him nevertheless qualified for the Work and Business of an Apostle.

But whatsoever St. *Peter's* Judgment, or St. *Peter* himself was, it is certain that the *Pharisees* were *Men of Business*, and that in a very eminent manner, as appears by their Behaviour both in the Court of Queen *Alexandra*, and afterwards in the Court of *Herod*; where by their Tricks and trinketting between Party and Party, and their intriguing it with Courtiers and Court Ladies, they had upon the Matter set the whole Court together by the Ears; according to that blessed Account and Character given of them by *Josephus*, Chap. 3. of his XVIIth Book of the *Jewish* Antiquities. And there seldom wants a Race of such meddlesome Vermin in the Courts of all other Princes, so exactly like those *Men of Business*, their true Ancestors, the *Pharisees*, that could they be but Contemporaries, and live together, it would be hardly possible to distinguish which were the Copy, and which the Original.

And thus I have given you a small Specimen of those artificially-misapplied Terms, by which crafty and malicious Men *Word* others out of their Interests and Advantages,
and

and themselves into them. I say, it is but a Specimen or Taste of those numerous, or rather innumerable Instances which might be produced; two of which especially I had thought to have spoken something more fully to; namely, *the calling Covetousness, good Husbandry; and Prodigality, Generosity*. According to the first of which, *Psal. x. 3.* it is made the very Mark and Description of a *wicked Man, that he speaks well of the Covetous, whom God abhorreth*; that is, he speaks well of a *Thief* and an *Idolater*; for so the Scripture calls the *covetous Man*, who makes his Money his God, and his Neighbour too; a Wretch, who under the Mask of Frugality, scarce ever has a Penny ready for the Poor, though never without his hundreds and his thousands of Pounds ready for a Purchase.

And no less is the Abuse, in firaming *the prodigal Person generous or liberal*, while he is spending and borrowing, and borrowing and spending, and never considering that it is the height of Injustice, as well as Folly, to affect to be generous at other Mens Cost.

There is also another notable Abuse of Words, and that of so contagious an Influence, that according to the Prophet's Expression, *Amos vi. 12. It turns Judgment into Gall, and Righteousness into Hemlock*; and that is, the calling of *Justice Cruelty*, and *Cowardice Mercy*; a fatal and pernicious Confusion of the very best of Things certainly, by which
the

the two main Pillars and Supports of Government and Society, of Policy and Morality, to wit, *Justice and Mercy*, are made utterly useless and ineffectual, nay, rather contrary and prejudicial to those high and noble Purposes.

These Things, I confess, might be further insisted upon, and many more such Instances alledged; but I shall stop here, it being so easy a Matter for every Man to multiply Particulars from his own Observation.

And therefore now to recollect and sum up all that has been delivered upon this vast and even immense Subject; I suppose we have seen enough to deserve the *Wo* or Curse mentioned in the Text over and over; a *Wo* which cannot possibly surmount the Guilt of the Persons and Practices which it stands denounced against, which is so foul, that it justly draws after it all the Vengeance of God in the next World, and the utmost Hatred and Detestation of Men in this. For as it is in *Prov. xxiv. 24. He who says to the Wicked, thou art righteous, him shall the People curse, Nations shall abhor him.* And I suppose the same Curse belongs to him who robs a Man of his Innocence, and says to the *Righteous, thou art wicked.* All, or most of the Miseries and Calamities which afflict Mankind, and turn the World upside down, have been conceived in, and issued from the fruitful Womb of this one villanous Artifice.

For

For cast your Eyes upon the Affairs of *Religion*, and you shall see the best, the purest, and most primitively ordered Church in the World, torn, and broken, and sacrificed to the Rage and Lust of Schism and Sacrilege, only by being libelled and misrepresented, under the false Guise of *Formality, Popery, and Superstition*. You shall see the Ruin of it effected under the Notion of *Reformation*; the Laws of it made odious and ineffectual by the Name of *Persecution*; and lastly, the whole Constitution of it baffled and betrayed by a Company of treacherous trimming, half Conformists, acting under the Vizard of *Moderation*.

From the Church, cast your Eyes upon the State, and see the best, the mildest, and most religious Prince that ever swayed a Scepter, butcher'd, and weltring in his own Blood, before the Gates of his own Royal Palace, by the barbarous Hands of his infinitely obliged, but infinitely cruel and ungrateful Subjects; and this by misreporting him to his People, as a Designer of *Popery and arbitrary Power*, Things as contrary to his gracious Nature and Principles as Light to Darkness; and yet under this Character he was pursued with Fire and Sword, Violence and Rebellion, and at length doom'd to Death by a Sentence as black and false as Hell itself, pronouncing him a *Tyrant, Traitor, Murderer, and publick Enemy*.

Next to this, see the faithfullest of his Friends torn from him and destroy'd, under the Notion of *evil Counsellors*; and the same Trick offered at again in his Son's Time, by an Endeavour to strip him of his Friends too, under the Name of *Pensioners*.

And then, as a Consequent of all this, see the vilest of Men aspiring to, and grasping at the sovereign Power, by endearing themselves to the Rabble under the plausible affected Titles of *publick Spirits, Standers-up for their Country, and for the Liberties, Properties, and the Rights of the Subject*; while inwardly they were *ravening Wolves*, made up of nothing but Tyranny and Atheism, Covetousness and Ambition.

From hence cast your Eyes and Thoughts upon the Concerns of private Families and Persons, and there oftentimes you shall see Husband and Wife irreconcilably divided, Parents estranged from their Children, and Children enraged against their Parents; and all this tragical consuming Flame generally kindled and blown up by the foul Breath of some lying, tale-bearing Wretch, throwing all into a Combustion by feigned Stories.

You may also see the Hope and Support of many a flourishing Family untimely cut off by a Sword of a *drunken Dueller*, in Vindication of something that he miscalls his *Honour*.

Another you may see wasted and undone by *Law-Suits*, and that thro' the false Arts of his unconscionable, greedy Counsel, colouring over crazy, unsound Titles with fallacious, encouraging Pretences.

Again if at any time you see old and long Acquaintances broken off with immortal, inextinguishable Feuds, it is a thousand to one odds but it has happened by the base Offices of some devilish Tongue which has passed between them.

And lastly, you may see others bereaved of the Favour and Countenance of those whom they have deserved best of, and so, crush'd in all their Interests, only by being *misrepresented* by secret Whispers and false Informations.

But it would be endless to recount all Particulars. And therefore in one Word. Do but cast over in your Minds all the schismatical Contrivances against *the Church*; all the seditious Attempts upon *the State*; all the Disturbances of *Families*; and lastly, all the Practices that have passed upon *particular Persons*; by which the Wicked have been encouraged, and the Good oppressed; and you may lodge them all within the Compass of this one comprehensive, boundless common-Place, as being directly derivable from, and naturally resolvable into this one, *Church and State, and Family-con-*

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founding Practice the calling good evil, and evil good.

*Now to God the Father, God the Son,
and God the Holy Ghost, be rendred
and ascribed, as is most due, all Praise,
Might, Majesty, and Dominion, both
now and for evermore, Amen.*



The

The F I R S T

Part or Discourse

C O N C E R N I N G

T E M P T A T I O N .

2 P E T E R ii. 9.

*The Lord knoweth how to deliver the
Godly out of Temptation.*

I Do not know a greater and a juster Ground of Discouragement to wise and thinking Men, with Reference to the high Concerns of their immortal Souls, than to consider, that over and above that *innate Corruption* brought with them into the World, and so mightily strengthened and improved by the continual restless working of the same, in the actual Commission of Sin ever since, that there should, I say, besides this be an external *Agent* and *evil Spirit* incessantly

cessantly blowing up this *Fire* within us, *exasperating, stirring up, and drawing forth* this active Quality in the several mischievous Actings thereof: and this *Evil Spirit* withal, of such Force, such Sagacity, and such unspeakable Vigilance for the compassing of Men's Destruction, as far surpasses all that Men themselves can be brought to do, even for their own Salvation. A sad Case certainly, and such as must needs cast the Issue of the War between them upon very unequal Terms; where the Superior *in Malice* is as much the Superior *in Strength* too; and where (to make the Odds yet greater) *Man* on the one Side must *venture* all, and *the Tempter* on the other has nothing to *lose*.

'Tis true indeed, that the *Will of Man* can never be forced by any created or finite *Spirit*, good or bad, but may still stand its Ground against all Attacks from without. Nevertheless there are so many ways to allure, inveigle, and persuade it by *ill*, but *suitable* Objects from Abroad; that this bare *natural Power*, or rather *Possibility* of resisting them, in the Issue of the Matter, proves but a very poor Security to it, being so often urged and over-born (as it is) by the powerful Impressions, which such Objects are almost continually, and with so much Success, still making upon it.

Nor is it only the present State of corrupt Nature, which gives Force and Efficacy to
these

these importunate Assaults, but it is altogether as manifest, that the fore-mentioned Qualifications of this subtle Agent, even in the State of *Innocence* itself, made him so much too hard for our *First Parents*, that under all the Advantages of that blessed Estate, he got ground of them so speedily, and so effectually, that he made a Shift to out them of *Paradise*, and their *Innocence* too, before they had passed one whole Day in either.

Whereupon an Universal Contagion seizing the whole Mass of Human Nature, and all Mankind; (the *second Adam* only, by his miraculous Conception, excepted) being ever since *born in Sin*, and not only *born*, but fatally *grown up in it*, and made Slaves to it too; how almost could it be imagined, that there should be so much as room, for any further Addition to the forlorn, and miserable Estate of a Creature so weak, so wretched, and so wholly byassed to his own Ruin, as Man, upon this Account, undeniably is? Indeed with so mighty a Byass is he now carried on towards it, that (one would have thought) it might have given even this restless and malicious Spirit himself (were he capable of it) his *Quietus est*: it being hard to judge to what Purpose so skilful an Artist (and so perfectly acquainted with his Business) should employ himself in planting *Engines*, and laying *Trains* to blow

up one, who by the freest Choice of his own Will, and in Spight of all the Principles of *Self-Preservation*, is upon every Turn so ready to destroy himself. He who will needs venture into the *Deep*, with neither Strength nor Skill to encounter the boistrous Element, will quickly find *the Stream* alonemore than sufficient to bear him down, and sink him, without the Concurrence of either *Wind or Tide* to speed his Destruction.

And this, God knows, is but too much our Case. Every one of us, from the bare sway of his own inherent Corruption, carrying enough and enough about him, to assure his final Doom, without any further Impulse from without, to push home and finish the killing Stroke. He who is ready to breath his last by a *Fever*, surely needs not to be dispatched with a *Sword*.

But this is not the worst, nor saddest of a Man's Condition, with Reference to Temptation neither: for though it be too certain, that the Corruption of Man's Nature is such, that it is sufficient to destroy him without the *Tempter's* doing any thing towards it; yet it is as certain also, that it never actually destroys him, but the *Tempter* has an Hand in that fatal Work. Such an Adversary have we the Sons of *Adam* to contend with, an Adversary, who in Conjunction with his two grand Allies, the *World* and the *Flesh*, will be always carrying on an implacable
War

War against Souls. For God has declared so much, and Men have found and felt it, and (whatsoever Atheism or Infidelity may object) neither must the *Justice* of the one be disputed, nor the *Experience* of the other be denied. Nevertheless, from what has been said, this I think may very rationally be inferred, that there cannot be a stronger Argument to evince the Necessity of a Superior *Good Spirit*, to assist, and bear Men through the Difficulties of a Christian Course; than this one Consideration, that besides a Man's own natural Corruption, there is an *evil Spirit* continually active, and intent to seduce and draw him from it. Upon which Account most certainly it is, that the Heart of Man so weak in itself *within*, and so assaulted from *without*, if not born up and assisted by something mightier than itself, is by no Means an equal Match for the Tempter.

In the Prosecution of the Words, I shall consider these two Things,

1st, Who are here to be understood by *the Godly*: And,

2^{dly}, What is here meant by *Temptation*.
And here,

1st, For the first of these; We may take this for a certain, though perhaps an obvious Direction of our Enquiries in this Matter, *viz. That we are not to look or seek for the Godly here spoken of by the Apostle, where, we*
may

may be sure before-hand not to find them; that is to say, amongst such, as with the highest Confidence, or rather Impudence, not only arrogate, but engross this great Character to themselves, such as Measure *their Godliness* by Looks, Postures, and Phrases, by a Jargon of Scriptural Cant, and a flow of some warm rapturous and phantastick Expressions; all according to the sanctified Whine, and peculiar Dialect of those times of Infatuation, when Noise and Non-sense so mightily bore down Sense and Reason, and the *Godliness* then in Vogue turned *Religion* quite out of Doors. It was the very Shibboleth of the Party; nothing being so much in Fashion with them as the *Name*, nor more out of Fashion, and out of sight too, than the Thing itself.

But *Godliness* (blessed be God) is not a mere Word or Pretence, a *Trick of State*, or *Political Engine* to support a Party, or serve a Turn; and much less an *Occasional Cover* for a *stated* Hypocrisy. No, it springs from a nobler Soil, and a deeper Root. And like the great Object of it, God himself, is *the same Yesterday, to Day, and for ever*; in its Original *Divine*, in its Rule *unchangeable*.

And therefore since bare *Negatives* are not to be rested in, where so high a Perfection is to be accounted for; a *Perfection* comprehending in it all the Graces of a Christian; and no less than the Image of God himself

new

new stamp'd upon the Soul, he, and he only, can lay claim to so glorious a Qualification, who is actually *in Covenant* with God, and that not only by *external Profession*, but by *real Relation*; a Relation entitling him to all the Benefits of a *federal Estate*, by coming up to the *Conditions* of it; or, to be yet more particular, he who with a full and fixed Resolution of Heart, has took the whole Law of Christ in the several *Precepts* of it, with the utmost Hardships attending them, for his Portion in this World, and the *Promises* of it for his Inheritance in the next: He who rules his *Appetites* by his *Reason*, and both by his *Religion*: He who makes his Duty his *Business*, till at length he comes to make it his *Delight* too: He, whose sole Design is to *be Pious*, without affecting to be *thought so*: He who lives and acts by a mighty *Principle within*, which the World about him neither sees nor understands: A Principle respecting all God's Commands without *Reserve*: A Principle carrying a Man out to a Course of Obedience, for the *Duration* of it constant, and for the *Extent* of it universal: And lastly in a Word, he, and he only, ought to pass for *Godly* according to the stated, unalterable Rules and Measures of Christianity, who allows not himself in the Omission of any known Duty, or the Commission of the least known Sin. And this certainly will, and nothing less that

that I know of, can, either secure a Man from falling *into Temptation*, or (which is yet a greater Happiness) from falling *by it*. All other Measures not coming up to this Standard are vain, trifling and fallacious, and to all the real Purposes of Religion wholly ineffectual. They give us but a *Godliness* of a Man's own making, and consequently of his own rewarding too, if ever it be rewarded at all. And thus much for the Explication of the first Thing; namely, *Who*, and *What* the *Godly are*, to whom the Text promises so great a Privilege, as to be *delivered from Temptation*.

2dly, The other Thing to be enquired into, and explained by us is, *What is here meant by Temptation*; a Thing better known by its ill Effects, than by the best Description. The Greek Word is *πειρασμός*, which signifies Tryal, and so imports not so much the *Matter*, as the *End* of the Dispensation. So that any Thing *whatsoever which tends to try, and discover what is in the Heart or Will of Man, is and may be (in one respect or other) called a Temptation*. In which Sense, outward *Crosses* and *Afflictions* are so called, and the People of God are bidden by the Apostle *to rejoice, when they fall into divers Temptations*, James i. 2. And according to the several Ways and Methods, whereby God draws forth, and discovers, what is lodged in the Hearts of Men good or bad, God himself

is said *to tempt them*, that is, to *try or prove them*. In which respect he was said to *have tempted Abraham in the xxii^d of Genesis ver. 1.* But (the common and most received use of the Word having added something of *Malignity* to its first and native Signification) generally in Scripture it denotes not only a bare *Tryal*, but such an one as is attended with a Design *to hurt or mischief* the People so *tryed*. In which Sense the Scribes and Pharisees are so often brought in by the Evangelists *tempting our Saviour*; that is, they were still trying him with captious, ensnaring Questions, as we find in *Luke xi. 54.* and elsewhere, *to get something out of his Mouth to accuse and destroy him.* But chiefly and most frequently, the Scripture means by it such a *Tryal*, as is intended to supplant and ruin a Man in his Spiritual Concerns, by inducing him to Sin, and so subjecting him to the fatal Effects and Consequents thereof. And thus, on the contrary, it is said of God, *That he tempts no Man*; in *James i. 13.* This sort of Temptation always proceeding from a Man's own inherent Corruption and Concupiscence, set on work by their trusty Confederate, and Co-worker the Devil, whose peculiar Province, and perpetual Business, being to *tempt Man* this way, he has accordingly, by way of Eminence, appropriated the odious Name of *Tempter* to himself. And therefore, to give a full Account of this

whole Matter in short. *Any Thing or Object whatsoever, whereby a Man, either thro' the Instigation of the Devil, or his Agents, or the Corruption of his own Heart, or the particular Circumstances of his Condition, or all of them together, is apt to be drawn or disposed to some sinful Action or Omission, is that which the Scripture principally, and most properly calls a Temptation.*

And this, I conceive, gives us so true and full an Account of the general Nature of *Temptation*, that no particular sort of it can be assigned, but what is directly comprehended in it, or fairly reducible to it.

As for the Sense in which the Word ought to be taken here, it may be, and no doubt with great Truth is, in the full Latitude of it, applicable to both sorts of *Temptation*. It being no less the Prerogative of God's Goodness and Power to deliver Men from such Tryals as *afflict them*, than from such as are designed to *corrupt* them. Nevertheless, I think it also as little to be doubted, that the Text chiefly respects this latter Signification, and accordingly speaks here most designedly of such a *Deliverance* as breaks the Snares, and defeats the Stratagems, by which the great and mortal Enemy of Mankind is so infinitely busy, first to *debauch*, and then to *destroy Souls*.

Nor can the very Reason of the Words (so far as I can judge) infer any thing else;

for as much as all the Instances here given by the Apostle, in the foregoing Part of this Chapter; as first, of *Persons seduced and drawn aside by false Prophets, and Teachers bringing in damnable Doctrines amongst them*, in the 1st ver. And then of *Noah delivered from that general Inundation of Sin*, by which, one Deluge (as I may so express it) brought upon the World another, in the 5. ver. And lastly, of *Righteous Lot's Deliverance from the filthy Conversation of the Sodomites*, in the 7. ver. are all of them, but so many notable Examples of several Persons, some *delivered to*, and others *delivered from*, such a sort of *Temptation*, as without affecting the *outward Man*, were to shoot their Poyson and Pollution only into the *inmost Powers* of the *Soul or Spirit*, wounding, and working upon that by secret and more killing Impressions.

Add to this, that the *Deliverance from Temptation* here insisted upon, is set forth as a *singular Privilege*, and *Special Act of Favour* vouchsafed by God to the *Righteous*, and that in a very distinguishing way, (as shall be shewn presently; whereas a *Deliverance from temporal Crosses and Calamities*, can hardly, with any Congruity to other Places, and Passages of Scripture be termed so; since such Crosses, for the most Part, are there declared to be the *Lot and Portion* of the *Godly* in this World, the known Mark
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of their *Calling*, a Proof of their *Saintship*, and the very Badge of their *Profession*.

Nevertheless, allowing this Sense of the Word not to be wholly excluded here, the Argument we may draw from thence, for our present Assertion, will run, *a fortiore*, thus. That if it be so signal a Mercy, for God to deliver the Saints from the meer Out-side and Surface of Misery, in those temporal Pressures and Adversities, which, though possibly they may sometimes incommode *the Man*, yet can never reach *the Saint*, and though they break the *Casket*, can never come at *the Jewel*, certainly it must needs be a Mercy of a much higher Rate to deliver them from such *Temptations*, as carry nothing but Hell and Death along with them, and are of so strong, so malign, and so fatal an Influence upon the Soul, as to drive at nothing less than its utter Ruin and Damnation.

And now, if upon what has been said, it be here enquired, whether they are *the Righteous only* whom God delivers from Temptation, and that no such *Deliverances* are ever vouchsafed by him to any of the contrary Character ?

I answer, that I can find nothing in *Scripture* or *Reason* to found such a Doctrine upon ; but that such *Deliverances* both *may be*, and sometimes *are* vouchsafed to Persons, far enough from being reckoned *Godly*, either

ther in the Accounts of God or Man. And First, *That they may be so*; we need no other Reason to evince it than this, that God in these Cases, may very well restrain the *Actions*, without working any Change upon the *Will or Affections*. And this, both with reference to the *Evil Spirit* himself; whom he may controul, and keep from tempting; as likewise with reference to *wicked Men*, from whom he may, in several Instances, cut off the Opportunities of sinning, or complying with the *Tempter*, and yet leave them as *habitually wicked* as they were before. God's *restraining Grace* often extending itself to such, as *his sanctifying Grace* never reaches. And in the next Place. That such *Deliverances* not only *may be*, but sometimes *actually are* afforded, to Persons represented under no Note of Piety or Virtue, but much otherwise, those three memorable Examples of *Abimeleck, Esau, and Balaam, the first in the xx. of Genesis, the 2d in the xxxiii. of Genesis, and the other in the xxii. of Numbers*, sufficiently demonstrate.

So that we may rationally conclude that even wicked Persons also are sometimes Sharrers in such *Deliverances*; but still so, that this by all means ought to be observed withal; that the said *Deliverances* are dealt forth to these *two different Sorts of Men*, upon very *different Grounds*: viz. to the former upon the *Stock of Covenant or Promises*;

to the latter upon the Stock of *uncovenanted* Mercy, and the free overflowing Egress of the divine Benignity, often exerting itself upon such as have no Claim to it at all. The Sovereign Author of all Good, in this, as in innumerable other Cases, scattering some of the Bounties of his *common* Grace, as well as those of *Nature*, amongst the Sons of Men, for the wise and just Ends of his Providence in the Government of the World; which would quickly dissolve and sink into Confusion, should even *the wickedest of Men* be always as *wicked*, as the Tempter (if he had his will) would assuredly make them.

Now this Exposition of the Word thus premised, I shall cast the Prosecution of them under these Three Particulars.

1st, To shew *how far* God delivers Persons truly Pious out of Temptation.

2^{dly}, To shew *what is* the grand Motive or impulsive Cause inducing God thus to deliver them. And,

3^{dly}, and *Lastly*, To shew *why and upon* what Grounds, this is to be reputed so great a Mercy, and so transcendent a Privilege.

And first for the first of these, namely, *how far God delivers Persons truly Pious from Temptation*. This I shall endeavour to shew, by considering them with Reference to *Temptation*, these three Ways.

1st, As before they enter into it.

2dly, As they are actually entred into it. And,

3dly, and *Lastly*, As they are in some Degree prevailed upon by it.

All Ways of Deliverance from it being accordingly reducible to, and comprehended within the Compass of these Three, *viz.*

1st, *Of being kept from it*; as the Church of *Philadelphia* was, in *Revel. iii. 10 ver.*

2dly, *Of being supported under it*; as *Joseph* in *Genesis xxxix*; and *St. Paul* in the *2 Corinthians ch. xii. and ver. 9.* (we read) were.

And,

3dly, and *Lastly*, *Of being brought out of it*, as in *Luke xxii. 31.* we find *St. Peter* to have been, and as all true Penitents and sincere Converts never fail to be.

Each of which particular Heads shall be distinctly considered by us. And,

1st of all; God delivers by way of *Prevention*, or keeping off the *Temptation*; which of all other Ways, is, doubtless the *surest*, as the *surest* is unquestionably the *best*. For by this is set a mighty Barrier between the Soul, and the earliest Approaches of its mortal Enemy. Whereas, on the contrary, the *first Step* in any destructive Course, still prepares for the *Second*, and the *Second* for the *Third*; after which there is no *Stop*, but the Progress is infinite; for as much as the *Third* more powerfully disposes to the *Fourth*

than the *First* to the *Second* ; and so the Advance proportionably goes on.

Which being so, and the Soul no less than the Body, being subject to so many Distempers, too likely to prove fatal to it, must not *preventing Remedies* in all Reason, be both the gentlest, and the safest for it too ? Distance from Danger is the strongest Fence against it : And that Man needs not fear *burning* (be the Fire never so fierce) who keeps himself from being so much as *scorched*.

If we consider the Sin of the fall'n Angels themselves, there might without dispute have been a *Prevention* of it, though no *Recovery* after it ; and a *keeping of their first Station* (as the Apostle expresses it) though when once quitted, no Postliminious Return to it, no retrieving of a lost Innocence, or a forfeited Felicity.

For which Causes the preventing Methods of Grace may deservedly pass, for some of the prime Instances of the Divine Mercy, to Men in this World. For though it ought to be owned for an eminent Act of Grace to restore one actually fallen, yet there are not wanting Arguments to persuade that it is a greater to keep one from falling. Not to break a Limb is more desirable, than to have it set and healed, though never so skilfully and well. *Preservation* in this, as in
many

many other Cafes, * being better a great deal than *Restoration*; since after all is done, it is odds, but the Scar will remain when the Wound is cured, and the Danger over.

And therefore happy no doubt, by a distinguished Sort of Happiness are those Favourites of Heaven, who have both Omnipotence and Omniscience, infinite Power, and infinite Wisdom, jointly engaged by infinite Mercy, so to guard and watch over them through all the various Turns, and hazardous Encounters in their Christian Course, as to bring them off from the Enemy safe and untouched, and to work their Deliverance rather by *Rescue* than *Recovery*. It is a Work in which God (as I may so speak) shews his Art and Skill. *God knows how to deliver the Godly*, says the Text. The whole Action is carried on by *preventing Grace*, under the Conduct of that high Attribute of God's *Knowledge*; and especially that noble Branch of it, his *Fore-knowledge*, by which he has the remotest Futurities, and the loosest Contingencies, under a certain and exact View. For though indeed the divine Knowledge (as all other Knowledge) be of itself inoperative; (the proper Nature of Knowledge being only to apprehend and judge of what comes before it, and rather to *suppose* than to *work* upon its

* See the Tenth Sermon in the Second Volume of my Sermons, concerning Prevention of Sin: upon 1 Sam. xxv. 32, 33.

Object :) yet if the Divine Knowledge did not certainly and infallibly foresee and comprehend every Turn, Motion, and Fore-determination of Man's Will, with reference to every Object or Motive that can possibly be presented to it, how could God so steadily and effectually ward off all those Evils and Temptations, which the several Events, Accidents, and Occasions of our Lives (all of them variously affecting our Wills) would from time to time expose us to? Omnipotence itself could not *certainly* prevent a Danger, if Omniscience did not *foresee* it. For where there is no *Prescience* there can be no *Prevention*. And this is a Demonstration, that all such preventive Deliverances are so peculiarly and wholly from God, that for want of this Perfection no Man living can possibly thus deliver himself. *I will guide thee with mine Eye* (says God) *Psalms xxxii. 8.* Next to the protecting Shelter of God's *Wing*, is the securing Prospect of his *Eye*.

Numerous are the Deliverances that God works for us, which we see, but infinitely more those which we do not see, but he does. For how often is the Scene of our Destruction contrived and laid by the Tempter? how often are his Nets spread for us, and those of too curious and fine a Thread to be discernable by our Eye; and we go surely treading on to our own Ruin, when suddenly the Mercy of a preventing Providence

vidence stops us in our Walk, and pulls back our Foot from the fatal Snare!

Unspeakable are the Advantages vouchsafed to Mankind by God's *preventing Grace*; if we consider how apt a *Temptation* is to diffuse, and how prone our Nature is to receive an Infection. It is dangerous dwelling even in the Suburbs of an infected City. Not only the *Touches*, but also the very *Breath* of a *Temptation* is poysonous; and there is sometimes (if I may so express it) a *Contagion* even without a *Contact*.

And if the Conscience has not wholly lost its native Tenderneſs, it will not only dread the *Infection of a Wound*, but also the *Asperſion of a Blot*. For though the Soul be not actually corrupted and debauched by a *Temptation*; yet it is something to be ſullied and *blown upon* by it, to have been in the dangerous Familiarities of Sin, and in the next Approach and Neighbourhood of Destruction. Such being the Nature of Man, that it is hardly poſſible for him to be *near* an ill Thing and not the *worſe* for it.

For if we accurately obſerve the inward Movings and Actions of the Heart, we ſhall find that *Temptation* wins upon it by very ſmall, ſecret, and almoſt inſenſible Gradations. Perhaps in its firſt Converſe with a tempting Object, it is not preſently ſurprized with a *Deſire* of it, but does it not hereby come to loſe ſome of its former *Averſeneſs*

to it? Possible at first View it may not esteem it *Amiable*, but does it not begin to think it *less Ugly*? Its *Love* may not be yet kindled, but is not its former *loathing* something abated? The Encroaches of a Temptation are so strangely insinuating, that no Security under it can be comparable to a being remote from it. And therefore if we hate its *Friendship*, let us dread its *Acquaintance*, shun its *Converse*, and keep a Loof off from its *Company*. For he who would gain a compleat Triumph over it, must know that to grapple with it is at best a *Venture*, but to fly from it is *certain Victory*.

And if so, where can a Man be so safe as in the Arms of Sin-preventing Grace? The sovereign Influence of which will appear not only from those peculiar Effects of it, upon the Pious and the Virtuous, but also from those great Things done by it, even for the worst and wickedest Part of Mankind, (as we hinted before) and those indeed so great, (how little soever taken Notice of) that without them common Society could not possibly subsist; but the moral and political Frame of the World would fall back into a fouler and more deformed Chaos, than that out of which this material One was first produced. For how come Men generally, and that so extremly against the Bent of Nature, to submit to *Laws*? *Laws* which for the most part lay a restraint upon their
strongest

strongest Appetites, and which, if they would but generally agree to break, and to throw off, could signify nothing. How comes the Multitude to have such an Awe upon their Spirits for *Governors* and *Magistrates*, tho' they know themselves so vastly superior in Strength to those who govern them? And why rather is not all Order and Government upon these Terms utterly confounded and turn'd topsy-turvy, by Thefts, Rapes, Incests, Perjuries and Murders, and irresistibly born down by an overflowing Torrent of all Kinds of Villany, forcing its Way thro' the very Bowels of it? Is it because there is not Corruption enough in Man's Nature to prompt and carry him out to all these Enormities? Or because there are not sinful Objects enough to inflame and draw forth this Corruption? No, it is but too sadly manifest that there is too plentiful a Stock of both, to suffer the World to be quiet one Moment, if they could but once, like two mighty Seas, meet and join, and flow in together.

But all the Stop is from an infinitely wise, preventing Power, which keeps all in order here below, by separating between ill Objects and worse Appetites, by cutting off the *Opportunities* of Sin, and so both diverting and defeating the *Temptation*. For how many might, and without doubt would have stoln, as *Achan* did, had the same Allurement been

been play'd before them? How many might have committed *David's Murder and Adultery*, had they been under *David's Circumstances*? How many might have *denied and forsworn* Christ with St. *Peter*, had they been surpris'd with the *same Danger*? How great a Part of the *Innocence* of the World is nothing else but *want of Opportunity* to do the Wickedness they have a mind to? And how many forbear sinning, not because God's Grace has wrought upon their Wills, but because a merciful *Providence* has kept off the *Occasion*.

And thus much for the first Degree of God's delivering Men from *Temptation*; a Benefit, which for the common Ends of his Providence, he sometimes vouchsafes to all Sorts of Men promiscuously, but most eminently and frequently to the Good and Pious, whom for higher and better Ends he often rescues and preserves from the first Offers and Approaches of sinful Objects and Occasions; and thereby gives his first Answer to that most important and divine Petition in the Lord's-Prayer; *Lead us not into Temptation*.

2dly, *We are now in the next Place* to consider such Persons as advanced a Step further, and as *they are actually entred into Temptation*; and so also God is at hand for their Deliverance. But here we must first premise, what it is *to enter into Temptation*. And that

in one word is, for a Man to meet with such Objects, to converse with such Occasions, and to be brought under such Circumstances of Life, as have in them a peculiar Fitness to provoke and draw forth the Working of his Corruption, whatsoever it be; but especially of that particular Corruption which is strongest and most predominant in him. So that a Man finds something ready to take hold of his Heart and Affections, which he cannot easily keep off, or disengage himself from. Thus when a covetous Man meets with Opportunities of Gain, fit to feed and gratify his *Covetousness*; or a proud aspiring Man with Honours and Preferments, suited to his *Pride and Ambition*; or lastly, a lustful Man with Objects or Incentives apt to kindle and inflame his *Lust*, with other the like Provisions for the several sinful Appetites of Man's corrupt Nature, such an one must know that *he is entered into Temptation*; his Standing is slippery, and his Retreat doubtful, and what the Issue will be in his final coming off, God alone knows, in whose sole Power it is to fetch him out of the Jaws of Death, and to work his Deliverance.

It is possible indeed, that by the peculiar and extraordinary Favours of divine Mercy, a Person so engaged may come off clear and entire, so that the Temptation shall not be able so much as to fasten, or make the least Impression upon him; but then this is very rare,

rare, and no more than *possible*, and not to be effected but by a Power infinite and divine. For as it was God who suspended the natural Force of that material Fire from acting upon the Bodies of the three Children mentioned in *Daniel* iii. so it is God alone who must controll the Fury of this spiritual Flame from seizing upon the Soul, having always so much Fuel and fit Matter there for it to prey upon.

And for an eternal Monument of his Goodness, he has not left us without some such heroick Instances as these upon Record in his Word, that so the Saints may receive double Courage and Confidence, having their Deliverance not only sealed, and secured to them by *Promise*, but also that Promise ratified and made good to them by *Precedents* and Examples, like so many Stars appearing, both to *direct* and to *comfort* the benighted Traveller.

And here, first of all, we have *Joseph* brought under as fierce a Trial as the Wit and Malice of Hell could contrive, being tempted to a vile Action by two of the most staggering Inducements that could well work upon the Mind of Man, to wit, Power and Favour in his Lord's Family, if he complied with the Temptation; and the Shame, Infamy and Reproach of the very Villany he was tempted to, in case he refused it. And no doubt so long as the Slander

der was believed of him, he lay in Prison under as black a Note of Ingratitude and Baseness, and with as great an Abhorrence of all good Men, as the Charge of so foul a Crime, if true, must deservedly have branded him with. And now, could any thing be imagined so grievous and intolerable to a virtuous Mind, as to bear the Infamy of a lewd and base Act, only for refusing to commit it? Yet this was the Plunge and Temptation which he was brought into, but God brought him out of it, and that without the least Spot or Sully, but with a Mind as clear, and a Conscience as unblemish'd, as the *Reputation* it has given his immortal Name to all Posterity.

In the next place let us cast our Eye upon *Moses* in the *Court of Pharaoh*, that is, in the Shop of the Devil, the School of Vice, the Scene and Sink of all Lust and Impurity, and the very high Road to Perdition; so that perhaps the *Court of Egypt* was a greater *Plague* than any that afterwards besel *Egypt*; a Place in which he was to converse with all Sorts of Allurement, to walk upon Traps and Snares, to have all his Senses accosted with continual Messages from the Devil; and in a word, to see, hear, and taste nothing but *the Pleasures of Sin*, and scarce to be able to look off from a Temptation. This was his Condition, and thus he was bred and train'd up, as *the Son of Pharaoh's Daughter*,

ter, a *Candidate* for Hell, and a *Probationer* for Damnation. And yet even here (as it were) in the very Bosom of *Sin* and *Death*, God preserved him innocent and untouch'd, and like *Gideon's Fleece*, clean and dry, while all was drench'd with a foul and a killing Dew round about him. Nor did God preserve him only from *ill Things*, but prepared him also for *great*, and perhaps the greatest that Providence ever thought fit to atchieve by the Hand of a meer Man.

Again, Such another Instance have we in *David*, encounter'd with a Temptation which seldom happens, and is seldomer resisted; to wit, an Offer to make his Way to a promised Throne and Scepter by the Blood of his bitter and avowed Enemy, then perfectly at his Mercy; and a greater Temptation certainly could hardly befall a Man, than that which should promise him with one Stroke both to gratify his *Ambition*, and to satisfy his *Revenge*, to put a *Crown upon his Head*, and his mortal Enemy *under his Feet*. And yet as dazzling and alluring as this Offer was, *David* had something within him stronger than the strongest Assaults of these two violent and transporting Affections; something that would not suffer him to be disloyal to gain a Crown, nor receive *Possession* of that Kingdom from the Devil, of which God himself had given him the *Reversion*. No Temptation could make him
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snatch God's Work out of his own Hands, whose sole Prerogative it is to dispose of Crowns and Kingdoms, to *appoint*, and to *exclude*, and to *hasten* as well as *alter Successions*.

But now, may there not be yet a greater Temptation than either of these? something more glistering than a *Crown*? and more luscious than *Revenge*? If there may, surely it was that which *St. Paul* and *Barnabas* met with in *Acts* xvi. the Offer of *divine Worship* and *Adoration*. For *to be like God* was the first Temptation, which robb'd Man of his *Innocence*; and so pertinaciously was this urged upon these two Apostles by the Men of *Lystra*, that it is said, *ver. 18. that Paul and Barnabas could hardly restrain them from doing Sacrifice to them*; for the *Oxen*, the *Garlands*, and the *Priests of Jupiter*, were all ready for that Purpose. But now, how did this strange *Ἀπωθέωσις* (think we) affect and work upon these holy Men? Why, to be sure not as it would have work'd upon a *Simon Magus*, whose whole Heart, Soul and Study, was set upon being canonized and worshipped by the sottish *Samaritans* for a kind of *Demi-god*, *Acts* viii. 10. Nor yet as it would have affected an *Herod*, who would needs be a God too, tho' of the *Rabbles* and the *Devil's* making, *Acts* xii. 22. But these Men, whose Hearts God had touch'd with a true and tender Sense of Religion, were so far from being

being exalted, that they were cast down, humbled, and astonished at such impious and extravagant Honours; and no doubt rejected them with so great an Horror and Detestation, that they would much rather have *been sacrificed themselves*, than have endured any *to sacrifice* to them.

Now in all these notable Instances of Success against Temptation, we must observe this; that the tempting Object was brought home and close to them, and laid directly before them, and that with all imaginable Advantages of Allurement, together with full Opportunity and Power to commit the Sin which they were tempted to; and yet the Persons so tempted came off (as we have shewn) not in the least tainted or prevailed upon. From all which it is evident that God secures his Saints against Temptation, not only by *antecedent Preventions* keeping them from it, but also by his *subsequent Grace* supporting them under it, and bringing them victorious out of it; which is the second *Degree of Deliverance*.

3dly, and lastly, We are to consider the Persons hitherto spoken of, as not only entered into Temptation, but also *as in some Measure prevailed upon by it*. For that a Person truly pious, sincere, and sound at the Heart towards God, may thro' the Inveiglements of the World, and the Frailty of his own Nature, be sometimes surpris'd, and
for

for a while drawn into the Ways of Sin, I do no more doubt or question, than that a sound and healthful Constitution may sometimes be disordered with Heats and Colds, battered with Wounds and Bruises, and indisposed by Swellings and Breakings-out; and yet all this without destroying the main substantial Health and Habit of the Body. And he who asserts the contrary, and acknowledges no *Holiness* but what is *Perfection*, will upon Trial find it a much easier Matter, by the faulty Passages of his Life, to prove himself *sinful and unholy*, than by the very best and holiest of them to prove himself *perfect*.

But that I may give some Light and Resolution to this great and weighty Case of Conscience, how far a Person truly godly and regenerate may, without ceasing to be so, be prevailed upon by Temptation, I will here set down the several Degrees, Steps and Advances, by which a Temptation or sinful Proposal gradually wins and gains upon the Soul, and those all of them comprised in St. *James* i. 14, 15. *Every Man* (says the Apostle) *is tempted when he is drawn away of his own Lust and enticed. Then when Lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth Sin; and Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth Death.* I say, in these Words we have a full and distinct Account of five several Steps or Gradations, by

which a Temptation grows upon, and at length prevails over the Souls of Men.

1st, The first of which we may call *Seduction*. As when the Mind being surpris'd, or suddenly struck with the taking Representation of some sinful *Act* or *Object*, begins to think of it, so as by such Thoughts to be for the present *drawn aside* from its Duty. For Seduction literally and properly signifies a Man's being drawn away, or drawn aside. As the *Greek* Word here has it. He is ὑπὸ τῆς ἐπιθυμίας ἐξελκόμενος, drawn off, or drawn away by his Concupiscence. As for Instance. When a Man is intent upon the honest Works of his Calling, and two or three lewd Companions come, and desire his Company to a Debauch; here he first begins to hearken to the Proposal, and to think with himself of the *Pleasure* and *Satisfaction* which he might find by complying with it. During which Thought he ceases for that time to intend the Business he was upon before, or to employ his Mind about it. And this is *Seduction*, the first invading Step of a Temptation, whereby it seizes a Man's Thoughts, and actually draws him off from his Duty; by diverting the Intention of his Mind from that to something else; much like the first unbending of a Bow, which tho' it does not spoil it, yet for the present renders it unserviceable.

2^{dly}, The

2dly, The second Degree of Temptation may be called *Enticement* or *Allurement*. As when a Man does not only think upon a sinful Object or Proposal, but also suffers his Thoughts to dwell, and (as it were) to brood upon it with *Delight*, pleasing his Imagination by frequent Reflections upon it, and representing it to himself under its most advantageous Colours and Circumstances, while he thus turns and rolls it about in his Fancy. And this is expressed here by the next *Greek Word* $\Delta\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\alpha\zeta\omicron\upsilon\mu\epsilon\omicron$, which the Translation renders *enticed*, and imports in it a Metaphor taken from the Practice of such as cast, or lay *some Bait before any Fish or Fowl*; which, as soon as they spy it, do for a while view, and look upon it with Appetite and Pleasure, before they are brought to take it in, or swallow it. Now if a Temptation chance to be stopt here, the main and principal Drift of it is defeated; nevertheless this is a great and a dangerous Step, for when it comes so far, it rarely happens but it proceeds farther. And therefore,

3dly, The third Degree is, when after such Possession had of the *Thoughts* and *Fancy*, the Temptation comes to make its way into the *Consent of the Will*, and to gain that great Fort also; so that the Mind begins to purpose, and accordingly to contrive the Commission of the Sin proposed to it: and this the *Greek Text* here calls $\sigma\upsilon\lambda\lambda\alpha\mu\beta\acute{\alpha}\nu\epsilon\iota\upsilon$ to con-

ceive ; $\acute{\alpha}\tau\alpha \delta\epsilon \acute{\epsilon}\pi\iota\theta\upsilon\mu\acute{\iota}\alpha \sigma\upsilon\lambda\lambda\alpha\epsilon\delta\delta\sigma\alpha$, when Lu-
 or Concupiscence has conceived ; so that th
 Soul hereby grows (as it were) *big, and im-
 pregnate* with a Temptation. In which Case
 as all immoderate Fulness naturally endea-
 vours after Evacuation and Vent, so the Soul
 now becomes restless, and (as it were) *in
 Labour*, till it disburdens itself, and dischar-
 ges what it has thus *conceived* by some sinful
 Act or Commission. And this directly in-
 troduces and brings in

4thly, The fourth Degree of *Prevalence*,
 which a Temptation gets over the Soul ; and
 that is, the actual Eruption of it in the Per-
 petration or *Commission of the Sin* suggested
 to it ; and this in the fore-mentioned Place
 of St. James is called $\tau\acute{\iota}\lambda\epsilon\upsilon\sigma\alpha\iota \acute{\alpha}\mu\alpha\rho\tau\acute{\iota}\alpha\upsilon$, to *bring
 forth Sin* ; when Lust or Concupiscence in
 the Heart sends forth a cursed Brood or
 Litter in the Actions ; like a Fountain, which
 having been for some time imprison'd and
 pent up in the Bowels of the Earth, at length
 forces its way through, and casts forth its
 Streams *with a violent, uncontroll'd Effusion*.

5thly, The fifth and last Degree, com-
 pleting the Victory which Temptation ob-
 tains over a Man, is, when Sin comes to
 that Pitch *as to reign*, and by a *frequent ha-
 bitual Commission* of it, to *domineer and lord it*
 in a Man's Conversation ; in respect of which
 we are said, *Rom. vi. 17. to be the Servants of
 Sin*, as not being in our own Power, nor
 having

having the Disposal and Command of our own Faculties, but upon all Occasions being turned and carried about by the tyrannical, impure Dictates of an over-ruling Corruption ; in which respect also we are said, *Rom. vii. 23. to be led captive by Sin*, as being conquer'd and over-master'd by the violent Assaults of it, and then (as it were) pinion'd and fetter'd (as Slaves and conquer'd Persons use to be) and so by consequence put out of all possibility either of Resistance or Escape.

And this the Apostle St. *James* in the fore-cited Place calls *τελευτῆν ἁμαρτίαν*, the finishing of Sin ; ἢ ὅτι ἁμαρτία δουλεύει θάνατον, *when Sin is finished it brings forth Death*. And it is Frequency and Continuance in Sin which properly *finishes* it ; for it is this which gives it its full Maturity and utmost Perfection, which habituates, and even turns it into *another Nature*, which a single Act or Commission of Sin cannot do. And when a Man comes once in this Manner, not only to *act Sin*, but even to *be acted* and possessed by it, as an absolute Slave to all its Commands, he is then ripe for Hell and Perdition, and fit only to be sent thither by the next destroying Providence.

These are the several Degrees by which a Temptation grows and prevails upon the Hearts of Men ; which that I may the better represent and set before you at one View, I shall gather and sum them up all into one

Instance; and it shall be that of *Demas* mentioned by the Apostle, 2 *Tim.* iv. 10. *Demas hath forsaken us, having loved this present World.*

Here we will first consider *Demas* in full Communion with the Church, and a zealous Professor of Christianity; during which strict and self-denying Profession, it is suggested to his Mind (by the Devil we may be sure) what Profit and Advantage he might reap by relinquishing this severe Course, and swimming with the common Stream of the World. And this Thought prevails so far with him, as to take him off from his accustomed Strictness in the actual Pursuit of his Duty. And this is the first Degree of Temptation, which is called *Seduction*. From this he proceeds to entertain and feed his Mind with frequent Thoughts of those worldly Gains and Emoluments, reflecting upon 'em with much Pleasure and Complacency. And this is the *second Degree of Temptation*, which the Scripture calls a *being enticed or beguiled*. From this he goes on, and from the Pleasure of those Thoughts begins to *purpose* and intend to put them in Execution. And this is that *third Degree of Temptation*, by which Sin is *said to conceive*. From hence he makes a Step further, and actually lays down the Profession of Christianity, and so striking off to the World, fully executes those Purposes and Intentions. Which is the *fourth Degree* of

of Temptation, by which *Sin is said to bring forth*. And lastly, having come so far, he adds the concluding Cast, and *continues and preserves* in the sinful Pursuit of his worldly Advantages, never returning, nor recovering himself by Repentance to his former Profession. And thus at length we see him got to the top of his Sin, which by this *Perseverance* in it properly *finishes and compleats*, and so stands registred in the black Roll of *final Apostates*.

Having thus reckoned up the several Degrees of Temptation, and set before you the fatal Round and Series of the Devil's Methods for destroying Souls, let us now in the next Place enquire, how far God vouchsafes to deliver the Pious and Sincere out of them.

In answer to which, I first of all affirm, that God's Methods in this Case are very various, and not to be determined or declared by any one standing or universal Assertion.

Sometimes by a total and entire Deliverance, he delivers them from *every Degree and Encroach* of a Temptation.

Sometimes he lets them fall into the first Degree of it, and receive it into their Thoughts; but then delivers them from the second, which is to *cherish and continue it there*, by frequent pleasing Reflections upon it

Sometimes he gives way to this too, but then hinders it from coming to a full *Purpose and Consent* of Will.

Sometimes he lets it go thus far also, and suffers Sin to conceive by such a *Purpose* or *Consent*; but then, by a kind of spiritual Abortion, stifles it in the very Birth, and so keeps it from breaking forth into *actual Commission*.

And fourthly, for Reasons best known to his most wise Providence, he sometimes permits a *Temptation* to grow so powerful, as to have *Strength to bring forth*, and to defile the Soul with one or more gross *actual Eruptions*.

But then, in the last place, by a mighty overpowering Grace, he *very often*, as some assert, or *always*, as others affirm, keeps it from an absolute, entire, and final Conquest. So that Sin never comes to that height as to *reign* in the Godly, to bear sway, and become *habitual*. But tho' its Endeavours are not always *extinguished*, nor its Sallyings out wholly *stopped*, yet its *Dominion* is broke. It may sometimes *bruise* and *wound*, but it shall never *kill*. It may possibly be *committed*, but it shall never come so far as to be *finished*. But the Spirit of God will interpose and cut it short in its Progress. This I say * is the Judgment of some in this great and arduous Point, who accordingly apply that glorious supporting Promise made in *Rom. vi. 14.* to all

* Memorand. That there are some Remarks of the same Nature, concerning the Steps and Progress of Sin, in the 10th Session of my second Volume, p. 508, 109, 510.

who are actually in a State of Grace, *that Sin shall not have Dominion over them.*

Now the foregoing Particulars, upon a due Improvement of them, will naturally teach us these two great and important Lessons.

1st, Concerning the singular *Goodness* as well as *Wisdom* of our great *Lawgiver*, even in the *strictest* and *severest* *Precepts* of our Religion.

2^{dly}, The other concerning the best and surest Method of dealing with the *Tempter*, and his *Temptations*.

Of each of which very briefly.

1st, And first for the first of them. The severest *Precepts* of Christianity seem to be those, which abridge Men in the very *first* *Motions* and *Desires* of their corrupt *Affections*. Such as are delivered in the fifth Chapter of *St. Matthew*. According to which, *Anger* passes in the Gospel Account for *Murder*, and *Looking* and *Lusting* for *Adultery*. Which are hard Lessons, you will say, and indeed considered barely in themselves, cannot well appear otherwise. But then, if you consider withal, that the just Reward of *Murder* and *Adultery* without Repentance, (which is not so easy a Work as some imagine) is certain and eternal Damnation, and that *Lust* and *Anger* directly lead to them, is it not the Height of *Wisdom*, and *Goodness* too, to hinder

hinder the Consummation of those Soul waſting Sins, by obliging us to withſtand them in their firſt Infancy and Beginnings? For then it is certain that they may be dealt with, and ſuppreſſed with much more eaſe, than when by ſeveral Degrees of *Luſt* and *Deſire* cheriſhed and allowed, they are ready to break forth, and (as it were) even force their way into actual Commiſſion. Is it not a much ſafer and ſurer way to Victory, to attack an Enemy in his Weakneſs, than in his full Strength, while he is yet levying his Forces, than when he has actually taken the Field? To cruſh the *Cockatrice* in the Egg, than to grapple with it when it is grown a *Serpent*? Is it not much eaſier to prevent the *Conception* of Sin, than to ſuffer it to *conceive*, and then to forbid it *to bring forth*? To ſuffer *Luſt* and *Anger* to boil, and rage, and ferment in a Man's Breſt without Controul, and then to damn him for a *luſtful* or *revengeful* Act, which perhaps after ſuch a Progreſs made by thoſe Sins in his Deſires, it is ſcarce *morally* in his *Power* to forbear.

Certainly it is a much greater Mercy, and Tenderneſs to the Souls of Men, to repreſent the firſt Movings of the Heart towards any forbidden Object, as unlawful in themſelves, and deſtructive in their Conſequence, and thereby to incite the Soul to a vigorous Reſiſtance of them, while they may be maſter'd, and with ten times leſs Trouble *extinguished*,
than

than after they are once actually committed, they can *be repented* of? No doubt Sin is both more easily and effectually kept from *beginning*, than being once *begun*, it can be stopped from *going on*. For every, even the least Motion towards Sin, not immediately check'd (tho' it be but in the Thoughts) is a certain Step to a farther Degree, and consequently a dangerous Preparative to the very last Completion of it. And therefore all those Precepts of Christ, which seem at first view to carry with them so much of Rigor and Severity, are indeed quite contrary, and nothing else but the gracious and benign Contrivances of a superlative Wisdom and Mercy combining to do us good; of *Wisdom*, as suggesting the best Course to prevent Sin, and of *Mercy*, as prescribing *the surest Way* to save the Soul.

2dly, The other great Lesson, which we may learn from the foregoing Particulars, is concerning the most effectual Method of dealing with the *Tempter* and his *Temptations*; and that is, to follow the Method of their dealing with us. A Temptation never *begins* where it intends *to make an end*.

Would the Devil tempt a Man *to Rebellion*? He will not persuade him to set up his Standard, to take up Arms, and declare himself immediately, unless he have to deal with one who is as much *Fool* as *Knave* (a very unfit Composition to make a Rebel of;) but he

he will first tempt him to *Ambition*, then to *Discontent*, then to *murmuring* or *libelling* against his Superiors, and from that to caballing with factious and seditious *Malecontents* like himself, and by these several Ascents and Degrees the Tempter will effectually form and fashion him into a perfect *Absalom*, a *Cataline*, or a *Cromwell*, in time.

Or would he work a Man up to the height of Debauchery or Uncleanness? Why, in such a Case it would be too black and impudent a Proposal to bid him leap into his Neighbour's Bed presently. And therefore he will make his Approaches like a more experienc'd Artift, first inveigling him with *loose Thoughts*, from thence leading him to *impure Desires*, and from such Desires to the further Incentives of lewd, lustful, and licentious Conversation, and by these several Stages of Filth and Folly, he shall at length arrive at such a Pitch of Guilt and Infamy, as shall render him a publick Nufance, a very Pest and Infection, and able to give the very Air he breathes in the Plague, or something worse.

These are some of the Devil's Methods by which he tempts and destroys Souls; and such as are spiritually wise will take the very same Course to preserve them. So that, would a Man keep the Devil out of his Life and Actions, Let him keep him out of his Thoughts and Desires. And so long as he
observes

observes this way of dealing with him, that Man surely can be in no danger of the Guilt of *Murder*, who makes a Conscience of the first Sallies of an *angry Thought*, or an abusive Word; nor is he under any likelihood of being ever brought to *defile his Neighbour's Bed*, who dares not allow himself in a *wanton Look* or a *lewd Desire*.

But on the contrary, can any one in his Wits think to secure himself from the Practice of any Vice, after he has suffer'd it to fix and seat itself in his Affections? Will he let the Devil (the most expert of *Wrestlers*) *get within him*, and then expect that he should not *throw him*? The divine Wisdom I am sure prescribes us quite other Methods for our spiritual Security, even the sure and sovereign Methods of *Prevention*. God's Prescription is, that we bestir ourselves betimes, that we *nip* Sin when it begins to *bud* in the *Thoughts*, and *crop* it off as soon as it *shoots forth* in the *Desires*. And tho' possibly such severe Disciplines and Restraints of ourselves may look but like Chimera's or Romances to Persons immersed in their *Sensuality*, and enslaved *to their Vice*, yet they are really great and necessary Duties, and such as *must be* practis'd, and therefore certainly *may*.

And the better to convince us that they are so, let this one Consideration always dwell upon our Minds; that there is no Man so far hardened by, and overgrown with

with Sin at present, but there was a time of his Life once, in which his Heart could have served him to have done all this. And if by a long inveterate Course of sinning, he has since (in effect) sinned away his *Liberty* and his *Conscience* so far, as to become *insensible* and *inflexible*, and unable to be wrought upon by that, which would both have wrought, and prevail'd upon him heretofore; such a *moral* acquir'd *Impotence* ought, in all Reason, to lie at his own Door; for it is certain that he cannot charge it upon God, whose *Wisdom, Justice, and Goodness*, is such, that he never fails those, who are not first failing to themselves.

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



The SECOND
Part or Discourse
CONCERNING
TEMPTATION.

2 PETER ii. 9.

*The Lord knoweth how to deliver the
Godly out of Temptation.*

I Have formerly made some Entrance in-
to these Words, in which, after a short
Explanation, and Account given of these
two Things, *viz.*

1st, Who are here to be understood by
the *Godly*. And,

2dly, What is here meant by *Temptation*.

I cast the further Persecution of the Words
under these following Particulars.

1st, To shew how far God delivers Persons truly Pious out of Temptation.

2^{dly}, To shew what is the grand Motive, or impulsive Cause, inducing God thus to deliver them. And,

3^{dly}, and *Lastly*, To shew why, and upon what Grounds, this is to be reputed so great a Mercy, and so transcendent a Privilege.

The first of these Three I have already dispatched, and proceed now to the

2^d, Namely to shew what is the Prime Motive, or *Grand impulsive Cause, inducing God to deliver Persons truly Pious out of Temptation.*

Now this is Twofold.

1st, The free Mercy of God. And,

2^{dly}, The prevailing Intercession of Christ.

1. And first, for the first of these; the free, sovereign, Inclination of divine Mercy. Concerning which, if we duly and exactly consider the *Absoluteness* and *Simplicity* of the divine Nature, nothing can be more agreeable to the Conceptions which we form of it, and consequently more rational than to state the *first Reason, or impulsive Cause* of all God's Actings within himself. So that as we must acknowledge the different Issue and Success of Persons, brought into the same Condition of Danger or Distress, to depend wholly upon the Exercise or Suspension of the divine Mercy towards such

Persons: in like Manner are we to resolve the Exercise or Suspension of this Mercy, into the divine Will.

Thus in the present Case: That one Man is delivered out of the Plunges of Temptation, and another suffered to sink and perish under them; it is from an Act of Mercy vouchsafed to the one, and not to the other; and that this is not equally vouchsafed to both, it is from the free Resolution of that Sovereign, supreme Will, *which has Mercy upon whom it will have Mercy*, and is by no Means bound to save or deliver those who have freely destroyed themselves.

And that this is so, is evident; for if the first *Motives*, or *impulsive Cause* of this Deliverance were not wholly from God himself, then it must proceed from something in the Person who is to be delivered; and if so, it must be either from the Necessity of his Condition needing such a Deliverance, or from the Worth and Goodness of his Person deserving it. But it will appear to be from neither. Not from the Necessity of his Condition in the first Place: for if this were the first and chief Cause inducing God to deliver Men; then it would equally do the same for all in the same Condition. But the contrary is too manifest; for some under the same Circumstances of Temptation are delivered, while others are suffered to perish by it. Nor yet in the next place, can the

Cause of this Deliverance be stated upon the Goodness or Piety of the Person delivered. For certain it is, that no Degree of Piety whatsoever could ever yet absolutely privilege the very best of Men from being tempted, that is to say, either from first entering into, or for some time continuing under a Temptation ; as several in all Ages, who have been most remarkably Pious, have found and felt by sad Experience. Nor is it less certain, that it is not a Man's Piety, which is the Cause inducing God to vouchsafe him a final Deliverance out of Temptation, for as much as it could not antecedently induce God at first to rescue or keep him from it, when yet it is manifest, that the Piety of the said Person, must needs have been at that time greater and more untainted, than after the Temptation had made some Breach upon it, as it always in some Measure does, before the tempted Person comes to be perfectly conquered by it : As for instance, it must of Necessity bring him to *the Commission* of it : And (if it were no more) this must needs degrade his Piety to a lower pitch than it was at, before the Temptation began. And then if an higher Degree of Piety could not obtain so much of God, as to keep the Man from first entering into *the Snare*, surely it cannot be imagined, that after he had lost some Degrees of that Piety by being taken and held
in

in it, should under those Disadvantages be more prevalent with God to deliver him out of it, than at first to keep him from it, which Experience shews it did not.

And therefore it is clear, that the *first grand Motive*, or *impulsive Cause* of this Deliverance, is not to be sought for in any thing inherent in the Person delivered, but in the sole and sovereign good Will and Pleasure of his great Deliverer.

But you will say, does not the Text itself state the Cause and Reason of this Deliverance, upon *the Godliness* of the Persons delivered? For does not the Apostle here expressly tell us, that they are *the Godly* whom *God delivers out of Temptation*?

To this I answer, that in all the Actings of divine Mercy, we must distinguish, between the *first impulsive Cause of the Act*, and the *proper Qualification of the Object*, upon which that Act is exerted. The Confusion of which too frequently occasions no small Mistakes and Blunders, in discoursing about these Matters.

God promises *Deliverance out of Temptation to the Godly*, and yet their *Godliness* is not the Cause of this *Deliverance*, any more than of God's making such a Promise. It is indeed the Qualification of the Person who is to be delivered; so that without it the Deliverance (upon a federal Account, as was said

before) would not be; but still the Cause of it is quite another thing.

A Prince (for Instance) has an Hundred of his Subjects in Captivity, and makes a Declaration that he will redeem so many of them as are of such a certain Age, taking no notice of the rest. Now in this Case, we cannot say, that their *being of such an Age*, was the *first impulsive Cause*, inducing their Prince to redeem them; but his own good Pleasure, which first made him take up a Resolution to redeem such Persons, and to make this the Condition of it. Their being indeed of such an Age, is the *qualifying Condition*, rendring them the *proper Objects* of such a Redemption; so that such, and none but such are redeemed. But the Cause of that Redemption it is not, that being (as we have shewn) to be sought for elsewhere.

Now the Case is much the same, where God vouchsafes to deliver Men out of *Temptation*. Whence is it, that upon such Tryals befalling Men, some few escape, and in the Issue are brought off without ruin, while *Thousands fall at their right Hand, and at their left*? Is it the extreme Misery of their Condition moving God's Compassion, or the worthiness of their Persons requiring this of his Justice, which causes their Deliverance? No; these are not, cannot be *the Cause*, for the Reasons before-mentioned; they are indeed the *proper Qualifications* rendring them
fit

fit to be delivered, but the free Mercy or good Pleasure of God is the main, leading, *impulsive Cause*, that actually they are delivered.

The Thing therefore, which is eminent from first to last in this whole Transaction, is *Mercy*. *Mercy*, which is its own Argument. *Mercy*, the first and grand Motive of which is itself. For if it were not so, what could there be in a sinful, polluted Creature to engage it? There is indeed enough to need, but nothing to deserve it. But the divine Compassion, wheresoever it fixes, removes all Obstacles, answers all Objections, and needs no other Reason of its Actings, but its own sovereign, absolute, unaccountable Freedom.

2dly, The other *impulsive Cause* of God's delivering the Saints out of Temptation is *the Intercession* of Christ on their Behalf. And this does not in the least derogate from, or contradict our first Assertion; ascribing this great Work and Benefit only to divine Mercy: for as much as it is the *sole Effect* of Mercy, that we have such an *Intercessor*; and there is no *Opposition* in *Subordination*.

Now the Two great Parts of Christ's Priestly Office are his meritorious *Satisfaction*, and continual *Intercession*. By the first of which he purchased for us all spiritual Blessings, and by the latter, he actually applies them. The first he perfected here on

Earth upon the Cross, and the latter he now performs in Heaven.

And with what Efficacy and Success he discharges this great Work of Intercession there, sufficiently appears from that constant, never-failing Prevalence, which still attended his Prayers here. For he himself expressly tells us, *that the Father always heard him*, John ii. 42. Heaven was always open to his Prayers, and they could not but *enter* where he, who made them, did *command*. There could be no Frustration or Denial where every Request had the Force of a Claim, and every *Petition* was founded in a *Purchase*.

The Divinity of Christ's Person, and the surpassing Value of his Merits, put a commanding Sovereignty into all his Desires; so that every thing which he asked of his Father was indeed a *Petition of Right*; and since his Divinity made him able to *give*, it was one Part of his Humiliation that he vouchsafed *to ask*. And for this Reason, some of his Requests run *Stylo Imperatorio*, in a kingly Dialect; and we sometimes find him not only *preaching*, but also *praying*, as one *having Authority*: John xvii. 24. *Father, I will, that those whom thou hast given me, be with me to behold my Glory*. It was not a meer Prayer, but a kind of compound Address, made up of *Petition* and *Demand*.

And now, this way of asking, as high and as efficacious as it is, is wholly employ-
ed

ed by Christ for delivering the Saints out of Temptation. *Judas* (we know) was tempted, and fell without Recovery. *Peter* also was tempted, and fell, but rose again. Now, whence was this Difference in the Issue of the Temptation? Why, those Words of our Saviour will inform us, *Luke xxii. 31. Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired to have thee, that he may sift thee as Wheat.* And accordingly to his Desire, he had him, and sifted him to the utmost, and discovered how much Chaff and foul Stuff was lodged in his Heart, which he himself knew not of. Yet still for all this, the *Wheat* was but sifted only, not destroyed; and Christ gives us the Reason of it in the next Words, *I have prayed that thy Faith fail not.* And if Christ had not prayed for him, in that wretched Condition, it is to be feared that he would scarce have prayed for himself.

For tho' indeed the Spirit of Prayer and fervent Supplication be one of the most effectual Means to bring a Man out of Temptation, yet sometimes the Temptation is so far beforehand with a Man, that it prevents him seizing and prepossessing his Will and Affections; and that to such a Degree, that he has no Heart to pray against it; but, like a Thief it steals upon him, and then binds his Hands, and stops his Mouth, so that he can neither lift up Heart nor Hand, to call in Aid from Heaven. In which forlorn Estate, if Christ prays not in his stead, and sollicit his

Father for the Succours of recovering Grace, the Sinner is left remediless in the cruel Grasp of his insulting Enemy, to be crush'd and devour'd by him at his Pleasure.

And now, what Christ did for *Peter* and other of his Saints, while he was here upon Earth, the same he still docs, and that with Advantage, for all Believers know that he is in Heaven, where he has changed *his Place* indeed, but not *his Office*; *his Condition*, but not *his Affection*.

What it was *to be tempted* our Saviour knew of old, by the sure, but sharp Convictions of his own Experience: and therefore treats such as are tempted with all the sympathizing Tenderness, that Fellowship in Suffering can produce in a Mind infinitely merciful of itself; as it is expressly affirmed, *Heb. ii. 18. For in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour those also who are tempted.* To which we may add, these Words, *Heb. vii. 25. That he liveth for ever, to make Intercession for us.* And from both together we have all that Comfort, that a *boundless Compassion*, supported by an *infinite Power*, and an *endless Duration*, can afford.

And this is that invaluable Advantage, which we reap from having such an *high Priest, as can be touched with the feeling of our Infirmities*. For as he who has broke a Limb, having his Choice of several Chirurge-

ons equally skilful, would much rather chuse one who had not only cur'd many others, but had also *suffered* the same Disaster, and felt the same Pain and Anguish of a broken Limb himself: for that from such an Hand he might rationally expect not only a sound but a gentle Cure; a Cure in which Compassion should combine with Skill, and make one Ingredient in every Application.

In like Manner, it is not so much the Greatness, the Power and Majesty of our Intercessor, that should animate Persons under a Temptation to address to him, as his *having drank of the same Cup*, and passed thro' the same Furnace himself. From which one endearing Consideration it is, that the Prayers of such Persons find stronger Arguments to enforce them in the Breast of him who *hears*, than they can derive from the Heart of him who *makes* them.

For, as it is commonly, and perhaps very truly said, that none knows the Heart *of a Father*, but he who has *been a Father*; so none knows what it is to be pursued and worried with the restless Buffets of an impure Spirit, but he who has endured the same terrible Conflict himself. Christ has endured it, and his Experience moves his Compassion, and his Compassion engages his Prayers; and where he has promised us his *Prayers*, we may promise ourselves the Success.

And thus I have shewn, that the *great impulsive* Cause of the Saints Deliverance out of Temptation is, partly the free, sovereign, distinguishing *Mercy of God*, and partly the *mediatorial Intercession of Christ*: that is, they have a gracious *Father*, and a powerful *Advocate*; and therefore being *assaulted*, they are not *conquered*, and being *tempted*, are not *destroyed*.

But now, by way of Objection to the foregoing Particulars, you will say: Does not this Doctrine open a Door to Presumption, and naturally encourage Men to venture themselves into Temptation, by giving them such Assurances of an After-deliverance from it? Does it not tend to lessen the Awe and Dread they should have of their spiritual Danger, by telling them that the *Mercy of God*, and the *Intercession of Christ*, are engaged for their Recovery?

I answer No; for as the Persons who are here said to be delivered, are Persons truly *sanctified, and regenerate* by a Principle of Grace, which was wrought upon, and *changed their Nature*, (so much being implied in the very Name and Character of *the Godly*) so it is utterly against the very Nature of such a Principle, to draw such Consequences from *the Mercy of God*, and *the Intercession of Christ*. For *moral Ingenuity* could not do so, and therefore *Grace* much less. *The Love of God* (says the Apostle, 2 Cor. v. 14.) *constraineth us*.

And

And as it is impossible for a Principle of Love to exert Acts of Hatred, so it is equally impossible for a Principle of Holiness to suggest to the Heart such villanous Deductions, as to make the very Mercy of God an Argument to offend him. Every Faculty or Principle is carried by its own Nature, as by a strong Bias, to act suitably to itself; and you may as well expect that the Fire should cool, or the Water dry, or a false Proposition issue from a true, as that a Principle of Grace should argue or discourse in this Manner. *He who is born of God* (says the Apostle) *1 John iii. 9. cannot sin, because he is born of God.* That is, the Principle which constitutes a Man a *new Creature*, cannot incline or induce him to sin. And therefore, how did *Joseph* answer, and repel the Temptation, which accosted him? Why, he neither pleaded the Disgrace nor Danger that might ensue upon it, but the utter Inconsistency of that Principle which he both acted, and was acted by, with the Commission of so vile a Fact. *How can I do this great Wickedness*, says he, *Gen. xxxix. 9. Not only how shall I, but how can I do it!* As if he had said, there is something within me so utterly contrary to, and so wholly averse from this wicked Proposal, that I *cannot* comply with it, I *cannot* frame or bring my Will to it.

In like Manner, for Persons *regenerate acting by that Principle*, which makes him so,
to

to take Confidence to venture upon a Temptation, from an Assurance of *God's Mercy*, or *Christ's Intercession*, is a thing absolutely *unnatural*, and consequently *impossible*.

But you will say, how then can a Person endued with this mighty and divine Principle come ever to be prevailed upon by a Temptation ?

Why, the Reason of this is, because such an one does not always act according to *this Principle*, but sometimes either through *Surprize* or *Neglect of his Duty*, or *Remissness* in it, or want of *Watchfulness over* himself, the working Force and Energy of this mighty Principle comes for a while to suspend its Actings, and to lie (as it were) stupified, or in a Trance; the *Giant* is asleep, and the *Sword* of the Spirit is not drawn, during which fatal Interval or Cessation, the *Flesh* and the *Devil* take their Advantage to assault, and get Ground even of the best of Men.

Nevertheless the Case is surely very different, when a Man thus overtaken with a kind of spiritual Slumber drops into a *Temptation*; and when with his Eyes open, and all the Powers of his Soul awake, he argues and debates the Matter with himself *for* and *against the Temptation*; and in the Issue of that Debate, comes at length to a formed Resolution, to venture upon it from a Confidence, that after he has took his Fill of his Sin,
the

the divine Mercy will deliver him out of it. This, I say, is a Case so vastly different from the former; that tho' the former may very well consist with an Habit of Piety and Sincerity, yet this latter looks so very ill, and has in it something so desperately wicked, that I very much question whether it be, or can be, incident to the Heart of a Person truly regenerate.

But because this is so great a *Mystery of Iniquity*, and apt to work so fatally upon the Minds of such as think themselves *sincere* and *regenerate*, but indeed not so; I think it may be of no small Use to look into, and resolve this Case of Conscience, namely, *Whether a regenerate, a godly, or sincere Person* (which are all but several Words for the same thing) can have any rational Assurance, before he enters into a Temptation, that being once prevailed upon by it, he shall in the Issue be delivered out of it?

To which I answer in these two Propositions.

1st, That a Person under such Circumstances can have no antecedent Assurance one way or other, either that he shall, or shall not be delivered. And,

2^{dly}. That it is more probable, and that he has greater Reason to believe, that he shall not be delivered, than that he shall.

Of both which Propositions with as much Brevity as the Thing will bear.

1st, And first, for the first of them, I affirm, *that such an one cannot certainly and positively conclude, that he shall not be delivered*: for as much as this would be a bold, unwarranted Intrusion into the Counsels of God, and a Limitation of that Mercy, the precise Measures of which are determined by Bounds known only to God himself. But this, I must confess, is an Error of such a Nature, that Men need not be much cautioned against it, as being still more apt, in all their Expectations of Mercy, to conclude too much *for*, than at all *against* themselves.

And therefore I affirm also on the other side, that much less can a Person thus offering himself to Temptation have any Ground of Assurance, that he shall in the Issue be brought out of it.

For the clearing of which Matter we must observe, that the Temptations here spoken of, are generally such as lead to *great Sins*; *great*, I say, either for the *Matter* of them, such as are *Blasphemies, Perjuries, Rebellions, Murders, Adulteries, Thefts, Extortions*, and the like; or *great* for the *manner of committing* them, as being committed against the clear Light and Conviction of Conscience, or as the Scripture sometimes expresses it, *presumptuously, and with an high Hand*, and with full Deliberation. All which kind of Sins wound and waste the Conscience, grieve the holy Spirit, hazard a Man's final and

eternal Estate, and in a Word, make a very great and dangerous Alteration in his spiritual Condition.

Those, I say, are the Sins which we are now treating of; for such, and such only, the Devil drives at in most of his Temptations, whether he effects them or no; but the Malignity of a Temptation is to be measured by the Greatness of the Sin, which *it designs* to bring a Man to. And concerning these Sins, I affirm, that when any Man is tempted to them, he can have no sufficient Assurance, that, in case he should be prevailed upon by them, God will deliver him out of them. And the full, serious, thorough Consideration of this is that *flaming Sword*, which God has placed before *the Door* and *Entrance* of every such *Temptation*, to warn all who value the present Peace and future Happiness of their Souls, to fly from it as they would from the Regions of Death, and the Mansions of the Damned.

But you will say: Have there not been several Instances of Persons whom God has delivered out of Temptation, after they have been prevailed upon by it? And if so, may not others in following Times, of the same Qualifications, and under the same Circumstances, antecedently assure themselves of the same Deliverance?

To this I answer; *First*, That of all Persons whom God has at any time *delivered*
out

out of Temptation, I believe it will be hard to produce any one who ever entred into it with such a *Presumption*. But 2dly, I add moreover, that it is hardly possible for any Man to assure himself, that his Qualifications and Circumstances are *exactly the same* with those who hath *been delivered*. Besides, that in the *last* place, there is nothing to oblige God to vouchsafe the *same Mercy* to Persons under the *same Circumstances*.

But you will urge further, that there are not only *Instances* and *Examples*, but also *Promises* of such a Performance in several Places of the Scripture, and particularly in the Text, where, by *God's knowing how to deliver*, the Apostle no doubt meant his *Will and Purpose to deliver the Godly out of Temptation*. And if so, may not such Persons be before-hand sure of their Deliverance? Since, where there is a *Promise* on God's part, there may, and ought to be, an *Assurance* on ours.

To this also I answer; that we are still to remember that neither this, nor any other the like Promises, are made immediately to any particular Person, but only in general *to the Godly and Regenerate*; amongst which no Man can with any rational Evidence account himself, while he is either actually committing, or at least purposing to commit some great Sin; as every Man under the Power of such Temptations (as we have
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mentioned) certainly is. And consequently, while he cannot be sure of his *Regeneracy*, neither can he be sure, that a Promise made only to *the Regenerate* does at all belong to him.

But you may yet say: Suppose that such an one had a *former Assurance* of his *regenerate State*, may he not now from his remembrance of that, draw a *present Assurance* that he shall be delivered out of all Temptations?

For the clearing of which, I observe, that there are two sorts of *Assurance*.

1. The first consisting in such a *certain Persuasion* of a Man's regenerate Estate, as is *subject to no Mistake about it*.

2. The second consisting in such a *Persuasion*, as excludes all *actual doubting* of it.

Which two sorts of Assurance differ as much from one another, as a Man's being *sure of a thing* differs from *his being only confident of it*; which latter he may very easily be, and yet be far enough from the former. Accordingly in the Case now before us, I shall not consider that first sort of *Assurance*, consisting in an *infallible persuasion of a Man's regenerate Estate*; it being much question'd by many, whether such an *Assurance* be attainable in this Life, unless by the special and immediate Gift of God; albeit all confess, that in case he should vouchsafe to any one so high a Privilege, it would certainly be attended with such a *confirmed Habit of*

Holiness, as would effectually keep him who had it from all gross and deliberate Sins.

But then as for the other sort of *Assurance* which only excludes all actual *doubting* of a Man's regenerate Estate, it is much another thing; for being raised chiefly upon the Stock of a forward Confidence, and not supported with an equal Measure of Grace, it may rise and fall, ebb and flow, and in many Cases, and with several Persons, come at length totally to be lost.

Which being premised, I answer to the foregoing Question in the *negative*, and that upon the Ground of a double Hypothesis. As,

1st, Of that which holds, *That a Person truly regenerate may fall from his Regeneracy, and thro' his Sin cease to be what he was.* According to which Opinion the Person here spoken of, who is either actually committing, or fully proposing to commit some great Sin, has no small reason to *suspect the Case* wholly altered with him as to his Regeneracy, and that, whatsoever he was before, he is now fallen from it; and consequently, notwithstanding any former Assurance of it, can at present lay no Claim to a Promise, made only to Persons continuing under that Estate.

2^{dly}, The other Hypothesis or Opinion, upon which I ground a further Answer to the aforesaid Question, holds *the certain final*
Perseverance

Perseverance of every regenerate Person in a State of Regeneracy. And according to this indeed, if a Man be once *truly assured* that he is in such a State, it must follow that he will be always in the same. But then I add, that it does not also follow that he shall always be *assured that he is so*. But on the contrary, that the Truth of Man's former Assurance, in the Case of great Sins committed, becomes *very questionable*, as most likely (for all his former Confidence) to have been taken up at the first upon false Grounds, and consequently must needs sink and cease, tho' his *regenerate Estate should continue*. For even a true Proposition may be assented to upon a mistaken Ground. And as to the Point now before us; nothing is more certain, than that former Assurances (tho' never so free from all Doubts when first entertain'd) will vanish upon a present great Guilt; since admitting that it should not wholly change a Man's regenerate State, yet it will be sure to blot and weaken (if not quite extinguish) those Evidences which he had once built his Assurances thereof upon. *David* no doubt was a Person truly regenerate, and in favour with God, and so continu'd to his Life's end; and as little is it to be doubted, but that at most times he fully reckon'd himself to be what really and in truth he was; but that with a constant uninterrupted Confidence he always thought himself so, cannot I am

sure with any Warrant from Scripture be affirmed. For tho' we find him sometimes with a kind of triumphant Assurance declaring, *that God held him with his Right-hand,* and that he would *both guide him with his Counsel, and after that receive him with Glory,* Pf. xxiii, xxiv. Expressions (one would think) of a Confidence too *high* to rise higher, and too *strong* to be brought lower; yet elsewhere we find this mighty Hero upon the very Brink of Despair, or rather plunged into the Depths of it, as appears from those terrible desponding Outcries, *Psalm lxxvii. 7, 8, 9. Will the Lord cast off for ever, and will he be favourable no more? Is his Mercy clean gone for ever, and does his Promise fail for evermore? Has God forgotten to be gracious, and hath he in Anger shut up his tender Mercies?* Every Verse, every Sentence, and Word here, speaking nothing but the Horrors of an hopeless Soul, and the Struggles and Agonies of one sinking under the dismal Apprehensions of the divine Wrath. Nor are we so much to wonder, that such fearful Breaches should be made upon the Confidence of so eminent a Saint, if we consider what Temptations, and what sinful Failings, God was sometimes pleased to suffer him to be overtaken with. To all which Vicissitudes of *Confidence* and *Distrust* about a Man's spiritual Estate, we may add this further Consideration; that according to the natural Course of Things, the Insincerity

cerity of the latter Part of a Man's Life is a greater Presumption against the Sincerity of the former Part of it, than the Sincerity of the former can be a Security against the Insincerity of the latter. And therefore let a Man's spiritual State and Condition be as safe and good, as he would persuade himself that it is, yet if he has no certain Knowledge thereof (as in the Case of great Guilt we have shewn that it is not to be had) he can conclude nothing from such his Condition concerning the *final Issue of a Temptation*. From all which it must follow, according to either of the fore-mentioned Hypotheses or Opinions (without my espousing either of them for my own) that whether a Man really be, or be not *regenerate*, yet when he is actually prevailed upon by a Temptation, he cannot assure himself that God will deliver him out of it, and consequently before the Temptation, can have no certain Prospect of such a Deliverance.

Well then; *Assurance* in such a Case, we have proved, that a Man can have none. But to make a Step lower, tho' there be no *Assurance*, yet may there not be at least a *comfortable Expectation*? And tho' no *Certainty*, yet a *Likelihood of Recovery*?

Why yes, I cannot deny by that in some Cases there may. But then we must distinguish of two sorts of *Temptation*, or rather of two ways of entering into it. As,

1st, When a Man enters into it purely by his own free Choice, no necessary Business or Circumstance of his Life engaging him in it, by unhappily casting the Matter of a Temptation before him in the Course of his lawful Occasions.

2^{dly}, When a Man meets with a Temptation in the Pursuit of his honest Calling or Profession, or in such a Condition, as he is unavoidably brought into by an over-ruling Hand of Providence.

These I say are the two ways by which Men pass into Temptation. Concerning the first of which, I affirm; that when a Man enters into it by his own free Choice, putting himself upon needless, adventurous Trials, *he leads himself into Temptation*, and so has no cause to rely upon God for a *Deliverance out of it*. And yet I do not, I cannot say, that God will not *in the Event* deliver such an one. But this I say, that such an one has no ground to conclude that he will; and withal, that for the most part he does not. For by thus stepping out of his way *he tempts God*, and that surely is not the likeliest Course to keep the *Devil from tempting him*.

As for the other way by which Men pass into Temptation, namely, in the Course of their *honest Calling or Profession*, or by *some over-ruling Providence* casting them under such Circumstances as may lay some tempt-

ing,

ing, alluring Object before them; I do not doubt but a Man in such a Case may comfortably and warrantably hope for such*Assistances from God, as shall carry him safe and successfully thro' the Temptation, be it what it will; I say, he may have much greater Grounds to hope for them in this, than in the former Cases, but can say no more; and that an Hope so bottomed is so far from being an Act of Presumption, that it is indeed a lower Act of Faith, or next to it, and a justifiable Dependance upon the Power and Goodness of him, who never by his *sole Providence* brings a good Man into Temptation, but that sooner or later he also opens a Door, whereby he may get out of it.

And it is in good earnest a Matter of some Astonishment, to consider what eminent, what triumphant Success, even weak Persons have had against such Temptations, as they have been next to unavoidably entangled in; and on the other side, what scandalous Falls even the strongest and greatest Heroes in Religion have met with, by entering the Lists with their powerful and skilful Enemy, before God had called them to the Combat; when indeed God thinks fit to call them to it, the *Battel* is his, and the Success must needs be answerable. But God is not bound to do Miracles, as often as Men

* Consult the tenth Sermon in Vol. II. of my Sermons about Prevention of Sin.

are pleased to be wanton, and to throw themselves into Danger, and thereby create to themselves a necessity, either of a dismal *Fall*, or a miraculous *Deliverance*.

But to illustrate this Matter further, I shall give you some *Instances* of the different Success which has attended these two ways of entering into Temptation.

And first; how came *David* to fall into so foul a Sin as *Adultery*, and *Joseph* to escape it, tho' the Temptation was much more pressing and importunate upon *Joseph* than it was upon *David*? Why, the Reason is manifest; *David* cast himself into it, by indulging himself at that time in a Course of Idleness and Pleasure, and a gross Neglect of the Duties of his Royal Office. For in 2 *Sam.* xi. 1, 2. we find him represented first *lazing upon his Couch, and then walking upon the Roof of his House*; and in a word, tarrying at Home careless and unactive, and that at the highest time of Action, a time when the Text remarkably says *that Kings when out to Battle*, and when his own Armies were in the Field, and he himself should have been in the Head of them, as became a Prince, whom God had raised to that high Station for nobler Ends, than to *do his Business by others*, and assume the *Glory of it to himself*.

On the contrary, *Joseph* came under the Temptation without any precedent Act or Fault of his own, being forced out of his
Country,

Country, and carried as a Slave into *Egypt*, and there bought and sold, and at length placed in a Family, where the Devil maliciously laid a Snare for him, and he as victoriously broke thro' it. But had *Joseph*, out of a vain vagrant Humour, travelled into *Egypt* (as some do into *France*, and other Places) only to see the Country, and to learn *Fashions* (as the Word goes) and in the Course of his Travels fallen into *Potiphar's* House, probably he might have given that lewd Proposal another kind of Entertainment, and while he was learning *Fashions*, not have refused so fashionable a Temptation.

Again, how came *Moses* to be safe amidst all the Pleasures and Idolatries of *Pharoah's* Court, and *Peter* to deny and forswear the Son of God, and Saviour of the World, in the Court of the High-Priest, where there was much less danger of forgetting God and himself, than there was in the *Egyptian* Court, a Place fraught with all sorts of Vice, and without the least Savour of God or Goodness, Virtue or Religion? Why, the same Reason is to be given for this also; God by a strange Providence had placed *Moses* there, without any Consent or Concurrence of his own; and accordingly, having brought him thither by his Providence, he preserved him there by his Grace.

But on the other side. What reason had *Peter* to thrust himself into the High-Priest's Hall,

Hall, where he had nothing to do, and to venture himself into the very Mouth of that Danger, which Christ himself but a few Hours before had so expressly warned him of? Why, it was his foolish Confidence and Curiosity which betrayed him into that gazing, fatal Adventure, which had like to have rifled his Soul, and robb'd him of his Faith, and without the Interposal of a singular Grace, had consigned him over to a sad and final Apostasy.

Many more such Instances might be produced of both sorts, but I suppose these may suffice to convince the Sober and Considerate, that the same divine Assistance which use to be vouchsafed to Men *in God's Way*, are not to be expected by them in the *Devil's Walk*.

And yet so little is this considered, that I dare avouch, that most of those deadly Blows and Falls given by the Tempter and his Temptations to the Souls of Men, have been from their bold, voluntary, unwarrantable putting themselves upon those Trials, which God would otherwise never have put them upon.

And it is wonderful to consider, what absurd, senseless Pretences some alledge for their so doing; three of which I shall briefly mention. As,

1st, Ask some Men how they dare make themselves Spectators of all that Lewdness,
and

and Hearers of all that Ribaldry, Immorality, and Profaneness, which is oftentimes seen and heard in some Places, and Companies, and those in no small Request neither; and they will tell you, that they do it (forth) because they know themselves Proof against all Impressions from such Objects. And do they indeed find themselves so upon Experience? Why yes, just as much as Tinder uses to be Proof against the Sparks which fall upon it. And generally such *spiritual Braves*, upon the first Encounter and Trial of their Strength this way, are quickly taught the contrary, full sore to their Cost, seldom coming off but with a baffled Confidence and a bleeding Conscience, with the Shame of one, and the Guilt of the other.

2dly, Others in the like Cases will tell you, that they venture in this manner, to create in themselves a greater and more lively Hatred and Detestation of such Practices, by an actual Inspection of the Ugliness and Deformity of them. Which kind of reasoning is just as if a Man should go into a *Pest-house* to learn a Remedy against the the *Plague*.

But whosoever he is, who shall presume to try the Strength and Temper of his Soul by such venturous, unhallowed Courses as these, shall find that God will leave him, and his own Purposes will fail him; and the Sin which he would pretend to hate, shall smile in his Face, and win upon his Heart, and by

by secret Encroachments grow upon his Spirit, till at length it has crept into, and lodged itself within the very inmost Powers of his Soul. It being usually with the Heart of Man, and a Temptation, as it was with *Eſau* and his Brother *Jacob*; while *Eſau* was marching towards him, he fully proposed to *Fight him*, but as soon as he came to him he *embraced him*.

It is a Saying worthy to be wrote in the Heart of every Man, with the Pen of a Diamond, *Ecclus. iii. 26. That he who loves danger, shall perish by it.* And that Man, who can be so sottishly ignorant of the Nature of Things, as to think to learn Sobriety amongst the Debauched, Chastity in the Stews, Modesty at Balls and Plays, and the like, will quickly come to leave his Virtue behind him, and to take the Shape and Impress of that Mold, into which such Courses and Companies have cast him. For there is no such thing as *gathering Grapes of Thorns, or Figs of Thistles*: no turning the Incentives of Vice, into the Instruments of Virtue; or growing Holy by a kind of Antiperistasis. He, who will needs fight the Devil at his own Weapon, must not wonder if he finds *him an Over-match*.

3dly, and lastly, There are others again, who run themselves upon these ungodly and fool-hardly Adventures, out of an insolent Confidence, that in case they should happen

to be worsted and foiled in them, *they will repent*, and that shall save all, and set them whole and right again: Than which Confidence, nothing can be imagined more *absurd and impious*. *Absurd*; because a Man hereby ventures the greatest Interest he has in the World, upon something not in his own Power; Repentance being, upon several Accounts, most particularly the Gift of God: and surely no Man can have cause to expect a *Gift*, nay, the best of Gifts from God, while he is actually provoking him. For how can such a Wretch assure himself, that God will give him either *Grace* to repent *by*, or Time to *repent in*? And yet it is certain that there can be no Repentance without both, and as certain that a Man can give himself neither.

He may perhaps for a while stop the Mouth of his crying Conscience, with some flattering, fallacious Promises of an After-amendment. But as it was said to the *rich, sottish Worldling* in the Gospel, singing a *Requiem* to his Soul, and projecting his *future Ease*, upon a Survey of his present *Stores*: so may it be said to that Man, who abuses himself with such false Reckonings about his spiritual Estate; *Thou Fool, this Night shall thy Soul be required of thee*; and then what will become of all those windy, abortive Projects of a *future Repentance*? No doubt, a Man may drop into Hell in the
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midst

midst of them. And that will be a sad Conviction to him, that Repentance is one thing, and a Purpose to repent, quite another. And so much for the *Absurdity* of this Pretence.

And then for the *Impiety* of it. It is of so peculiar a Malignity and Opposition to the Motions of God's Holy Spirit, that whosoever can take heart to sin upon Presumption of a following Repentance, needs not be much concerned about the Issue of any Temptation; for he is already under the Power of one of the worst and strongest Temptations that can possibly befall a Man; and carries an Heart so utterly contrary to, and estranged from all real Sense of Piety, that the utmost Commission of the Sin which he is tempted to, can hardly estrange it more.

Such an one is certainly in the very *Gall of Bitterness*, and under the most binding Fetters, that the Devil can well hold him by. For all the Devil's Engines, this Imposture of a future Repentance is the chief and most fatally efficacious: and (I dare affirm) has sent more Souls to Hell, than any one thing else whatsoever. Nay the Truth is, it is hard to imagine, how any Man with his Senses about him could venture upon any deliberate Sin without it. For come to a Sinner just as he is entring upon the Devil's Work, and ask him whether he does not
know

know that God has threatned *Theft, Murder,* and *Uncleanness,* and the like, with Damnation? And he will tell you, yes. And is not God True and Just? yes. And if so, how dare you venture to commit any of these Sins? Then whispers his false Heart this secret Encouragement in his Ear; that Repentance shall step in between him and Damnation. And so the Scene being thus laid, the Man goes on, and upon these Terms complies with the Temptation, and commits the Sin. And God perhaps, in his just Judgment, never gives him Grace to repent of it. But this is a Subject of so great Importance, that it worthily requires a just, entire Discourse by itself.

And thus having shewn, that, which way soever a Man passes into Temptation, he can have no *antecedent Assurance* that God will deliver him out of it; no nor yet in the Place, so much as a *probable Expectation* of such a Deliverance, unless the Temptation befalls him in the Course of his lawful Occasions, or by some over-ruling Providence casting him upon it, and not by his own free Choice, and Fault stepping into it; and lastly, since it is certain, that Men fall into Temptation this latter way, at least an Hundred times, for once, that they fall into it upon the former Account: I suppose, there can need no further Demonstration of the Truth of that other Proposition, laid down
by

by me; namely, “That before a Man’s entering into Temptation, it is much more probable, and that he has greater reason to believe, that being once prevailed upon by it, he shall not be delivered out of it, than that he shall.” Which one thing seriously thought of, and laid to Heart, surely one would think, should be abundantly enough to alarm any Man in his Wits, and to keep him out of those fatal By-ways, where the Entrance is dangerous, the Retreat is doubtful, and the End is Death.

And now to sum up this whole Argument and Discourse in a few Words. If the foregoing Assertions or Propositions be true (as the whole World will never be able to prove them otherwise) let any one of Sense and Reason from this Consideration, *That the Mercy of God, and the Intercession of Christ, are engaged to deliver the Godly out of Temptation*, draw a rational Argument to venture upon a Temptation if he can.

For first, upon a Principle of *common Gratitude*, or *Humanity*, will, or can any one make Mercy itself a Motive to Sin? and the greatest Kindness a Provocation to the foulest Hostilities? Will a Son kick against his Father’s Bowels, only because he knows that they yearn over him? And if this be monstrous and incredible, can we believe that a Principle of Grace can suggest or endure such Reasonings, as common Humanity would abhor? Or,

Or, in the next Place, will a Principle of *common Prudence* suffer a Man under a Capital Guilt, to offend, grieve, and affront his Advocate? Shall I spit in the Face of him who is to plead for my Life, and I am a dead Man if he does not? And if common Sense will, and must explode such Practices, can a Principle of *Grace*, which *enlightens the Understanding*, as well as *purifies the Heart*, carry a Man to that which common Sense would secure him from? All these are Paradoxes in Reason and Nature, and therefore infinitely more so in Religion.

Well, but admit, that the enormous Strength of a Man's Corruption should so far over-bear all those Discourses both of Reason and Religion, as to make him sin, and then presume upon Mercy in spite of them. Why, then it will follow, that such an one has no reason in the Earth to reckon himself in the Number of the *Godly* and *Regenerate*; to whom alone, an Interest in those two great Benefits does belong: and consequently, that he presumes without any Ground. In which Case, it is not this, or any other Gospel Doctrine, but the Man's own Ignorance and Misapplication of that to himself, which he has no Claim to, which causes his *Presumption*.

And therefore, shew me that Man, who can make such cursed Inferences from those two high Privileges; and I will undertake

to demonstrate to him, that those Inferences and Conclusions, are much more effectual Arguments to evince, that he has no Interest at all in *that Mercy*, and *that Intercession*, than they can be to prove that that *Mercy*, and that *Intercession* will be employed, or concerned to deliver him out of Temptation.

For a Principle of *true Grace*; nay, even a probable Persuasion; nay further, a full Assurance of that Grace, would keep any one from arguing at such a villanous Rate. For as much as no Man ever attains to such an *Assurance*, but by a long Course of Piety, and an habitual strict Communion with God, and such an eminent, controuling Degree of Grace, as shall render it *morally* impossible for a Person so qualified, to make such horrid Conclusions.

But the Truth is, Error, and a wicked Mind will draw Poison out of any thing, and turn the choicest Benefits, and the richest Cordials of the Gospel into *Gall* and *Hemlock*. But for all that, *God is not mocked*, though Men love to be deceived. Nor are the Means of Salvation at all the less so, because some abuse them to their Destruction. I am sure we have all Cause to pray, that God would keep us from so dangerous a Delusion, in so great a Concern.

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

The THⁱRD

Part or Discourse

CONCERNING

TEMPTATION.

2 PETER ii. 9.

*The Lord knoweth how to deliver the
Godly out of Temptation.*

I Have twice already discoursed upon this Text, in which, after some short Explication and Account given, both of the Sense and Design of the Words, I cast the further Prosecution of them under these following Particulars.

1st, To shew how far God delivers Persons truly pious out of Temptation.

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2^{dly}, To

2dly, To shew what is the grand Motive or impulsive Cause inducing God thus to deliver them. And,

3dly, and lastly, To shew why, and upon what Grounds, this is to be reputed so great a Mercy, and so transcendent a Privilege.

The two first of these I have formerly treated of, and proceed now to the third and last; which is to shew, *why, and upon what Grounds, Deliverance out of Temptation is to be reputed so great a Mercy, and so transcendent a Privilege.*

In order to which, as all *Deliverance* in the very Nature and Notion of it imports a relation to some *Evil*, from which a Man is delivered; so in this *Deliverance out of Temptation*, the surpassing Greatness of it, and the sovereign Mercy shewn in it, will appear from those intolerable Evils and Mischiefs, which are always intended by, and necessarily consequent upon a prevailing Temptation. I shall give some Account of which shall be the chief business of our present Discourse.

And for this, we shall first in general lay down this as a certain Truth. That all the Mischief that Sin can possibly *do* a Man, Temptation *designs* him. All that is valuable either in this World or the next, it would rob him of; and all that can be called Misery, either here, or hereafter, it would subject him to. All that a Man can enjoy is struck at, and all that a Man can suffer is intended; and if the Tempter allows him the quiet Enjoyment

ment of any thing desirable in this Life, it is only to bereave him of that which is infinitely more so in the other.

Which being so, as to that high *Concern* in debate between the Devil and the Souls of Men; since his Malice is such, that he cannot *but tempt*, it is an infinite Mercy, that he *can do no more than tempt*, and that a Man's own Consent must be had to his own Destruction. For if the Tempter could have his Will upon the Person tempted, he would scorn to court, where he could compel. He would make directly at *his Head*, and not come stealing upon *his Heel*. He would break in upon him with open Force, and not stand poorly *waiting at his Elbow* with a Temptation.

But to come to Particulars, four Things more especially are designed, and driven at by the Tempter in all his Temptations. As, they all begin with the *greatest*, and that is always first intended, tho' last accomplished, the utter Loss and Damnation of the Soul. For this is the grand Mark which the Tempter shoots at, this the beloved Prize which he contends so hard for.

And as two Enemies may be really as much Enemies while they are *treating* as when they are *fighting*, so the Devil bears the same Malice to a Man while he *tempts* him, as when he actually *torments* him.

Temptation is the Way to Torment, and Torment the End of Temptation.

When Men first venture upon sinful Objects, lewd Converse, and Occasions of Life suitable to their corrupt Humours, the Face of the Temptation looks fair and harmless, the first Proposals of it plausible and modest, and the last and dismal Issue of Things is with great Art and Care kept out of their Sight; so that they shall not perceive that their Enemy is so much as about to strike, till the final and fatal Stroke is effectually given.

The Devil perhaps offers the *Pleasure*; but poor Creature! it is thy *Life* which he aims at, thy darling Life which he is driving a base Bargain for. Or he may lay *Wealth* and *Riches* before thee, but be assured that he will have *something for his Money*, something of more Value to thee than both the *Indies*, and the whole World besides. Sometimes he courts with *Honour* and *Greatness*, but still expects to be well paid *for both*. And as great a Prince as he is, he *never Knights any one*, but he expects more than *Knights Service* from him in return. In a word, *he will have thy Conscience*, and thy Religion by way of *Earnest* here, and thy Soul in full *Payment* for it hereafter. There is not the least thing in the World, which the Tempter offers a Man for nothing; not so much as a pitiful Mess or Morsel to relieve thy craving, starving

starving Appetites, but he will (if he can) have thy Birthright, thy immortal Birthright in Exchange for it.

Could we but look into those Mansions of Horror, where he has lodged so many Millions of lost Souls, the cruel Monuments of his victorious Delusions, and whom almost amongst them all, might we not hear charging his coming into that woful Estate, upon the over-reaching Arts of this great Impostor ! Some we should hear cursing those false and fallacious Pleasures which had baited, and beguiled, befooled, and drawn them into those direful Pains, from which there is neither Respite nor Redemption. Others we should hear raving and crying out of those guilty Gains, those ill filled Bags, and deluding Heaps, which served only to treasure up Wrath to the Owners of them, and at length sink them into a bottomless Pit, deeper, and more insatiable (if possible) than their own Covetousness. Others again we should hear, with the Height of Rage and Bitterness, reflecting upon those treacherous, dear bought *Honours*, the unconscionable Price of their wretched Souls, by which the Tempter hook'd them into his Clutches, blinding the Judgment, and blasting their Innocence, till by several Steps of Guilt and Greatness, *he preferred them downwards to the Place prepared for such forlorn Grandees*, where they are like to lie for ever, *cursing*

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them;

themselves as much, as formerly they *were* *curst* by others.

This is the Result and End of all the Tempter's glossing Arts and flattering Addresses. Hell is the Center of all his Temptations, for from *thence* they were first drawn, *there* they all meet, and in *that* they end.

And therefore let not that Man, who would not be fooled in so vast an Interest as his Salvation, fix his Eye either upon the *Outside* or the *Beginning* of a Temptation. Even the Beginning of a *Tragedy* is pleasant, but the Close of it is not so. Let him not judge of what the Tempter intends by what he offers; for be it what it will, look it never so gay or great, can any one, not quite abandoned by common Sense, imagine that his mortal avowed Enemy is at all concerned for his Pleasure, Profit, or Preferment? Assuredly nothing less, in all this he is but setting his Trap, and no Man sets a Trap but he *baits* it too. He hates most *implacably*, while he offers most *plausibly*. His Drift in every one of his Temptations is to separate between the Soul and its chief Good for ever, and to plunge it into a State of Misery both intolerable and unchangeable.

Further than this he cannot go, and short of this, if possible, he never stops. Every Temptation not defeated, certainly destroys. For by once casting a Man from his Innocence, it carries him still downwards, and
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he who falls so, falls further and further by a continual rolling Motion, and never leaves falling (unless staid by a mighty intervening Grace) till he comes to the *Bottom*, or rather to the Place that has *none*.

This is the natural Course, Way and Method of a Temptation from first to last. In the beginning it *flatters*, in the Progress of it it *domineers*, and in the issue it *damns*; always concluding (if not baffled and broken off in Time) *in the Worm that dies not, and the Fire that is not quenched*.

But to proceed. There are other Consequences of a successful, conquering Temptation, short of Damnation, and yet sufficiently dreadful in themselves. As,

2dly, In the second place, Loss of a Man's *Peace with God*, and his own Conscience, and the weakning if not extinguishing all his former Hopes of Salvation. It confounds and casts a Man infinitely backwards, as to his spiritual Accounts. It degrades him from his Assurance, renders his Title to Heaven dubious and perplexed; draws a great and discouraging Blot over all his Evidences; and even shakes in pieces that Confidence, which was formerly the very Life and Support of his Soul, with new, terrible, and amazing Objections.

This is a Man's Condition immediately upon the Prevalence of a Temptation. For whatsoever makes a Breach upon his Innocence,

cence, in the same Degree also certainly dashes his Comforts. And for a Man to be thus always in the Dark, as to the greatest Concern he has in both Worlds, what is it but a kind of temporary Hell, as Hell itself is chiefly a perpetual Darknes! And therefore where Men cannot arrive to the high Privilege of a *Certainty*, they are glad at least of a *Probability* of their Salvation. But he who has once rifled and laid open his Soul to a base Compliance with a Temptation, has nothing to relieve his tottering, shaken Hopes with, but the weak and glimmering Light of God's general Mercy, which many enjoy, who shall never taste of his special Favour.

Look upon *David*, a Person represented under as sublime and heroick a Character of Piety to Posterity, as any one whatsoever; a Person signalized with that peculiar Elogy, of being *the Man after God's own Heart*, *1 Sam. xiii. 14.* And yet how did this glorious and great Man, by yielding to a foul Temptation, undermine and sap the very Foundation of all that Comfort and Confidence in God, which by a long Course of Piety and strict Living, he had for many Years together been building up; so that immediately after that terrible Blow given him, we find the Horror of his Sin, and the *Terrors of the Almighty* always fresh and fierce upon his Spirit. *My sin*, says he, *is continually before me*, *Psal. li. 3.* Nay, tho' he received his Pardon by a particular

ticular Message from Heaven, a Pardon bearing Date as early as the very Confession of his Sin (for no sooner had he said, *I have sinned*, but the Prophet replies upon him immediately from God himself, *2 Sam. xii. 13. The Lord also hath put away thy Sin, thou shalt not die*) yet notwithstanding all this, the Wound hereby made upon his Conscience was so broad and deep, so angry and inflamed, that we cannot find that it was ever perfectly cured and closed up; but still we have him complaining of *broken Bones, and noisome Sores, Loss of God's Presence, and Decay of spiritual Strength, mournful Days, and restless Nights*; sometimes rising, and sometimes falling, with alternate Hopes and Fears, even to his dying Day.

The History of whose Condition, one would think abundantly sufficient to set a frightful Look upon the fairest and best dressed Temptation. For tho' in such a Case God by a sovereign restoring Mercy should at the last secure a Man's eternal Interest, and keep him from an Hell hereafter, yet is it not Misery enough to endure one here? to be still carrying about him a sick, ulcerated Mind, a Mind perpetually almost harrassed with the returning Paroxysms of Diffidence and Despair? and to go drooping all his Days under the secret Girds and Gripes of a dissatisfied, doubting, ill-boding Conscience!

Is it nothing to be haunted with the dismal Apparitions of a reviving Guilt, and the old black Scores of our past forgotten Sins? Nothing to have that merciless *Hand-writing of the Law against us*, which we thought had been cancelled, presented anew in fresh and flaming Characters to our Apprehensions? In a Word, is it nothing to be always walking upon the Brink of Damnation, like a Man looking down with Horror into a deep and black Water from a slippery Standing, from which he expects trembling to fall every Minute, and from which if he does fall, he sees his Death and his Grave before him in the Bosom of the merciless Element, where he is sure to be swallow'd up irrecoverably?

A Man may have the whole Frame of his spiritual Estate so broken and battered by a Temptation, that he shall never be able to retrieve upon his Heart so much rational Confidence of his future Happinets, as to afford him one cheerful Day all his Life after; but shall pass *the Time of this Pilgrimage here* in Sadness and Uncertainty, Clouds and Darkness, *Clouds* that shall make all black and lowring over him, and intercept the View of all that is comfortable above him.

Such, for the most Part, is the Case and Condition of a *Sinner* plunged by Temptation into a great Guilt; a Condition so inexpressibly miserable, that it is impossible for a Man under it to enjoy any Thing. And that

that surely is, or ought to be Argument enough against it, tho' he should in the issue escape from it. For a wise Man would live, not only with Safety, but also with Satisfaction.

And therefore, as in this temporal Life it is not the bare Union of Soul and Body, or a Power merely to subsist and breath, which deserves the Name of *Life*, and much less of *Enjoyment*, but to have those nobler Superstructures and Advantages of Nature, an healthful Body, and a sound Mind, vigorous Faculties, and well-disposed Organs, together with an happy Symmetry and Agreement of all the Parts.

So in the spiritual and supernatural Life, will any one who has a true Sense and Relish of such Things, content himself with so poor a Proportion of Grace and Sincerity, as just to keep him spiritually alive, and out of a State of Death and Reprobation, and in the mean Time neglect the Health, the Growth, the Flower and Activity of the spiritual Principle? Will he satisfy himself in having just as much *Oil in his Lamp* as to keep it from going out, when he might, and should have so much as to feed it up to a brisk and a *glorious Flame*?

Why should a Man chuse to go to Heaven thro' Sloughs and Ditches, Briars and Thorns, Diffidence and Desertion, Trembling and Misgiving, and by the very Borders of Hell,
and

and Death staring him in the Face; when he might pass from Comfort to Comfort, and have all his Way paved with Joy and Assurance, and made easy and pleasant to him by the inward invaluable Satisfactions of a well-grounded Peace?

He, who shuns the Road of Temptation, may do so; but he, who will needs keep in it, is at best, but like the Man in the Gospel, who travelling *from Jerusalem to Jericho, fell amongst Thieves. They stripped him, and wounded him, and left him half dead.* After which, would any one (think we) in his right Wits, who had seen all this, have ventured himself into the same Hands, only because the Man who fell into them, was not actually dispatched by them? Do wise Men account the Dangers and Disasters of War as nothing; because every one who engages in the Battel, is not killed out-right upon the Place, but many escape and come off wounded and maimed, and leaving a good Part of themselves behind them?

Surely I should think, that not only *Graves*, but *Hospitals*, not only the *Enemy*, but the *Surgeon*, not only the *Weapons of Death*, but the *Instruments of Cure*, should speak Terror enough, to dissuade considering Minds from the Peril of such Adventures.

But much otherwise is the Discourse and Arguing of those whom the Tempter infatuates;

uates; when in defiance of common Sense and Experience, they would reason away the dread of Sin, and the danger of Temptation. They reason for the Commission of a Sin from the bare possibility of not being damned for it, but overlook the certainty of being made extremely wretched and miserable by it: just like a Sot, who purchases the short, worthless Pleasure of a luscious, unwholesom Morsel with a terrible Surfeit, or a long Sickness, only because a Man may be sick, and surfeited, and not die. These are the wise Consequences which some govern their Actions by; while, by a new unusual Art of Argumentation, they *dispute* for the Devil, but *conclude* against themselves.

3dly, The third Consequent of a prevailing Temptation, is the exposing of a Man to the *temporal judgments* of God in some signal and severe Affliction. For though, in much Mercy, God may (as we have shewn) save such an one from eternal Death: yet it rarely happens, that he frees him both from *Destruction*, and from *Discipline* too; but that some time or other, he gives him a taste of the bitter Cup, and teaches him what his Sin has *deserved*, by what at present it makes him *feel*.

When the *Israelites*, by that monstrous Instance of Ingratitude and Idolatry, in changing the Deity for a *golden Calf*, (the

God that made them, for a God made by them) had provoked God utterly to cut them off; and *Moses* by a mighty Intercession kept off the killing Blow, so that they were not then destroyed: yet for all that, they did not go unpunished; as appears from that remarkable Place in *Exodus xxxii. 34. Nevertheless* (says God) *in the Day when I visit, I will visit their Sin upon them.* And by many terrible *Items* did the Vengeance of God remind them of it, for many succeeding Generations. So that it was a common Saying, even to a Proverb amongst the *Jewish* Writers, that never any Judgment befel the Children of *Israel* from that Time forward, but *there was an Ounce of the golden Calf in it.*

It seems there was an old Score still to be reckoned for. As the killing Malignity of many a Distemper may be removed, and yet the Man not absolutely cured of it, but that for many Years after, he may find it in his Bones, and never recover the Debauches of his Youth so far, but that they may leave something behind them, which shall be sure to rub up his Memory in his Age.

Some there are who hold, that when God has once pardoned a Sin, as to its Guilt and Merit of *eternal Punishment*, there is yet another Guilt, binding the Sinner over to *temporal Punishment*, which remains yet unpardoned, and consequently to be expiated and

cleared off, either by God's temporal Judgments inflicted upon the Sinner before or after his Death, or to be satisfied for, by something voluntarily undergone, or otherwise commuted for by the Sinner himself.

This I say is the Doctrine of some. A Doctrine much more beneficial in its Consequences, than true in its Principles; and such as maintains those who hold it, much better than it is maintained by them. For though it is most true, that after God has pardoned a Sin as to its eternal Punishment, he may nevertheless afflict and chastise the Sinner for it in this World; yet to affirm that this is in Order to the *Satisfaction* of his Justice for that Sin, is false and inconsistent with the infinite Fulness and Perfection of Christ's Satisfaction.

All Satisfaction implies Recompence and an equal Compensation; but God intends no such Thing in the Calamities, which he inflicts upon a pardoned Person: but he inflicts them for quite other Ends; as partly to give the World fresh Demonstrations of his hatred of Sin, and partly to inodiate and im-bitter Sin to the chastised Sinner. So that *to punish* properly taken, is one Thing; and *to afflict and chastise*, perfectly another.

The Difference therefore in stating the Ground, or *formal Reason* of this Dispensation is very great, though the Effect of it be *materially* the same, and the Evil inflicted,

whether by way of *Retribution*, or *Castigation*, equally grievous. And since it is so, let no Man from any, even the most rational Persuasion, that he can have of the main and final Pardon of his Sin, conclude, that there shall be no other Reckonings with him in temporal Visitations. For, he who has escaped the Ax or the Gallows, is not sure also to escape the *Lasb*: and though Mercy has spared a Malefactor's *Head*, yet Justice may *leave him* a small Token *in his Hand* to remember it by.

For the Proof and Confirmation of which can any thing be more apposite and express, than that emphatical Place in *Psalms* xcix. 8. *Thou wast a God* (says the Psalmist) *who forgavest them, though thou tookest Vengeance of their Inventions.* What! *Forgiveness* and *Vengeance* upon the same Persons? Light and Darkness in the same Region, and at the same Time! Who can unriddle these Obscurities, or reconcile the seeming Contradiction? Why, the Resolution is not so very difficult, if we consider that eternal Mercy may very well consist with temporal Severities, and the *Pardon of the Sin* with the *Correction of the Sinner.*

See this farther exemplified in the Person of *David* himself (the great Instance, whom we shall still have recourse to, in treating of this Subject.) Could, or can any one act an higher Repentance than he did, whose Re-
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penitance stands upon Record, as a Pattern to the Penitents of all succeeding Ages? Or can any one pretend to a greater Assurance of his Forgiveness, than the same *David*, whose Pardon (as we have shewn) was immediately sealed in Heaven, and infallibly declared to him by the Mouth of an inspired Prophet? Yet, for all this, cast but your Eyes forward, and certainly from that Time, you will find but very few fair Days in the following part of his Life. For first of all, he hears the Doom of his darling Child; and then by a strange Intermixture of Judgments and Pardons together, in the very same Breath almost, that the Prophet tells him, *that he should not die*, he tells him also, *that the Sword should never depart from his House*. And how was his royal Family broken and dishonoured by strange, infamous, and unusual Villanies and Disasters; by Incest, Murder, and Rebellion? One Brother ravishing his Sister, another killing his Brother, and rebelling against his Father. Surely there was as sad a Face of Confusion upon the *House of David* as ever there was, not only upon the Court of any Prince, but upon the Family of any private Person whatsoever. And yet all these lamentable Accidents were both subsequent upon, and derivable from a Sin, which was fully pardoned. Of so vast, so lasting, and so surviving an Extent, is the Malignity of a great Guilt.

And no wonder ; for as *Guilt* is inseparable from *Sin*, so *Sorrow and Suffering* are inseparable from *Guilt*. *Tribulation and Anguish* (says the Apostle) *upon every Soul of Man that doeth evil*. The Sentence is universal, and we find no reserve or exempt Case in the Execution. And therefore let that Man, who can be so far taken and transported with the present, pleasing Offers of a Temptation, as to overlook those dreadful After-claps, which usually bring up the Rear of it ; let him, I say, take heed, that Vengeance does not begin with him in this Life, and mark him in the Fore-head with some fearful unlook'd for Disaster. And if this once comes to be the Case, I cannot see, but that those high Blades, who pretend to out-brave Hell, and laugh at all Apprehensions of future Misery, yet when they come to feel the Hand of God upon their worldly Interests, can as sadly and sharply resent the Calamity of a languishing Body, or a declining Family, a blasted Name, or a broken Estate, and bend under it as poorly, as the meanest and lowest spirited Man whatsoever.

But let them bear it as they can ; such for the most Part are the dolorous Effects, and bitter Appendages of a prevailing Temptation. After all which, if pardoning Mercy should come in, and save a Man at the last, yet surely no serious, considering Person, would

would need any greater Argument against the Commission of a Sin, than to have these the *Circumstances of its Pardon*.

4thly, The fourth and last mischievous Consequence of a prevailing Temptation, is the *Disgrace, Scandal, and Reproach*, which it naturally brings upon our Christian Profession. The three former Consequences terminated within the Compass of the Sinner's own Person; but this last spreads and diffuses the Mischief much further: nothing in Nature casting so deep a Stain upon the Face of Christianity, as the Blots, which fall upon it from the lewd and scandalous Behaviour of Christians.

For as much as every ill Practice naturally reflects a disrepute upon a Man's Principles, as being still supposed, either to influence him to that Practice, or at least not to restrain him from it; either of which is justly a Discredit to them. For if the first be true, his Principles are evil, and *immoral*; if the latter, they are *imperfect*.

From whence it is, that constant Experience has found it to be the common Course and Custom of the World, to except, and inveigh against *Professions, Offices, and Things themselves*, only for the Faults of *Persons*. A way of arguing indeed as absurd, as spiteful; but yet very easy and usual, and with gross vulgar Minds (not well able to distinguish or discern any Thing, but as it is

exemplified and embodied in Persons) almost unavoidable.

And this certainly should make every wife and good Man very tender and cautious of being drawn into those Ways, which may both bring upon him a personal Guilt, and render him a publick Scandal. For why in all reason should the Profession or Society, the Church or Religion, which a Man is of, suffer by his Lewdness, or share the Infamy of those Crimes which they are not in the least concerned in, otherwise, than to disown, hate, and detest them? Common Ingenuity (one would think) should stop the Foul-mouth of any Temptation, with such Reasonings and Replies as these.

Nay, should a Man take up his Religion, not out of *Conscience*, but *Design*, yet surely it would be his Interest to keep it fair and creditable: and should he (as too many do) wear it only as a *Cloak*; yet Prudence, and common Decency, would teach him to wear it *clean*, and without Spots. For he, who is not concerned for the *Honour* of his *Religion*, may justly be supposed to have neither *Honour* nor *Religion*.

If indeed a Man could be wicked, and a Villain to himself alone, the Mischief would be so much the more tolerable: But the Case is much otherwise; the Plague flies abroad, and attacks the innocent Neighbourhood: The Guilt of the Crime lights
upon

upon *One*, but the Example of it sways a *Multitude*; especially if the Criminal be of any Note or Eminence in the World. For the Fall of such an *One* by any Temptation (be it never so plausible) is like that of a principal Stone, or stately Pillar, tumbling from a lofty Edifice into the deep Mire of the Street: It does not only plunge and sink into the black Dirt itself, but also dashes, and bespatters all that are about, or near it, when it falls.

Was it not thus with *Sampson*? who, of a *Judge of Israel*, and a Terror of his Enemies, a Man all made up of Miracle, rendered himself both the Shame of the former, and the Contempt of the latter; a Scoff, and a By-word to all the Nations round about him (as every vicious and voluptuous *Prince* must needs be;) and all this by surrendring up his Strength, his Reason, and his royal Trust to the Charms of a brutish Temptation, which quickly transformed and made him a more stupendious Miracle of Folly and Weakness, than ever he had been of Strength; and a greater Disgrace to his Country than ever he had been a Defence; or in a Word, from a Judge of *Israel*, a woful Judgment upon it.

And was it not thus also with *David*? This was the worst and most killing Consequence of the Temptation, which he fell by; 2 *Sam.* xii. 14. *That he had by that enormous*

Act given the Enemies of God, as the Prophet told him, *great Occasion to blaspheme.* And on'doubt, the Religion he professed, as well as the Sin he had committed, was thereupon made the *Song of the Drunkards*; and many a biting Jeer was *obliquely* cast at one, as well as *directly* levelled at the other. For to be vicious in the Sight of a Man's Enemies, and those not more the Enemies of himself, than of his Religion, what a bitter Aggravation is it of his Guilt, and what an indelible Reproach to his Person!

Yet thus it is, and ever will be in such Cases: where the Person of the Criminal is *publick*, the Infamy of the Crime can hardly be *private*. It is too great and too diffusive to be confined to one Place, or circumscribed within one Person. But the Report of it shall whirl and rattle over a whole Nation, damping the Spirits of some, and rejoicing the Hearts of others, but opening *the Mouths* of all; those of Enemies in Taunts and Sarcasms, and those of Friends in Sighs and Complaints; when it shall be said of any Person of *Credit* and *Repute*, what a false or foul Step he made, either in Point of Conscience or Honour, throwing off all Obligation of one and all Sense of the other, only through a blind aspiring Ascent to some pitiful Station of worldly Wealth and Greatness, where the Curse of Men will be sure to *follow*, and the Curse of God to *overtake*

These

These two Things therefore, let every one rest assured and persuaded of. First, that in every Temptation, the Tempter's Design is not only the single Guilt and Damnation of the Person tempted, but, if possible, to make him a Means or Instrument to carry and convey the Infection of the Crime to many more. And if he fails in that, so that he cannot defile or destroy Persons, he will endeavour at least to derive a Slur upon Professions. This being most certain, that there is not a Man of Remark, in any Religion in the World, but has thereby got it into his Power to do his Religion a great Mischief. To which I shall add one Note more; that every Man living has it in his Power to do more Mischief, than he can do Good. And this directly introduces that other Thing, which I would have every Man fix and keep in his Thoughts; namely, that it is the most unworthy, base, and ignoble Thing, that can be incident to human Nature, for a Man to make himself a Plague, and a publick Calamity, a Blot to a Church, and a Blemish to his Religion. For what is it else, but to make himself a Tool and an Under-agent to the great Enemy of God and Man, and to do that for the Devil, which the Devil, without the Help of such Instruments, could not possibly do by himself.

But

But such a Wretch is every one ; who, by complying with a Temptation in any vile or dishonest Practice, does as much as in him lies to libel his very Calling, to reproach his Saviour, and to put Christianity itself to the Blush. But above all, scandalous and inexcusable would it be for a Minister of the Church, to suffer himself to be tempted to any thing wicked or dishonourable. For such an one by so doing, first puts his *Foot* into the Mire, and then tramples upon the *Altar*.

And thus having set before you four of the most dire and fatal Consequences of a prevailing Temptation, I suppose it will be no hard Matter to take an Estimate of the Greatness of the Mercy of being delivered from it.

For first, is there any Happiness in being free from the cruel Bites and Tortures of a perpetually accusing Conscience ; a Conscience labouring under the Guilt of some great Sin, which, like a remorseless Vulture, shall lie daily and hourly gnawing and preying upon his Heart ; or like a poisonous Adder, rolling in his Bosom, and from thence always hissing in his Face ?

It is a Blessing to be secured from Poverty and Sickness, Infamy and Disgrace, and all the terrible Lashes of an angry, provoked Vengeance, which are able to make Life itself all Anguish, Horror and Astonishment,
and

and Death, in respect of it, a Relief and a Sanctuary to fly to?

Is it a Mercy to be kept clear and innocent, and to be preserved from such Courses and Practices, as shall render a Man a publick Nufance, and a common Grievance, the Abhorrence of the Age he lives in, and the Detestation and Curse of the Ages after him?

And lastly, is it not an Act of a superlative, divine Goodness and Compassion, to hinder a Man from running head-long into a State of final and eternal Perdition? A State of *Judgment* without *Mercy*, where there is no *Repentance*, and from whence there is no *Return*. A State of Torment and Despair; Torment, *which Eye has not seen, nor Ear heard, nor has it entred into the Heart of Man to conceive*. I say, let a Man rally up his best Attention, his severest and exactest Thoughts, and let him consider and weigh these Things, each of them in particular, and all of them together, the Misery of enduring, and the Felicity of escaping them; and then he shall be able to comprehend, or at least to adore the *Height and Depth*, the Compass and Dimensions of that Mercy, which delivers him from Temptation.

And now to make some useful Inference and Deduction from the whole foregoing Discourse: What can we so naturally, and

so happily improve it into, as into this one great, important Lesson? Namely, that let Mens Desires, Hopes, and Designs, be never so big and swelling, and their Fancy for the World, and the Things of the World, never so fond and eager; yet that doubtless is, and ought to be accounted by the truly Pious and Prudent, the best Condition and State of Life, (be it what it will) which shall least expose them to *Temptation*. For if the End of any Course or Condition be *destructive*, the Way to it certainly must needs be *dangerous*.

It is the general Aim and Desire of Men to be rich and great, and to live with Ease Plenty and Honour, and to be their own Carvers for all these Things; and when they can be so, they think themselves happy Men. But as the King of *Israel* said to his insulting Enemy, 1 *Kings* xx. 11. *Let not him who girdeth on his Armour, boast as he who putteth it off*. So say I in the Case now before us. Let no present flutter of Fortune, or flow of Riches, either transport the Man himself with Confidence, or the Fools about him with Admiration, till we see that it makes him better and wiser than he was before, (which seldom happens) and not only makes, but steadily keeps him so, till he has finished his Course by a well led Life, and closed his Eyes by an honourable and and happy Death.

Other-

Otherwise, let his first setting out be as bright and glorious as the rising Sun; many a black Cloud may gather over him, and many a furious Storm fall upon him, which shall bring him beaten and battered with a *non putavi* (the Fools Motto) in his Mouth, to a sad and doleful Journey's-End; and then he will find (when he has once felt it) that it is no such strange Thing, for a *fair Morning*, and a *foul Evening*, to fall on the same Day.

This is certainly true of Things, as well as Persons: that *Performances* rarely keep pace with *Promises*; and that, what flatters us most at first, generally in the issue befriends us least. And nothing in Nature serves a Man so more than his own Heart. Oh! If I might have such an Estate! how happy should I be! says one: and if I might attain to such Honour, such high Place and Favour, how should I enjoy my self! says another. But, thou ignorant Man! Dost thou know what thou shouldest be if under such and such Circumstances? Dost thou carry thy Heart so absolutely in thy Hand, as to be sure to keep it firm and fix'd, and faithful to thee, when the World and the Tempter shall break in upon it, with Riches to bribe, Pleasure to court, and Greatness to bewitch it, and all to debauch and draw it from thee, so that it shall be no longer thine, to bestow upon God and Goodness,
Justice

Justice or Religion? For alas! there is no such thing as *being wicked to a Measure*, or playing the Knave to a certain Degree, and no further. This being (as the Comedian says) *dare operam, ut cum ratione insanias*.

And therefore he who ventures upon any unlawful, or suspicious Practice, or supposed Advantage on such Terms, is like a Man who goes into the Water for his Pleasure or Refreshment, his Design (to be sure) is to divert, not to destroy himself, and accordingly with great Caution he enters in Step by Step; but the rapid Stream presently draws him in, carries him away, and hurries him down violently, and so the poor Man with all his Art and Caution is drowned. He thought to have been too wise and skilful for the Stream, but the Stream proved too strong for him.

In the Concerns of the Soul, as well as of the Body, it is a dangerous thing for a Man to venture beyond his Depth. Since it is not in Men as it is in Waters, which are always as *deep* as they are *high*. For in Persons, Experience shews, that *Height* and *Shallow-ness* may consist very well together.

But to draw towards a Close. If that State or Condition of Life be undoubtedly the best, which is least subject to Temptation, then this may afford us these two following Directions.

1st, Let no Man in his Prayers peremptorily importune God for any particular Enjoyment or State of Life. That is, let him not *pry* and *prescribe to God* in the same Petition. God alone knows what will help, and what will hurt us. He only can discern the various Windings and Turnings, the peculiar Bent and Constitution of the Heart, and how this or that thing would affect or work upon it, and how far such or such a Condition would agree or disagree with it. He knows the proper Suitableness and Unsuitableness of every State of Life to each Mind and Temper, which it is hardly possible for the ablest and deepest Heads to have a perfect Knowledge of. For such very often pray for they know not what, even for their own Bane and Ruin, and with equal Importunity and Ignorance solicit their own Destruction. They think they *ask for Bread*, but it proves *a Stone*; and *for a Fish*, but they find and feel it to be *a Serpent*; and therefore it is oftentimes in mere Love to their *Persons* that God answers not their *Prayers*. In a word, the wisest Man living is not wise enough to chuse for himself, and therefore we have Cause to fly to an infinite *Wisdom* to direct our Request, as well as to an infinite *Goodness* to supply our *Wants*.

2^{dly}, As a Man is by no means positively to request, or pray for any particular Enjoyment

ment or State of Life, so ought he with the greatest Satisfaction of Mind to accept of, and acquiesce in that State and Condition (whatsoever it be) which Providence shall think fit to allot and set out for him. I have already shewn, that no Man living is in this Case fit to chuse for himself. And if we refer it to God to chuse for us, surely there is all the reason in the World that we should stand to his Choice. We come all as Suppliants, or rather as Beggars to the Throne of Grace; and to *beg and to chuse too*, we know is too much. Is thy Condition in the World poor, thy Circumstances low, and thy Fortune, in the Eyes of all about thee, mean and contemptible? Repine not at it; for do we not every Day beg of God *not to lead us into Temptation?* And shall we not allow him to judge which is the best and surest Way to keep us from it? Possibly this very thing that thou complaineest of, is that by which God is effectually answering that Prayer.

He denies thee Honour, but it is perhaps because he intends thee Heaven. He refuses thee *Greatness*, but it may be to preserve thy *Innocence*, and perchance in long-run thy *Neck* too. In a Word, he with-holds that from thee, which he knows thy spiritual Strengths are not able to bear. Thou affectest to be high and powerful, and probably the Tempter, who hates thee mortally,
would

would be glad to have thee so too. But God, who throughly knows, and truly loves thee, knows, that instead of being high or powerful, it is much better for thee to be *harmless* and *safe*.

And if there be any Truth in the Gospel, and all Religion be not made up of Tricks and Lies, it is really better and more eligible for a Man to keep a good Conscience, tho' with an Halter about his Neck, or a Dagger at his Throat, than with the Loss of it to gain all the Riches, and Glories, and Kingdoms of this World, which the Tempter heretofore so liberally offered our Saviour, and our Saviour so resolutely and disdainfully threw back in his Face.

In fine, we have nothing to do, but to commit ourselves to God *as to a faithful Creator*; to receive what he assigns us humbly, and to enjoy it thankfully, knowing, that by denying us these *gaudy Nothings*, those *gilded Poisons*, he is doing us the greatest Kindness in the World, which (in Answer to the Lord's Prayer) is *to keep us from Temptation*; and by keeping us from Temptation, *to deliver us from Evil*; and by *delivering us from Evil*, to prepare and fit us for all the Good that can be pray'd for; *and for himself*, the endless, inexhaustible Fountain of it; *in whose Presence there is Fulness of Joy, and at*
VOL. VI. Q *whose*

whose Right-hand there are Pleasures for evermore.

To whom therefore be rendered and ascribed, as is most due, all Praise, Might, Majesty, and Dominion, throughout all Ages and Generations. Amen.



The F O U R T H

Part or Discourse

C O N C E R N I N G

T E M P T A T I O N .

Rev. iii. 10.

Because thou hast kept the Word of my Patience, therefore I will keep thee from the Hour of Temptation, which is coming upon all the World, to try the Inhabitants of the Earth.

AS Deliverance out of Temptation is undoubtedly one of the greatest Mercies that God vouchsafes his People in this World, so there is nothing that more enhances and sets off the Greatness of the Mercy, than the *critical Time* of God's vouchsafing it. The wise Man assures us that *there is a Time for every Thing and Purpose under Heaven*; a *Time* which gives it a peculiar

and proper Advantage above what it has at other Times. And therefore since the said Advantage is universal, and extends to all kinds of Action, we must not wonder if the great Enemy of Souls has his *Time* also, his particular advantageous *Time* to tempt and destroy, as God has his *Time* to rescue and deliver. But as in the Vicissitudes of Night and Day, the Darkness of one recommends the Returns of the other, adding a kind of *Lustre* even to *Light* itself, so it is the *Hour of Danger* which sets a Price and a Value upon the *Hour of Deliverance*, and makes it more properly in season. *It shall be given you* (says our Saviour to his Disciples) *in that very Hour*, Matt. x. 19. in the very Point and Crisis of their Extremity; like a Pardon intervening just as the fatal Arm is lifting up; a Pardon sent in the very Instant of Execution. And certainly next to Life from the Dead, is to be near the killing Stroke, and yet snatch'd away from it; to see Death brought to our *very Doors*, and yet prevented *from coming in*.

The Occasion of the Words is indeed particular, as containing in them a Prediction of the sad and calamitous Estate of the Church, under the approaching Reign of *Trajan* the *Roman* Emperor; but I shall not consider them under any such particular Respect or Limitation, but as they hold forth a general important Lesson or Admonition, of equal
and

and perpetual Use to all Men, with reference to those spiritual Trials, Conflicts, and Temptations, which will be sure to exereice and engage them in the Course of their Christian Warfare; and accordingly I shall cast the Prosecution of the Words under these four Particulars.

1st, I shall shew, that there is a certain *proper Season, or Hour*, which gives a peculiar Force and Efficacy to Temptation.

2dly, I shall shew, by *what Means, Helps, and Advantages*, a Temptation attains its *proper Season, or Hour*.

3dly, I shall shew *some Signs, Marks, or Diagnosticks*, whereby we may discern when it has actually attained it.

4thly, and lastly, draw some useful Inferences from the whole. And,

1st, For the first of these: *That there is a certain proper Season, or Hour, which gives a peculiar Force, Strength, and Efficacy to Temptation*. It is observed in all those Actions or Passages which cause any great and notable Change, either in the Mind of Life or Man, that they do not constantly operate at the same rate of Efficacy, but that there is a certain *Crisis*, or particular *Season*, which strangely provokes and draws forth the Activity and Force of every Agent, raising it to Effects much greater and higher than the common Measure of its Actings is observed to carry it to.

So that if we would take a true Estimate of the full Power of any operative Principle, we must consider it under its proper Advantages of working, and in those *critical Seasons*, which will be sure to employ, heighten, and call forth the utmost Strength and Energy that it is naturally possessed of. Every Fit of a burning *Fever* is not equally dangerous to the sick Person; nor are all Hours during the Distemper equally fatal. But we usually say, that if the Man passes such a Day, or such a Turn of the Moon, the Danger is over, forasmuch as at those particular Seasons the Distemper rallies together all its Malignity, and vents the Height of its Rage; after which it breaks and declines, and Nature begins to recover itself.

In like manner there is a determinate proper *Time*, sometimes called in Scripture *the Day of Temptation*, Psal. xcv. 8. Sometimes *the evil Day*, Ephes. vi. 13. And sometimes (as here in the Text, and elsewhere) remarkably, *the Hour of Temptation*. A Time in which Temptation is infinitely more fierce and daring, more urgent and impetuous, than at other Times. A Time, in which with all its Might it comes rushing in upon the Soul, like the *fluctus decumanus* upon the labouring Ship or Vessel, which always gives it the greatest and most dangerous Shock.

We know our Saviour conversed freely and safely with the Jews for a considerable
Time,

Time, coming into the Temple, and teaching in their Synagogues, and they stretch'd forth no Hands against him, as he himself tells us *Luke xxii. 58.* and yet all this while, as quiet as they held their Hands, they had Malice enough working in their Hearts, and Opportunity enough to have exerted that Malice in their Actions. Nevertheless for that time they touch'd him not.

But how then came the Devil and his Instruments to have so much Power at length as to apprehend, and seize, and put him to a cruel ignominious Death? Why, our Saviour gives us the reason of it in the next Words. *This (says he) is their Hour, and the Power of Darkness.* Accordingly, *Mark xiv. 35.* we have him praying, *that if it were possible the Hour might pass from him.* And again, *ver. 41. The Hour is come, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the Hands of Sinners.*

And it is worth observing, that tho' our Saviour began his great Office and Ministry with *Temptations*, *Matt. iv. 1.* and carried it on under *Temptations*, *Ye are those (says he to his Disciples) who have continued with me in my Temptations,* *Luke xxii. 28.* yet the Scripture records not his praying in his own Person against any *Temptation*, but only this last and great one, *this Hour of Temptation*, this terrible and *critical Hour*, in which it pleas'd the all-wise God to let loose all the Powers of Hell upon him, and in which they spit

the utmost of their Venom, and summoned all their hellish Arts and Forces to give one mighty Push for all. And it was the Behaviour of Christ at this Hour, upon which depended the eternal Happiness or Misery of Mankind, and the vast Moments of the World's Redemption.

And as it was with Christ himself, who *did* and *suffered* every thing as a publick Person, and consequently was *tempted* as well as *crucified* for us; so it will be with every Christian in the World. Christ vouchsafed to be like us in most things, and we shall certainly be like him in this.

And from this Consideration no doubt it is that we must gather the true Sense and Exposition of that noted Place, *James iv. 7.* in which the Apostle bids us *resist the Devil, and he will fly from us.* But Experience sufficiently shews, that upon every Act of Resistance he does not fly, but that his Assaults are frequent, and oftentimes continue very long; nay, the Frequency of the Onset, and the Length of the Siege, are usually some of the principal Methods by which he conquers, and brings the Soul to a Surrender. And if so, what can that particular kind of Resistance be which proves so victorious, and sends him going like a vanquished Person? Why, no question it must be eminently that, which withstands and encounters him at that *particular Hour, or Season*, in which the *Temptation*

tation is come to an Head, and in which it has all the Helps and Advantages for Conquest imaginable.

For if the Tempter miscarries in this his highest, his sharpest, and most violent Attack, it is natural to conceive that he must surcease the Conflict, draw off, and give it over, for that time at least. For if his *twenty-thousands* prevail not, to what Purpose can it be for him to carry on the War with *ten*? Or what should an Enemy do more, who has already done his utmost? And thus much for the first Thing proposed, *which was to shew, that there is a certain proper Season, or Hour, which gives a peculiar Force, Strength, and Efficacy to Temptation.* I proceed now to the second, which is to shew, *by what Means, Helps and Advantages, a Temptation attains its proper Season or Hour.* And for this I shall mention seven, beginning at the more remote, and so proceeding to such as bring it still nearer and nearer to an Head. And,

1st, For that which is most remote, but yet the very Source and Ground-work of all the Mischief which the Devil either does or can do to the Souls of Men; namely that original, universal Corruption of Man's Nature, that *Fomes Peccati*, containing in it the Seeds and first Principles of all Sins whatsoever, and more or less disposing a Man to the Commission of them. For it is this which administers the first Materials for the

Tempter to work upon, and without which it is certain that he could do nothing. For when he set upon our Saviour with all his Rage and Subtilty, yet still he was worsted, and beaten off; and the reason of it is assigned by our Saviour himself, in those Words in *John* xiv. 30. *The Prince of this World* (says he), *cometh, and hath nothing in me*; that is, *nothing* for any of his Temptations to fasten upon. The infinite Purity of his Nature, free from the least inherent Filth, afforded no Handle for the Tempter to lay hold of him by. He was like pure Fountain-water in a Glass, which you may shake and shake, as much and as often as you will, but no shaking of it can ever foul it. On the contrary, let a Liquor in any Vessel look never so clear and transparent upwards, yet if there be the least Settlement, or heterogeneous Matter in any Part of it, shake it throughly, and it will be sure to shew itself.

In like Manner when the Tempter comes to any of us, he knows that there is something lurking in the Heart of the very best of Men, which he can make foul Work with, if the particular Grace of God does not prevent him, as it is certain that in many Cases it does not. Temptation first finds a Man evil, and then makes him worse.

And thus much for the *first Advantage* which a Temptation has towards the Attainment of *its Hour*; namely, *the general*
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Corruption of Man's Nature, suiting it to all the Proposals of the Tempter, and rendring it always ready, both to invite him, and to be invited by him.

2dly, The next Advantage is from that particular Corruption, or sort of Sin, which a Man is most peculiarly prone and inclined to. And this is one Step and Advance beyond the former. For tho' every Man (as we have shewn) has the *Root* and *Seeds* of all Sins virtually in him, yet thro' the good Providence of God (setting Bounds to the Extravagance of Nature) no Man is equally inclined or carried out to all sorts of Sin, for that would quickly throw the whole World into Confusion. But there is a particular Bent of Constitution, which derives and contracts the general Stream of natural Corruption into a much narrower Channel, by that special Propensity which every Man finds in himself to *some one Kind of Vice* or sinful Passion more than to any other. Such a Thing there is certainly in all Men, and being founded in Nature, it sticks closely, and operates strongly.

And so advantageous a Ground does this afford the Tempter, to plant his Batteries upon, when he would assault us, that he never overlooks it, but observes it exactly, and studies it thoroughly, and will be sure to *nick* this governing Inclination (as I may so express it) with some suitable *Temptation*. So

that whereas by Virtue of this some Men are naturally choleric and impatient, some proud and ambitious, some lustful, some covetous, some intemperate, and some revengeful, and the like; this the Devil knows better than any Man knows himself. He understands the *Crafsis* and Temperament of his Body, and the peculiar Turns and Motions of his Mind and Fancy, better than any Physician can judge of one, or any Philosopher can give an Account of the other; and accordingly a Man shall be sure to hear from him, and receive many a terrible Blow and Buffet on his *blind Side*.

He is not such a Bungler at his Art, as to use the same Nets and Baits indifferently for all sorts of Game. He will not tempt a shrewd, designing, active, aspiring Mind, with the gross and low Pleasures of Wine or Women; nor a Sot or an Epicure with the more refined Allurements of Power, or high Place. But still suiting his Proposals to the Temper of the Person whom he addresses them to, he strikes for the most Part home and sure, and it is seldom but he speeds. And therefore let a Man look to it, and before he enters the Combat with so experienced an Enemy, who will assuredly find him out, and fight him (if possible) to his Disadvantage, let him view and review himself all over, and consider where he lies most opportune and open to a fatal Thrust, and be sure

sure to guard himself there, where he is most liable to be mortally struck.

3dly, A *third Advantage* towards the prevailing *Hour* of a Temptation, is the continual Offer of alluring Objects and Occasions extremely agreeable to a Man's particular Corruption. Fire cannot burn without Fuel; and the strongest Inclinations would in a little time faint and languish, if there were not Objects to invigorate and draw them forth: nay, and the very Faculties of the Mind would grate and prey upon themselves, if they found no Matter from without to work and whet upon. Something there must be to employ them; and whatsoever *employs*, will at the same rate also *improve* them.

And therefore the World is like a great Store-house, full of all sorts of Provisions for Men's Lusts; so that whatsoever Course may be taken to mortify or extinguish them, it is certain that being left to themselves, they will never die of *Want*. For there are Riches for the Covetous, Honours for the Ambitious, and Pleases for the Voluptuous. And so keen and eager are the Appetites of corrupt Nature towards these things, that where such plentiful, and withall such suitable Preparations come before them, they will be sure to fall to. And such moreover is the mutual Agreeableness between them, that they never fail to find out one another;
either

either such Objects to find out the Heart, or the Heart them. And if there could chance to be any failure or defect upon this Account, there is an old Pander (the Prince of Pimps) always at Hand, who makes it his great Business and perpetual Study to bring them together, and will never suffer a vitious inclination to starve for want of a suitable Object to feed it. And this introduces the

Fourth Advantage or Furtherance towards the Maturity, or prevalent Season of a Temptation. Which is the unspeakable *Malice* and *Activity*, together with the incredible *Skill* and *Boldness* of the Tempter. Now Malice and Envy are of all ill Qualities the most fierce, active, and indefatigable; admitting neither Peace nor Truce with their respective Objects. And accordingly, being much higher, and more sublimate in the Devil's Nature, than they can be in Man's, they carry him roving and ranging about the World like a roaring, insatiable *Lion*, *Night and Day* upon the search, whom *he may devour*; and the more he has devoured, the greater is his Appetite to devour more. His Mouth is always open, and his Eyes never shut. He is restless and unwearied; and though Idleness be a Sin, which he loves to tempt Men to, yet he is never guilty of it himself.

To which we may add his profound Skill and Cunning in the various Arts, Wiles, and Stratagems, which he has to over-reach and circumvent even the wisest and most watchful. It is enough to say of his *Cunning*, that it is equal to his *Diligence*, and not inferior to his *Malice*.

And then in the last Place, so intolerable is his Boldness, or rather Impudence, that no Repulse shall daunt, no Defeat discourage him, nor any Degree of Holiness deter him from tempting even the best of Men to the very worst of Sins. For he set upon *Adam* in his Innocence and prevailed; nay, and he ventured upon our Saviour himself, and that again and again: and though as often as he spoke, he was baffled, yet still, though *baffled*, he would not be *silenced*: he received *no* after foil, and was thrice conquered before he would quit the Field.

From all which Qualifications, united in our mortal Enemy, let this be concluded upon; that as certain as it is that there is such an evil Spirit in the World, so certain is it that every Man living has a restless, implacable, subtle, audacious Adversary, who will infallibly engage and fall upon him, and with his utmost Skill and Force dispute it with him for *his Salvation*. But then,

5thly, Over and above all this, God sometimes in his wise Providence, and just Judgment, commissions this implacable Spirit to tempt

tempt at a rate more than ordinary. And this must needs be a further Advantage towards the ripening of a *Temptation*, than any of the former. I shall not presume to assign all the Reasons why God is pleased to do this. But it is enough that sometimes to try and manifest Men's Graces; as when he commissioned the Devil to try and tempt *Job* in that terrible Manner, *Job* i. 12. and sometimes to reproach them for their *Weakness*, in Conjunction with their absurd *Confidence*; as when at the Tempter's own Instance, he allowed him *to winnow and tempt Peter*, *Luke* xxii. 31. and sometimes to punish them for former great Sins; as when he impowered the *evil Spirit* to persuade that Monster of Wickedness, and first-born of Hell, King *Ahab*, *to go up and perish at Ramoth Gilead*, *1 Kings* xxxii. 22. *Thou shalt persuade him, (says God) and prevail also. Go forth and do so.* I say, it is enough, that for these and the like Ends, (especially in the way of Judgment for former Guilt) God is sometimes pleased to take this dreadful Course with Men: nothing being more true, than that as *Temptation* brings a Man to Sin, so Sin also brings him to *Temptation*.

But the thing which I would chiefly observe from hence is, that in all such Cases, in which the Devil acts by Commission from above; he tempts (as we may say) *with Authority*, and consequently, with more than usual

usual *Vehemence* and *Success*; always using the former, and seldom failing of the latter: as indeed it is hard to imagine how he should, when the only thing that can stand between him and Success, (to wit, the Divine Grace) in the Case here supposed by us, is withdrawn, and the Man thereby left wholly to himself. And whosoever has any Experience in these Matters, will easily acknowledge, that for a Man to be left to *himself*, and to be left to *the Devil*, will be found in the Issue, but one and the same thing.

6thly, A *sixth Advantage*, by which a Temptation approaches to its *Crisis* or *proper Hour*, is a previous, growing familiarity of the Mind with the Sin, which a Man is tempted to; whereby he comes to think of it with still lesser and lesser Abhorrences, than formerly he was wont to do. Frequent Thoughts of a thing, naturally wear off the strangeness of it: for by these the Mind converses with its Objects; and Conversation breeds *Acquaintance* with *Things*, as well as *Persons*.

Upon which Account, when any ill thing is suggested to the Mind, whether from a Man's own Corruption within, or from the Devil, or the Examples of wicked Men without, if it be not immediately rejected with a present and particular Act of Abhorrence, it will leave some small Impression upon, or Disposition in the Mind towards

that ill Thing, which before it had not and otherwise would not have.

Which Impressions or Dispositions, tho' small and inconsiderable at first, yet by the frequent Repetition of such like Thoughts or Suggestions will in the Issue amount to something very dangerous, and either produce in the Heart a positive Inclination to, or at least extinguish its former Aversion from, the Sin suggested to it. Either of which will assuredly be made use of by the Tempter, and by Degrees prepare and smooth him a way, and at length open a Door for the Temptation in its full Force and Fury to enter. The Serpent has already got into his Head, and his whole Body *will not be long* behind.

7thly, And lastly, There is yet another Way by which a Temptation arrives to its highest Pitch or *proper Hour*; and that is by a long Train of gradual, imperceivable Encroachments of the *Flesh* upon *the Spirit*. I say, imperceivable for the present, and considered each of them singly and by themselves; but sufficiently perceivable, after that some considerable space of Time, and a frequent Iteration of them, has wrought such a Change in the Soul, as to a spiritual Discernment will quickly shew and discover itself.

The Meaning of which I conceive, will be best declared and made intelligible by particular Instances, having first premised this

this great and certain Rule, *viz.* That whatsoever tends to gratify or strengthen *the Flesh*, in the same Proportion or Degree tends to weaken *the Spirit*; and look in what Degree *the Spirit* is weakned, in the same Degree it is prepared for and laid open to a *Temptation*.

Now there are several Enjoyments in themselves very lawful, and yet such, as upon a free unwary use of them, will by Degrees certainly indispose and unspiritualize the Mind, dulling its Appetite, and taking off its Edge and Relish to the Things of God. A Man's Food, his Sleep, his Recreations, nay, and his very Business, if not ordered by the Arts and Conduct of the *Spirit*, may prove a Snare to him, and draw off his Heart by secret Estrangements from those spiritual Duties and Disciplines, in which the very Health and Life of his Soul consists.

So that after some Time so spent, a Man shall have lost his Heart he knows not how nor which way; and by what dark Escapes it has slipped from him he shall hardly be able to learn; only he shall find that when he should make use of it, it is gone. For the reason of which it is enough, that *the Flesh* has got round of *the Spirit*; the Rise of one being still the Fall of the other. And when after such a Course, either of extreme Sollicitude, or Intentness upon Business on

the one hand, or of Gayety and Freedom of Conversation on the other, the Frame of a Man's Spirit comes to be loose and unfix'd, and took off from its usual Guard, then let him know that the *evil Hour* is preparing for him, and he for that. His Enemy is not far off, and it will not be long before he hears from him in some fierce *Temptation* or other.

And thus I have done with the *Second Particular* proposed, and shewn *the several Helps and Advantages by which a Temptation ripens and arrives to its proper Hour, and full Maturity.*

But now to determine how many of these must concur to the bringing of a Temptation to such a pass, is a thing not to be done by any one standing, universal Rule. For sometimes Two or Three, sometimes more, sometimes all of them join and fall in, to the working it up to this critical Pitch. Nevertheless, when we have said all that we can upon this Subject, that which *Agur* says, *Prov. xxx. 19. Of the Way and Motion of a Serpent upon a Rock,* may be much more appositely said of the intriguing Ways and Windings of this *old Serpent* the Tempter with the Heart of Man, *viz.* That they are in the Number of those mysterious Things, which, it surpasses the Reason of Man to give an Account of. That he is often at work, is too manifest, though the
 2 way

way of his working be undiscernible. Pass we now therefore to the

Third Particular, *Which is to shew some Signs, Marks, and Diagnosticks, whereby we may discern when a Temptation has attained its proper Season or Hour*; I shall instance only in Three. As,

1. When there is a strange, peculiar, and more than usual Juncture and Concurrence of all Circumstances and Opportunities for the Commission of any Sin, that especially which a Man is most enclined to; then, no doubt, is the Hour of Temptation. When a Man is to take Physick, if both the Humours within are prepared, and the Weather without proves suitable, and the Potion itself be strong, the Operation and Force of it must needs be more than ordinary. And as it is with the Physick of the Body, so no question it is also with the Poison of the Soul; the same Advantages will give the same force of Operation to both.

Sometimes a Man shall see the Scene of things round about him so fitly laid, and prepared to serve him in the Gratification of his corrupt Desires, that he cannot but conclude, that there was something more than *blind Chance*, which brought him into that Condition. For when we see a Net or Snare curiously and artificially placed, we may be sure that there is something intended to

be caught, and that the Fowler is not far off, whether we see him or no.

Judas, no doubt, had a Temptation to gratify his covetous Humour, before he betray'd his Master. For *St. John* has given us his Character, *John* xii. 6. *That he was a Thief, and carried the Bag*, and that more to serve himself than any one else. But the great *Hour* was not come, that he should shew himself so, till he had that Opportunity of trucking with the Priests; and then he quickly *swallowed up the Sop* and the Treason together, sold his Conscience, and put his Master's Blood in his Pocket.

A corrupt Principle may be *strong*, tho' it be *still*; and as strong at one time as at another, though it does not always break out into the same exorbitance of Sin. But when Occasion improves and quickens it, Circumstances help and encourage it, and Opportunities further and push it on: then you shall see not only *what a Day*, but even *what an Hour of Temptation can bring forth*. Fire has always the same consuming Quality, though it does not always make *work for a Brief*. Sometimes it is quenched as soon as kindled; but when the Wind strikes in with it, and both strengthens and spreads the Flame, and the Matter upon which it seizes, is more than ordinarily catching and combustible, and all Means of extinguishing and stopping the Progress of it, are out of the
Way;

Way ; then, and not till then, it shall reign and rage with a boundless irresistible Fury and shew you how much another kind of Thing it is, while it is *your Servant*, and when it comes to be *your Master* ; while it serves the Occasions of the House upon the *Hearth*, and when it comes to lord it upon the *Roof*.

Now the Case of a Man's Corruption, before and under the *Crisis* of a Temptation, is much after this Manner. When it comes against him with all its Recruits, all its Auxiliaries, all its peculiar Advantages, then let him expect a Battle, and know that he is to combat a prepared Enemy, who has prevented him, and comes to fight him upon the Vantage-Ground. And as it was said of the Stars fighting in their Courses against Sifera, *Judges v. 20.* so may it be said of a Man brought into such a Condition, that all the Circumstances of Time, Place, Person, and the like, shall jointly fight against him, enflame his Corruption, heighten and give Life to the Temptation, driving it home like so many mighty Strokes upon a Wedge strong and sharp pointed, and apt enough to enter, and make its way *of itself*.

2dly, A second Sign of a Temptation's drawing near *its Hour*, is a strange Averse-ness to Duty, and a backwardness to, if not a neglect of, the spiritual Exercises of *Prayer, Reading and Meditation*. Now as every Principle

ciple of Life has some suitable Aliment or Provision, by which, both its Being is continued, and its Strength supported: so the fore-mentioned Duties are the real proper Nutriment, by which the spiritual Life is kept up and maintained in the vigorous Exercise of its vital Powers.

And as in all other Things, when the great Instrument of Life, *Appetite to Food*, fails them, it is an undoubted Argument of some notable Disturbance, or decay of Nature; so when the Soul begins to disrelish its daily Nourishment of Prayer, Watchfulness, and strict Communion with God, it is an infallible Sign that it is under some present Disorder, and possibly not far from some mortal Distemper.

A Man at first perhaps feels a kind of grudging and uneasiness all over his Body, a deadness upon his Stomach, and a drowsiness upon his Senses, and he cannot well tell what he ails; but after a few Days these uncertain Beginnings come to rage in a burning Fever, or to strike him with an Apoplex: and then it appears what those Symptoms fore-boded and tended to all along; and the great Question now is, not *when* or how soon the Man shall *recover* and be well, but *whether* or no he shall *live*.

In like manner, when a Man finds it thus with himself, as to the State of his Soul, that his former freshness and fervour in the Service

Service of God is abated, and that his Heart either flies off from the Duties of Religion, or performs them with a cold, faint, languishing Indifference: in the Judgment of all those Guides of Souls, who discourse most experimentally and knowingly of these Matters, such an one has all the reason in the World to suspect, that there is some notable Mischief designed him by his spiritual Enemy; and that he is entring upon some dangerous Trial, some critical, searching Temptation, which will be sure to probe him to the Bottom, to *shake* all the Powers of his Soul; and from which if the divine Mercy does in the Issue deliver him, yet it *will be so as by Fire*, by Smart, and Difficulty, and great Unlikelihoods, and by such near Approaches to, and narrow Rescues from Destruction, that it will be matter of Horror to him to reflect upon his very Deliverance, and the Danger will be *terrible even after* it is escaped.

3^{dly}, The third and last *Sign* that I shall mention, of a Temptation's attaining *its full Hour* or Maturity, is a more than usual Restlessness and Importunity in its Enticings or Instigations. For it is the Tempter's last Assault, and therefore will certainly be furious; the last Pass which he makes at the Soul, and therefore will be sure to be driven Home. For he knows that if he succeeds now, he is absolutely victorious; and that

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if he miscarries in this his last Action, all his former Arts and Attempts vanish and fall to nothing.

So that upon such a promising Concurrency of all those mighty Advantages which we have mentioned, nothing can remain further to speed his Design, but that he presses on to Victory, by charging forcibly and frequently : And this he will sometimes do with such Fury, pouring in Arguments upon the Mind so thick and fast, that all contrary Considerations and Arguings, by which it would fence against the Power of his Proposals, shall be either stifled with the Multitude, or overborn with the Urgency and Impudence of his Sollicitations.

There have been strange Examples of Men brought into such a Condition. It is reported of *Luther*, that being tempted to make away with himself, the Temptation grew so fierce and pressing upon him, that falling into an Agony, and (as it were) struggling for Life, he had no other way to defend himself, but, during the Conflict, by frequently urging and repeating over and over to himself the *Sixth Commandment* : *Thou shalt do no Murder ; Thou shalt do no Murder*. That so, by encountring this fiery *Dart*, with the continually renewed Evidence of the *Sin* offered full and fresh to *his Faith*, in the peremptory, express Words of the Precept ; he might relieve his labouring Mind against
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the present Violence of that impious Suggestion.

The Tempter in this Action behaves himself just as you shall see some eager, ill-bred Petitioners, who do not so properly supplicate or hunt the Person whom they address to, dogging him from Place to Place, till they even extort an Answer to their rude Requests. So in this Case a Man shall find himself not only importuned, but even invaded; the Temptation shall in a manner break in upon him, and follow him without Pause or Intermision; so that he shall not be able to discharge his Mind of the irksom, incessant Representations of the Sin which it sollicitis him to, but his Imagination shall be possessed, and his Thoughts so far entangled with it, that they shall have no Power to divert or pass off to any other thing. And now when a Temptation has arrived to this Pitch, the tempted Person may assure himself that it is at its *high Crisis*, its *Hour* is come, and he is actually engaged in a Dispute for his Soul, and nothing less than the keeping or losing it for ever, is the Thing which is contended for.

And thus I have also done with the *third Particular* at *first proposed*, and given you three several *Signs* or *Marks*, by which the spiritually wise and watchful may observe the Motions of their *grand Enemy*, and discern the Approach of the *fatal Season*. Of all

all which we may say, as Christ did of those Signs that were to portend his own coming, *Mark xiii. 29. When you shall see these Things come to pass, then know that it is nigh, even at the Doors.* So when a Man shall find these Things come upon him, he must know, that tho' he is not actually conquered and trodden down, yet the Enemy is in his Quarters, and the Sword at his Breast; and if these Dangers alarm him not, he is beside the Remedies of Mercy, and the Admonitions of Grace, he is passing into a State of Hardness and Insensibility, and (for ought appears) under all the sad Likelihoods of a perishing Condition. And thus at length we come to our

Fourth and last Particular, which was, to draw some *useful Inferences* from the whole Discourse; and many such might be drawn from thence. But I shall insist only upon three, and that very briefly. As,

1st, That every Time in which a Man is tempted, is not properly *the Hour of Temptation*. A Man in his Christian Course may meet with several Assaults and spiritual Encounters, which he easily masters and breaks thro'; but if from these slight Efforts or Velitations (as we may call them) he shall conclude that the Tempter can do no more, and from former Success in smaller Combats shall promise himself certain and final Victory in all future Conflicts, he will find himself deceived,

ceived, and imposed upon by false Measures, taken from insufficient Experience. For probably the Temptation at those Times might not have got all those Helps and Advantages about it, which were necessary to give it its full Strength.

Temptation has its daily Risings and Fallings, *Ebbings* and *Flowings*, and a Man must daily and of course expect them. But the great Danger is not from hence; but when by a kind of periodical Revolution or Return it comes (as I may so speak) *to its Spring-tide*, then let a Man look to his spiritual Banks and Mounds, that the Flood break not in upon him, and the killing *Waters* (as the Psalmist expresses it) *come not in even to his Soul*.

The Life and Business of a Christian is but too truly a Warfare, and a sharp one too; and no Warriour must think himself sufficiently informed by a few antecedent Skirmishes, what the whole Body and united Force of his Enemy can do in the main Heat of the Battle. For after a Man has been victorious in the former, he may be, and very often is, shamefully worsted, and overthrown in the latter.

2dly, The second Thing which we shall infer from the foregoing Particulars is, *That* every Man living, some time or other, sooner or later, shall assuredly meet with an *Hour of Temptation*; a certain *critical Hour*, which shall more especially try what Mettle
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his Heart is made of, and in which the eternal Concerns of his Soul shall more particularly lie at Stake. So that if he does not quit himself like a Man, and make good his Station against this principal Assault of his spiritual Adversary, a Failure or Miscarriage then will prove like an Oversight in the Day of Battle, hardly to be recovered by any after Reparation.

It is indeed called an *Hour*, but it is such an *Hour* as has an *Eternity* depending on it, and consequently makes a whole Life little enough to prepare for it. The Advice of the Son of *Sirach* is excellent, and home to the Case, *Eccles. ii. 1. My Son, if thou come to serve the Lord, prepare thy Soul for Temptation.* And great reason doubtless has a Man to prepare for that which will assuredly be prepared for him, and from which no Privilege of Christianity does or can exempt the very holiest and perfectest of Men. For Gold itself must be tried, and must pass the Furnace for that purpose.

Now the two great Ways of Trial, by which Men are generally brought to a dividing Point, are by their *Hopes* and their *Fears*. And for the most part the Tempter uses to accost Men first by their *Hopes*, and to bid fair and high, to see what they will take for their Souls; and if he finds that they will come to no Bargain with him, but that his Offers are rejected, and so this

Course

Course succeeds not, then he will see what he can do upon their *Fears*, and try whether he can fright or disgrace, *beggar* or *kill* Men out of their Consciencs. These I say are the two old stated Methods, by which his Temptations are usually wrought up to a Pitch; and if the Tempter cannot prevail one way, let no Man flatter themselves, but rest assured that he will take the other; if he cannot speed as a *Merchant*, he will try what he can do as a *Warrior*.

What our Saviour says of Offences, *Matt. xviii.7.* holds equally true of Temptation, *that it must needs be that they will come.* And accordingly that Declaration of his runs absolute and positive, *Luke xiv. 26. If any Man come to me, and hate not his Father and Mother, Wife and Children, Brethren and Sisters, and his own Life also he cannot be my Disciple.* This is the terrible Decree and Sentence of Christianity. And that critical searching *Hour* (which we have been hitherto discouraging of) is the great Instrument of Providence to draw forth, and place those two commanding Motives of Mens Actions, and Rivals for their Choice, *Duty and Interest*, one against the other; and to set the Offers of this World, and the Promises of the *next*, the Enjoyments of one, and the Hopes of the other, in their full Competition. And when after a thorough Debate on both Sides, the deciding Cast and Issue of the whole Matter comes

to this; “*Either* part with your Conscience, “ or your Pleasures; your Conscience, or “ your Interest; your Conscience, or your “ Estate; nay, your Conscience, or your “ very Life;” *then* let a Man know that the *Hour of Temptation* has overtaken him; and God and his holy Angels sit as Spectators in Heaven, looking down and observing how he will behave and govern himself in this great *Crisis*; in the whole Carriage of which, as he is most particularly and directly under God’s Eye, so it will be a vast Help and Advantage to him to place God immovably before his.

In the mean time let it be fixed and concluded upon, that such a *Season*, such an *Hour* will come: and that when it is come, every Man must expect to fare in it according as he has prepared himself for it. And this directly brings us to the

Third and last Inference which I shall make from the Words; namely, that the surest way to carry us safe and successful thro’ this great and searching *Hour of Probation*, is a strict, steady, conscientious living up to the Rules of our Religion, which the Text here calls *a keeping the Word of Christ’s Patience*; a Denomination given to the Gospel, from that peculiar distinguishing Grace, which the great Author of the Gospel was pleased to signalize it for, above all other Religions and Institutions in the World, and that
both

both by his Precept and Example. And therefore we must not take *Patience* here in the new and lately current Sense of the Word, for *Patience per Force* (tho' a most useful Quality I confess in the Case of *Madness*;) nor, which is much the same, for a Willingness of Disposition to *suffer*, only where a Man has no Power to *resist*; according to the Republican Divinity of some scandalous Exploders of the Doctrine of *Passive Obedience*. A Doctrine which shines with as high and flaming an Evidence throughout the whole New Testament, as the very History of our Saviour's Life does, which was a kind of Comment upon it. For the Christian Religion, both in itself and in its Author, is a *suffering Religion*; a Religion *teaching* Suffering, *enjoining* Suffering, and *rewarding* Suffering; and to express all in a word, it was *Christ's passive Obedience* which redeemed the World; and for any one who wears the Name of a Christian to scoff at, or write against it, and at the same time to look to be saved by it, is certainly very strange and preposterous, and too much in all Conscience for any, but such Professors of Christianity as live and practise in a direct Defiance of their Profession.

But to pass to that which I principally intend; I say it is a steady, uniform Practice of the common, constant Duties of Christianity, which is the Christian's surest Preser-

vative against this great and critical Day of Trial. It is not any one or more strange, superlative Act or Acts of Mortification, nor any high Strain of Discipline or Severity upon ourselves (tho' of excellent Use doubtless in their proper place) but it is the constant, even Tenor of a good Life, which will be found the best Security against the Tempter; as no one Blow, how great soever, discharged upon an Enemy, is so certain a Protection against him as a continual *Posture of Defence*. And such a Thing is a good Life against all the Arts and Assaults of our subtil, watchful Aggressor.

Great Disputes there are about Religion, and great reason there is that Men should be zealous for the Truth; nevertheless, be a Man's Belief never *so true*, and his Religion never *so good*, an ill Life will certainly send him to the Devil. And it is really a very senseless and ridiculous thing for an ill Liver to be zealous about any Religion; it being much the same Case, as if one who had a rotten, pocky Carcase, should be extremely solicitous about the Colour of his Clothes. For suppose a Man a Murderer, an Adulterer, or a perjur'd, false Person, can any Religion in the World do such an one any good? No, 'tis impossible; for if his Religion be false, it will further his Damnation; and if true, it will aggravate it.

Nothing

Nothing but *the Word of Christ's Patience*, derived into *Practice*, and digested into a good Life, can keep a Man firm and tight in the terrible shaking Day of Temptation; a Day, which every one who knows the true Value of a Soul, will be always providing against. And that he may do it effectually, let him follow the Course which I shall here briefly mention, and mark out to him, and so conclude.

As first, let him be frequent and fervent in Prayer, and in his Devotions to God, both publick and private, assuring himself that God values not one without the other. In the next place, let him be exact and impartial in the great Work of Self-examination, looking often and narrowly into the State of his Soul, and clearing all Accounts and old Scores between God and his Conscience. Moreover, let him be much and serious in considering the extreme Vanity, Emptiness, and Shortness of all those worldly Enjoyments, which the generality of Men do so much doat upon. And lastly, above all, let him daily and hourly, and with the closest Intention of Mind, meditate of Death and Judgment, of the Certainty and Horror of them, and the intolerable Misery of such as shall be overtaken by them in their Sins.

And when a Man shall have inur'd and beaten himself to such Thoughts as these for some considerable Time, the Allurements

of the *Flesh* and the *World* will be but dry, tasteless, insipid Things to him; and if the Tempter comes, all the Avenues and Passages to such a Soul will be found shut, and bolted against his Temptations, so that he must withdraw and be gone; for where he finds a Man so doing, he will find nothing to do himself.

In a Word, such a Course of Living will make that, which is generally one of the greatest *Hours of Temptation*, even the *Hour of Death* itself, neither terrible nor strange, so that altho' it should be *sudden*, yet it shall not be *surprising*, as having nothing more to do with such an one, but only to take him out of this *World*, which in Mind and Desire he has *left already*, and to carry him to *Heaven*, where *his Conversation* was before.

To which God of his Mercy vouchsafe to bring us all; to whom be rendred and ascribed, as is most due, all Praise, Might, Majesty, and Dominion, both now and for evermore.
Amen.



The FIFTH

Part or Discourse

CONCERNING

TEMPTATION.

I COR. X. 13.

— *God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able; but will with the Temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.*

THere is nothing in itself more irrational, nor yet (as the State of Nature now is) more *natural*, than for Men to govern their *Hopes* and their *Fears* wholly by their present Apprehensions; so that where they see a Danger manifestly threatening them, *there they will fear*; and where, on the other hand, the Means of their Deliverance are obvious to the *View* of Sense, *there they*

will hope; that is, in other Words, they will hope and fear just as far as they can see, and trust God so far as they can trust their Eyes, and no further.

A Temper of Mind utterly contrary to that heroick Nature of Faith; the noblest Property of which is to give *Light* and *Evidence* to Things *not seen*; and *Being* and *Subsistence* to Things *before they are*; and by so doing, to render its Object then more *credible*, when most *invisible*; and this (if thoroughly considered) with the highest reason imaginable; for as such a short and limited *Faith*, as ties itself wholly to the Measures of Sense, can proceed from nothing else but a Man's not considering how many Ways he may be attacked and ruined, even in his *highest Security*; and how many Ways again he may be delivered, even in his *deepest Distress*, which he cannot possibly comprehend nor pierce into; and upon that account *presumes* in one Case, and *despairs* in another; and this only from a peremptory Persuasion founded upon a gross Ignorance of both; so on the contrary, that generous Confidence of *Faith*, which carries it above all these low Phænomena of *Sense and Matter*, is bottomed upon the truest and strictest Philosophy discoursing about *God's Wisdom and Power*; which being confessedly *infinite*, must needs upon that Score, even in the very Judgment of bare Reason, have unconceivably more

Ways.

Ways to deliver from *Temptation*, than there can be *Temptations* for any one to be delivered from. And therefore where the utmost Reach of created *Wit* and *Power* ends, then and there these *two mighty Attributes* begin; this being the proper, eminent, and peculiar Season for their *working Wonders*; that so by this Means a Man may see his pitiful narrow Reason *nonpluss'd* and *outdone*, before he sees his Wants answered; and the *proud Nothing* own himself baffled, while in spite of his *Despair* he finds himself *delivered*.

Now of all the Evils incident to Man, there is none from which an *Escape* is both so difficult and so desirable as from *Temptations*. For as all *Escape*, in the very Notion and Nature of it, imports in it these *three Things*, 1st, Some precedent Danger threatening; and 2^{dly}, The Difficulty of getting thro' it; and yet, 3^{dly}, a *final* Deliverance from it; so in this Business of Temptation, the *Danger threatening* is no less than *Damnation*; the Difficulty of *escaping it* is founded partly upon the *Importunity, Vigilance, and Power* of a *Spirit* inexpressibly strong, subtle, and malicious, and partly upon a furious, in-bred Inclination to Sin in the *tempted* Person himself, and this both heightened by inveterate Custom, and inflamed by Circumstances continually pushing it on to Action. All which represents to us such a Scene of Opposition, such a Combination of Craft, and Force to-

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gether,

gether, as must needs over-match all the Strength of Nature, all the poor Auxiliaries which *Flesh and Blood* can bring into the Field against so mighty an Enemy.

And therefore nothing less than a Being *infinitely wise*, and thereby able to sound all the Depths, and to out-reach and defeat all the Finesses and Intrigues of this *tempting Spirit*, and withal, of an infinite, irresistible Power, to support the Weaknesses, and supply the Defects of a poor sorry Mortal, engaged against him, and ready to fall under him. Nothing, I say, but that Almighty Being, which can do all this, can break the Bonds, and lose the Cords, which the Tempter holds the tempted Person by; and so give him a full and absolute Deliverance.

Now *how*, and *by what Ways*, God does this, shall be our present Business to enquire. In which, tho' (as I shew before) it would be a great *Vanity*, and as great an *Absurdity*, to offer to reduce *Omniscience* to our *Methods*, or to confine *Omnipotence* to our *Measures*, and consequently to give a full and distinct Account of those innumerable Ways, by which the *great Ruler of the World* brings about his Designs, especially in his dealing with the Souls of Men (which ever was, and will be strange, secret, and unaccountable) yet I shall venture to assign *four several Ways*, and those very intelligible to any considering Mind, by which God is pleased,
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in the Course of his Providence, *to deliver Men out of Temptation.* As,

1st, If the Force of the Temptation be chiefly from the *vehement, restless, and incessant Importunities* of the *evil Spirit*, God often puts an Issue to the Temptation, by rebuking and commanding down the Tempter himself. For we must know, that altho' the *Devil*, in his Dealings with Men, acts the Part of an *Enemy*; yet still, in respect of God, he does the *Work of a Servant*, even in his greatest Fury, and operates but as an *Instrument*; that is, both with *Dependence* and *Limitation*. He is in a Chain, and that Chain is in God's *Hand*; and consequently notwithstanding his utmost Spite, he cannot be more *malicious* than he is *obnoxious*. And therefore being under such an absolute Controul, all that he does must be by Address and Art, he must persuade us to be damn'd, cajole and court us to Destruction. He must use Tricks and Stratagems, urge us with Importunity, surprise us with Subtilty, till at length we enter upon *Death by Choice*, and by our *own Act* put ourselves into the fatal Noose.

For certain it is that God has not put it into the Power of any created Being to make a Man do an ill thing against his Will, but has committed the great Portal and Passage into his Soul, to wit, the *Freedom of his Will*, to his own keeping; and it

is not all that the Devil can do, that can force the Key of it out of his Hands. But he must first be a *Tempter*, before he can be a *Destroyer*.

Nevertheless tho' he cannot compel to sin, yet he *can urge*, and *press*, and *follow* a Man with vehement and continual Sollicitations to it. And tho' his Malice can go no further, yet certainly it is a real Torture, and a great Misery to a well-disposed Mind, that he should go so far, and to find itself incessantly importuned to any vile Thing or Action; indeed as great and vexatious, as Blows or *Bastinadoes* can be to the Body; for during the Sollicitation, the spiritual Part is all the time *struggling* and *fencing*, and consequently in the same degree *suffering* and *oppressed*; and for any one to be always in a laborious, hazardous Posture of Defence without Intermission or Relief, must needs be intolerable.

For admitting that none of the *fiery Darts of the Devil* should actually kill and destroy, yet certainly it is next to *Death* to be always warding off *deadly Blows*, and to be held upon the Rack of a constant, anxious, unintermitted Fear about the dreadful Issues of a Man's eternal Condition. And that Man who is not *pierced* with a mortal Wound, yet if he is continually *pulling Arrows* out of his Flesh, and hearing Bullets hissing about his Ears, and Death passing by him but at the distance

distance of an Hair's Breadth, has surely All that Fear, and Danger, and Destruction, in the nearest Approach of it, can contribute to make him miserable.

It is hard indeed, if not impossible, to assign exactly how *one Spirit* may *operate upon* and *afflict* another. But thus much it is very agreeable to Reason to suppose, to wit, that a *stronger Spirit* may proportionably make the *afflictive Impression upon a weaker, which a stronger Body* is able to make upon a Body of less Strength than itself. And two Ways we have Ground to conclude that the *evil Spirit* does this by; one by raising strange and unaccountable Horrors in the Mind; and the other by rude and boistrous Impulses to something contrary to the Judgment of Conscience. The former of which might easily be made out both from *Reason* and *Experience*; and the latter is, what we are now discoursing of. And a very wretched, dangerous, and dubious Condition is the Soul very often cast into by this means; and being brought thereby to the very Brink of Destruction, God is then pleased to step in to its Assistance; and when the Tempter grows restless, and next to violent, and instead of *persuading*, attempts even to *ravish the Consent*, God stops his foul Mouth, and commands him to *hold his Peace*, as formerly in *Job's* Case he commanded him to *hold his Hand*.

For his devilish Method in tempting is commonly this. First to begin the Temptation with a *still Voice* and a gentle Breath, and all the sly and fawning Applications that can be ; but when that will not do, then he raises his Voice, and the Temptation blows rough and high like a Tempest, and would shake down where it cannot insinuate. It raises a Storm amongst all the Powers and Faculties of the Soul, and like the rolling Billows of a troubled Sea, dashes them one against another, *Judgment against Appetite, and Appetite against Judgment*, till the poor Man (as it were) broken between both, is ready to sink and perish, and make *Shipwreck of his Faith*, did not a merciful and powerful Voice from above *rebuke the Winds*, and compose the Waves, and chide down the Rage and Blusterings of so impetuous an Adversary.

And this God often does out of meer Compassion to a Soul labouring and languishing, and even wearied out with the frequent and sordid Instigations of a tempting Spirit : For all *Importunity* is a kind of *Violence* to the Mind. This was the Course which our Saviour himself took with him in the like Case. The Devil seemed to pour in his Temptations upon him without any Pause or Intermision ; and accordingly our Saviour answers his *first and second Temptations* with fit Scriptures calmly, and rationally applied

plied to both; but when he grew impudent and audacious in *his third Temptation*, our Saviour not only confounds him with *Scripture*, but also *cuts him short* with a Word of Authority, and bids him *give over, and be gone*. And as afterwards he once took up *Peter* speaking like *Satan*, so at this time he turns off *Satan* speaking like himself, with an ὑπαγε Σατανᾶ, *Get thee behind me*. And a most proper and efficacious Way it is certainly to repel the Encroachment of a bold and troublesome Proposal, to be rough and peremptory with it, to strike it down, and to answer it with Scorn and Indignation; and so to silence the pressing Insolence of a *saucy Sophister*, not so much by confuting the *Argument*, as by countermanding the *Opponent*. And this is one Way by which God gives *Deliverance and Escape out of Temptation*; he controuls and reprimands the Tempter, and takes off the evil Spirit before he can be able to fasten.

2dly, If the Force of a Temptation be from the *Weakness of a Man's Mind*, rendring it unable of itself to withstand and bear up against the *Affaults* of the Tempter, God oftentimes delivers from it by *mighty, inward, unaccountable Supplies of Strength*, conveyed to the Soul immediately from himself. The former Way God delivers a Man by removing his Enemy, but this latter by giving him wherewithal to *conquer* him. And this

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is as certain a Way of Deliverance as the other can be. For surely a Man is equally safe, whether his Enemy *flies from* him or *falls before* him. It seems to be with the Soul, with reference to some Temptations, as with one of a weak and a tender Sight, with reference to the *Sun Beams* beating upon it: if you divert or keep off the *Beam*, you relieve the Man; but if you give him an *Eagle's Eye*, he will look the Sun in the Face, endure the Light, and defy the Impression. So if God, instead of silencing and commanding off the Tempter, suffers him to proceed and press home the Temptation, yet if at the same time also he gives in a Proportion of Strength superior to the Assault, and an Assistance greater than the Opposition, the Man is as much delivered as if he had no Enemy at all; the manner indeed of his Deliverance is infinitely more noble, and as much preferable to the other, as the Trophies of a Conqueror surpass the poor inglorious Safeties of an Escape.

Thus it was with that holy and great Man *St. Paul*. He was not only accosted, but even worried with a *Messenger from Satan*; a *Messenger* sent not only to *challenge*, but actually to *duel* him: and so sharp was the *Encounter*, that it passed from Sollicitations to downright Blows; for in *2 Cor. xii. 7.* he tells us *he was buffeted*. And so near was he to an utter Despair of the main Issue of the Conflict,

Conflict, that he cries out like a Man vanquished, and with the Sword of a prevailing Enemy at his Throat. *O wretched Man, who shall deliver me!* Delivered (we all know) he was at length, and that it was God, who delivered him. But how? why, not by taking off the Tempter, not by stopping his Mouth, that he should not *solicit*, nor lastly, by tying up his Hands, that he should not buffet (which yet was the Thing which St. Paul so much desired, and accordingly so earnestly prayed for.) *Thrice* (says he) *I besought the Lord that it might depart from me,* v. 8. But God designed him another, and a nobler kind of Deliverance, even by a *Sufficiency of his Grace*, v. 9. *My Grace*, (says he) *is sufficient for thee.* God himself (as I may so speak) undertook the Quarrel, and fought his Battels, and that brought him off, not only *safe*, but *triumphant*, which surely was as much more honourable than to have the *Combat ended by parting the Combatants*, as it is for a generous and brave Enemy to have his Quarrel decided by the Verdict of a victorious Sword, than to be taken up and compromised by the mean Expedients of Reference and Arbitration.

But this kind of Deliverance *by such mighty inward Conveyances of Strength* was never so signal and illustrious, as in that *noble Army of Martyrs*, which fought Christ's Battels in the Primitive Ages of the Church. For what could

could make Men go laughing to the Stake, singing to the Rack, to the Saw and the Gridiron, to the wild Beasts and the *Lions*, with a Courage vastly greater than theirs, but an invincible Principle, of which the World saw the manifest Effects indeed, but could not see the Cause? What, I say, could make *Nature* thus triumph over *Nature* in the Cause of Religion? Some *Heathen Philosophers* I confess did, and some Heathenish Christians (who have neither Religion nor Philosophy) still do ascribe all this to the peculiar Strength and Sturdiness of some Tempers.

But in answer to these; in the first place I ask, *where such a Strength and Sturdiness of Temper* ever yet was, or elsewhere to be found in any great and considerable Multitude of Men? *Flesh and Blood* was, and will be the same in all Places and Ages. But is *Flesh and Blood* left to itself an equal Match to all the *Arts and Inventions*, all the *Tortures and Tyrannies*, which the Will, Power and Malice of Persecution could or can encounter it with? No, assuredly the Courage, which rises and reaches up to Martyrdom, is infinitely another thing from that, which exerts itself in all other Cases whatsoever. Nor can every bold Man, who in hot Blood can meet his Enemy in the Field, upon the Stock of the same Courage *fry at the Stake*, or with a fixed deliberate Firmness of Mind endure

to have his Flesh torn off with burning Pincers piece by piece before his Eyes. No, there are few Hearts so strongly and stoutly hard, but are quickly *melted* down before such *Fires*.

All this is most undeniably true. But then by way of further Answer to the fore-mentioned Allegation; *That the natural Sturdiness of some Tempers might be sufficient to enable some Persons to endure such exquisite Torments, as we have been speaking of,* I add moreover: that the Endurance of them has been in none more eminent and glorious than in Persons of a quite contrary Temper, of a weak and tender Constitution, and of a nice and delicate Education. Nay (and which is yet more) in such as have been extremely *diffident and suspicious of themselves*, lest upon the terrible Approach of the *fiery Trial* they should fly off, and apostatize, *and deny the Truth*. And yet when God has brought these poor diffident self-distrusting Souls to grapple (as it were) Hand to Hand with the Enemy, whom they so much dreaded, they have found something *within* them greater and mightier than any thing, which they feared *without* them; something which equally triumph'd over the Torment itself, and their own more tormenting Fears of it. All which could spring from nothing else but those secret inward *Supplies* and *Assistances* of the *Divine Spirit*, which raised and inspired

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their blessed Souls to such an Extasy of Fortitude, as not only exceeded the very *Powers*, but almost overflowed the very *Capacities* of Nature.

For the Truth is, Nature at best is but a poor and a feeble thing, *the Flesh is weak*, and the Heart fallacious; Purposes are frail, and Resolutions changeable, and *Grace* itself in this Life is yet *begun*. But, Thanks be to God, our principal Strength lies in none of all those, but in those Auxiliaries, which shall flow in upon us from the Almighty God, while we are actually engaged *for God*, in those hidden ineffable Satisfaction, which are able to work a Man up to a pitch of *doing* and *suffering* incredibly above and beyond himself.

For still as God brings his Servants into different States and Conditions, he fails not to measure out to them *a different Spirit*, suited and proportioned to their respective Exigences of each Condition. For this is a most certain Truth, and worthy of our best Observation, that the same *Almighty and Creative Power*, which has *given* to one Man greater Strength of Mind than to another, can, and undoubtedly very often docs, *vouchsafe* to the same Man greater Strength of Mind at some times, than he does at others. Without which Consideration it is impossible to give any satisfactory Account of the Cause and Reason of that miraculous *Passive Fortitude*

itude (may our triumphant Whigs pardon the Word) which shined forth in the Primitive Christians; which yet all the Records of Antiquity, and Historians of the Church, are *unanimously Witnesses*, and *equally Admirers of*. From all which it follows, that no Man living, tho' never so humble, so distrustful and suspicious of himself, can, from any thing which he finds or feels in his Heart the time of his Prosperity, certainly know, what a during invincible Spirit may enter into him, when God shall call him forth as his Champion to own, and assert an oppressed Truth, to *act*, and to *suffer*, to fight, and perhaps die, in his despised Cause.

And therefore, if a *Day of Trial* should come upon us (as God knows, how near it may be, and how terrible it may prove) let us so prepare before it comes, as not to despond under it when it does come. For when I consider that vast Load of *National Guilt*, which has been growing upon us ever since the *Year Forty One*; and never yet to any considerable Degree accounted for to Publick Justice: I cannot persuade my self, that either the Judgments of God, or the Malice of Man have done with us yet. Especially since the same Faction, which overturned *the Church and Monarchy then*, is, with all its Republican Guilt, strong and in Heart now; and gnashing its Teeth at the *Mo-*

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narchy, and at the *Church of England* for the sake of *the Monarchy* every Day. And it is but a melancholy Reflection, I confess, to all honest Minds to consider, what so daring a Combination may in a short time arrive to.

Nevertheless (as I said before) *let us not despond*, but only make this our Care, that though we suffer by their *spite*, we may not share in their *Guilt*. And then we may be confident, that our main Strengths will be found in better keeping than our own; as being neither deposited in our own Hands, nor to be measured by our own Knowledge. We shall find those inward Comforts and Supports of Mind, which all the Malice of Men and Devils shall never be able to *suspend us from*, or *deprive us of*. *All my fresh Springs are in thee* (says *David*) Psalm lxxxvii. 7. We shall find a fulness in the *Stream* to answer all our Needs, though the *Spring* perhaps, which feeds it, may escape our Eye.

When our Saviour *Christ* had set before his Disciples a full and lively Draught of all those barbarous and cruel Usages which they should meet with after his Death, from *Synagogues and Councils*, from *Kings and Potentates*, before whom they should be arraign'd, and brought to plead their Cause against all the Disadvantages which the Wit and Eloquence, the Power and Malice of their *Persecutors* could put them to, he well knew that

that this would create in them great Anxiety of Thoughts, and sollicitous Fore-cast, how they who were Men of an unskilled, unlearned Simplicity, and withal none of the greatest Courage, should be able to manage their own Defence so as to acquit themselves at the Bar of the Learned, and in the Face of Princes. All this, (I say) he foresaw, and knew, and therefore, *Luke* xxi. 14, 15. he lays in this sovereign and peculiar Antidote against all such disheartning Apprehensions. *Settle it* (says he) *in your Hearts not to meditate beforehand what ye shall answer, for I will give you a Mouth and Wisdom, which all your Adversaries shall not be able to gain-say or resist.* And in *Matth.* x. 19. It is emphatically remarked, *that it should be given them in that same Hour, what they should speak.* Which undeniably proves, that they should receive that Ability by immediate and *Divine Infusion*; as coming in upon them just in the *Season*, in the very *Hour*, and critical *Instant* of their necessity.

This Example, I confess, is *particular, personal*, and *miraculous*; but the reason of it is universal and perpetual, as being founded in this: that as *Nature* in Things *Natural*, so *Grace* in Things *Supernatural* is never deficient or wanting to Men in Necessities. And as necessary as it was for the first founding of a Church, that Christ should vouchsafe his Disciples those miraculous Assistances

in point of *Ratiocination* and *Elocution*, so necessary it is at this very Day ; and will be so long as the World lasts, for God to vouchsafe Men under some Temptations, such *extraordinary Supplies of supporting Grace*, as otherwise are not commonly dealt forth to them. For still (as we observed before in *St. Paul's Case*) God intends us a *sufficiency of Grace*. But where the Trial is *extraordinary*, unless *the Grace* afforded be so too, it neither is, nor can be accounted *sufficient*. Let this therefore be the second Way by which God delivers out of *Temptation*.

3dly, If the Force of a Temptation springs chiefly from *the unhappy Circumstances of a Man's Life* continually exposing him to *tempting Objects* and Occasions of Sin ; God frequently delivers such an one by a *Providential Change* of the whole Course of his Life, and the Circumstances of his Condition. And this he may do either by a *general Publick Change* and Revolution of Affairs, which always carries with it the *Rise and Fall* of a vast Number of particular Interests, whereby some perhaps whose Greatness had been a *Snare* to themselves, as well as a *Burden* to others, are happily thrown down into such a Condition, as may serve to mortify and fit them for *another World*, from such an One, as had before made them intolerable *in this*.

And sometimes God does this by a *Personal Change* affecting a Man only in his own *Person*,

son and his *private Concerns*: So that, whereas his former *Conversations, Interests, and Acquaintance* might enslave him to some sort of *Objects and Occasions*, which have such a strange and powerful Ascendant over his *Temper and Affections*, that he is never assaulted by them, but he is still foiled in the Encounter, and always comes off from them a worse Man than they found him: in this Case, God by a sovereign Turn of his Providence alters and new models the whole State and Course of such an ones Affairs; and thereby breaks the Snare, and unties the several Bonds and Ligaments of the fatal Knot, and so unravels the whole Temptation.

And this is as much God's *Prerogative*, and the Act of a *Divine Power*, as that to which a Man owes his very Being and Creation. For as no Man *can add one Cubit to his Stature*; so neither can he add one *Span, one Hands-breadth* to his *Fortune*. For that a Man should be either High or Low, Rich or Poor, Strong or Weak, Healthful or Sickly, or the like, is wholly from the Disposal of a superior Power; and yet upon these very things depends the Result and Issue of all *Temptations*.

Accordingly if God shall think fit to strip a voluptuous Person of his Riches and Interest, and thereby transplant him from an *idle and delicate way of Living* into a Life of

Hardship, Service, and severe Action; from the *Softness* of a *Court* to the *Disciplines* of a *Camp*, to long *Marches*, short *Sleeps*, and shorter *Meals*, there is no question but those *Temptations* which drew their main *Force* and *Prevalence* from the *Plenties* of his former *Condition*, will attack him but very faintly under the *Pemuries* of the quite contrary; and the combustible *Matter* being thus removed, the *Flame* must quickly abate and languish, expire, and at length go out of itself.

Nevertheless there is, I confess, such an impregnable *Strength*, such an exuberant *Fulness* of *Corruption* in some *Natures*, as to baffle and disappoint all these *Methods* and *Applications* of *Providence*, and even where *Objects* and *Occasions* of *Sin* are wanting, to supply the want of them by an inexhaustible overflowing *Pravity* and *Concupiscence* from within. So that such an one can be proud and insolent, tho' *Providence* cloaths him with *Rags*, and seats him upon a *Dunghill*; he can be an *Epicure* even with the *Bread and Water of Affliction*; nor can *Hardship* and *Hunger* itself cure him of his *Sensuality*, the *Fury* of his *Appetites* remaining still fierce and unmortified, in spite of the *Failure* of his *Stores* and the *Scantiness* of his *Condition*; in a word, the *Man* is his own *Tempter*, and so is always sure of a *Temptation*.

All this we must own to be very true ; but then this is also as true, that these and the like hard and severe Passages of Providence have in them a natural Fitness to work upon *the Heart of Man*, tho' some Hearts are never actually wrought upon by them. For no doubt there are Monsters and Anomalies not only in the Course of Nature, but also in that of Grace and Morality ; and some sort of Tempers are not to be *alter'd*, and much less *batter'd* by any, or all of those Disciplines, by which yet God reclaims and effectually reduces Millions of Souls to himself. God strikes many in their *Temporal* Concerns to promote and further them in their *Spiritual* ; and if this way fails of its designed Effect, it is not from the Unfitness of the *Remedy*, but the invincible Indisposition of the *Patient*. God knows how to reach the *Soul* thro' the *Body*, and commonly does so ; and so do the Laws of all the wise Nations in the World ; tho' our *new fashioned Politicks*, I confess, contrary to them all, have cry'd down the Fitness of all Temporal Inflictions, to reduce Men to a sober Sense and Judgment in Matters of Religion.

Nevertheless the sacred Story assures us, that this was still the Course which God took with his own People. They were the Sins and Apostasies *of their Souls*, for the Reformation of which he plagued them in their
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Bodies and Estates; and when Profaneness or Idolatry was the Malady, *Captivity and the Sword* were generally the Cure. This was God's Method, and by this he put a Stop to the Sin, and an End to the Temptation. Nor do we find, that the *Jews* ever threw it in the *Prophets Teeth*, when they denounced God's Judgments against them, that *Sword* and *Famine*, and such like Temporal Miseries and Calamities, were things wholly improper, and unable to work upon the *Conscience*: for their *Conscience* knew and told them the quite contrary. And much less do we find, that God ever thought it suitable to his Wisdom to secure the Authority of those Laws by which he meant to govern the World, by proclaiming Impunity and Indulgence to the bold Violaters of them.

And thus much for *the third way*, by which *God delivers out of Temptation*; namely, by *altering the Circumstances of a Man's Life*, when the Temptation is principally founded in them, and arises from them. So that if Riches debauch a Man, Poverty shall reform him. If Honour and high Places turn his Head, a lower Condition shall settle it. If *his Table becomes his Snare*, God will remove it, and *diet* him into a more temperate and severe Course of Living. In a word, God will cut him short in his very *Conveniences*, rather than suffer him in his *Extrava-*
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gances; and to prevent his *Surfeits* abridge him even in his lawful *Satisfactions*.

4thly, and lastly, If the Force and Strength of a Temptation be chiefly from the powerful Sway and Sollicitation of some unruly and corrupt Affection, God delivers from it by *the overpowering* Influence and Operation of his holy Spirit gradually weakening, and at length totally subduing it. The *Strength of a Temptation* lies generally in the *Strength of a Man's Corruption*. And the Tempter for the most part prevails not so much by what he suggests to a Man, as by what he finds in him; for what hold can he have of that Man, in whom he finds nothing to take hold of him by? They are our Lusts, our depraved Appetites, and corrupt Affections, which give the Tempter such a mighty Power and Advantage over us. Otherwise if these were thoroughly mortified and extinguished, the Temptation must of necessity fail, and sink, and vanish into nothing, for want of Matter to work upon. It is said of *Archimedes*, that he would undertake to turn about the whole Earth, if he could but have some place beside the Earth to fix his Feet upon. In the like manner as skilful an *Engineer as the Devil* is, he will never be able to play his Engines to any purpose, unless he finds something to fasten them to. If indeed he finds a Man naturally *choleric* and *passionate*, he has numberless Ways and Arts to
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work upon his Choler, and transport him to a Rage; if he finds him *lustful*, he will quickly blow up his lewd Heats into a Flame; and if *luxurious* and *sensual*, he can lay a thousand Trains to betray him to Excess and Intemperance. But still in all these Cases, and many more, it is the corrupt Humour within us, wherein his great Strength lies. It being with the Soul in such Instances 'as with some impregnable Fort or Castle, nothing but Treachery within itself can deliver it up to the Enemy.

I with-held thee from sinning against me, says God to *Abimelech*, Gen. xx. 6. and no doubt God has innumerable Ways, by which he does this: tho' still by the way, barely to with-hold a Man from Sin, and to cure him of it, are things extremely different; the proper Effect of this latter being to bring a Man to Heaven, but of the former without this, only to suffer him to pass on in a cleaner way to Hell. God may with-hold a Man from Sin, by plucking away the baneful Object, that would have ensnared him; as likewise by diverting the Course of his Thoughts, and the Bent of his Desires, by sundry cross Accidents cast in his way. And lastly, after a *full Purpose* of Sin *conceived*, he may by many intervening Impediments disable him from the Execution of it: with several other Ways of Restraint, which we are not aware of; and all of them, no question, very

very great Mercies, as giving a Man some Check at least in his full Career to Destruction.

But when, over and above all this, God, by the powerful Impressions of his Almighty Spirit, shall make a Man, of *angry* and *passionate*, *mEEK* and *patient*; of *lustful*, *chaste*; of *luxurious*, *temperate* and *abstentious*; that is, when he shall subdue, break, and mortify the sinful Appetite and Inclination itself, and plant a mighty contrary *Bias*s and *Propensity of Will* in the room of it (all which God can do, and sometimes has done) this is a greater, a nobler, and a surer Deliverance out of Temptation, than either the removal of the enticing Object, or the cutting off the Occasion; nay, than the very Prevention of the sinful Act itself. It is undoubtedly one of the greatest and the best things which God does for a Man in this World; and without which a Man lives in continual danger of being ruined by every returning Temptation. For certain it is that he cannot be secure from the *Returns*, nay, the frequent *violent Returns* of it. In a word, as long as the *old Ferment* remains unthrown out, a Man cannot be safe; nor can he assure himself, that after a very long Cessation it shall not break out and rage afresh, as Occasion may give Life and Motion to his Corruption.

But you will say perhaps, where are there any Instances of such a mighty Change wrought upon Men? I confess there are but very few, and I must confess also, that this, upon supposal of the Necessity of such a Change, is a very dreadful Consideration. Nevertheless some such Instances there are. For both the Scripture asserts it, 1 *Cor.* vi. 9, 10, 11. And those known Expressions of *Regeneration* and the *new Creature* do evidently impart it, 3 *John* iii. 4, 5, 6, 7. And the Experience of many good Men now in Heaven, who were far from having been always such while they liv'd upon Earth, does fully confirm it. Howbeit we must still acknowledge thus much, that wheresoever such mighty Changes are found, they are (as I may so express it) the very *Trophies* and *Magnalia* of Grace, the peculiar *Triumphs of the Spirit* over the Corruption of Nature, and the *grand Instances* of its invincible controlling Power over the Hearts of Men. But still (I say) for all the *Rarity* and *Fewness* of such Examples, God will have the World know (maugre all our flourishing *Socinians* and *Pelagians*) that under the Gospel Oeconomy there is such a thing, such a *Gratia Vorticordia*, as we have been speaking of. And I fully believe, from the Authority of much learned Men than either *Pelagius* or *Socinus*, or any of their preferred Disciples, as well as from the Authority of holy *Scripture*

ture (paramount to all other Authorities whatsoever) that none ever yet did, or ever shall, go to Heaven, whom God does not vouchsafe these *Heart-changing Impressions of his Spirit* more or less to. And indeed if we do but grant *the general Corruption of human Nature thro' original Sin*, it is infinitely sottish, as well as impious, to assert the contrary.

And as to the *present Subject* now before us, I doubt not to affirm, that these extraordinary *Workings of the Spirit* in the Sanctification and Change of Mens Hearts, are so much the very Master-piece of *God's Power*, and the greatest (as well as last) Efforts of his *Mercy*, in riding Men out of *Temptation*, that all other Ways (tho' confessedly great in themselves) are yet as nothing in comparison of this. For they are all of them but the diverting of a Blow, not the Conquest of an Enemy, but like the dealing with a Man under a *Fever* or an *Ague*, in which there may be many Ways both, to lessen and to put off a Fit (and those of singular Use too) but nothing but the removal of the *feverish and morbifick Matter* within can carry off the Distemper.

Let this therefore be the *fourth and last Way* which we shall mention whereby God gives *Escape out of Temptation*, namely, *by the inward over-powering Influences of his Spirit, working such a mighty Change upon the Will*
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and the Affections, that a Man's Desires shall become cold and dead to those Things, which before were so extremely apt to captivate and command them; than which there cannot be a greater Baulk to the Tempter, nor a more effectual Defeat to all his Temptations.

But now, besides *all these four Ways of Deliverance*, there are no doubt (as I shew at first) innumerable others, which no human Understanding is able to comprehend or look into. Nevertheless so much I shall venture to say, that there is hardly any sort or degree of *Temptation* which Man is subject to, but by some one or other of those four mentioned Ways God has actually given Men a full and a compleat Deliverance from it.

Now there are several *Inferences* naturally flowing from the foregoing Particulars, and those of no small Use; but being too many to be fully treated of now, and therefore reserving them to a distinct Discourse by themselves; as I have already laid before you some of the *principal Ways and Methods by which God delivers out of Temptation*, so I shall now mark out to you some of the *principal Temptations* also which do most threaten and endanger the Souls of Men, and which God principally magnifies his Goodness by delivering them from. As, 1. *A publick declared Impunity to Sin* is one of the greatest Temptations to it which it is possible for human Nature to be brought under. For if *Laws* be intend-
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ed by God and Man for some of the principal *Preventives of Sin*, and the *Sin-preventing Strength* of the *Law* lies chiefly in the *coercive Force* it has over the Transgressors of it, it is manifest, that when these *Coercions* are taken from it, the *Law* is disarmed, feeble, and precarious, and *Sin*, like a mighty Torrent, when the Banks are cut down, must break in, and pour itself upon the Lives and Manners of Men without Resistance or Controul. And I need say no more than this, that *Laws* without Power to affect or reach the Transgressors of them, are but *Imperii & Justitiæ ludibria*, the Mockeries of Justice, the Reproaches of Government, and the invincible Encouragements of Sin; for whatsoever weakens the Law, in the same degree also invites the Transgression.

Some, I know, talk of *Politicks and Reason of State*; but there is no such thing as *Policy* against common Sense and Experience, nor any true *Reason of State* against *Religion*. For since the Propensity of Man's Nature to most *Things forbidden* is so mighty and outrageous, that nothing can check or over-awe it, but the Dread and Terror of the Law; it is evident, that when the Law is stripped of that, by which alone it can strike Terror into the Despisers of it, it is in effect to bid *Vice* and *Profaneness* do their worst, and to bid *Virtue* and *Religion* shift for themselves; the grand Rule by which some Politicians (as they

would be thought forsooth) govern their Counsels by.

2dly, The wicked, vicious, and scandalous *Examples of Persons in Place and Power*, are strong Temptations to Sin. For amongst the prime Motives of human Actions, next to *Laws* most reckon *Examples*, and some place *Examples* above them. For tho' indeed there may be a greater Authority in *Laws*, yet there is a greater *Force* (because a greater *Suitableness*) in *Examples*; and then Experience shews, that it is not so much what *commands*, as what *agrees*, which gains upon the *Affections*; and the *Affections* (we all know) are the grand Springs and Principles of Action.

So that if a Prince, for Instance, gives himself up to Lewdness and Uncleanness, there is no doubt but Whoring will soon come into fashion, and that he will quickly find more by a great many to follow him in his *Lusts*, than to obey him in his *Laws*. If a Prince be a Breaker of his Word, his Oath, or his solemn Promise, it may prove a shrewd Temptation to others to do the like by him. And then he may thank his own *Example*, if he suffers by the *Imitation*. Likewise if a Clergyman be noted for Sensuality, Covetousness, or Ambition, he may preach his Heart out in behalf of the contrary Virtues, and all to no purpose; for still his Example will be a stronger Temptation *to the Sin*,
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than his Doctrine can be an Enforcement of the Duty.

The Sins of *Princes* and *Priests* are of a spreading and a reigning Contagion; and tho' *naturally* they are no more than the Acts of particular Persons, yet *virtually* and *consequently* they are often the Sins of a whole Community. And if so, good God! what huge Heaps of foul Guilt must lie at such Sinners Doors! For every Person of *Note, Power, and Place*, living in an open Violation of any one of God's Laws, holds up a Flag of Defiance against Heaven, and calls in all about him to fight under his lewd Banner against God, and his express Commands, and so (as it were) by a kind of *Homage* and *Obedience*, to be as vile and wicked as himself. And when it once comes to this, then all the Villanies which were committed by others in the Strength and Encouragement of his devilish Example, will be personally charged upon his Account, and as a just Debt *exacted of him to the utmost Farthing*.

3dly, and lastly, Great, cruel, and vexatious *Oppressions of Men in their Persons, Liberties, and Estate*, are strong and powerful Temptations to Sin; and that indeed to some of the worst of Sins, such as are *murmuring and repining at Providence*, and perhaps *questioning*, nay, and possibly sometimes absolutely *denying it*; besides those sinister and unlawful Courses, which they may

tempt and drive Men to for their Deliverance. For as the great Master of Wisdom tells us, *Oppression will make even a wise Man mad*, Eccles. vii. 7. And whatsoever robs a Man of his *Reason*, must needs also give a terrible Shake to his *Religion*. Such Impressions has it sometimes made upon some of the *wisest and holiest* Men living; and no Wonder, since the *wisest* of Men have their *weak Side*, and the *holiest* some Mixture of Corruption. *Job, David, Jeremy, and Habakkuk*, found it so; the last of which debates the Case with God in these remarkable Words, *Habakkuk* i. 13. *Wherefore* (says he) *dost thou hold thy Tongue when the Wicked devours the Man that is more righteous than himself?* From which, and such like staggering Passages about God's Government of the World, we may safely and certainly conclude thus much at least; that that which has been a Temptation to the best of Men sometimes to dispute it with Providence, will effectually bring ill Men to *deny* it.

The Truth is, one grand Oppressor (the more is the Pity) is able to make many Blasphemers, and one *French Nero* or *Dio-clesian* prospering in all his Cruelties and Barbarities, is like to make many more Converts to Atheism and Scepticism than ever he did to his own false Religion.

Tho' by the way, one would think that such *oppressing Nimrods* should have a *little Wit*

Wit in their Cruelty, and take heed how they bear too hard upon their poor Subjects, whom God has placed under their *Government*, not under their *Feet*; and that they should find but little Temptation to Oppression, when others have found *Oppression* so strong a Temptation to *Rebellion*.

And thus I have given you *three great and notable Instances of Temptation*, and those indeed to great, that Thousands have perish'd by them; and nothing but an infinite Power, under the Conduct of an infinite Mercy, can carry a Man safe thorough them, or victorious over them. Nevertheless these two Things must still be considered by us.

1st, That the strongest Temptations to Sin are no Warrants to Sin.

2^{dly}, That God delivers those only out of them, who do their lawful *Utmost* to deliver themselves.

Accordingly to resume and run over the three fore mentioned Particulars. As if a Man, for Instance, finds himself tempted to; any unlawful Course, upon a declared Impunity to the thing which he is tempted to let him soberly and seriously consider with himself, that the Obligation of a Law is the same, tho' no Punishment ever follows the Transgression or Breach of it, and that a *Liberty of Sin* (christen it by the Name of what Liberty you will) is yet one of the greatest and dreadfulest Judgments which can befall

any Person or People, and a certain Cause as well as Sign of an approaching Destruction. Again, if a Man be tempted to any wicked or vile Act by the Example of some great, powerful, or illustrious Sinner, let him learn, instead of admiring and following the *Greatness* of the Person, to abhor the *Baseness* of the Practice, as knowing that the Man can never authorize the Sin, but the Sin will be sure to embase the Man.

And lastly, if a Man finds himself tempted to murmuring and repining at Providence, by his being oppressed in his just Rights and Estate, as the greatest Part of *Europe* now is; let him satisfy and compose his Mind with this Consideration, that no Oppression can go a Step further, or last a Minute longer than its Commission; and that God, who gave it its Commission, never did nor will suffer a good Man to be oppressed beyond what he is able to endure.

Which, and the like Considerations, pressed home upon the Heart, will wonderfully *blunt* the Edge, and *break* the Force of any Temptation. And when a Man shall thus acquit himself, and do his Part, by fencing in this manner against the Assaults and Buffets of the Tempter, then, and then only, may he be properly said *to depend upon God*; and while Men do so, be the Temptation never so great and pressing, such as *faithfully depend*

depend upon him, shall be certainly delivered by him.

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



The SIXTH
 Part or Discourse
 CONCERNING
 TEMPTATION.

I COR. X. 13.

But God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able; but will with the Temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.

I Have discoursed several times from several Texts of Scripture upon this great Subject of *Temptation*.

And that Branch of it which I last treated of from this Scripture, was about the several Ways whereby *God delivers Men from it*.

Concerning which, we are to observe in general, that the said Deliverances are of two sorts.

1st, Those

1st, Those whereby God delivers Men out of Temptation *immediately by himself, and his own Act*, without the Concurrence or Interposal of any Act of the tempted Person. And,

2dly, Those wherein God makes use of the Endeavours of the tempted Person himself, in Subordination to the Workings of his own Grace. And these are two, *Watchfulness and Prayer*, which I intend for the Subject of my next Discourse upon that Portion of Scripture, *Mat. xxvi. 41. Watch and pray, that ye enter not into Temptation.*

Now for the first of these two sorts, *viz.* that wherein *God acts immediately by himself*, I shew the Instances thereof were innumerable, and such as it was impossible for any human Understanding to have a full and a distinct Comprehension of. However in particular I then instanced in four. The Heads of which, for the better representing the Connection of what went before with that which is to follow, I shall briefly repeat, and so go on. As,

1st, I shew, that if the Force and Strength of a Temptation be chiefly from the vehement, restless, and incessant *Importunities of the evil Spirit*, God often puts an issue to the Temptation, by rebuking and commanding down the Tempter himself.

2dly, If the Force of a Temptation be from *the Weakness of a Man's Mind*, rendring it un-

able

able of itself to withstand, and bear up against the Assaults of the Tempter, God oftentimes delivers from it by mighty, inward, unaccountable Supplies of Strength, conveyed to the Soul immediately from himself.

3dly, If the Force of a Temptation springs chiefly from the *unhappy Circumstances of a Man's Life*, continually exposing him to tempting Objects, and Occasions of Sin, God frequently delivers such an one, by a providential Change of the whole Course of his Life, and the Circumstances of his Condition.

4thly, and lastly, If the Force and Strength of a Temptation be chiefly from the powerful *Sway and Sollicitation of some unruly and corrupt Affection*, God delivers from it by the over-powering Influence and Operation of his holy Spirit, gradually weakening, and at length totally subduing it.

These four Ways in particular I assign'd, whereby God was pleas'd to deliver Men out of Temptation; and tho' I shew that he had infinite other Ways to effect the same, known only to himself; yet I shew withal, that there was hardly any sort or degree of Temptation which Man is subject to, but by some or other of these four fore-mentioned Ways God has actually given Men a full and compleat Deliverance from it.

Upon

Upon the whole Matter, the Design of the Apostle in the Text, seems to be the convincing of the Persons he wrote to, of these two Things.

1st, That it is not Man himself, but God who does, and must *deliver him* out of *Temptation*.

2dly, That the Ways by which God does this, are certainly above Man's Power, and for the most part beyond his Knowledge too.

Now these two are very great Considerations; great indeed in themselves, but greater in the *practical Consequences* naturally deducible from them. And the Business I then proposed to myself was, to draw forth and lay before you some of the usefulest and most important of them.

Accordingly I undertook to insist upon these five. As,

1st, That the only true Estimate of an Escape from Temptation, is to be taken from the *final Issue and Result of it*. From whence these two Things naturally follow. First, that an Escape from a Temptation may consist with a very long Continuance under it; indeed so long, that God may put an End to the Temptation and a Man's Life together; so that he shall not have striven his Last, till he has breath'd his Last too. And the other Inference is, that a final Escape and Deliverance from Temptation

may very well consist with several Foils under a Temptation. Both which Considerations are of vast moment to satisfy and instruct the Conscience in so important a Case, as affording an equal Antidote against *Presumption* on the one hand, and *Despair* on the other.

For neither is a Foil given or received a Conquest. The Tempter may be foiled and worsted in many a Conflict, and yet make Head again, and come off victorious at last (as we have already shewn.) 'Tis true the Scripture tells us, that *if we resist the Tempter, he will fly from us*. Nevertheless we are not sure, that after that *Flight* he will not return; but that he who *flies* at one time, may *face about* and fight it out sharply, and carry all before him at another. And therefore let no Man flatter himself too much upon some little Successes against the Tempter and his Temptations. For it is not every Skirmish which determines the Victory. Has a Man born up with Courage against a first, second, and third Assault, whether of *Pride*, *Lust*, *Intemperance*, or whatsoever other Vice it be, which the Devil is apt to attack the Souls of Men by; let such an one be joyful, and bless God for it, but still let him be humble too, and prepare for a fourth and fifth Encounter, and God knows how many more after them. For he only conquers, who gives the last Stroke. On the contrary,

has a Man received many a Foil and Wound in the Combats between him and his Spiritual Enemy, yet let him not despond; for God may deliver him for all this: only let him continue the Combat still; for as long as a Man dares dispute it with his Enemy, tho' with his Blood about his Ears, he is not conquered. God can turn the Fortune of the Day when he will, and where the tempted Person is not wanting to himself, he always does. But I do not say, that he always does this presently; for God may try a Man several Years, and not deliver him till the last, as a Man may struggle with a Distemper the greatest Part of his Life, and yet recover, and get the full Mastery of it in the Issue; and not only so, but live many a fair and comfortable Year after it.

Nothing should make us give up our *Hope*, till it forces us to give up the *Ghost* too. And it is only Men's being slavishly tied to the present, and fixing their Thoughts wholly upon what they actually see and converse with, which disables them from doing any thing that is great, or enduring any thing that is difficult. The greatest Obstacles to a Religious Course are Men's ungoverned Passions and Affections; and it is impossible to conquer or over-rule these, but by carrying the Judgment of Reason beyond the Apprehensions of Sense: for the Passions are all founded upon the present Sight and Sense

of Things. And it is this, which so wretchedly abuses and transports Men, that they think that all the Good and Evil which is considerable in the World, lies within that pitiful Compass of visible Objects, which they have before them. This, I say, is that which makes them sell Eternity for a Song, give away their Souls for a Trifle, and turn their Backs upon Glory and Immortality, and God himself under the Pinch of any present Pain, or the Bewitchery of some present Pleasure. In a word, the main Strength of almost every Temptation lies in this, that Men ascribe all to the *Present*, which is short and contemptible, and nothing to the *Future*, which is infinite and invaluable.

But as Reason is of itself able to look much farther than Sense, so Faith is able to look as much beyond Reason: and therefore if my Reason tells me, that there is something in the Nature of Things, which escapes and transcends my View, Faith (I am sure) will take yet a farther Flight and a nobler Prospect, and assure me, that tho' I am but an Inhabitant of this World, yet I am Heir of a better, and consequently ought to be governed by my highest Interest, and to proportion my Esteem to the Measure of my Concern, which is incomparably greater in the next Life than it can be in this.

A Man perhaps is pressed hard and sore by a Temptation, and he begs as hard of God to deliver him from it: nevertheless the Temptation goes on, and he is not presently delivered. But shall now this pitiful Thing called *Man* prescribe to his Maker, and (which is yet worse) to his Deliverer? He, I say, who can dance Attendance from Day to Day, and sometimes from Year to Year, upon such another pitiful Thing as himself, possibly a Treasurer, Chancellor, or some chief Officer of State (who may be, and often is, stripped and kicked out of his precarious Greatness the next Day) and shall this proud Nothing think much to attend the uncontrollable Pleasure of the Almighty God about the inestimable Concerns of his never dying Soul?

But let Men satisfy themselves, that God will have them wait his Leisure, and that there is a *Ripeness* for *Mercy* as well as for *Judgment*, and consequently that there must be a *Fulness of Time* for the former, as well as for the latter. But it has ever been one of the Prime Arts of the Tempter, to make such an Attendance tedious, nauseous, and uneasy to Men under any present Pressure, and thereby to frustrate the wise and leisurely Methods of the Divine Grace for their Deliverance. From all which we may with great Reason conclude, that nothing can be so fatal and mischievous to a Person under
Temp-

Temptation, as that Weakness and Instability of Spirit, which so naturally betrays him to Two of the worst and meanest Affections incident to the Mind of Man, *Impatience and Despair*.

2dly, No way out of any *Calamity*, (whatsoever *Temptation* it may subject the afflicted Person to) if brought about by his own Sin, is, or ought to be accounted a *Way* made, or allowed by God for his Escape either out of that *Calamity*, or the *Temptation* springing from it. But on the contrary, so far is it from being so, that it is truly and properly a preventing of one Death by another, a *Temporal* by an *Eternal*, a seeking to cure the Burnings of a Fever by the Infections of a Plague, and in a word, a flying from the Devil as a *Tempter*, and running into his Hands as a *Destroyer*. For though indeed his Power and Malice be such, as may and does enable him to trouble and distress us, (which is the most that he can do) yet nothing but Sin can give him Power to *destroy us*. He may lay the Train, but till Sin gives Fire to it, it can do no Execution.

The Temptations which Men generally attempt to rid themselves of this Way, are either Temptations from Suffering, or from the plausible Pretences of compassing some great and publick Good by an Action in itself indeed Evil; but yet such as shall be vastly exceeded and over-balanced (as they imagine)

imagine) by the Good brought to pass thereby. But this is a wretched Fallacy; and the Procurement of the greatest Good in the World cannot warrant a Man to commit the least Evil, nor the Safety of a Kingdom commute for the Loss of his personal Innocence. And therefore let us suppose, that a Man sees his Country ready to sink under the Violence of a brutish Tyranny; yet for all that, let him take heed that he does not *Rebel*, and that he does not, to prevent it, *baffle* and *distinguish* himself out of his Duty: for let his Grievances and his Fears be what they will, the *Fifth Commandment* is still where it was, and binds as fast as it did or can do in times of the greatest Justice and Prosperity; and it is not in the Power of the mightiest Sinners, and the most successful Sins, to dissolve or lessen the obliging Force of any of God's Laws. Or does a Man, in the next place, see Religion and the Church ready to be over-run with Fooleries and Superstition, or (which is worse) over-turned with *Sacrilege* and *Separation*, this will not authorize him to step beyond the compass of a private Man, whose Business is to honour and preserve Religion only by a sincere Practice of the Duties of it, and for the rest let him leave it to that God, who governs the World, to protect his Church the best Part of it, and not think to minister to his *Providence* by a Violation of the least

of his *Precepts*. For no such Pretence, how specious soever, will allow a Man to leap over the Bounds of his Profession, nor justify St. *Peter* himself in taking up the Sword, tho' for the Defence and Rescue of *his Master*: the greatest and the warmest Zeal being but a weak and a cold Plea for one, who acts without a Commission. *Uzzah*, we know, was struck Dead for but offering to take hold of the Ark, then shaking and tottering, though out of a pious Concern to keep it from falling. But, it seems, the Act was unwarrantable; and being so, the Purpose of the *Heart* could not excuse the Error of the *Hand*. He went beyond his *Duty*, and God needed not his *Help*.

And so we may be sure it is in all God's other Commands. The infinitely wise Lawgiver foresaw and weighed all possible emergent Cases, which might any ways be alledged in Exception to the binding Power of any of his Laws. That is to say, God by a full, clear, and comprehensive Grasp of his immense, all-knowing Wisdom, perfectly fore-knew and considered all the Good, which Men could pretend to compass or bring about by disobeying his Laws, and all the Evil, which they were capable of suffering for obeying them, and yet notwithstanding both, he thought fit to fix his Laws *absolute and peremptory*, and without any Limitations, Exceptions, or Reserves; an evident
Demon-

Demonstration doubtless, that God intended that our Obedience should be every whit as *absolute* as his Laws, and that when he gives a Command, he does by no means allow us to assign the Measures of its Obligation.

But the Truth is, be the Case how and what it will, Men care not for suffering (which is the only grand and unanswerable Argument against *Passive Obedience* that I know of) and from hence alone it is, that while Men fly from *Suffering*, they are so fatally apt to take *Sanctuary in Sin*: that is, in other Words, to go to the *Devil* to deliver them out of *Temptation*. For so Men certainly do, where *Suffering* is the *Temptation*, and Sin must be the *Deliverance*.

3dly, To chuse or submit to the Commission of a lesser Sin to avoid the Commission of a greater (which a Man finds himself tempted to) ought by no means to be reckoned amongst those Ways, whereby God delivers Men from Temptation. This particular Head may seem at first to co-incide with the former, but is in truth very different from it. For as much as the former considered Sin as sometimes made use of for an Escape out of a *Temptation* founded in and springing from some Temporal Suffering, which a Man would rather sin than fall into or continue under; whereas here we consider it as a means to defeat a Temptation, by our chusing to commit one Sin rather than

another. But this also, howsoever it may possibly carry with it something more of Art and Finness than the *other* former; yet, as we shall now shew, has no more to justify or plead for it than that has: it being nothing else but a leaving of *the broad Way* to Hell for *a narrow*, and perhaps a *smoother*, but still leading to the same Place.

And the reason, that no Sin, tho' never so small, can be a warrantable and allowed Means to prevent the Commission of a greater, is, because no Man can be brought into such a Condition as shall or can put him under any Necessity of sinning at all. That the Case indeed may be such, that it shall render it very difficult for a Man to come off without Sin, is and must be readily granted; but for all that no Difficulty of any Duty can take off the *Obligation to it*, how many soever it may fright from the *Practice of it*.

I have heard it reported (and it is a Story not unknown) of a certain *Monk* or *Prelate*, who for a long Time together was continually urged and sollicitated, or rather worried and pursued with three foul and horrid Temptations, *viz. to commit Murder, or Incest, or to be drunk*, till at length quite wearied out with the restless, vexatious Importunity of the *Tempter*, he pitches upon the Sin of *Drunkenness*, as the least of the three, to avoid his Sollicitation to the other two.

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This was the Course he took to rid himself of a vehement Temptation. But the Tempter, who was much the better Artist of the two, knew how to make the very same Course he took to decline it, an effectual Means to push it on and enforce it. For having once prevailed and carried his Point so far as to bring him *to be drunk*, he quickly brought him in the Strength thereof to commit both the other Sins too. Such are we, when God abandons us to ourselves and our own deluded and deluding Judgments. Whereas had this poor Wretch (if this Story of him be *real*, and not a *Parable* only) under his unhappy Circumstances betook himself to frequent *Prayer* and *Fasting*, with a vigilant and severe shunning all Occasions of Sin, such especially as either his natural Temper or his unactive Way of Living put him in most Danger of; I dare undertake, that following such a Course he should neither have worn out his *Knees* with *praying*, nor his *Body* with *fasting*, before God would have given him an Answer of Peace, and a full Conquest over his Temptations. To which Method may be added one Instruction more, and that of no less sovereign Influence in the Case now before us than all of them together: *viz.* that we should upon no Terms account any Sin small; for whatsoever it may be reckoned, if compared with others of an higher Guilt and Malignity, yet

still considered *absolutely in itself it is not so small*, but that it is an Act of Rebellion against the supreme Lord and Governor of the Universe by a direct Violation of his Law ; *not so small*, but that by the same Law it merits Damnation to the Sinner in the eternal Destruction of his Soul and Body ; nor *lastly so small*, but that as it merits, so it would actually and infallibly inflict the same upon him, had not the Son of God himself shed his Blood, and laid down his very Life both as a *Satisfaction* for the Sin, and a *Ransom* for the Sinner. And if all this must be owned and submitted to as uncontrollable Truth, from what Topick of Reason or Religion can the most acute Disputant argue for the *Smallness* of any Sin ? Nevertheless admitting (without granting) that a Sin were never *so small*, yet certain it is, that the greatest and the foulest Sins, which the corrupt Nature of Man is capable of committing, generally enter upon the Soul by very *small* and scarce observable Instances at first. So that of all the Courses which Man in such a Case can take, this of capitulating, and (as it were) making Terms with the Devil, is the most senseless and dangerous : no Man having ever yet driven a saving Bargain with this great Trucker for Souls, by *exchanging Guilts, or bartering one Sin for another*.

It is too well known, how it was with a most virtuous and excellent Prince (if we may be suffered to pay a due Honour to that glorious Name, which to the Astonishment and Scandal of all good Men has been so vilified and run down of late :) It is known, I say, what a Struggle his pious and truly tender Conscience had with itself, when he was urged to sign the Death of a faithful and great Minister, and how far his *Heart* was from going along with his *Hand* in signing that fatal Act. Nevertheless thus pressed (as he was on all sides) he was prevailed upon at last to throw an innocent Life over-board, to secure the whole Government from that terrible National Storm, which seemed at that time to threaten all. But what was the Issue and Result of this woful Expedient (which yet none more deeply regretted and repented of than that blessed Prince himself?) Why, the result and natural Effect of it was, that the Flame (intended thereby to be stifled and extinguished) broke out and raged thereupon ten times more violently, and the Devil and his Faction took their Advantage, and carried all before them more and more audaciously, never ceasing, till they had brought his Royal Head to the Block, overturn'd both Church and State, and laid our Laws and Liberties, with every thing that was great,

honourable, or sacred throughout the whole Kingdom, in the Dust.

This was the Consequence of an unjustifiable Act for preventing a greater Mischief (as some judged:) which, no doubt, had it not been taken, but instead thereof Innocence had been resolutely protected, and Providence humbly relied upon, things could never have come to that deplorable Issue, which they were brought to, and which it is to be feared that we and our Posterity may for some Ages rue. For according to the Course of God's Justice in his Government of the World, there is but too much Ground to think, that so horrid a *Rebellion* and *Regicide* have not yet been so fully accounted for, but that there remains a long and a black Score still to be paid off: it being so usual, as well as just with God, where the Guilt of a People is high and clamorous, to revenge the Practices of the *Fathers* upon the *Children*, succeeding into and avowedly persisting in the same Principles, which produced them. God has owned it for his Rule, and that for more Generations than one; and it is not to be presumed, that he will bank an establish'd Rule for our Sakes.

Such we see have been the false and fallacious Methods, whereby some have so wretchedly deceived themselves: besides which it has been likewise observed of some others, who have been so unfortunate as to
have

have their dependance upon Persons as much *wickeder* as *greater* than themselves, that they have complied with them in lesser Irregularities to induce the Grandee, out of mere good Nature (forsooth) not to press his poor Dependant to fouler and more frightful Enormities. But alas! this is a Way which never takes: for such great Ones in all their Debauches will be attended upon thro' *thick* and *thin*, and care not for any but a *thoroughpac'd Companion* in their Vices; since no other can give them any Countenance in their Lewdness, which is the chief Thing they drive at and desire. And therefore this also will be found as senseless and absurd a Project to elude the Tempter, as any of the former, and seldom or never succeeds but to an effect quite contrary to what was designed. For from *lesser* to *greater* has been ever accounted a very easy and natural Passage, especially in Sin. And he who suffers the Devil to be his *Rider*, must not think always to jog on softly and slowly even in the dirtiest Road, but must expect to be sometimes put upon his full Career, and neither be suffered to chuse his *own Way* or his *own Pace*. In a word, he who ventures deliberately to commit a *less* Sin in order to his Avoidance of a *greater*, does certainly bring himself under the Guilt of one, and puts himself in the next Disposition to the other. And therefore this can be none of those

those *Ways by which God delivers Men out of Temptation.*

4thly, If it be the Prerogative and proper Work of God to deliver and bring Men out of Temptation, let no Man, when the Temptation is founded in suffering (how careful soever he may and ought to be of entring into it) be so sollicitous how *to get out of it*, as how *to behave himself under it*. For the former being God's Work, may be best left to his Care; it is the latter only which belongs to the Man himself, and let him but make good his own Part, and he may rest assured that God will not fail in his.

And to this Purpose, and for the Comfort of every one under Temptation, let this be observed as a great Truth. *That no Man's Suffering is properly and formally his Sin* (how much soever it might be occasioned by it) and withal, that the whole Time a Man is under a Temptation without consenting to it, he is really and truly *a Sufferer by it*. The Tempter indeed dogs and pursues him close, and consequently must needs vex and afflict him proportionably; but still no Man is ruin'd by being *pursued* by his Enemy, but by being *taken*; and the Huntsman (as hard as he may *follow the Chace*) does not always *carry his Game*. It is the tempted Person's Duty (no doubt) to fence, and strive, and oppose the Temptation with all the Art, as well as Resolution, that he can; but nevertheless it

is not his Sin, if he cannot wholly rid himself of it. A sturdy Beggar may weary me, but he cannot force me. He may importune my *Charity*, but he cannot command my *Purse*. And if in all our spiritual Combats with our great Enemy the Tempter, this one Rule were but impartially considered, and as strictly followed, it is incredible to imagine what a vast deal of Guilt and Mischief it would prevent in the World. It would prevent all that can arise from Rashness and Impatience, from a Man's Confidence in himself, and his Diffidence in God; Qualities that would advance the Creature to the Prerogative of God, and bring down God to the Level of the Creature. In a word, it would keep Men from daring to snatch God's Work out of his Hand, from audaciously carving for themselves, or expecting God's Mercies upon any but his own Terms. It would keep them quiet even upon the Rack, silent and patient under all the Arts and Engines of Cruelty, and in the sorest Distresses they can groan under; fearful how they catch'd at a Deliverance, before God (who alone knows the proper Seasons of Mercy, and understands Men better than they can themselves) saw them fit for it. In fine, according to that of the Prophet, *Isa. xxviii. 16. He who believeth, will not make haste*; that is, he who founds his Belief in his *Reason*, will not sacrifice it to the Transports of his

his

his *Passion*; but rather (as *Moses* had the *Israelites* in a Condition they thought desperate) *stand still and see the Salvation of God*, than fly to such false Methods of Escape, as shall both assure and hasten his *Destruction*. Nothing so much entitles a tempted Person to Relief from *above*, as a steady, composed, and unwearied looking *up* for it; a Qualification always attended with such a peculiar Greatness and Firmness of Mind, as the Goodness of God never yet did, nor will, nor indeed can desert. In every arduous and difficult Enterprize, *Action*, all own, must begin the Work, and *Courage* carry it on; but it is *Perseverance* only which gives the finishing Stroke. If a City be besieged by an Enemy, a bold and brisk Sally now and then may give a present Repulse to the Besiegers, but it is Constancy and Continuance that must *raise the Siege*; and consequently in such Cases, where the Assault is frequent, and the Opposition long, he *who stands it out*, bids as fair for Victory, as he *who fights it out*; and nothing can be more pusillanimous or more fatal than an hasty Surrender. Promises of Succour (if not too long delay'd) often *inspire* Courage, even where they find none. And therefore no Man of *Judgment*, if but with a competent Supply of *Spirit* to second it, would in so high a Concern as that of his Soul, part with his *Hope* before his *Life*, having so *particular a Promise* to

support the one, and only the *common Protections* of Providence to guard the other. But then on the other side, if his Strength lie here, and this be his Case, must it not be inexpressibly senseless and irrational, for one who owns a Dependance upon God for his *Deliverance*, to have recourse to the Devil for the *Way and Means* of it? That Man, no doubt, who makes his *Duty* to God the sole Measure of his *Dependance* upon him, can never (be his Straits what they will) be so much enslaved and insulted over, as to think it worth his while to *purchase* his *Liberty* with the *Sale of his Conscience*, or to quit his *passive Obedience* (with the inward Comforts always accompanying an oppressed Innocence) for the most *active, thriving, and successful Rebellion*. For let a temporal Suffering be never so sharp, whosoever will needs be his own Deliverer, and that in his *own Time*, and his own Way also, that Man first distrusts God, and then defies him, and not only *throws off his Yoke*, but *throws it at him too*. For the great Lord and Governor of the World will be as much obeyed, trusted, and relied upon, while he visits and afflicts, as while he embraces and supports us; while his *Rod is upon us*, as while *his Staff is under us*. And in the very worst Circumstances which he can be in, it will be hard to prove that our Allegiance to the *King of Kings* (according to the new, modish, Whig-Doctrine relating

relating to our temporal Kings) is only *conditional*.

stly, *The fifth and last Corollary*, or Conclusion deducible from the foregoing Particulars, is, That there can be no Suffering or Calamity whatsoever, tho' never so terrible and grievous to human Nature, *but may be endured without Sin*; and if so, may be likewise made a Means whereby God brings a Man out of Temptation.

As to the first Part of which Proposition, the Christian Martyrs were a glorious and irrefragable Proof of it (as has been before observed;) the Torments they endur'd were as horrid and exquisite as the Wit of Man could then *invent*, or now *comprehend*; nor were they more for their peculiar Strangeness *unaccountable*, than for the Variety of their Kinds *innumerable*. The whole History of the primitive Church is but a continued *Martyrology*; in a word, this *noble Army of Martyrs* were (as the Apostle tells us, *Heb. xi. 35, 36, 37.*) *cruelly mock'd and scourg'd, rack'd and tortur'd, slain with the Sword, or rather butcher'd, burnt, and sawn asunder*; and in a word, *what not*? All this, I say, and a great deal more, they undauntedly suffered, and triumph'd over; and the same Grace which enabled them to bear such *Barbarities*, enabled them also to bear them *without Sin*; the *Fire* indeed *consumed* them, but the *Smoke* could not *blacken* them. All which
being

being as to Matter of Fact unquestionable, it must needs be an Argument of the clearest and most allowed Consequence, that if such Inhumanities *actually have been born*, it is certain that *they may be born*. Experience (which answers, or rather annihilates all Objections) has made *good the Antecedent*, and nothing can *keep off the Consequent*. In the mean time, for my own Part, I must confess myself wholly unable to believe, that such monstrous Cruelties could ever have been endur'd, but in the Strength of something supernatural and divine, something which raised and bore human Nature above itself, something which gave it a kind of inward *Armour of Proof*; meer *Flesh and Blood* (God knows) being but a pitiful, weak thing, and by no means a Match equal to such Encounters.

From all which we see and learn, how wholly different the wise and gracious Methods of God are from those of poor silly Mortals. The Way of the World is for Men to rush into *Sin*, to keep or bring themselves out of *Misery*; but God's Method is, sometimes to bring Men into worldly *Misery*, to keep them *from Sin*, and thereby rescue them from Damnation. And this is most certainly true, that no Evil, how afflictive soever, is or ought to be accounted *intolerable*, which may be made a direct Means to escape one *intolerably* greater. For as there

is no sort of Enjoyment upon Earth, but may, and often does, become the Ground and Scene of a *Temptation*, so neither is there any sort of temporal *Misery*, but may be a Remedy against it. *Poverty* is indeed a bitter Pill, but often used by the great Physician of Souls, as a sovereign Antidote against *Pride*, *Profuseness*, and *Sensuality*. Nothing sinks deeper into an ingenuous Mind than *Disgrace*, and yet God frequently makes it an effectual Cure of Vain-glory, Arrogance, and Ambition. *Sickness* is a tedious and vexatious Trial, eating up and consuming the *Vigour* and *Spirit* both of Body and Mind, and yet the surest and best Course, by which God beats down the Rage of Lust, and the brutish Furies of Intemperance. And lastly, *Death* itself, which Nature fears and flies from as its dreadfulest and greatest Enemy, is yet the grand Instrument in the Hand of Mercy to put an End to *Sin and Sorrow*, and a final Period to all *Temptations*.

And thus at length I am come near a Close of what I had to discourse upon this great and important Subject of Temptation; indeed so important, that, whereas *that best of Prayers* prescribed and left us by our Saviour (as the standing Form and Pattern for his Church to pray by for ever) consists in all *but of six Petitions*; *this against Temptation* makes one of that small Number; a clear Demonstration doubtless of what infinite Concern

it is to all who know how to value their eternal State and Condition, to guard against it, and to be delivered from it. For so much I dare aver may with great Truth be affirmed of the Malignity of it (and more and worse can hardly be said) that greater Numbers have been destroyed by it, than *Repentance* ever saved. For it is *this* which has peopled Hell, and made the Devil's Dominions large and populous; *this* which has carried the Trophies of his black Conquests as far and wide as the Corruption of Man's Nature has spread itself, and the Sin of *Adam* extended its Contagion; *this*, whereby that avowed Enemy of God and Man has done such terrible Execution upon Souls; for were it not for his Art and Skill to *insinuate*, his Power could do nothing to *destroy*; that being his sure, and long tried Method, for getting hold of the *Will*, and seizing the *Affections*, and so drawing the whole Man after him, which by downright Force he could never do. In short (according to the Poet's Expression) *Populo dat jura volenti*, he brings Men to obey, and serve him spontaneously, and further than thus he cannot go, nor lead any into the bottomless Pit, but such as are as willing to *follow* as he to *lead*; a woful way of perishing certainly, and the very *Sting*, not of *Death* only, but even of *Damnation* itself.

Nor is this all whereby he carries on his Work, but he has yet this further Advantage over Men, that being a *Spirit*, he can convey himself into, and possess himself of the chief Instruments of the Soul's Operations, the *Spirits*, and this without the Man's discerning that he does so. For tho' indeed when God permits him to exert his mischievous Power upon the Bodies of Men (as he did upon many in the Days of our Saviour) it must needs in that Case be discernible enough *where* and *of whom* the evil Spirit has taken *Possession*; yet where he employs his Malice only in a spiritual way, by secret but powerful Instigations of their corrupt Nature to wicked Actions (as for the most part he does now a-days) it is hard, if possible, to distinguish truly and exactly what proceeds from bare inherent Corruption, and what from diabolical Impulse and Infusion; but no doubt in many Instances it proceeds from both, and from the latter more especially, that being always more impetuous, and hurrying the Soul with a more violent Bias to the Commission of Sin, than if left merely to its own Inclinations, it would probably have been carried out to. And thus it is with Men frequently, they find within themselves a Motion both *sensible* and *forcible*, while the Spring of it is invisible, and so run on violently, not aware in the mean time
who

who it is that *drives them*, or what it is that he *drives out*.

These, and many more, are the Advantages which the Tempter has over the Sons of Men, partly from the *Spirituality* of his own Nature, and partly from the *Grossness* and Imbecillity of theirs; to which if we join his incredible Sagacity, to spy out every the least Opportunity offered him, and his implacable Malice to pursue, and make use of it, to the utter supplanting us, and that in no less an Interest than that of our immortal Souls (in comparison of which the whole World is but a Trifle) it must needs hold all thoughtful Minds under such continual Agonies and misgiving Reflections, that altho' we may escape Hell *hereafter*, he will be sure, if he can, to give us a *severe* Taste of it *here*.

But what! Must all Advantages then lie like a *dead*, or rather like a *killing Weight*, wholly on the Tempter's Side, and no Remedies to encounter them be found on ours? God forbid; for then we must look upon our Case, not only as *dangerous*, but *desperate*, and give over the Conflict as absurd, where all *Resistance* is vain, and the *Conquest* impossible. But on the contrary, as God of his great Wisdom has not been wanting to forewarn and assure Men that *Temptations* will attend them, so neither has he been failing of his equal Goodness to prescribe the

proper Ways, Means and Methods, whereby to fence against them; which, as in the several Particulars thereof (each of them severally adapted to the several States, Tempers and Conditions of Men) are for their vast Variety (upon the Matter) innumerable, so they are nevertheless every one of them directly reducible to, and fully comprehensible under these two grand general Heads (prescribed by the best and surest Guide of Souls, our Saviour himself) *Watchfulness* and *Prayer*; and accordingly (as I hinted before) I shall treat of them distinctly by themselves, as the proper Materials of my following Discourse upon the same Subject (tho' from another Text) with which I shall conclude all that I had proposed to deliver upon this weighty, useful, and highly concerning Point of Temptation.

Now to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, &c. be rendred and ascribed, as is most due, all Praise, Might, Majesty, and Dominion, both now and for evermore. Amen.



The Seventh and Last

DISCOURSE
CONCERNING
TEMPTATION.

MATTHEW xxvi. 41.

Watch and pray, that ye enter not into Temptation.

AS the Life and Business of a Christian in this World is certainly to *Flesh and Blood* a Thing of great Difficulty, and considering the Opposition which it is sure to meet with, of equal Danger; so this appears in nothing more, than in its being represented by one of the most difficult and dangerous Things in human Life, which is *War*, 1 Tim. i. 18. *This Charge I commit unto thee (says Paul to Timothy) that thou mightest war a good Warfare.* And as the Difficulty and

Danger of War is to be measured partly by the high Worth of the *Thing* fought for, and partly by the Power and Policy of the *Enemy* to be fought with; so the eternal invaluable Interest of an immortal Soul on the one side, and the Arts and Strength of a mighty, subtil, and implacable Spirit on the other, are but too full a Demonstration, with what Difficulty and Danger the Soul is to manage and maintain this spiritual Conflict.

And therefore as *all War* is to be carried on partly by our own Strength, and partly by that of Allies and Auxiliaries called in to our Aid and Assistance; so in this Christian Warfare the Things which properly answer those two, are *Watchfulness* and *Prayer*; for as much as by Watchfulness we exert and employ our *our Strength*, and by Prayer we engage *God's*; and if ever Victory and Success attend us in these Encounters, these two must join Forces, *Heaven* and *Earth* must be *Confederate*, and when they are so, the Devil himself, as strong as he is, and as invincible a Monarch as he would be thought to be, may yet be forced to go off with a *pluribus impar*, and to quit the Field with Frustration and a Baffle.

In the first place then we will speak of *Watchfulness*, as the first of the two great Defensatives against Temptation, here prescribed in the Text, *Watch and pray*. In giving an Account of which, as the Founda-
tion

tion of the Expression is a Metaphor, so the Prosecution, and further Illustration of it, must (in a great measure at least) be metaphorical also. And consequently as it relates to the Soul *waging* and carrying on this *spiritual War* with the Tempter and his Temptations, it imports in it these five following Particulars. As,

1. First of all, *Watching* imports a strong, lively, abiding Sense and Persuasion of the exceeding Greatness of the Evil which we watch and contend against. Sense of Danger is the first Step to Safety, and no Man watches but to secure and defend himself. Watching is a troublesome and severe Work, and wise Men would not willingly trouble themselves to no purpose. A Combatant must first know, and dread the Mischief of a Blow, before he will fence against it; he must see it coming with his Eye, before he will ward it off with his Hand.

To be always upon the Guard, hungry and restless, expecting the Enemy, and liable to be kill'd every Minute, only to secure the Life of others, must needs be a very afflicting Discipline; and no Man would spend the Night upon the Sentry, who knew that he might spend it as safely in his Bed. *Had the good Man of the House known of the Thief's coming* (as our Saviour observes, *Matt. xxiv. 43.*) *he would have watched*; he would have kept his Eyes open and his Doors shut; for

tho' to break ones Sleep, when Nature importunately calls for it, be something grievous, yet to have ones House broke open, and to be spoiled of ones Goods, and perhaps of ones Life too, is much worse. The sight of Danger is stronger than the strongest Inclinations to Rest; and no Man could with any heart go to *sleep*, who fully believed that he should *wake* in another World.

Accordingly let a Man in every Temptation consider the Evil which is designed him, and is certainly coming towards him, and that (if Reason governs) will make him readily digest a less Pain to secure himself from an infinitely greater. But Men slight and dally with Temptation, because they are not really persuaded that there can be so much Evil at the *bottom* of that which looks so fair at *top*. But the Evil which lies lurking under a Temptation is intolerable and inexpressible. The Design of it is, by leading thee *from Sin to Sin*, to harden thy Heart, to debauch thy Conscience, and seal thee up under a *reprobate Sense*; and when the Tempter has brought Things to this pass, he knows he has a Man sure enough; he has the Sinner in *Chains*, whensoever may be the Time of his *Execution*.

A Temptation presents it self to thee dressed and painted, and set off according to thy own false Heart's Desire; and *the evil Spirit* is pressing thee to a Compliance with
 it,

it, and the *good Spirit of God* and thy own Conscience would keep thee off from it; God is urgent on the one side, and the Tempter busy on the other, and thy Heart is warmly solicited on both: now consider in this critical Push, which way it inclines, and what the Issue may be, if the Tempter should carry thy Choice. Possibly if the blessed Motions of God's Spirit dissuading thee from Sin be refused now, this may be the last Address the Spirit may make to thee, the last time it may ever knock at the Door of thy Heart. And then what follows? Why, *Blindness of Mind, Stupidity of Conscience, Deadness of Affection* to all that is good, and *a daring Boldness in Sin*; which are as certain Forerunners of the Soul's Destruction, as Buds and Blossoms are the Foretellers of Fruit, or the Sentence of Condemnation the Harbinger of Death.

Now if a Man would have these terrible Effects always fresh upon his Spirit, it is impossible but he should be willing to be at any Pains to intrench and fortify himself against such Invasions. I have heard of a Criminal, who endured the bitterest Torments of the Rack with incomparable Resolution, which if a Malefactor endures without confessing his Crime (according to the Custom of those Countries, where this Trial is used) he escapes Death. And being asked, how he could strengthen his Spirit to
endure

endure such horrid Pains, why, says he, before I was to ascend the Rack, I caused the Picture of a Gibbet to be drawn upon my Foot, and still as my Pains grew higher, I fixed my Eye upon that, and so the Fear and Abhorrence of dying at the Gibbet, if I confessed, enabled me with Silence to master and overcome the Tortures of the Rack without Confession. In like manner, when a Man is at any time accosted with a Temptation, a sly, pleasing, insinuating Temptation, so that to turn away from it is extremely irksome to corrupt Nature, and to oppose and defy it resolutely much more, so let him while he is thus casting one Eye upon the Difficulty of resisting it, cast the other upon the dismal Consequences of being overcome by it. Let him look upon the Slavery and the Vassalage which it will subject him to here, and the Ruin, dreadful and never ending Torments, which it will infallibly bring him to hereafter. And then let but common Sense be his Counsellor, and it will quickly reconcile him to all the Fatigues of *Watching and Striving*, and all the Rigors of Mortification; and even Self-Love itself will make them with both Arms embrace all these Austerities, and ten Thousand more, rather than give up the Combat, and lie down in *eternal Sorrow*. Let him but once come to this positive, decretory Result with himself, either I must *watch and*

strive, and fence against this detestable Sin and Temptation, or I am lost; I must fight, or I must die; resist and stand it out, or perish and sink for ever. I say, let the Case be but thus partially put and driven home, and we may safely venture the greatest Epicure, and the most profligate Sinner in the World, indeed any thing that wears the Name of a Man, to judge, and chuse for himself.

2dly, *Watching* imports a diligent Consideration, and Survey of our own *Strength* and *Weakness*, compared with that of our Enemy. Let a Man know himself strong before he ventures to fight; and if he finds himself weak, it will concern him either to *fence* or *fly*. Wise Combatants will measure Swords before they engage. And a discreet Person will learn his own Weaknesses rather by Self-reflection than by Experience. For to know ones self weak only by being conquered, is doubtless the worst sort of Conviction.

The greatest and most fatal Miscarriages in all War are from these two things, *Weakness* and *Treachery*; and a subtil Enemy will certainly serve his Turn by one or both of them. And as it is too evident that *Weakness*, as such, can be no Match for *Strength*, so *Strength* itself must become a *Prey to Weakness*, where *Treachery* has the Management of it. Now let a Man know that he carries both

both these about him, and that in a very deplorable Degree. And,

1st, For *Weakness*; his Heart is extremely unable to withstand or repel a sinful Object suitably proposed. For so much as there is of Corruption whether *Natural or Moral* in any One, so much there is of *Weakness*. *Since thou dost these Things, how weak is thy Heart*, says the Prophet *Ezekiel* xvi. 30. Sin is the greatest *Weakness* in the World; and what a pitiful thing does it render the stoutest Heart upon the Assault of a mighty Temptation? Just like a *Reed shaken with the Wind*, or like a Bullrush yielding and bending itself under the Torrent of a mighty Stream; so far from being able to stem or conquer it, that it is not so much as able to shew its Head.

This therefore let a Man always think upon, let him still consider his *Weakness*, and compare it with the Wit and Strength of him who comes against him; and if he duly weighs and considers this, he will find that *Weakness* can have no other Support in Nature but *Watchfulness*. He who is not strong enough to *beat back* a Blow, ought to be quick fought enough *to decline it*. But,

2^{dly}, This is not all; there is not only *Weakness* but also *Treachery* in the Case, *Jer.* xvii. 9. *The Heart of a Man is deceitful above all Things*: and so great is the Deceitfulness of it, that the Tempter never assails a Man,
but

but he is sure of a Party within him. The poor Man has not only *one Arm* too feeble to resist his Enemy, but (which is worse) he has the other ready to *embrace* him. And then, as it falls out in a Siege, if Weakness abandons the Walls, and Treachery opens the Gates, the Enemy must needs enter and carry all before him.

Let a Man therefore, in his spiritual Warfare, draw another Argument for Vigilance from hence, that he carries something *about* him which is like to do him more Mischief than any thing that can annoy *him from without*: that he has a close, domestick, *Bosom Enemy*, more dangerous than the bitterest and most avowed Adversary, whose open and profest Defiances may pass for Humanity and Fair-play, in Comparison of the sly, hollow, and fallacious Arts of the corresponding Traytor within.

The Truth is, in most of the Transactions of Human Life, the cruellest and most killing Blows given both to Persons and Societies, have been from some amongst themselves: hardly any Government or Constitution comes to Confusion, but by some hungry *Vipers*, which were conceived, and bred in her own Bowels, and afterwards gnaw'd their way through them; hardly any Church (though in never so flourishing a Condition) is destroyed, but by the help of some Wretches, *who first eat her Bread*, (and perhaps

haps wear her Honours) *and then lift up their Heel against her*; suck themselves fat with her *Milk*, and then stab her to the Heart through the *Breast*, which gave it. Such oftentimes has been the Fate of the greatest Things. They have been ruined from within, which no Force from abroad could shake. A Bullet from an Enemy often goes beside a Man, and so spares him; but an Impostem in his Head, or an Apoplex strikes him dead.

Now what I have here remarked by way of Illustration, from such Cases as these, let a Man be assured that he is in danger of finding fatally verified upon himself in the spiritual War, carried on by the Tempter against him. For 'tis his own Heart, his own false and base Heart, which he is chiefly to watch against. The very Instruments of watching (if not looked to) may sometimes betray him; and one Eye had need to keep a watch over the other. And therefore *God defend me from myself*, ever was, and is, and will be a most wise and excellent Petition.

Every Man (as I may so speak) has a *Wolf in his Breast*, which (if not prevented) will be sure to devour him. Let him therefore take Heed and be wakeful; let him *neither give Rest to his Eyes, nor Slumber to his Eyelids*, for as they *shut*, so the Tempter *takes him*, still directing his Arrows rather *by our Eyes than by his own*. This is our Case; and

and surely if ever it concerns us to watch, it should be against an Enemy, whose Malice is such, that he *will not*, and whose Nature is such, that *he cannot* sleep.

3dly, Watchfulness implies a close and thorough Consideration of the *several Ways*, by which *Temptation* has at any time actually prevailed, either upon *our selves* or *others*. He who would encounter his Enemy successfully, should acquaint himself with his way of Fighting, which he cannot do but by Observation and Experience. Great Captains should be good Historians, that so by recollecting the various Issues and Events of Battels, they may see in several Instances, by what Arts and Methods the Victory has been gained on one side, and by what Failures and Miscarriages it has been lost on the other. As for instance, such an Army perished by Ambuscade; such a Battel was lost by such an Oversight or Fault in Conduct; such a strong Place, for want of Men or Courage, was took by Assault and Storm; such a Castle was surprized by such a Stratagem; and such an one was undermined, and had its Walls laid flat with the Ground, and delivered, but not given up; and lastly, another, by a surer way than all, sold.

In like manner in this Spiritual Warfare let the Soul watch against an *Assault*, against a *Surprize*, and against the *close subterraneous Actings* of its restless Enemy; for Ruin and
Destruction

Deſtruction has entred by every one of theſe Ways: and therefore take heed, that whilſt thou art expecting an Aſſault, the Enemy ſteals not upon thee with a Stratagem, or over-reaches thee by a Parley, when he cannot over-match thee by Force. And thus a ſagacious Reflection upon what has been done, is the ſureſt Way to eſtabliſh ſolid and certain Rules what to do. For tho' Perſons vary, yet Caſes are generally the ſame, as being founded in the Nature of Things; and it is eternally true, that the ſame Method will be always applicable to perfectly the ſame Caſe, as things that are caſt into the ſame Mould, will certainly take the ſame Figure. Therefore, I ſay, let the watchful Chriſtian conſider, what has been the Iſſue and Effect of the Tempter's Arts and Methods both upon *himſelf* and *others*.

1ſt, And firſt for *himſelf*; every Man does or ſhould know the Plagues of his own Heart, and what falſe Steps he has made in the ſeveral Turns and Periods of his Chriſtian Courſe; by what Means he fell, and upon what Rocks he ſplit, I ſay, every rational, thinking, reflecting Man muſt needs know this: for he who has the Mind of a Man muſt *remember*, and he who *remembers* what *has fallen* out, will be watchful againſt what *may*. He will carry his Eye backward and forward, and on every ſide when he knows that the Danger moves ſo too. For tho' poſſibly

possibly in dealing with Friends, it may not always be thought so *commodious to look backwards* (the Rule of a great Prince, one really great) yet in dealing with Enemies one would think it the Concern of the stoutest Soldiers to look backwards sometimes, for fear no old fly Enemy should come behind him and knock out his Brains before he is aware; and it is certain that he will hardly be the wiser for that; for it will be too late to watch when his Head is low, or to make use of his Sword when he has no Hand to hold it.

He who shall make true and accurate Reflections upon his past Life, and observe by what secret Avenues and Passes the Temptation has entred and broke in upon him, shall find that there have been some sorts of Things, Persons, Companies, and Actions, which perhaps he never ventured upon in all his Life, but he brought away *Matter of Repentance* from them, and it was well if God gave him the *Grace* of it too.

Now let such an one look upon all these as so many Engines planted against him by the Devil, and accordingly let him fly from them, as he would from the Mouth of a Cannon or the Breath of a Pest-house, assuring himself that the same Poison will still have the same Operation, and that the same Stone which gave him so desperate a Fall once, if he stumbles at it again, will be as

apt to give him another; but then, if notwithstanding such frequent and fatal Trials, he will still run himself upon the same Mischief which he has so terribly felt and fatally fallen by, he must know that tho' his old Enemy the Devil tempted him the *first time*, yet his worse Enemy, himself, tempts him the *second*. And will that Man pretend to *watch*, whom neither Sense, Smart, nor Experience can awaken? Who, while he feels Blow after Blow, will not be persuaded that he is struck. But when it comes to this, *Destruction* must *convince*, where Danger cannot *admonish*. But then,

2. In the next place; let the watchful Christian carry his Eye from himself to others, and observe with what Trick and Artifice the Tempter has practised upon them. And for this how many tragical Stories and doleful Complaints may you hear of Persons, sometimes of great Hope and Reputation, yet after a while utterly fallen from both, and plunged into the very Sink and Dregs of all Debauchery! And what Account do Men give us of so wretched a Change? Why, of some you shall be told, that while they were under the Eye and Wing of their Parents, they were modest, tractable, and ingenuous, sober in their Morals, and serious in their Religion. But alas! either they were first unhappily planted in some Place of ill and vicious Education, where

where the Devil and his Agents infused such diabolical Filth and Poison into their Hearts, that no Discipline or Advice, no Sermons or Sacraments, could ever after antidote or work it out.

Or if, thro' the singular Mercy of Providence, such Persons escape the first Taint and Venom of ill Breeding, and so thereby make one farther Step into the World, with all the Advantages of a fair Carriage and a fair Esteem, yet generally not long after, by the Insinuations of that old Pander and Trapper of Souls, it is odds but you shall hear, that some of them either fall into villanous and lewd Company, or light into loose and debauched Families, or take to some ensnaring Employments, which quickly wear off the first Tenderness of their Hearts, and bring them to a callous Hardness and Sturdiness in Vice, till at length stripp'd even of common Civility, as well as abandoned by Morality, they come to launch out into the Deeps of Sin, to *drink* and *whore*, and *scoff* at *Religion*; and so by an uncontrouled Progress thro' all the several Stages and Degrees of Vice, commence at last *fashionable* and *complete* Sinners.

Now when the watchful Christian shall stand by and observe this dismal Catastrophe of Things, when he shall see that *Proximus ardet Ucalegon*, surely it will be high time for him to look about him, and to conclude that

the Fire which has already burnt down his next *Neighbour's* House, will assuredly catch at *his*. Let him therefore watch, and stand upon his Guard against all those fore-mentioned encroaching Mischiefs, which have made such a woful Havock of Souls even before his Eyes. Let him neither send Son nor Friend to the *Stews* or the Play-house, *Banditti* to *Sodom* or *Gomorrab* for Education. Let him make no Friendships or Acquaintance with those, whom nothing will satisfy but to go to Hell with them for Company; let him have nothing to do with any House or Family (tho' never so great and so much in Power) where the Devil is *Major Domo*, and governs all; and lastly, let him not follow any Employment or Course of Life, which may work immoderately upon any of his *Passions*, which may swell his *Hopes*, feed his *Lust*, or heighten his *Ambition*. In a word, let him look with Horror upon all these high Roads to Hell, as the Man did upon the Passage to the Lion's Den, where he beheld with Trembling the Foot-steps of innumerable who had gone in, but of none who had returned from thence. And this is truly to *be watchful*, for a Man thus to secure and make good his own *Standing*, by considering how and whereby others have *fallen*; no Wisdom being so sure, and so much a Man's own, as that which is *bought*; and none

none so cheap, and yet withal so beneficial, as that which is bought at *another's Cost*.

4thly, Watchfulness implies a continual, actual Intention of Mind upon the high Concern and Danger which is before us, in Opposition to Sloth, Idleness, and Remissness. Stand (says the Apostle) *having your Loins girt about*, Eph. vi. 14. The grand Security of a Warrior is to be always ready. While the Bow is bent, it is still fit for Execution; but if the Enemy comes and finds that unbent, and the Armour off, the Man is destroyed and run down before he can either bend the one or put on the other; and then it will be to little purpose to cry out, *Who would have thought this!* For the Fool's Thought comes always too late, too late to rescue, tho' time enough to reproach him. There is ever some gross Neglect in an Army when they come to have their Quarters beaten up; for an Enemy rarely ventures at this, but where he knows his Advantage, and that one Enemy can never take, till the other is Fool enough to give.

We have a notable, but sad Instance, of a supine, careless People, immersed in Sloth and Ease, and of the terrible Fate which attended them in that Condition. For in Judges xviii. 7. it is said of the Inhabitants of Laish, that *they dwelt careless, and after the manner of the Zidonians, quiet and secure, and had no Business with any Man*. But what fol-

lows? Why, some it seems were resolv'd to have *Business* with them, tho' they would have none with others; for the *Children of Dan* (we read) came, and in the midst of this profound Quiet and Security fell upon them, burnt down their City, and put them all to the Sword. The Text says expressly of them in two several Places, that they were *secure*, but the Event shews that they were far from being *safe*.

In like manner when *David* and *Abishai* came and found *Saul* with his Troops round about him all asleep (a most Warlike and fit Condition (you will say) for one upon the Pursuit of an Enemy) 1 *Sam.* xxvi. 7, 8. *Abishai* thereupon thus bespeaks *David*, *This Day hath God delivered thine Enemy into thy Hands, let me therefore smite him with the Spear to the Earth at once, and I will not smite him twice.* See here the Danger of a drowsy Warrior; but it was well for his *Royal Drowsiness*, that he found him his true Friend, whom he pursued as his *mortal Enemy*: For had his old back Friends the *Philistines* found him in such a Posture, they would hardly have left him so; but *David* would do as became *David*, tho' never so ill used by *Saul*.

Another Instance I have met with in Story not much unlike this, of a certain General, who going about his Camp in the Night, and finding the Watch fast asleep upon the Ground, nails him down to the Place, where he

he lay with his own Sword, using this Expression withal, *I found him dead, and I left him so.* So that Sleep (it seems) in such Cases is something more than the *Image of Death*, and closes the Eyes too fast ever to be opened again.

Accordingly in this Spiritual Warfare let us take heed, that our vigilant, active Enemy find us not idle and unemployed. The Soul's *Play-day* is always the Devil's *working Day*, and the *idler the Man*, still the *busier the Tempter*. The Truth is, Idleness offers up the Soul as a Blank to the Devil, for him to write what he will upon it. Idleness is the *Emptiness*, and Business the *Fulness* of the Soul; and we all know that we may infuse what we will into an empty Vessel, but a full one has no room for a farther Infusion. In a word, Idleness is that which sets all the Capacities of the Soul wide open, to let in the evil Spirit, and to give both him, and all the Villanies he can bring along with him, a free Reception and a full Possession; whereas on the contrary Laboriousness shuts the Doors and stops all the Avenues of the Mind, whereby a Temptation would enter, and (which is yet more) leaves no void Room for it to dwell there, if by any Accident it should chance to creep in; so that let but the Course a Man takes be just and lawful, and then the more active still the more innocent, for Action both perfects

Nature and ministers to *Grace*; whereas Idleness, like the Rust of the Soul, by its long *lying still*, first soils the Beauty, and then eats out the Strength of it. In like manner the Industry of the Person *tempted* ever supercedes that of the Tempter; so that as long as the former is employed (as we hinted before) the other can have but little to do, and consequently will be hardly brought to address himself to one, whose Head and Heart, whose Eyes and Ears, and all the Faculties of his Soul are actually taken up, and nothing at Leisure to receive him; for few make Visits, where they are sure neither to be entertained nor let in.

Now the first, and generally the most fatal Way, by which the Tempter accosts a Man, is by the Suggestion of evil Thoughts; for when the Temptation is once lodged in the *Imagination*, he knows it is in the next Neighbourhood to the *Affections*, and from the *Affections* that it is usually no long Step to the *Actions*, and that when it once reaches them, he is pretty sure that his Work is then done. But now when the Mind is thus intent upon greater and better Objects, and the Thoughts wholly taken up with no less a Concern than that last and grand one of *Life and Death*, surely it is scarce possible for his impertinent Stuff (and his Temptations are no better) to find either Audience or Admittance; for the Soul thus employed

is really too busy to regard what he says, any more than a Man who is contriving, studying, and beating his Brain how to save his Head, can be presumed to mind powdering his Hair, or while he knows he is eating his last Meal, to play the Critick upon Tastes; no doubt whosoever is so wholly taken up, can neither attend making nor receiving Invitations, tho' the Tempter we own is so much a *Courtier* as to be always ready for both.

Let the wary Christian therefore remember, that he is *hoc agere*, that he is to keep all his Hours, and (if possible) his very Minutes filled up with Business, and that *Grace* abhors a *Vacuum* in Time, as much as *Nature* does in Place; and happy beyond Expression is that *wise* and *good* Christian, whom, *when the Tempter comes*, he shall find so doing; for as much as he, who is thus prepared to receive the *Tempter*, cannot be unprepared to receive his *Saviour*; since, next to his Soul, his Time is certainly the most precious Thing he has in the World, and the right spending of the one the surest and most unfailing *Way to save* the other. But,

stbly, and lastly, *Watching* implies a constant and severe *Temperance*, in Opposition to all the Jollities of Revelling and Intemperance. We have before observed the great Analogy and Resemblance between the carrying on the spiritual and the temporal Warfare;

fare; and accordingly as to this latter we may observe farther, how whole Armies have been routed and overthrown, and the greatest Cities and the strongest Garrisons surpris'd and sack'd, while those who should have been watching the Motion of the Enemy, were sopping it at their Cups, equally unmindful both of their Danger and Defence; for such Debauches seldom happen either in Camps or besieged Towns, but their wakeful Enemies quickly getting Intelligence of the Disorder, come upon them on a sudden, and find them as the Poet describes such, *Somno Vinoq; sepultos*, that is to say, *buried* in a manner before *dead*, or rather already dead to their Hands, and so scarce worthy to receive another and a nobler Death from their Enemies Sword; for when Men have once drank themselves down, the Enemy can have nothing more to do but to trample upon them.

How came *Ahab* with an Handful of Men in comparison to overthrow the vast insulting Army of *Benhadad* the King of *Syria*? Why, we have an Account of it, *1 Kings xx. He and two and thirty Kings his Confederates were drinking themselves drunk in their Pavilions*, v. 16. as if he had drawn together such a numerous and mighty Army, headed by so many Princes, only for the glorious and warlike Expedition of carousing in their Tents, or to fight it out Hand to

Hand in the cruel and bloody Encounters of drinking Healths; but their Success was answerable, they fell like Grass before the Mower, cut down and slaughter'd without Resistance, and happy were those who had their *Brains* so much in their *Heels*, as to be sober enough to run away.

Accordingly in the Management of our Christian Warfare, so much resembling the other (as I shew before) it is remarkable *Watching and Sobriety* are still joined together in the same Precept; as *Luke* xxi. 34. *Take heed to yourselves* (says our Saviour) *lest at any time your Hearts be overcharged with Surfeiting and Drunkenness, and so that Day come upon you unawares*; which if it should, and chance to find Men in such a Condition, it would prove a sad Conviction, that *Men may eat and drink their own Damnation* more Ways than one. And the same Injunction is repeated over and over by the Apostles; as, *Let us watch and be sober*, says *St. Paul*, *1 Thess.* v. 6. *And be ye sober, and watch unto Prayer*, says *St. Peter*, *1 Pet.* iv. 7. And again, *Be sober, be vigilant, because your Adversary the Devil, like a roaring Lion, goes about seeking whom he may devour*, *1 Pet.* v. 8. Of so peculiar a Force is Temperance against the fiercest Assaults of the Devil, and so unfit a Match is a soaking, swilling Swine to encounter this roaring Lion. Concerning which it is further worth our observing, that as we read

read of no other Creature but the Swine which our Saviour commission'd the Devil to enter into, so of all other brute Animals there are none so remarkable for Intemperance as they, did not some I confess of an higher Species very often out-do them.

In short, he who has an Enemy must *watch*; but there can be no such thing as watching, unless Sobriety *holds up the Head*, for as much as without it *Sleeping* is not only the easiest, but the best thing that such an one can do, as being for the time of his Debauch like other Beasts, always most innocent when asleep, tho' for the same reason also I confess more in danger of being caught and destroyed before *he wakes*.

Let that wise and circumspect Christian therefore, who would always have a watchful Eye upon his Enemy, with a particular Caution take heed of all Intemperance; and I account that Intemperance, which immediately after eating and drinking unfits a Man for Business, whether it be that of the Body, or that of the Mind; it renders a Man equally useles to others, and mischievous to himself; and we need say no more nor no worse of Intemperance than this, that it lays him wretchedly open, even as open to *throw* out as to *pour* in, a kind of Common-shore for both; it makes his own Tongue his Executioner, sometimes by scandalous Words, and sometimes by dangerous Truths, and that

that which is the certain Consequent of both, by procuring him dangerous Enemies, unless possibly sometimes to prevent a greater Mischief, the Brute cries, *Peccavi*, arraigns himself, makes his Folly his Apology, and so forsooth proves himself no Criminal by pleading that he was a Sot. But this is but one Mischief of a thousand, which Intemperance exposes its miserable Slaves to; for I look upon this Vice as a kind of *Mother Vice*, and the producing Cause of infinitely more, and Sensuality (which is but another Name for the same Thing) as the very Throat of Hell, or rather that *broad Way*, by which three Parts of the World (at least) go to the Devil.

And therefore as the pious and prudent Christian Warrior will be sure to keep himself far enough from such a Traitor as downright Excess, so to this purpose let him, as much as possible, shun all jovial Entertainments, Banquetings, and merry Meetings, (as they are called) if they may deserve that Name, which seldom fail to bring so sad an Account after them; an Account which will be sure to remain, when all Bills are cleared, and all Reckonings at the Tavern paid off; so that every experienc'd Guide of Souls may truly pronounce of all such Jollities, what the best Guides of Health observe of some Meats, that it is possible indeed with great Care and Niceness to order and use them

them so, that *they shall do a Man no Hurt*, but it is certain *that they can never do him Good*.

And we may as confidently affirm, that no wise or truly great Man ever delighted in such Things. The Truth is, wise Men slight them, as the Hindrances of Business, and good Men dread them, as dangerous to the Soul. In a word, *Temperance* is a Virtue, which casts the truest Lustre upon the Person it is lodged in, and has the most general Influence upon all other particular Virtues of any that the Soul of Man is capable of, indeed so general, that there is hardly any noble Quality or Endowment of the Mind, but must own Temperance either for its *Parent* or its *Nurse*; it is the greatest Strengtheners and Clearer of Reason, and the best Preparer of it for Religion, the Sister of Prudence, and the Handmaid to Devotion. But we need no further Proof of the sovereign Value of a strict and severe Temperance than this, that the temperate Man is always himself; his Temperance gives him the constant Command of his Reason, and (which is yet better) keeps him under the Command of his Religion; it makes him always fit and ready to answer the Devil, for it takes away the very *Matter* of the Temptation, and so eludes the Tempter's Design, for want of *Materials* to work upon. And for this Cause no doubt it was that our Saviour, *Matth. xvii. 21.* told
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his Disciples, that there were *some evil Spirits not to be dispossessed but by Fasting* as well as Prayer; and I think we may rationally enough conclude, that whatsoever *Fasting casts out*, Temperance must at least keep from entering in. It is seldom that a Temptation fastens upon a Man to any purpose, but in the Strength of some one or other of his Passions; and this is a sure Observation, that where Temperance over-rules the *Appetites*, there Reason is ablest to command the *Passions*; and that till the former be done, the latter will be impracticable.

And thus I have shewn what is implied in the grand Duty of *Watchfulness*, the first Thing prescribed in the Text, to guard us against *Temptation*; and many more Particulars might (no question) be assigned as belonging to it, but I have singled out and insisted upon only five, which for Memory's sake I shall briefly repeat and sum up in a few Words.

As first of all, let a Man thoroughly possess his Mind with a full and settled Persuasion of the devilish and intolerable Mischief designed him by Temptation; for unless he believes it to be such, he neither will, nor rationally can watch against it.

In the next place, let him narrowly survey and inform himself of his own spiritual Strength and Weakness, and compare them with the Forces and Advantages of his Enemy,

my, and accordingly by supporting Weakness with Watchfulness, let him be sure to fortify the *weak Side*, and the *stronger* will be the better able to defend itself.

And then, thirdly, let him wisely reflect both upon his own Experience and that of others; and so observing by what Arts, Methods and Stratagems the Tempter has heretofore prevailed upon either, let him apply what is *past* to what is *present*, and so judging of one by the other, use his utmost Vigilance, that the same Trick be not trump'd upon him more than once.

And to this purpose, let him, in the fourth place, have his Mind continually intent upon the great and pressing Danger he is surrounded with, that no Sloth, Negligence, or Remissness of Spirit, open a Passage to the Tempter, and so betray him like a Fool, between *sleeping* and *waking*, into the Hands of his cruel Enemy; but let him have his Danger still in his Eye, and still look his Enemy in the Face, and that is the likeliest way to look him out of Countenance.

And, fifthly and lastly, above all let him practise the strictest Temperance against all kind of Excess in the Use of any of God's Creatures, which generally proves fatal and pernicious to the Soul, frequently destroying, but always wounding it.

And to enforce these two last Particulars more especially, I shall only add this one true
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and important Remark, to wit, that of all the Sins and Enormities which the Soul of Man is capable of being ensnared by, I hardly know any (except those two of *Covetousness* and *Ambition*) but directly rush in upon it thro' those two broad, open, hellish Gates of *Idleness* and *Intemperance*.

And thus from *Watchfulness* pass we now to the other great Preservative and Remedy against Temptation prescribed in the Text, which is *Prayer, Watch and pray, that ye enter not into Temptation*; the reason and necessity of which Duty is founded upon the Supposition of this great Truth, that it is not in the Power of Man to secure or defend himself against Temptation, but that something above him must do it for him, as well as very often by him; and Prayer is that blessed Messenger between Heaven and Earth, holding a Correspondence with both Worlds, and by an happy Intercourse and sure Conveyance carrying up the *Necessities* of the one, and bringing down the *Bounties* of the other. This is the high Prerogative of Prayer, and by virtue of it every tempted Person has it in his Power to engage Omnipotence itself, and every one of the Divine Attributes in his Defence; and whosoever enters the Lists upon these Terms, having the Almighty for his Second (let the Combatants be never so unequal) cannot but come off a Conqueror. A State of Temptation is a

State of War, and, as often as a Man is tempted, he is put to fight for his *All*; Danger both *provokes* and *teaches* to pray, and Prayer (if any thing *can*) certainly *will* deliver from it. And to convince Men, how infinitely it concerns them to fence against the Danger threatned, by persevering in the Duty enjoined, let them assure themselves, that there is not any Condition whatsoever allotted to Men in this World but has its peculiar Temptation attending it, and hardly separable from it; for whether it be Wealth or Poverty, Health or Sicknes, Honour or Disgrace, or the like, there is something deadly in every one of them, and not at all the less so for not killing the same way. Wealth and Plenty may *surfeit* a Man, and Poverty *starve* him, but still the Man dies as surely by the one as by the other. God indeed sends us nothing but what is naturally wholesome, and fit to nourish us, but if the Devil has the Cooking of it, it may destroy us; and therefore the Divine Goodness has prescribed Prayer as an universal Preservative against the Poison of all Conditions, extracting what is healing and salutary in them from what is baneful and pernicious, and so making the very *Poison* of one Condition a specifick *Antidote* against that of another. In fine, let none wonder, that Prayer has so powerful an Ascendant over the Tempter (as mighty as he is) when

God himself is not only *willing*, but *pleas'd* to be overcome by it; for still it is the Man of Prayer, who takes *Heaven by Force*, who lays Siege to the Throne of Grace, and who, in a word, is thereby said to *wrestle with God*: and surely if Prayer can raise a poor Mortal so much above himself as to be able to *wrestle with his Maker*, it may very well enable him to *foil the Tempter*. And therefore since both our Saviour himself, and his great Apostle St. *Paul*, represent *Prayer without ceasing* as so eminent a Duty, and so opportune a Succour, we must needs own, that there cannot be a more pressing Argument for a *never ceasing* Prayer than never ceasing *Temptations*; and therefore whatsoever our personal Strengths are (as at best they can be but little) it is certain, that our Auxiliary Forces and Supplies must come in from Prayer; in a word, I know no one Blessing so small, which can be rationally expected without it, nor any so great but may be obtained by it.

But then to render it thus prevalent and effectual there are required to it these Two Qualifications.

1. Fervency, or Importunity.
2. Constancy, or Perseverance.

1. And first for Fervency. Let a Man be but as earnest in praying against a Temptation as the Tempter is in pressing it, and he needs not proceed by a surer Measure.

He who prays against it coldly and indifferently, gives too shrewd a Sign, that he neither fears nor hates it; for Coldness is, and always will be, a Symptom of *Deadness*, especially in *Prayer*, where Life and Heat are the same thing.

The Prayers of the Saints are set forth in Scripture at much another rate, not only by *Calls*, but *Cries*, *Cries* even to a *roaring*, and Vociferation, *Psal.* xxxviii. 8. and sometimes by *strong Cries* with Tears, *Heb.* v. 7. sometimes again by *Groanings*, *not to be uttered*, *Rom.* viii. 26. things too big for Vent, too high for Expression. In fine, he who prays against his Spiritual Enemy as he ought to do, is like a Man fighting against him upon his Knees; and he who fights so, by the very Posture of his Fighting shews, that he neither will nor can run away.

Lip-Devotion will not serve the Turn; it undervalues the very Things it prays for. It is indeed the begging of a Denial, and shall certainly be answered in what it begs; but he, who truly and sensibly knows the invaluable Happiness of being delivered from Temptation, and the unspeakable Misery of sinking under it, will pray against it, as a Man ready to starve would beg for Bread, or a Man sentenced to die would entreat for Life. Every Period, every Word, every Tittle of such a Prayer is all *Spirit* and *Life*, Flame and Extasy; it shoots from one Heart
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into another, from the Heart of him who utters, to the Heart of him who hears it.

And then well may that powerful thing vanquish the Tempter, which binds the Hands of Justice, and opens the Hands of Mercy, and in a word, overcomes and prevails over Omnipotence itself; for, *Let me go*, says God to *Jacob*, Gen. xxxii. 26. And, *Let me alone*, says God to *Moses*, Exod. xxxii. 10. One would think that there was a kind of Trial of Strength between the Almighty and them; but whatsoever it was, it shews that there was and is something in Prayer, which he, who made Heaven and Earth, neither could nor can resist; and if this be that holy Violence which Heaven itself (as has been shewn) cannot stand out against, no wonder if all the *Powers* of Hell must fall before it. But,

2dly, To *Fervency* must be added also *Constancy* or *Perseverance*. For this indeed is the crowning Qualification, which renders Prayer effectual and victorious, and that upon great Reason, as being the surest Test and Mark of its Sincerity; for, as *Job* observes, *Job* xxvii. 10. *Will the Hypocrite call always upon God?* No, he does it only by Fits and Starts, and consequently his devotional Fervours are but as the returning Paroxysms of a Fever, not as the constant kindly Warmths of a vital Heat: they may work high for a

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time, but they cannot last, for no *Fit* ever yet held a Man for his whole *Life*.

Discontinuance of Prayer by long broken Intervals is the very Bane of the Soul, exposing it to all the Sights and Practices of the Tempter. For a Temptation may withdraw for a while, and return again, the Tempter may cease urging, and yet continue plotting; the Temptation *is not dead, but sleeps*, and when it comes on afresh, we shall find it the *stronger* for having *slept*.

And therefore our Saviour casts the whole Stress of our Safety upon *continual Prayer*, by a notable *Parable* intended, as St. *Luke* tells us, *Luke xviii. 1.* to shew, *that Men ought always to pray, and not to faint*; nothing being more fatally common, than for Men, not receiving immediate Answers to their Prayers, to despond and give over, and to conclude with themselves, *as good not at all as to no purpose*. A Man perhaps labours under the Tyranny of some vexatious Lust or Corruption, and being bitterly sensible of it, he sets upon it with *watching and striving, reading and hearing, fasting and praying*, and after all thinks he has got but little or no Ground of it: and now what shall such an one do? Why, nothing else must or can be done in the Case, but resolutely to keep on praying; for no Man of Sense who sows one Day expects to reap the next; this is certain, that while any one *prays sincerely* against a
 Temptation,

Temptation, he *fight*s against it, and so long as a Man continues fighting, tho' with his Limbs all battered, and his Flesh torn and broken, he is not vanquish'd; 'tis *Conquest*, in the Account of God, not *to be overcome*. God perhaps intends, that there shall be War between thee and thy Corruption all thy Days: thou shalt live *fighting* and *warring*, but for all that mayst die in Peace; and if so, God has answered thy Prayers; I say, answered them, enough to *save thy Soul*, tho' not always enough *to comfort and compose* thy Mind. God fully made good his Promise to the *Israelites*, and they really *conquered* the *Canaanites*, tho' they never wholly *dispossessed* and *drove* them out.

And therefore since God will still have something remain to exercise the very best of Men in this Life, if thou wouldst have thy Prayer against thy Sin *successful*, in spite of all Discouragements, let it be *continual*: let the Plaister be kept on till the Sore be cured. For Prayer is no otherwise a Remedy against Temptation than as it is commensurate to it, and keeps pace with it; but if we leave off praying, before the Devil leaves off tempting, we cannot be safe, we throw off our Armour in the midst of the Battel, and so must not wonder at the worst that follows.

In a word, present Prayer is a certain Guard against present Temptation; but as

to what may come, we cannot be assured, that it will keep us from it, or support us under it.

And thus much *briefly* for that other great Preservative against *Temptation, Prayer*, together with its two prevailing Properties, *Fervency* and *Perseverance*, from which all its Success must come; for it is *Fervency* in Prayer which must charge the Enemy, and *Perseverance* in Prayer which must conquer him.

And now from the foregoing Particulars thus discoursed of, we may learn the true *Cause* (and it is worth our learning) why so many Men, who doubtless at some times of their Lives resist and make head against Temptation, and have many an hard Struggle and Conflict with their Sins, yet in the Issue are worsted by them, and so live and die under the Power of them, and this is not from any Insufficiency in *Watching* and *Prayer*, as Means unable to compass the End they are prescribed for, but from this, that Men divide between *Watching and Prayer*, and so use and rely upon the Duties *separately*, which can do nothing but *in Conjunction*. For *Watchfulness* without *Prayer* is *Presumption*, and *Prayer* without *Watchfulness* is a Mockery; by the first a Man invades *God's Part* in this great Work, and by the latter he neglects *his own*. *Prayer* not assisted by *Practice* is *Laziness*, and contradicted by

by Practice is *Hypocrisy*; it is indeed of mighty Force and Use within its proper Compass, but it was never design'd to supply the room of *Watchfulness*, or to make Wish instead of Endeavour.

God generally gives spiritual Blessings and Deliverances as he does temporal; that is, by the Mediation of an active and a vigorous Industry. The Fruits of the Earth are the *Gift of God*, and we pray for them as such; but yet we plant, and we sow, and we plow, for all that; and the *Hands* which are sometimes lift up in *Prayer*, must at other times be put to the *Plow*, or the Husbandman must expect no Crop. Every Thing must be effected in the Way proper to its Nature, with the concurrent Influence of the divine Grace, not to supersede the Means, but to prosper and make them effectual.

And upon this Account Men deceive themselves most grossly and wretchedly, when they expect that from Prayer, which God never intended it for. He who hopes to be delivered from Temptation merely by praying against it, affronts God, and deludes himself, and might to as much purpose fall asleep in the midst of his Prayers, as do nothing but sleep after them. Some ruin their Souls by neglecting Prayer, and some perhaps do them as much Mischief by adoring it, while by placing their whole entire Confidence in it,

it, they commit an odd Piece of Idolatry, and make a *God* of their very *Devotions*. I have heard of one (and him none of the strictest Livers) who yet would be sure to say his Prayers every Morning, and when he had done, he would bid *the Devil do his worst*, thus using Prayer as a kind of Spell or Charm; but the old *Serpent* was not to be charmed thus; and so no Wonder if the Devil took him at his Word, and used him accordingly.

And therefore to disabuse, and deliver Men from so killing a Mistake, I shall point out two general Cases or Instances, in which *praying against Temptation* will be of little or no Avail to secure Men from it. As,

First, When a Man prays against any Sin or Temptation, and in the mean time indulges himself in such Things or Courses, as are naturally apt to promote an Inclination to that Sin, such an one prays against it to no purpose. Every Sin is founded in some particular Appetite or Inclination, and every such Appetite or Inclination has some particular *Objects, Actions, or Courses*, by which it is fed and kept in heart. Now let no Man think that he has prayed heartily against any Sin, who does not do all that he can, who does not use his utmost Diligence, nay, his best Art and Skill, to undermine and weaken his *Inclination to that Sin*. To water an
ill

ill Plant every Day, and to pray against the Growth of it, would be very absurd and preposterous. St. Paul (we know) complained of a *Body of Death*, and of a *Thorn in the Flesh*, and he prayed heartily against it. But was that all? No, he *also kept under his Body, and brought it into Subjection*, 1 Cor. ix. 27. being well assured, that unless the Soul keeps under the Body, the Body will quickly get above the Soul. If you would destroy a well entrench'd Enemy, cut off his Provisions; and if you starve him in his Strong-holds, you conquer him as effectually as if you beat him in the Field. But then again,

2dly, When a Man prays against any Sin or Temptation, and yet ventures upon those *Occasions* which usually induce Men to it, he must not expect to find any Success in his Prayers. For would any Man in his Wits, who dreaded a catching Distemper, converse freely with such as had it? that is, would he fly from the *Disease*, and yet run into the *Infection*? In like manner, do not *Occasions of Sin* generally end in *the Commission of Sin*? and if they generally end in it, must they not naturally tend to it? And if so, can Men think that God ever designed Prayer as an Engine to counter-work or controul Nature, to reverse its Laws, and alter the Course of the Universe, by suspending the natural Efficiency of Things, in compliance with some Men's senseless and irrational Petitions?

None

None trifle with God, and make a Sport of Sin, so much as those whose *Way of Living* interferes with their *Prayers*; who pray for such or such a Virtue, and then put themselves under Circumstances which render the Practice of it next to impossible; who pray perhaps for the Grace of *Sobriety*, and then wait daily for an Answer to that Prayer at a merry Meeting, or the *Tavern*. But the *Spirit of Prayer* is a Spirit of *Prudence*, a Spirit of *Caution* and *Conduct*, and never pursues the Thing it prays for in a Way contrary to the Nature of the Thing itself.

Does a Man therefore pray (for Instance) against the Temptation of *Pride* or *Ambition*? let him not thrust himself into high Places and Employments, which he is neither worthy of nor fit for. Or does he beg of God to free him from the Sin and Slavery of *Intemperance*? let him break off from Company; let him not give up his Reason, his Credit, his Time, and his very Soul, out of Complaisance (as Fools call it) but let him make his own *Conscience*, and not other Mens *Humours*, the Rule he lives by, and let him stick close to it. In a word, let him resolve against all the false Pleasures of Luxury, and then let him keep his Resolution, and his Resolution shall assuredly keep him.

And this is a plain, natural, and sure Course, directly leading to the Thing he prays for;

but the contrary is both a Paradox in Reason, and an Imposture in Religion. And believe it, we shall one Day give but an ill and lame Account of our *Watching* and *Praying*, if by an odd Inversion of the Command, all that we do, is first *to pray against a Temptation*, and afterwards *to watch for it*.

And thus I have given you two notable Instances in which Men *pray against Temptation* without any Success. In short, if a Man cherishes and keeps up a sinful Principle or Inclination *within*, and shuns not the Occasions of Sin *without*, his Prayers and his Actions supplant and overthrow one another; and God will be sure to answer him according to what *he does*, and not according to what *he prays*.

And therefore let us take heed of putting a Cheat or Fallacy upon ourselves, a *Fallacy, à bene conjunctis ad malè divisa*; by dividing between these two great Duties; and *dividing*, we know, in some Cases, is in effect *destroying*, and it will prove so in this. *Watchfulness* and *Prayer* are indeed principal Duties, and of principal Acceptance with God, but God accepts them only as he commands them, and that is, *both together*. God has joined them by an absolute, irreversible Sanction; and what God himself has so joined, let not the Devil, or our own false Hearts, presume to put asunder. But let us take this
 both

both for our Direction and our Comfort, that proportionably as we *watch*, God will answer us when we *pray*.

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



PROV. xxviii. 26.

*He who trusteth in his own Heart is
a Fool.*

THE great Instrument and Engine for the carrying on of the Commerce and mutual Intercourses of the World is *Trust*, without which there can be no Correspondence maintained either between Societies or particular Persons. And accordingly being a Thing of such general and immediate Influence upon the Affairs of Mankind, there is nothing in the Management of which Men give such great Experiments either of their *Wisdom* or their *Folly*; the whole Measure of these being taken by the World, according as it sees Men more or less deceived in their transacting with others. Certain it is that Credulity lays a Man infinitely open to the Abuses and Injuries of crafty Persons. And tho' a *strong Belief* best secures the Felicity of the *future Life*, yet it is usually the great Bane and Supplanter of our Happiness *in this*; there being scarce any Man, who
arrives

arrives to any sound Understanding of himself, or his own Interest, till he comes to be once or twice notably *deceived* by such an one, of whom he was apt to say and think, according to the common Phrase, *I would trust my very Life with him.* And for this Cause it is, that that Nation, which seems justly of the greatest Reputation for *Wisdom* in the *Western World*, has vouch'd it for a Maxim, and liv'd by it as a Rule, *to trust no Body*; whether in so doing they deal honestly and ingenuously they seem not much to care, being contented that it is safe.

But of all the Fallacies and scurvy Cheats put upon Men by their *trusting* others, there are none so shameful, and indeed pernicious, as the Baffles which Men sustain by trusting *themselves*; which gives them but too frequent and sad an Experience, that the *nearest Neighbours* are not always *the best Friends*. For none surely can be nearer to a Man than *himself*, or be supposed so true and faithful to all his Concerns, as the Heart which *beats* in his own *Breast*; yet *Solomon*, and a greater than *Solomon*, which is *Experience*, gives us infallible Demonstrations that it is much otherwise; and that the *Heart*, of all Things in the World, is least to be confided in, else certainly a Man's trusting of it could not thus denominate him *a Fool*.

The Words contain in them a Caution or Admonition against Mens trusting their *own Hearts*,

Hearts, upon the account of that disgraceful Imputation, which such a *Trust* or Confidence will in the issue bring upon them; and consequently they very naturally present these two Things to our Enquiry.

1. What is meant by a Man's *trusting his Heart*

2. Wherein *the Folly* of it consists.

As for the first of these. For a Man to trust *his own Heart*, is in short, for him to commit and resign up the entire Conduct of his Life and Actions to the Directions of it, as of a Guide, the most able, and the most faithful, to direct him in all the most important Matters, which relate either to his temporal or his spiritual Estate. For whosoever *trusts* another for his Guide, must do it upon the account of these two Qualifications to be found in him.

1st, That he is *able* to direct and lead him : So that in this Case a Man must look upon every Dictate of his Heart as an Oracle; he must look upon it as speaking to him from an infallible Chair, incapable of Error or Mistake in any thing which it proposes to him to be followed. In a word, he must take it for the unerring Measure of Truth, and the most certain Reporter of the Mind of God.

2^{dly}, A Guide must be such and one, as not only *certainly can*, but also *faithfully will*, give the best Directions. For let a Man know the *Way* never so well, yet if he has a Design not

to impart that Knowledge, but perhaps has more Windings and Turnings than the *Way itself*, such an one is far from being a competent Guide, and fit to be trusted, especially in a Man's Journey to Eternity. So that for a Man to *trust his Heart*, is to take it for his best, his surest, and most unfailing Friend, that will deal openly, clearly, and impartially with him in every thing, and give him faithful Intelligence in all his Affairs.

Having thus seen what is imported in a Man's *trusting his Heart*, we come now in the next place to see wherein the *Foolishness* of it consists. For the making out of which, we are to observe that there are two Things which render a *Trust foolish*, both of them to be considered with mutual relation to one another in this Particular.

1st, The *Value* of the Thing which we commit to a Trust.

2^{dly}, The *undue Qualifications* of the Person to *whose Trust* we commit it.

In both of which Respects the Confidence reposed by Men in their *own Hearts* will in the Procedure of this Discourse appear to be inexcusably *foolish*.

First of all then as for the *Thing* which we commit to a *Trust*. We do, in a word, trust all that to *our Hearts* which is the Consequent of our Actions, either in reference to this World or the other. But to explicate and draw forth this General into the several

Parti-

Particulars wrapt up and included in it; while we rely upon the Guidance of our *Heart*, we commit these three Things to the Mercy of its Trust. 1. The *Honour of God*. 2. Our *own Felicity here*. 3. The *eternal Concernments* of our Souls *hereafter*. All of them certainly, either jointly or severally, Things too great, too high, and too concerning, to be ventur'd upon the rotten Bottom of a *false* and a *deceiving Heart*.

We shall speak of each of them distinctly.

1st, First of all then, the *Honour of God* is intrusted with *the Heart*. So far as the Manifestation of God's Honour depends upon the Homage of his obedient Creature, so far it is at the Mercy of our Actions, which are at the Command of the *Heart*, as the Motion of the Wheels follows the Disposition of the *Spring*. God is never *disobeyed*, but he is also *dishonoured*. In every Act of Sin, *Dust and Ashes* flings itself in the Face of the Almighty, and defies him so far, that it puts him to the Exercise of his vindictive Justice) to prove his Sovereignty and Dominion over the bold Offender.

Now God is capable of being honoured or dishonoured by us in three several Respects.

1st, As he is our *Creator*; and is it not infinitely reasonable for *Clay* to comply with the Will of the *Potter*? for such frail Vessels as Men are, to be subject to their Almighty

Artificer? For did God make us, that we might spit in his Face, and give us a Being, that we might employ it to the Dishonour of him who gave it? While a Man sins, he seems to be his own Creator, and to own an absolute Independency, as to any superior productive Cause. For no Understanding, judging rationally, would imagine, that a Creature durst act against him, who first raised him into a Capacity of acting, and that even out of Nothing, and could crush him into Nothing again every Minute. So that the Honour, by which we vouch and own God for a *Creator*, is a Result of our Actions, and the Conduct of them is committed to the Heart.

2dly, God is capable of being honoured by us as a *Lord and Governour*. *If I am a Master* (says God) *where is my Honour?* But can the Rebellion of the Subject declare the Sovereignty of his Prince? And is not every Act of Sin a blowing of a Trumpet against Heaven, and a lifting up of a Standard against the Almighty? Is it not the Language of every Offence, *we will not have God reign over us?* Does it not trample upon his Laws, and puff at the Power, which should revenge the Violation of them? And on the contrary, is not the Piety and Obedience of our Lives a proclaiming of God to be our *King*, and a recognizing of him for our great *Master?*

For

For this is an obvious and easy Maxim of Reason, *that his Servants we are, to whom we obey.* Obedience is but a clearer Comment upon our *Allegiance*, Why does God call upon us *to let our Light shine before Men*, did not the *shining* of that by Reflexion cast a *Shine* and a *Lustre* upon his own *Glory*? When *Men see our Good Works*, they are apt *to glorify* and acknowledge the Supremacy and ruling Hand of our Lord and Master in Heaven.

Well it is, that 'tis not in the Power of the most rebellious Creature, by any Sin and Mis-behaviour of his, to take away the Power and Prerogative of God, tho' it may for the present be able to *eclipse*, *blur*, and so *obscure* it. For surely this is done, in a great measure, by every broad Violation of the divine Law, which seems to attempt to persuade the rest of the World, that God is not so great and so mighty a Potentate as he bears himself for; since the *Boldness* of an Offender for the most part speaks the Weakness of the Governor.

To advance the Clearness of which by Instance. Pray how did *David* own God in the Relation of a King, when by his two great Sins he caused the Enemies of God to blaspheme? How did the Sons of *Eli* own him in that respect, when by the Insolence and Impurity of their Behaviour, they caused all *Israel* to loath the Offerings of the Lord?

All these Actions were a deposing of God from his *Throne*, so far as his *Throne* was plac'd in the *Heart* and awful Esteem of his Creatures. In this respect therefore is the *Heart* entrusted with God's *Honour*.

3dly, The Honour of God also, considered as our *Saviour, and gracious Father*, is trusted to the Behaviour of the *Heart*. For does not every Sin defy, and every Act of Obedience honour God in this Capacity? Would any one take him for a Son, who lifts up *his Heel* against him, to whom he should *bend the Knee*? Or can any Man be thought to own God for his Saviour, while he treats him with all the Acts of Hatred and Hostility? By the Behaviour of Sinners towards God, one would think that they took him for an implacable Tyrant, and an Enemy, for one who hated and malign'd them, and consequently that the whole Tenor of their Life was but the acting of a continual Revenge upon him for it. Natural Ingenuity abhors the recompensing of a Friend with all the Indignities and Contempts, that exasperated Nature passes upon an Enemy. Every unworthy, sinful Deportment therefore tends to beget and foment unbeseeming Apprehensions of God in the Mind of his Creature. Now since the Actions are governed by the *Heart*, as the great Dictator and Commander in chief of all that a Man either does or desires; it follows, that the

Heart

Heart has that great *Trust* reposed in it, how far God shall receive the Glory due to him, as he bears these three grand Relations to us, of a *Creator*, a *Governor*, and a *Saviour*.

2dly, The *second Thing* a Man trusts his Heart with, is his Happiness in this World; and this is twofold. 1st, *Temporal*. 2dly, *Spiritual*.

1st, And first he trusts it with all his *temporal Comforts* and Felicities. It is a most known Truth, that most of the Miseries and Calamities which befall a Man in this Life, break in upon him thro' the Door of Sin; frequent Experience shewing us, how easily Men sin themselves into *Disgrace*, *Poverty*, *Sickness*, *Loss of Friends*, and the like; they are the direct Consequents of a Man's Personal Misdemeanors. *David's* Adultery and Murder made his Enemies scorn, and his Friends desert him, *Psal.* xxxviii. 11. It is said of them, *that they stood aloof off*; they flew from him as from a living, walking Contagion. Intemperance ends in Poverty, and a full Belly makes an empty Purse. Luxury enters upon and spoils the Soul thro' the Ruins of the Body, and the *Bed of Uncleanneſs* prepares for the *Bed of Sickness*.

But now in all these Instances of Sin, which maul the Sinner with these temporal Disasters, the *Heart* is the first moving Spring and Principle; they all flow from the Prevarications of this. It is this that is the Source and

the fruitful Womb of all the Mischiefs that render this Life miserable, were there no After-reckonings in another.

How cautious is every Man almost of trusting his Neighbour with his *Mind*, or with his *Estate*? because he knows how much such an one thereby gets the Command, and the dispose of his Happiness; for he fears lest he may by this means betray his Honour, and disgrace him, or undermine his Estate, and ruin him; not considering how much greater a Suspicion he ought to have of his own *Heart* and Temper, which may, thro' the unhappy Bent and Propensity of it, push him on upon those Courses, which shall irrecoverably dash him in all his outward Enjoyments; and then that shall sound forth his Infamy, and trumpet out his Disgrace louder than the Tongue of the most merciless Reviler can; that shall betray him into Captivity to some expensive Vice, which shall grind his Fortune to Poulder, and leave him as bare as the Oppression of a domestick Tyrant, or the Invasion of a foreign Enemy.

Such an one ventures into lewd Company, and perhaps is thereby surpris'd into the Dishonours of Intemperance, and so departs with a Wound upon his Reputation. Another is confident, and steps into the Occasion of Sin, which perhaps by degrees entangles, and at length draws him into the Paths of Vice and Uncleaness, and that sullies the
Clearness

Clearness of his Fame, and withal makes a Breach upon the Serenity and Content of his Mind, so that he is brought to taste but little even of these temporal Felicities.

Now, how comes this to pass? Why, all thro' the Treachery of his *Heart*, which persuaded him of those Strengths which he never really had, which told him what Command he had of himself under those Circumstances of Temptation, which yet upon Trial he was unable to contest with, and which would needs make him believe, that he might *touch Pitch and yet not be defiled*, venture upon the Occasions of Sin, and yet stand secure from the Sin itself. These fraudulent Dealings of the *Heart* are those Impostures, which plunge Men into infinite Calamities and Inconveniences, such as embitter the Enjoyment even of common Life itself.

2dly, There is yet another Part of a Man's Happiness in this World, which is *spiritual*, which his *Heart* is also entrusted with, and that is, the *Peace of his Conscience*; a Thing, the Enjoyment of which is so valuable, and the Loss so dreadful, that tho' it stands here reckon'd but for a Part of a Man's Felicity, yet it is of that Nature, that it may well pass for the whole; for what can a Man truly enjoy while he wants it? And what can he much feel the want of while he enjoys it? It is in effect a Man's whole entire Happiness; such a spreading universal Influence
has

has it upon all his Thoughts, Actions, and Affections. For while a Man carries his acquitting, absolving Sentence within him, and a Transcript of the Pardons of Heaven deposited in his own Breast, what Storm can shake, what Terror can amaze, what Calamities can confound him! It is he alone who can look *Death and Danger in the Face* with a rational Unconcernment; for he has that which enables him to look him, who is infinitely more terrible than all these together, even a just, an holy, and Sin-revenging *God, in the Face.*

On the other side, when the Glass of a Man's Conscience shall shew him a God frowning, a Law cursing, Wrath and Vengeance preparing, and all the Artillery of Heaven and Earth making ready against him, what can he think, say, or enjoy, in this Condition? even as much as *Cain* enjoyed, who lived a Vagabond, and a Terror to himself; or as *Belsazzar*, whose Joints loosed, and whose Knees smote together with Horror and Consternation. But now, what is this which puts the Scourge into the Hand of Conscience, thus to lash and torment a Man? Why what is it, but the Guilt of Sin, which Arms and envenoms it against the Sinner? And is not Sin the Product of the *Sinner's Heart*? Is not this the *Dunghill* where that *Snake* is bred, and which gives Warmth to the *Cockatrice's Egg*, till it be hatch'd and brought

brought forth to the Sinner's Confusion? It is the Heart which sows Dissention between a *Man* and his *Conscience*, by enticing and ensnaring him into those Sins, the Guilt of which lies grating and gnawing upon his Mind perpetually; so that he lives with Pain, and dies with Horror, passes his Days ill, and ends them worse. In every thing that a Man's Heart prompts him to, it casts the Dye, whether he shall *be happy or miserable* for ever after. An unwholsome Draught, or an unwholsome Morfel, may make a Man a pining, languishing Person all his Days. And it is the Treachery of his Appetite, which inveigles him into the Mischief, which cheats, and abuses, and by deceitful Overtures trapans him into a perpetual Calamity.

3dly, and lastly, The other great thing, which a Man entrusts *his Heart with*, is the *eternal Concernment of his Soul* hereafter. For as a Man's *Heart* guides him, so he *lives*, and as he has *lived in this World*, so he must *be rewarded in the other*; and the State a Man passes into there, is Eternal and Unchangeable; there is neither retreat from Misery, nor fall from Happiness. And if so, how vast an Acquisition is future *Glory*, and how invaluable a Loss goes along with *Damnation*! Better is it, that a Man had never been born, than that he should miscarry in that his grand and last Concern. But it is the

Behaviour of his Heart, which must decide whether he shall or no; for if his *Heart* deceives and seduces him into the fatal Ways of Sin, upon Promise of Pleasure, it is a Thousand to one but the Man holds on his Course with his Life, till those present *Pleasures* determine in everlasting *Pains*. How many are now in Hell, who have nothing to Charge their coming into that woful Place upon, but an *hard Heart*, a *voluptuous Heart*, a *vain seducing and deluding Heart*, which failed them in all the specious Shews and Promises it made them, which varnished over the Ways of Sin and Death, which spread the Paths of Destruction with Roses, and made them venture an Immortal Soul upon an Appearance, and build Eternity upon a Fallacy. This has been that, which has kindled the unquenchable Flames about their Ears, which has tied those Millstones, those Loads of Wrath about their Necks, which have sunk them into endless Destruction.

Keep thy Heart with all Diligence (says the Wise Man.) Why? Because (says he) *out of it are the Issues of Life*, Prov. iv. 23. It is that in which a Man's Life is bound up. It is the Portal of Heaven and Hell, and a Man passes to either of them through his own Breast. For what think we of Murders, Adulteries, Thefts, Blasphemies, and the like? Are not these the Sins, which have

filled the Mansions of the Damned, and slain so many Millions of Souls; and whence come they but from the Heart? *Matt. xv. 19.* This is the *Puteus Inexhaustus*, here are the Provisions made for the Place of Torment, here is laid in the Fuel for the *Everlasting Burnings*; *one bottomless Pit* emptying and discharging itself into the *other*.

And thus I have shewn these Things, which a Man entrusts his Heart with, namely, the *Honour of God*, his *Happiness in this World*, the *Peace of his Conscience*, and his *eternal Happiness* hereafter: Things, one would think, too great to be trusted with any one, since in all Trust there is something of *Venture*, and these Things are of too high a Value to be ventured any where, but where it is impossible a Man should be deceived. God only, who *made* the Soul, is fit to be *trusted* with it. For if a Man is deceived here, where shall he have Reparation? Or what can a Man *gain*, when he has once *lost himself*.

But however, if we should trust these great Things in such Hands as were liable to a *possibility* of failing, yet surely we should secure the next *Degree*, that at least there might be no *probability* of it; and that we would repose our Confidence in one, who was infinitely *unlikely* to deceive or put a Trick upon us, so that our Confidence might be *prudent* at least, though not *certain and infallible*.

infallible. But now we shall find the Heart far from being such a thing; but on the contrary, so unfit to be trusted, that it is Ten thousand to One, but it betrays its *Trust*: so that as the Folly of such a Trust has been seen in the *first Ingredient*, namely, the high and inestimable Worth of the thing committed to a *Trust*; so the same will appear yet more abundantly from the next, which is the *undue Qualifications* of the Party who is trusted: and the Heart of Man will be found to have eminently these Two ill Qualities utterly unfitted for any *Trust*.

1. That it is *Weak*, and so cannot make good a Trust. 2. That it is *Deceitful*, and so will not.

As for its Weakness, this is Twofold.

1st, In point of Apprehension, it cannot perceive and understand certainly, what is good.

2^{dly}, In point of Election it cannot chuse and embrace it.

1st, And first for the Weakness of the Heart in respect of its Inability to *apprehend and judge* what is good. This it is deplorably defective in. For though it must be confessed, that there are these common Notions concerning Good and Evil, writ in the Hearts of Men by the Finger of God and Nature; yet these are blurr'd, and much eclipsed by the Fall of Man from his Original Integrity: and if they were not impaired that

that way, yet they arrived not to their full natural Perfection, but as they are improved and heightened by virtuous Practices. Upon which account the Apostle ascribes not a discerning of Good and Evil to every one having the natural *Sense* of it, but to such only as have their *Senses exercised*, Heb. v. 14. Every Man has an innate Principle of Reason, but it is Use and Cultivation of Reason, that must enable it actually to do that, which Nature gives it only a remote Power of doing.

This being so, it is further evident, that all Men may, and do, neglect to improve those Notions naturally implanted in them, whereupon they can with no more Certainty trust to their Direction, than they can rely upon an illiterate Plowman to be instructed by him in Philosophy. The *Light within* is *Darkness* in many, and but as the Dusk and Twilight in all, and consequently its Directions are but imperfect and insufficient, and dangerous to be relied upon.

2dly, The *Heart of Man* labours under as great *Weakness* in Point of Election: it cannot *chuse*, what the *Judgment* has rightly pitch'd upon. For supposing that the *Understanding* has done its Part, and given the *Heart* a faithful Information of its Duty, yet how unable is *the Heart*, after all, actually to engage in the thing so clearly laid before it! It may indeed see the Beauty, the Lustre,
and

and the Excellency of an Action, but still it is so much a Slave to base inferior Desires, that it cannot practise in any Proportion to what it approves. *Video meliora proboq; ; deteriora sequor.* That excellent Description of a good Judgment enslaved to a vile Appetite, is an exact Account of the Movings of *Man's Heart* in most of its Choices.

It cannot look its fawning Affections in the Face, and deny them any thing : but like a Man captivated with the sottish Love of a Woman, he is ready to sacrifice his *Reason*, his *Interest* ; and all that he is worth, to her imperious Will. When the Affections come clamouring about the *Heart*, that presently yields, and is not able to stand out against their Assaults, to frown upon their Demands. and behave itself boldly and severely in the Behalf of Virtue and Reason. Most Men in the World who perish eternally, perish for prevaricating with themselves, and not living up to the *Judgment* and Resolves of their own Knowledge ; they miss of their Way to Heaven, not because they do not *know it*, but because they know it, and will not *chuse it*. The Heart is *as unstable as Water*, and therefore *it cannot excel*. It hardly bears up against its *Corruption* so far, as to dare to purpose what is good, but if it does, Inconstancy quickly melts down its strongest Purposes, and the next Temptation scatters its best Resolutions as the Sun chaces away the
the

the *Morning Clouds*, and drinks up the *early Dew*.

It is the just Shame and Blush of the Frailty of our Condition to consider, how hardly we come *to fix* upon Good, and then how quickly we are *unfix'd*; how weak we are to intend, and how much weaker to perform. Impotence and Change, like a *Spiritual Palsy*, have so seized all the Faculties of our Souls, that when we reach forth our Hand to Duty, and endeavour to apply the *Rule* to *Practice*, it trembles and shakes, and is utterly at a loss how to do any thing steadily and exactly, and reach the nice Measures of Christian Morality. The *Rule* serves only to upbraid the *Action*, which always comes short of it. *Since thou doest these things*, says God, *Ezek. xvi. 30. how weak is thy Heart!* how unable to resist a flattering Mischief, and a tempting Destruction! It resigns up itself upon every Summons of great *Desire*. it quits its Throne, lays aside its Scepter, forgets its Sovereignty, takes the *Bit* into its Mouth, and is willing to be *rid*.

And thus much for the first ill Quality unfitting the Heart of Man to be trusted, namely, its *Weakness*, and that both in *Apprehension*, that it cannot *understand*, and also in *Election*, that it cannot *chuse* and embrace what is good.

2. The other ill Quality rendring *the Heart* unfit to be trusted, is its *Deceitfulness*, which

does so abound in the Breasts of all Men, that it would pose the *acutest Head* to draw forth and discover, what is lodged in the *Heart*. For who can tell all the Windings and Turnings, all the Depths, the Hollownesses, and dark Corners of the Mind of Man! He who enters upon this Scrutiny, enters into a Labyrinth or a *Wilderness*, where he has no Guide but Chance or Industry to direct his Enquiries, or to put an End to his Search. It is a *Wilderness*, in which a Man may wander more than *Forty Years*; a *Wilderness*, thro' which few have passed into the *promised Land*. If we should endeavour to recount all the Cheats and Fallacies of it, no Arithmetick can number, or Logick resolve them, their Multitude is so vast, and their Contexture so intricate.

Yet to discover and give us some Acquaintance at least with the Treachery and Unfaithfulness of our Hearts, I shall endeavour to lay open and set before you some of those Tricks and Delusions, which may convince us how unlikely the *Heart* is to make good any *Trust* which we can repose in it, in relation to our Spiritual Affairs.

And these Delusions shall be reduced to these three sorts.

1. Such as relate to the *Commission of Sin*.
2. Such as relate to the *Performance of Duty*.

3. Such as relate to a Man's *Conversion* or *Change* of his *Spiritual Estate*.

And first for those which relate to a Man's committing of Sin; of this sort there are three.

1. First of all a Man's *Heart* will drill him on to sin, by persuading him that it is in his Power to give Bounds to himself, as to the Measure of his engaging in that Sin, according as he shall think fit. If his Conscience is affrighted, when a great and a foul Sin shall offer itself to his Consideration, *his Heart* will tell him, tho' the Commission of it be indeed dangerous, yet he may at least indulge himself in the Thought of it, act it upon the Scene of his Fancy, and so reap the fantastick Pleasure of it in Conceit and *Imagination*. And if it comes to be listened to in this its first crafty, and seemingly modest Proposal, it will advance a little further, and tell him that he may also please himself with the *Desires* of it; and so by letting his Desires work, his Corruption grows at length so enflamed, that the Man is troublesome and uneasy to himself, till it breaks out into actual Commission: and when he is wrought up to such an Eagerness and Impatience, his Heart will then enlarge his Commission, and tell him that it is no great matter if he ventures to commit the Sin he so much desires for once, since it is in his Power to retreat and give over when he pleases, and so is in

no Danger of being forced to continue in it, which alone proves damnable. But now being brought thus far, Sin has a greater Interest in his Desires than before, and easily persuades the Man to act it yet once more, and then again and again, till he is insensibly brought under the Power of his Sin, and held Captive in a sinful Course; from which he is not able by all the poor Remainders of his own Reason to redeem and disentangle himself; he has brought himself into the Snare which holds and commands him. So that if the free preventing Grace of God (which yet no Man can certainly promise to himself in such a Condition) does not interpose, and knock off his Bolts and Shackles, the Man must die a Prisoner and a Slave to his Sin, which will provide him but a sad Entertainment in the other World.

And now when a Man is thus disposed of into his Eternal State, with what Sadness must he needs reflect upon the cursed Artifices of his deluding Heart? He little imagined that his Destruction could have entred upon him thro' the narrow Passage of sinful *Thoughts* and *Desires*. But had he consider'd the spreading, insinuating, and encroaching Nature of Sin, how that by every Step it makes into the Soul it gets a new Degree of Possession, and thereby a proportionable Power; had he considered also how few Men are destroyed at once, but by gradual Under-

Underminings, and that the greatest Mischiefs find it necessary to use Art and Fallacy to make their Approach indiscernible by the Smallness of their Beginnings; I say, had he considered all these Things by an early Caution (which his false Heart would be sure never to prompt him to) he might have prevented his fatal Doom, and avoided the Blow by suspecting the Hand that designed it.

2dly, The Heart of Man will betray him into Sin by drawing him into the *Occasions of it*. Certain it is, that every thing may be the Occasion of a Sin to Man, if it be abused; but some Things have a more direct and natural Connection with Sin than others, so that a Man is under a greater Danger of being surprized when he falls under such Circumstances, than under others. For surely some Companies, and some Ways of Living are such, that upon the Frailty of corrupt Nature a Man may as well expect to come dry out of a River, as to come clear and unpolluted out of them. Let a Man accustom himself to converse with the Intemperate, and Profane, and the Lascivious, and something of the Venom and Contagion of these Sins will rub itself upon him do what he can. The very Breath of infected and polluted Persons is itself infectious.

But there is one notable Way above the rest, by which the Hearts of most Men sup-

plant them, and that is in drawing them on to something *unlawful*, by causing them to take their utmost Scope and Liberty in Things *lawful*. The Difference between lawful and unlawful is often very nice, and it is hard to cut the Hair in assigning the precise Limits of each of them.

But surely it cannot be safe for any Man still to walk upon a Precipice, to stand upon an indivisible Point, and to be always upon the very Border of Destruction. It is true indeed, that he who stands upon the very Brink of the Sea, stands as really upon the Land, as he who is many Miles off, but yet he is not like to stand there so long, as the other. There are many Companies, Sports, and Recreations, (I shall not mention Particulars) no doubt in themselves very lawful; but yet they may chance to prove the Bane of the bold User of them. For alas! the Heart is unable to bear them without warping. Sin is not in the *House*, but it lies at the *Door*; and it is hard for so near a Neighbourhood not to occasion a Visit. There are some Diversions now-a-days much in request to gratify the Palate, the eating of which it is possible a Man may time and regulate so, that they shall do him no hurt, but it is certain that they can never *do him any good*. Though in the Diet of the Soul I am afraid the Observation is much stricter, and that it is hard to assign any thing, which should
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only *not do us good*, without also doing us some *hurt*.

And therefore let no Man trust his glozing Heart, when it tells him what hurt is there in such and such Pleasures, such and such Recreations? For this very Discourse of his Heart is a shrewd Sign, that they are like to prove hurtful and pernicious to him. And I shall venture to state and lay down this for a Rule; that be an Action or Recreation ever so lawful in itself, yet if a Man engages in it merely upon a Design of *Pleasure* (as I believe most do) it is Ten to One but it becomes a Snare to that Person, and that he comes off from it with a Wound upon his Conscience, whether he is always sensible of it or no. Let a Man's Heart say what it will, I am sure the Spirit of God in these Cases recommends to every pious Person Caution, Diffidence, and Suspicion. It bids him secure himself by keeping out of Harms way. He that escapes a *Danger is Fortunate*, but he that comes not *into it is Wise*.

3dly, The Heart of Man will betray him into Sin, by lessening and extenuating it in his Esteem: Than which fallacious way of dealing, there is nothing more usual to the Corruption of Man's Nature. In the Judgment of which, great Sins shall pass for little Sins, and little Sins for no Sins at all. For *Moats* may enter, where *Beams* cannot: and small Offences find Admittance, where great

and clamorous Crimes *fright* the Soul to a *standing upon its Guard*, to prevent the Invasion.

Now the Heart, if it does not find *Sins small*, has this notable Faculty, that it can make them so: For it has many Arts to take off from, and to diminish the Guilt of them. As either by calling them *Infirmities*, such as creep upon Men by daily and unavoidable Surprize, and such as Human Weakness cannot possibly protect itself against. When the Truth is, the Heart is willing to excuse itself from performing Duty, and from resisting Sin, by representing *Difficulties* for *Impossibilities*, and accounting many things difficult, because it never so much as went about them; whereas a vigorous Endeavour would remove not only the supposed Impossibility, but even the Difficulty also of many Actions and Duties, which mere Laziness has represented to the Mind as impracticable.

Certain it is, that the Blow given by *Original Sin* to Man's Nature, has left a great Weakness upon it, much disabling it as to the Prosecution of what is good; but yet many Impotencies, or rather Averseness to Good, are charged upon a natural Account, which indeed are the Effects only of habitual Sins, Sins that by frequent Practice have got such firm hold of the Will, that it can very hardly advance itself into any Action
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of Duty. Some have accustomed themselves to *swear* so often, that they cannot forbear it upon every light Occasion. Some have lived *intemperately so long*, that they cannot refrain from their Whore and their Cups; and then if either their Conscience checks them, or others reprove them, presently their Answer is, *God forgive them*, it is their *Infirmity*, they cannot help it.

But in this they are wretchedly deceived; for it is not Infirmity, but Custom, Custom took up, and continued by great Presumption and Audaciousness in Sin, inducing them to trample upon a clear Command, for the gratifying of a Lust, or a base Desire.

Temptation also is another Topick, from which the Heart will draw a plausible Argument for the Extenuation of Sin. Men will confess that they sin, but how can they forbear (say they) when the Devil pushes them on headlong into the Commission of what is Evil? And the Devil being so much stronger than they, how can such weak Creatures resist so mighty an Adversary? but in this also the Heart plays the Sophister and shews itself like the Devil, while it pleads against him: for God himself assures us that the *Devil may be resisted*, and that so far as *to be put to flight*: and besides this, the Freedom of Man's Will is a Castle, that he cannot storm a Fort that he cannot take. If indeed it will surrender itself upon vain and treacherous

treacherous Proposals, its Destruction is from itself, and it is deceived, but not forced into Sin.

Now so long as a Man's Heart can possess him with an Opinion of the smallness of any Sin, it will certainly have these Two most pernicious Effects upon him.

1st, Antecedently, he will very easily be induced to commit it; nor will he think the eternal Happiness of his Soul concerned to *watch* against it; for he cannot imagine but that it will be as soon pardoned as committed, or that it can make any great Breach between God and him. His Conscience he finds not much startled or alarm'd at it, and so he concludes that it must needs be fair *Weather without Doors*, because he finds it *so within*.

2^{dly}, The other malignant Effect it will have upon a Man consequently to sin, is, that he will scarce *repent* of it, scarce think it worthy of a *Tear*. By which Means, he is actually under the Wrath of God, which abides upon every Man during his Impenitence. The Consequence of which to him, who has a spiritual Sense of Things, must needs be very dreadful. For every Sin unrepented of may provoke God by withdrawing his Grace to lay the Sinner open to the Commission of grosser; which how far they may waste his Conscience, and where they may

may end, he knows not, but has Cause at the thought of it to tremble.

It is incredible to consider what Ground Sin gets of the Soul, by the Heart's extenuating and undervaluing of it, and that in the very least and most inconsiderable Instance. for by this Means it is easily let into the Soul, and seldom thrown out. No Caution is applied beforehand, nor Repentance after. And surely it cannot but be dangerous to leave the World with any one Sin unrepented of.

And thus much for that first Sort of Fallacies, which the Heart of Man is apt to put upon him, namely, such as relate to the *Commission of Sin*. The

2d, Sort is of those that relate to the *Performance of Duty*; of which Kind are these Two.

1st, A Man's Heart will persuade him that he has performed a Duty, when perhaps it is only some *Circumstance of it*, that has been performed by him. *Prayer* is one of the prime and most Sovereign Duties of a Christian; and many there are, whose Consciences will by no means suffer them to omit it. But how few are there who perform it spiritually, and according to the exact Measures of Christian Piety! For some do it *to be seen of Men*, and to approve themselves to the Eye of the World, that they are not altogether Heathens, and destitute
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of all Sense of Religion. Some use to pray, as the *Athenian* Orators made Harangues before the People for Applause and Ostentation of Parts, stiling a readiness of Speech, and a great flow of Words, *the Inspirations of the Spirit*.

The corrupt Heart of Man naturally rests in the *Opus Operatum* of every Duty ; and the Conscience having lost much of its first Tenderness and Sagacity, is willing to take up with the Out-side and Superficies of Things ; to feed upon Husks, and to be contented with the mere Shew and Pageantry of Duty. There is no doubt, but the *Pharisee*, who made that boasting Prayer, or rather *Bravado* before God, *Luke xviii. 14.* went home abundantly *satisfied* in himself, though not at all *justified* before the *Seer of Hearts*. And it is as little to be doubted, but that the rest of his Brethren, who did their Alms in the Concourse of the Multitude, and proclaimed their *Charity with Trumpets*, were full of an Opinion of their own Piety ; though all that they gave was but a Sacrifice to their own Pride, and a slavish Service to the Designs and Humours of an insatiable Ambition ; yet still their flattering Hearts echoed back to them all those Acclamations of the ignorant, deceived Rabble, and questionless told them, that they were the most pious, liberal, and generous Persons in the World.

The like Instances may be given in the Fastings and Mortifications used by many People; which, no question, rightly managed, are huge Helps to Piety, great weakeners of Sin, and furtherances to a Man in his Christian Course. But every Man who is driven from his Meat by a *Proclamation*, does not therefore keep a *Fast* in the sight of God, whatsoever his foolish *Heart* may persuade him. Every Man who wears *Sackcloth*, and uses himself coarsely, does not therefore perform any one true Act of *Mortification* upon his Sin. The Man catches at the Shadow, but misses of the Substance of the Duty: His Heart misreckons him; and therefore, when he comes to rectify his Account by the Measure God takes of Things, he finds that in all his Fastings, and corporal Austerities, he has done indeed a great deal of *Work*, but little *Duty*.

2dly, A Man's Heart will make him presume to sin with greater Confidence, upon the Account of *Duty performed*. I have heard of some, who after they had discharged their Consciences in Confession, used to rush with so much quicker an Appetite into Sin; as if former Scores being cleared, they were now let loose to sin upon a fresh Account: and Experience shews, that many take heart to sin, after they have performed some strict Duty, thinking that that has set them so much *before-hand* with Heaven, that they
 may

may well be born with, if they make some little Excursions in the Indulgence of their sinful and voluptuous Appetites. If they have been for any Time in the School of Virtue, tied up under its severe Disciplines, they think they may well claim some Time for *Play*, and then *Vice* shall be their *Recreation*.

This is the corrupt, perverse Reasoning of most Hearts; this they insist upon as a satisfactory Argument to themselves, tho' infinitely sottish and contradictory to the very Nature and Design of Religion. For as the Apostle most justly and rationally upbraids the *Galatians* in that significant Reproof of them, *Gal. iii. 3. What ! having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the Flesh ? Can Piety fit a Man for that which crosses and destroys Piety ? Can any Man make this an Argument why he should be vicious, because he has been virtuous ? or loose and voluptuous, because he has been some Time strict and abstemious ?* Yet this is the brutish Discourse of most Mens Minds; who think it all the reason in the World, that they should relax and unbend, after they have for some Time abridged themselves by the severe Course of Religion.

Tho' the Truth is, upon a right and due Estimation of Things, such Persons never performed any one truly pious and religious Action, who had such Principles and Persuasions

suasions habitually resting upon their Hearts, but were utterly void of the very Notion, much more of *the Power of Godliness*. This is evident; for he who performs a Duty from a Principle of true Piety, is so far from being weary of going on in the same Course, that he finds his Desires thereby quickened, and his Strength encreased, for a more vigorous Prosecution of it; and no Man changes his Course, and passes into contrary Practices, but because he finds in himself a Loathing and a Dislike of his former: than which there is not a more certain and infallible Sign of a false, rotten, hypocritical Heart, an Heart abhorred and detested by God: for if we loath God's Commands, we may be sure that God as much loaths our Performances, as being the forced Effects of Compulsion, not the natural, genuine, and free Emanations of the Will. He therefore, who thinks the Merit of any pious Action performed by him may compound for a future Licentiousness, abuses himself and his Religion; for he makes a Liberty to sin the Reward of Piety, than which there cannot be a greater and a more pestilent Delusion. And thus much for the Fallacies of the Heart relating to the Performance of Duty.

3. The third sort relate to a Man's *Conversion*, and the Change of his Spiritual Estate; of which I shall mention two.

1. *A Man's Heart* will persuade him that he is converted from a State of Sin, when perhaps he is only converted from *one Sin to another*; and that he has changed his Heart, when he has only changed *his Vice*. This is another of its Fallacies, and that none of the least fatal and pernicious. A Man has perhaps for a long Time took the full Swing of his voluptuous Humour, wallowed in all the Pleasures of Sensuality, but at last, either by Age or Design, or by some cross Accident turning him out of his old Way, he comes to alter his Course, and to pursue *Riches* as insatiably as formerly he did his *Pleasures*; so that from a *sensual Epicure* he is become a *covetous Miser*; a worthy Change and Conversion indeed. But as a River cannot be said to be dried up, because it alters its Channel, so neither is a Man's Corruption extinguish'd, tho' it ceases to vent itself in one kind of Vice, so long as it runs with as full and as impetuous a Course in another.

Suppose amongst the *Jews* a Man had passed from the Society of riotous and debauched Livers; from the Company of *Publicans and Sinners*, to the Strictness and *Profession of the Pharisees*, this Man indeed might have been termed a *new Sinner*, but not a *new Creature*; he had changed his Intemperance or his Extortion for the more refined Sins of Vain-glory and Hypocrisy; he had changed
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a dirty Path for one more cleanly, but still for one in the same Road. One Man perhaps goes to a Town or a City through the Fields, another thro' the Highway, yet both of them intend and arrive at the same Place, and meet and shake Hands at the same Market. In like manner a Man may pass as surely to Hell by a Sin of less Noise and Infamy, as by one more flaming and notorious. And therefore he that changes only from one Sin to another, is but the Devil's *Convert*; and the whole Business of such a *Conversion*, is but a Man's altering of the Methods of his Ruin, and the casting of his Damnation into another Model.

2. A Man's Heart will persuade him, that a *Cessation from Sin* is a plenary *Conquest* and *Mortification of Sin*. But a *King* is a *King* even while he is *asleep*, as well as when he is *awake*, and is possessed of a Regal Power even then when he does not exercise it. So Sin may truly *reign* where it does not actually *rage*, and pour itself forth in continual gross Eruptions.

There are Intervals of Operation, Vicissitudes of Rest and Motion, in all finite Agents whatsoever; and therefore it is not to be expected; but that the Sinner may have some Relaxation from the Drudgery of his Sin, and not be put every Minute to *obey the Flesh in the Lusts thereof*.

Nay, there may be a very long Forbearance; and yet as there may be a *Truce* with an Enemy, with whom there is no *Peace*; so no Man can conclude his Corruption *vanquished*, because for the present it is *quiet*. For such a Quietness there may be upon several Accounts. As partly mere Lassitude and Weariness; for what Epicure can be always plying his Palate? what Drunkard always pouring in? Nature is not sufficient for the Commands of Sin without some Respite and breathing Time. Partly also may Sin be quiet out of Design; for Sin must still bait its Hook with *Pleasure*, and Pleasure consists in the Interchanges of *Abstinence* with *Enjoyment*, without which it would quickly pass into Loathing and Satiety. And the Devil knows that these Interposals of Forbearance do but whet the Appetite to a greater Keeness of Desire, when the Object shall come again before it.

How miserably then does that Man's Heart deceive him, when it tells him that his Sin lies wholly prostrate and dead, when it only lies still, and stirs not for some Time? But alas! it is not *dead*, but *sleepeth*; for when the Soul is hereby made so confident as to quit its Guard, Sin will quickly step forth and take Advantage to act a sorer and a sharper Mischief upon it than ever.

And thus I have given an Account of some of those Deceits and Fallacies which the
Heart

Heart of Man is apt to circumvent him by; and God knows that it is but some of many. For infinite are the Impostures that lie couched in the Depths and Recesses of this hollow and fallacious Thing. So that all that I have said is but a Paraphrase, and that a very imperfect one, upon that full Text of the Prophet *Jeremy* xvii. 9. *That the Heart of Man is deceitful above all Things, and desperately wicked, who can know it?* It is a Depth not to be fathomed, and a Mystery never thoroughly to be understood. And being so, I suppose it appears by this time how unavoidable that Consequence and Deduction is made by *Solomon* here in the Text, *that whosoever trusts it, is inexcusably a Fool.* For what Principles of ordinary Prudence can warrant a Man to trust a *notorious Cheat*, and that also such an one as he himself has been cheated and deceived by? There is no Man whose Experience does not tell him to his Face that his *Heart* has deceived him; and no wise Man will be *deceived so much as twice by the same Person.*

Now the Imputation of being a *Fool*, is a Thing which Mankind of all others is the most impatient of, it being a Blot upon the prime and specifick Perfection of human Nature, which is *Reason*, a Perfection which both governs and adorns all the rest. For so far as a Man is a *Fool*, he is defective in that very Faculty which discriminates him from

a *Brute*. Upon which Account, one would think, that this very Charge of *Folly* should make Men cautious how they listen to the treacherous Proposals coming out of their own Bosom, lest they perish with a Load of Dishonour added to that of their Destruction. For if it is imaginable that there can be any Misery greater than Damnation, it is this, to *be damn'd for being a Fool*.

But this needs not be our Lot, if we can but prevail with ourselves to take that Conduct, which God has provided us for our Passage to our eternal State; a Conduct which can neither impose upon us, nor be imposed upon itself, even the holy and eternal Spirit of God, the great *Legacy* which our *dying Saviour* left to his Church, whose glorious Office and Business it is *to lead* such as will be led by him, *into all Truth*.

To whom therefore, with the Father and the Son, be ascrib'd, as is most due, all Praise, Might, Majesty, and Dominion, both now and for evermore. Amen.

I JOHN iii. 3.

Every Man that hath this Hope, purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

THE Apostle in this Chapter endeavours to comfort the Saints from a Consideration of the transcendent Greatness of God's Love, which appeared in those excellent Privileges that accrued to them from it. The first of which the Saints enjoy even in this Life, namely, to *be the Sons of God*, the adopted Children of the Almighty, to be admitted into the nearest and dearest Relation to the great Creator and Lord of Heaven and Earth. *Behold what manner of Love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the Sons of God!* The second great Privilege is to be enjoyed by the Saints in the Life to come, and that is no less than a *Likeness to Christ himself* in Glory; a Participation of those grand, sublime Prerogatives that Christ is endowed withal. *We know*

that when he shall appear we shall be like him in Glory, v. 2. Now because this great Enjoyment was as yet future, and so visible but at a distance, and consequently not so pregnant and bright an Argument of Comfort, he tells them, that the Saints could view it as present in the Glass of their Hopes, by which they could draw from it *a real Comfort, with an actual Fruition.*

It is indeed the Nature of earthly Comforts to afford more Delight in their Hopes than in their Enjoyment. But it is much otherwise in heavenly Things, which are of that solid and substantial Perfection, as always to *satisfy*, yet never to *satiate*; and therefore the Delight that springs from the Fruition of those is still fresh and verdant; nay, we may add this yet farther, that the very *Expectation* of heavenly Things, if rational and well grounded, affords more Comfort than the *Possession and Enjoyment* of the greatest earthly Contents whatsoever.

The Apostle having thus told them of their Hope, and what a real Hold it took of the Things hoped for; that he might prevent Mistake, and dash Presumption, tells them also, that an assured Hope of *future Glory* did not at all lead Men to *present Security*, but was so far from ministering to Sloth, that it did rather quicken and excite them to Duty; so that *he that has this Hope in him, purifieth himself*; he does not lie still, and acquiesce

acquiesce in this, that he shall be happy and glorious in the *World to come*, and therefore in the mean time forgets to be *virtuous in this*; but it raises him to a Pursuit of a more than ordinary Strain of Duty and Perfection; *he purifies himself, even as Christ is pure*; this is his Hope, this is his Design; he expects to be like Christ in the Brightness of his Glory, and therefore he exerts his utmost Diligence to resemble him in the *Purity of his Life* too.

Now before we proceed any further, there are two Things that offer themselves in the very Entrance of the Words, and require some Resolution. As first,

1. Is it possible for any Man to *purify himself*? Is it not the *Spirit of God* that must work in us *both to will and to do*? For are we not naturally dead in Trespasses and Sins? And who can bring a clean Thing out of an unclean? How then can so great a Work be ascribed to us?

To this I answer, That we must distinguish of *a twofold Work* of Purification.

1. The first is, the infusing of the Habit of Purity or Holiness into the Soul, which is done in Regeneration or Conversion; and in this respect no Man living can be said to purify himself. For in this he is only *passive, and merely recipient* of that Grace, that the Spirit of God, the sole Agent, infuses into him; antecedently to which we are said to

be dead in *Trespases and Sins*, and consequently in this Condition can by no means contribute to this Work, so as to *purify ourselves*.

2. The other Work of *Purification*, is the exercising of that Habit, or Grace of Purity, which a Man received in *Conversion*; by the acting or exercising of which Grace he grows actually more pure and holy. And in this respect a Man may be said in some Sense to purify himself, yet not so as if he were either the *sole* or the *prime* Agent in this Work; for God is the principal Agent, who first moves us, and then we *act and move*, and are said to be *Co-workers with God*; and so are these Words to be understood. God, without any Help or Procurement of our own, first gave us a Talent, which afterwards we improve, yet *not that entirely* by our own Strength, but by his Assistance. In short, that which has been said in Explication of this Thing, amounts to no more than that known and true Saying, *That God who made, and since converted, that is, new made us, without ourselves, will not yet save us without ourselves*. And thus much for the first Query.

2. But, *2dly*, Admitting that a Man may purify himself in the Sense mentioned, yet can he do it to that degree as to equal the *Purity of Christ himself?* to *purify himself even as he is pure?* of whom it is expressly said, that he is *fairer*, that is, holier and purer than the *Sons of Men*, and that the Spirit has

anointed him with the Oil of Gladness, that is, with all divine Graces, above his Fellows.

To this also I answer, That this Term, *even as*, denotes here only a *Similitude of Kind*, not an *Equality of Degree*; that is, he that hopes for Glory, gets his Heart purified with the same Kind of Holiness that is in Christ, tho' he neither does nor can reach it in the same *Measure* of Perfection; he gets the same Meekness, the same Spiritual-mindedness and Love to the divine Precepts, that is, the same *for Kind*; for as much as there is no Perfection in Christ's Humanity, but the very same *for Kind* is also to be found in his Members, tho' we confess in a much *lower degree*; as the same kind of Blood that runs in the *Head*, runs also in the *Hand*, and in the *Foot*, tho' as it is in the Head, it is attended and heighten'd with quicker and finer Spirits, than as it is diffused into the inferior Members. But yet further, tho' we should grant that he that has this Hope in him pursues not only after the same *Kind*, but also after the same *Degree* of Purity that is in Christ, yet it follows not hence that he ever attains to the same; for we must distinguish of Holiness as it is absolutely *perfect in the Pattern*, and as it is *imperfect in our Imitation*.

These Things being thus cleared off, I cannot perceive any thing more of Difficulty in
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the Words; the Prosecution of which shall lie in the Discussion of these *two Things*.

1. To shew what is implied and included in a Man's *purifying of himself*, here spoken of in the Text.

2. To shew how the *Hopes of Heaven* come to have such an *Influence* upon the effecting of this Work.

And first for the first of these. *To purify* is a Term of Alteration, and imports the removal of the Filth or Pollution of any thing, by introducing the contrary Qualities of Purity or Cleanness. Now that which a Man is to remove, and to purify himself from, is Sin, in which there are two Things to be carried off by a thorough Purification.

1. The *Power of Sin*. 2. The *Guilt of Sin*.

As for the first, the purifying of ourselves from the *Power of Sin*, I shall shew,

1. Wherein it consists.

2. By what Means it is to be effected.

It consists of these three Things.

1. *A most serious and hearty bewailing of all the past Acts of Sin*, by a continually renewed Repentance. Every Day, every Hour, will afford fresh Matter for a penitential Sorrow; for Sin will still increase and multiply; so that Christ has taught us a daily Prayer for the *Forgiveness of Sins*; and the very Nature of the Thing will teach us to mingle Prayer with Humiliation; since to pray God to forgive

give that for which we are not humbled, is but farther to provoke him, and to procure a Penalty instead of a Pardon. We are told that *the righteous Man falls seven times a day*, and I am sure if he falls by so often sinning, he cannot rise but by as often repenting.

Some are apt to deceive themselves, and to think that *once repenting* is sufficient for all their Sins; so that when this is done, they think themselves beforehand with God for all the Sins that they shall commit for the future; but such must know, that Repentance is still to follow Sin; and he that does not *repent continually*, never repented *so much as once truly*. What needed the Prophet *Jeremy* to have wished his *Head a Fountain*, in order to his *weeping for Sin*, did not that require such a *Stream*, as was to follow without Intermision? *A Fountain of Sin* may well require a *Fountain of Sorrow*. For Repentance cannot be effectual, but as it bears some *Proportion* to Sin; and unless one be as continual as the other, there is no *Proportion between them*.

It is an excellent Thing so to manage our spiritual Accounts, as not to let our Debts run on too far. That Soul that is careful to make Scores even between God and itself by a daily fresh Repentance, has a mighty Advantage over its Corruption, and will by degrees weary it out; the very Thought of
a sub-

a subsequent *Humiliation* is enough to embitter and discommend the *sweetest Offers* of Sin.

Repentance has a *purifying Power*, and every *Tear* is of a cleansing *Virtue*; but these penitential *Clouds* must be still kept *dropping*, one *Shower* will not suffice; for Repentance is not one *single Action*, but a *Course*. We may here compare the *Soul* to a *Linnen Cloth*, it must be first wash'd to take off its native *Hue* and *Colour*, and to make it *white*, and afterwards it must be ever and anon washed to preserve and to *keep it white*. In like manner the *Soul* must be cleansed first from a *State of Sin* by a converting Repentance, and so made pure, and afterwards by a daily Repentance it must be purged from those *actual Stains* that it contracts, and so be kept pure. It is an *Enjoyment*, and a *Privilege* reserved for *Heaven*, *not to need Repentance*; and the reason of this is, because the *Cause* of it will then be taken away. But here this *Pitch of Perfection* is not to be hoped for. We cannot expect that *God* should totally wipe these *Tears from our Eyes*, till he has taken all *Sin out of our Hearts*. Till it be our *Power* and *Privilege* not to sin, it is still our *Duty* to repent.

3dly, The purifying ourselves from the *Power of Sin* consists in a *vigilant Prevention* of the *Acts of Sin* for the future. If we would keep our *Garment* clean, it is not sufficient to wash it only, unless we have also a *continual*

nual Care to keep it up from drailing in the Dirt. After the Use of healing Physick, by which we are freed from our Distemper for the *present*, we must also use *preventing Physick* to secure it from the Returns of it *hereafter*. Repentance *bewails* those Sins that a Man has committed, and *bewares* of those which as yet he has not; it has a double Aspect, looking upon Things past with a *weeping Eye*, and upon the future with a *watchful*. I know the bare suppressing of Sin from breaking out into Act, is not able to mortify or extinguish *the Power*; yet in this Sense, at least, it may be said to weaken it, that it hinders it from growing *stronger*. For a Restraint of ourselves from the committing of Sin, bereaves the Power of Sin of that Strength that it would certainly have acquired by those Commissions. Sin indeed, while it lies quiet, *still is Sin*, but when it rages in outward Actions, it is more sinful. While a *Beast is kept in*, and shut up, he still retains his *wild Nature*, but when he breaks out and gets loose, his Wildness is much more hurtful and outrageous.

Now for the keeping of Sin from an actual breaking out, a Man should observe what Objects and Occasions are apt to draw it forth, and accordingly avoid them. When there are some Impressions of Holiness made upon the Heart, if we yet venture it amongst the Allurements of enticing Objects, those
will

will quickly again deface them. As when we have stamp'd a Piece of Wax with the Print of a Seal, if we put the Wax to the Fire again, that will presently melt out the Impression.

He that would keep the Power of Sin from running out into *Act*, must restrain it from conversing *with the Object*. For when that has once cast the *Bait* before the Heart, so that the Heart begins to look upon it, and by degrees to delight in it, and to feed its Imagination with Pleasure, then let a Man beware, for the Tempter is then hammering and framing out a sinful Action, Sin is *then conceiving*; and if we do not fright it by Humiliation, so far as to make it prove abortive, it will certainly *bring forth*; and we know that when the Heart has brought forth Sin, Sin will be sure to bring *forth Death*.

In vain therefore is any Endeavour to *purify the Heart*, unless *we watch*. A Christian should be always in a Posture of Caution. If the former Part of our Life has been stained, let us endeavour to keep that, at least, that is to come, pure and unpolluted. And then, tho' Abstinence from Sin cannot of itself take away the *Power* of it, yet it will put the Heart in a good Preparedness *for Grace to take it away*. On the contrary, every new actual Transgression exceedingly heightens our Account. For this is most certainly true,
that

that whatsoever adds to the *Guilt of Sin*, increases also the *Power*.

The *purifying ourselves* from the *Power of Sin*, consists in a continual *mortifying* and weakening the very *Root and Principle* of inherent *Corruption*. The *Power of Sin* is properly the *Root*, and the actual *Commission of it* are the *Branches*; and our *purifying Work* cannot be perfect, unless as we *lop off the Branches*, so we also *strike at the Root*. There is a *Principle of Sin* conveyed to us from our very *Being*, and it continues with us as long as our *Being*, that is, in this *State of Mortality*. And there is no *Man living* but has wrapt up in his *Nature* the *Seeds of all Impurity*; so that in this respect we are said to have *a Body of Sin*, Rom. vi. 6. *Sin* is not only a *Scar*, or a *Sore*, cleaving to one *Part or Member*, but it has incorporated itself into the whole *Man*. In respect of which also it is said, *How can he be clean that is born of a Woman?* Job xxv. 4. A *Man* draws so much *Filth* from his very *Conception and Nativity*, that it is now made almost as *natural and essential* to him to *be a Sinner* as to *be a Man*.

Now the chief *Work of Purification* lies in the *disabling and mortifying* this *sinful Faculty*. The *Power of Godliness* must be brought into the room of the *Power of Sin*. A *Man* must place all his *Endeavours* for the *battering down of this Strong-hold*. A *Man* must

be perpetually striving as for his Life, and for Eternity, to get the Conquest over his inbred Enemy. All Ways and Courses must be taken to pluck out this *Core*, or the Wound cannot be cured. All Endeavours to purify ourselves from actual Sins, unless we also work out the Principle of Sin, is only to wash and scower the Outside of the Vessel, while the Inside is full of all kind of Filth and Noisomness. As long as this remains in us it will be *fighting*, and if it be not mortified it will be *victorious*. It is continual and restless in all its Workings, like the troubled Sea, continually *casting forth Mire and Dirt*. Every Day it casts new Defilements upon the Soul, fresh Pollutions upon the Conscience. Justly therefore are we to direct our purifying Work against this, for as much as this is the Cause, and (as it were) the Parent of all those actual Abominations that swarm in our Lives.

Having thus shewn the Particulars of which this Work of *purifying ourselves* from the *Power of Sin* does consist, I come now to the next Thing, which is, to shew the *Means* by which it is to be effected; three I shall mention, as having a most sovereign Force and Influence for the compassing of this great Work.

1. The first is, with all possible Might and Speed to oppose the very first *Rising and Movings of the Heart to Sin*; for these are the
Buds

Buds that produce that bitter *Fruit*; and if Sin be not nipt in the very Bud, it is not imaginable how quickly it will shoot forth. There be sudden Sallies out of inherent Corruption in these first Motions, which, tho' at first they are not so easily *prevented*, yet may be easily *suppressed*; and these may be working in the Heart, when there is no Noise of any outward Enormity in the Actions. The Fire may *burn strongly* and vehemently, tho' it *does not flame*. The Bees may be at work, and very busy *within*, tho' we see none of them *fly abroad*.

Now these Sins, tho' they may seem small in themselves, yet are exceedingly pernicious in their Effects. These little *Foxes destroy the Grapes* as much or more than the greater, and therefore are to be diligently sought out, hunted and kill'd by us, if we would keep our Hearts fruitful. We should deal with these first Streamings out of Sin, as the Psalmist would have the People of God deal with the *Brats of Babylon*; *happy shall he be who taketh and dasheth those little Ones against the Stones*. And without doubt most happy and successful will that Man prove in his spiritual Warfare, who puts on no Bowels of Pity even to his *Infant Corruptions*, but slays the small as well as the great; and so not only conquers his Enemies by opposing their *present Force*, but also by extinguishing their *future Race*. The *smallest*

Children, if they live, will be *grown Men*; and the first Motions of Sin, if they are let alone, will spread into great, open, and audacious *Presumptions*.

But it a Man is always upon his Guard, and (as if were) stands *perdiem at his Heart*, to spy when Sin begins to peep out in these first Inclinations, and then with much Force and Courage beats them back again; the very *Power of Sin* will by Degrees languish: for as frequent working improves the Power, so a long Disuse and Intermision of working will insensibly *weaken it*. The first Motions of Sin lie nearest to the Faculty itself; whereupon he who vigorously fights against these, must by Consequence also wound that; as he that strikes that Part that is next to the Root, by the same Blow weakens also the Root itself.

As often therefore as a Man finds his Corruption renewing its Assaults, let him set upon it with a renewed Opposition. As often as that stirs, let him strike, at no Hand suffering it to get Ground of him; for every Motion of it not resisted gives it an Advance. And we know that after it has made some Progress, it is then harder to be subdued than at the first repulsed. When an Enemy is but rising, it is easy to knock him to the Ground again, but when he is up, and stands upon his Legs, he is not then so easily thrown down. It is less difficult to hinder and prevent,

vent, than to stop and restrain the Course of Sin.

2dly, A second Way to purify ourselves from the Power of Sin, is to be frequent in *severe mortifying Duties*, such as *Watchings* and *Fastings*, the Use of which directly tends to weaken the very Vitals of our Corruption. For they are most properly contrary to *the Flesh*; and whatsoever opposes that, proportionably weakens Sin. Yet still I recommend not these Practices as if they were any ways meritorious, or of themselves able to subdue Sin, but only as *spiritual Instruments* which God sanctifies, and the Spirit often employs and makes successful about this great Work. And so far as under God they are instrumental and conducing to the taming of the Flesh, they have been of singular Use to the Saints of God in all Ages: and those who are not in some Measure acquainted with the Exercise of such Austerities, it is to be feared are but Novices in Piety, and Strangers to the Arts of Mortification. He that would lay the Axe to the Root of his Sin, must use it coarsly, and strike it boldly. Courtship to an Enemy is but Cruelty to ourselves. Better were it for a Man to restrain an unruly Appetite, and to stint himself in the Measures of his very Food and his Sleep, than by a full Indulgence of himself in these, to pamper up his Corruption, and give it Strength and Activity to cast off

all Bonds, till at length it becomes unconquerable. Sin has now so insinuated itself into our Nature, that we cannot freely cherish that, but we must by unhappy Consequence nourish and feed our Sintoo. For which Cause it is, that such as have had Experience what it is to walk with God, and what are the chief Impediments to such a Course, have been always fearful *of pleasing the Flesh*, tho' in Things *lawful or indifferent*. And every Man's Conscience can best resolve him, whether or no a full Allowance of himself even in *Things not forbid*, has not indisposed him to a more near and spiritual Converse with God. He that would maintain such a strict Communion with himself, must bind that excellent Advice of the Apostle upon his Heart, *Gal. v. 13. Not to use Liberty for an Occasion to the Flesh*. For did but Men well consider how apt the *Flesh* is to encroach upon the *Spirit*, and how ready to turn every Thing into an Occasion of Sin, they would keep it under with the severest Discipline, and deny it in all its importunate Cravings, as knowing that they have to deal with a Rebel, who is rather bound up and restrained than throughly subdued and conquered; and therefore when he has Opportunity, wants not Will to renew his Rebellion. It is not in vain therefore that the Apostle, *Rom. xiii. 14.* warns men *not to make Provision for the Flesh*. For God knows that

is too apt to provide for itself, and to progreſs and purvey for the Satisfaction of its vile Deſires.

There are two Things in the Body, both of which contend to have its Service, and the Intereſt of both is totally different, namely, *Sin* and the *Soul*. And if we would break the Dominion that Sin uſurps over it, and make it ſubſervient to the Operations of the Soul, and the ſpiritual Commands of the Underſtanding, we muſt be ſure to rule and feed it like a ſturdy Slave, inure and accuſtom it to Fleſh-diſpleaſing Performances. And a conſtant faithful Practice of this will at length enfeeble the Forces of Sin, and keep them from making an Inſurrection againſt the Spirit. Our Bodies are unhappily made the *Weapons of Sin*; and therefore if we would overcome that, we muſt by an auſtere Courſe of Duty firſt wring theſe Weapons out of its Hands.

3dly, A third way to purify ourſelves from the Power of Sin, is to be frequent and fervent in *Prayer* to God for freſh Supplies of ſanctifying Grace. There is no Conqueſt to be had over Sin but by *Grace*, nor is Grace any way ſo effectually to be procured as by *Prayer*. For ſurely if we would obtain any thing from a Prince, it muſt be by way of Petition.

We find a defiling Power of Sin within us; and perhaps we ſtrive againſt it, but ſtill

it is strong; we contend with it, but still it prevails. And now what should we do, but call in Help and Assistance from above? *Come unto me* (says Christ) *all ye that are heavy laden, and I will give you Ease.* Christ calls upon us to come, and I am sure the best way is to come *upon our Knees*; we cannot make our Addresses to him more acceptably than by humble, frequent, and importunate Supplications.

It is a Truth both clear from Scripture, and ratified by the Experience of all Believers, that there was never any one, were his Entanglements in Sin never so great, his Corruptions never so raging, but if he was enabled to wait upon Mercy in an earnest constant use of *Prayer* for the Removal of his Sin, became in the End a *Conqueror*, the Issue was glorious, and the Success comfortable. Prayer is the only Expedient, that we have always in Readiness to procure Help in the Time of spiritual Distress. To describe the Virtue, Efficacy, and Excellency of this Duty is not the Business of the present Discourse; but thus much I shall say of it, that it is that which enables every Believer like a Prince *to prevail with God.* It has (as I may speak with Reverence) a Kind of Omnipotence; for it even over-powers him that is Almighty. It is this that has often tied God's Hands from the inflicting of
Judg-

Judgments, and opened them for the bestowing of Blessings.

And now if this be the Force and Energy of Prayer, when we find the Power of Sin to grow violent, and the Workings of it by any Strength of our own irresistible, why do we not fly to this Remedy, and cry mightily to God, that *he would create clean Hearts, and renew right Spirits within us?* Why do we not make that Request to our Saviour that the Leper did? *Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.* 'Tis but one Word of his Power dispensing out *purifying Grace*, and we shall be pure. And surely Christ could not but vouchsafe a gracious Answer to every such Petition. For if he was of such Tenderness and Compassion as to heal the Leprosy and Distemper of the Body upon asking, do we not think that he will be much readier to commiserate and heal the dangerous, loathsome Leprosy of the Soul, which is Sin, upon the vehement Entreaties of a sincere Heart? Certainly he that was so tender to the Bodies of Men, must needs be much more compassionate of their Souls.

Now we are to observe yet further, that as Prayer is of such sovereign Force to procure sanctifying Grace from God, so there is a certain cleansing, purifying Power in the very Duty itself. And we may appeal to the Experience of any pious Person, who has accustomed himself to be earnest and spiri-

tual in Prayer, whether he has not found his Heart in a very *different Frame and Posture* after the Performance of it, from what it used to be at other Times. How have his Inclinations to Sin been (as it were) stupified, the Dislike of his Corruption renewed! How has his Love to Holiness been enflamed! how much stronger has he found himself to encounter a Temptation! I believe there is none who ever kneeled down to this Duty with a good Heart, and performed it well, but rose up with a better. If he came to it with Desires against his Sin, he went away with *Strength* added to his *Desires*.

Whosoever therefore would give a speedy Dispatch to his Corruption, let him continually engage his Prayers against the Power of it. It is reported of *Alexander*, that when he was beset round by his Enemies, and sorely wounded, he yet bore up his Spirit and fought upon his Knees. So a Christian, when all the Powers of Darkness do encompass him, and his Sin has given him many Wounds, yet if he can but hold out praying and *fighting against it upon his Knees*, he may in the End vanquish and overcome it. *A praying Heart* naturally turns into a *purified Heart*.

And thus much for the first Thing from *which we are to purify* ourselves, namely, the *Power of Sin*, as also for the Ways and Means by which it is to be effected. From all which
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we gather, how vain and unsuccessful that Method of purifying the Heart from Sin must needs prove, which is used by two sorts of Men.

1. Such as direct their Humiliations and penitential Cleansings only *to some great actual Sin*, that has broke out in their Lives, but in the mean time never to the *Power and Root of Sin*, which is the Cause of all these actual Rebellions. These indeed are most conspicuous in our Lives, but the other is the most dangerous and hurtful to our Souls. For this is that Spring-head, that lies under Ground, and sends forth all those Streams of Impurity, that flow in our Actions. Now that should most *humble* us, that most *provokes God*; but it is the sinful Frame of the Heart, the Inclination and Disposition of the whole Man to Wickedness, that renders us so loathsom in the pure Eyes of God. We indeed take more Notice of a sinful *Action* than of a *sinful Heart*, because that does more vex and disquiet us, and is more visible to ourselves and others. But when Repentance is sincere and effectual, where it resolves to kill Sin, it gives the *first Stab to the Heart*. Thus *David*, an excellent Pattern of true Penitence, when he would humble himself for those actual Sins of Murder and Adultery, he pursues them to their first Cause, which was his *sinful Nature*. Psalm li. 5. *In Sin* (says he) *was I conceived*. And

v. 10. he cries out for a *clean Heart*. Those actual Sins he made only *Occasions* to discover to him the Sin of his *Nature*. They indeed make a greater Noise and Clamour in the World, and procured him more Trouble and Shame from Men; but he knew, that the Power of Sin in his Heart was most odious, and consequently most deserved his Sorrow.

From whence we may take an excellent infallible Note of Difference between a forced un sincere, and a true spiritual Repentance; that the first humbles us chiefly for actual Sins, and that because they are the most troublesome; the latter humbles us chiefly for the Sin of our *Hearts and Natures*, and that because it is the most sinful. For, that it is so, is clear from this Consideration; because the Sin of our Natures makes our *State and Condition sinful*, which a bare actual Transgression does not. No wonder therefore, if many poor deluded Persons, who spend much Time and Labour to purify themselves from Sin, yet after all are not purified. For they fasten their Repentance upon some one *actual Sin*, but overlook *the Power*. But certainly this is to take the wrong way, and to labour in the Fire; this is to *plaster a Pimple* upon the Check or Face, while a malignant Humour is to be purged out of the *whole Body*. For still it is the Body of Sin, and not so much this or that particular

particular Sin, that is like to be the Sinner's Destruction. It is not a *Sore* or a *Bruise* upon his Hand or Arm, tho' perhaps that may *pain him most*, but it is his *Consumption*, tho' it does *not so much pain him*, that endangers his Life. Whosoever therefore would be thoroughly purified, must begin the Work here, strike at the Foundation, stop the Fountain, block up that Place from whence Sin receives all its Supplies; otherwise all Labour, all Sorrow and Humiliation will avail nothing. For after it has beat back Sin from one Place, it will break out in another; when one actual Sin disappears in a Man's Life, another will presently start forth. The only sure and infallible Way of *destroying the Effect* is first to *remove the Cause*.

2dly, The other ineffectual Course to purify the Heart from Sin is, when Men rest only in Complaints of the Evil of their Natures, without a vigorous Endeavour to amend the particular Enormities and Misdemeanors of their Actions. This Course is directly contrary to the former, which pursues the Reformation of particular Actions, without regarding the Purification of the Heart. Both Ways are equally unsuccessful. For to purge the Actions before the Heart is preposterous, and to complain of the Heart without reforming of the Actions is vain and superfluous. Many complain and cry out very tragically of the Wretchedness of their
Hearts,

Hearts, their total Indisposition to all Good, and exceeding Propensity to all Sin. All which may be very true : But while they are complaining of their *Hearts*, perhaps they freely allow themselves in some known Course of *Disobedience* ; they frequently renew Wounds upon their Consciences by the repeated Commission of actual Sin ; and this surely is not the way ever to get themselves *purified* ; thus to *complain* of Sin, and to *commit* Sin ; to confute their Complaints by their Practices ; to cry out of the Body of Sin, and yet to take no Notice of actual Impieties ; this is both a Provocation to God, and an Abuse to themselves. Their Business is to turn Complaint into Endeavour, Words into Action, and vigorously to oppose every particular Temptation, to stifle every sinful Suggestion : For certainly none ever truly hated the Sinfulness of his *Heart*, who did not in some Measure *reform* the Sinfulness of his *Actions*.

I proceed now to the other Thing, *from which* we are to *purify ourselves*, and that is the *Guilt of Sin*. In speaking of which I shall shew,

1. *Negatively*, what *cannot* purify us from the Guilt of Sin. 2. *Positively*, what alone *can*.

1. For the first of these. No Duty or Work within the Power and Performance of Man as such, is able to expiate and take
away

away the Guilt of Sin. In this Matter we must put our Hands upon our Mouths and *be silent* for ever. He that thinks and attempts by his own Goodness to satisfy God's Justice, does by this the more incense it ; and by endeavouring to remove his Guilt does indeed increase it. His Works of *Satisfaction for Sin* are the greatest Sins, and stand most in need of the *Satisfaction of Christ*.

We know how miserably the deluded Papists err in this Point, how they wander in the Maze of their own Inventions about Works of *Penance*, Deeds of *Charity*, *Pilgrimages*, and many other such vain Ways, found out by them to *purge* and *purify* guilty Consciences. A Man perhaps has committed some gross Sin, the Guilt of which lies hard and heavy upon his Conscience ; and how shall he remove it ? Why, peradventure by a blind Devotion, he says over so many Prayers, goes so many Miles barefoot, gives so much to holy Uses, and now he is *rectus in curiâ*, free and absolved in the Court of Heaven. But certainly the Folly of those that practise these Things is to be pitied ; and the Blasphemy of those that teach them to be detested. For do they know and consider what Sin is ? and whom it strikes at ? Is it not the Breach of the Law ? Is it not against the infinite Justice and Sovereignty of the great God ? And can the poor, imperfect,

fect, finite Services of a sinful Creature ever make up such a Breach? Can our pitiful broken *Mite* discharge the Debt of ten thousand *Talents*? Those that can imagine the Removal of the Guilt of the least Sin feasible, by the choicest and most religious of their own Works, never as yet knew God truly, nor themselves, nor their Sins; they never understood the fiery Strictness of the Law, nor the Spirituality of the Gospel.

Now tho' this Error is most gross and notorious amongst the Papists, yet there is something of the same Spirit, that leavens and infects the Duties of most Professors; who in all their Works of Repentance, Sorrow, and Humiliation for Sin, are too too apt secretly to think in their Hearts, that they *make God some Amends* for their Sins. And the Reason of this is, because it is natural to all Men to be Self-justitiaries, and to Place a justifying Power in themselves, and to conceive a more than ordinary Value and Excellency in their own Works, but especially such Works as are Religious.

But this Conception is of all others the most dangerous to the Soul, and dishonourable to God, as being absolutely and diametrically opposite to the Tenour of the Gospel, and that which evacuates the *Death and Satisfaction of Christ*; for it causes us, while we acknowledge *a Christ*, tacitly to deny *the Saviour*. And herein is the Art and Policy
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of the Devil seen, who will keep back the Sinner as long as he can, from the Duties of Repentance and Humiliation, and when he can do this no longer, he will endeavour to make him *trust* and *confide in them* : And so he circumvents us by this Dilemma. He will either make us neglect our Repentance or adore it ; throw away our Salvation by *Omission of Duty*, or place it in our *Duties* : but let this Persuasion still remain fix'd upon our Spirits, that Repentance was enjoined the Sinner as a Duty, not as a Recompence ; and that the most that we can do for God, cannot countervail the least that we have done against him.

2. In the next Place therefore *positively*, that Course which alone is able to purify us from the Guilt of Sin, is by applying the Virtue of the Blood of Christ to the Soul by renewed Acts of Faith. We hold indeed, that Justification, as it is the Act of God, is perfect and entire at once, and justifies the Soul from all Sins both past and future ; yet Justification and pardoning Mercy is not actually dealt forth to us after particular Sins, till we repair to the Death and Blood of Christ by particular Actings of Faith upon it ; which Actings also of themselves cleanse not away the Guilt of Sin, but the Virtue of Christ's Blood conveyed by them to the Soul, for it is that alone that is able to wash away this deep Stain, and to change the Hue
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of the spiritual *Æthiopian*; nothing can cleanse the Soul but that Blood that redeemed the Soul.

The Invalidity of whatsoever we can do in order to this Thing, is sufficiently demonstrated in many Places of Scripture, *Job ix. 30, 31. If I wash myself with Snow Water, and make my Hands never so clean, yet thou shalt plunge me in the Ditch, and my own Clothes shall abhor me.* He that has nothing to wrinse his polluted Soul with but his own penitential Tears, endeavours only to purify himself in muddy Water, which does not purge, but increase the Stain. In Christ alone is *that Fountain that is opened for Sin and for Uncleannefs*; and in this only we must wash and bathe our defiled Souls, if ever we would have them pure. *1 John. i. 17. The Blood of Christ cleanseth us from all Sin.* It is from his crucify'd Side that there must issue both *Blood to expiate*, and *Water to cleanse* our Impieties. Faith also is said to *purify the Heart*, *Acts xv. 9.* But how? Why certainly, as it is instrumental to bring into the Soul that purifying Virtue that is in Christ. Faith purifies, not as the *Water* itself, but as the *Conduit* that conveys the *Water*. Again, *Rev. i. 5. Christ is said to have wash'd us from our Sins by his own Blood.* There is no cleansing without this: So that we may use the Words of the *Jews*, and convert an Imprecation into a Blessing, and pray that *his Blood may be*
upon

upon us and upon our Souls; for it is certain that it will be one way upon us, either to *purge* or to *condemn us*. Every Soul is polluted with the loathsome, defiling Leprosy of Sin. And now for the purging off of this Leprosy, if the Spirit of God bids us go and wash in the Blood of Christ, that *spiritual Jordan*, and assures us that upon such *Washing* our Innocence shall revive and grow anew, and our original lost Purity return again upon us, shall we now in an Huff of spiritual Pride and Self-love run to our own Endeavours, our own Humiliations, and say, as *Naaman* did, *Are not the Rivers of Damascus better than all the Waters of Israel? may I not wash in them and be clean?* Are not my Tears, my Groans, and my penitential Sorrows, of more Efficacy to cleanse me, than *the Blood and Death of Christ?* May I not use these and be clean, and purified from Sin? I answer, no; and after we have tried them, we shall experimentally find their utter Insufficiency. We may sooner *drown*, than *cleanse* ourselves with our own *Tears*.

I have now finish'd the first general Thing propos'd for the handling of the Words, which was, to shew *what is implied in the purifying of ourselves, here spoken of in the Text*, I proceed now to the other.

2. Which is, to shew *how the Hope of Heaven and a future Glory comes to have such a sovereign Influence upon this Work*.

It has so upon a double Account, *Natural* and *Moral*,

1st, And first upon a *Natural* Account; this Hope purifies as being a special Grace infused into the Heart by the Holy Ghost, and in its Nature and Operation directly contrary to Sin: as Heat is a Quality both in Nature and Working, contrary to, and destructive of Cold. All *Grace* is naturally of a *Sin-purging Virtue*; as soon as ever it is infused into the Soul, it is not idle, but immediately operative. And its Operation is to change and transform the Soul into its own Nature; for the effecting of which it must work out that Principle of Corruption, that does intimately possess it. When *Leaven* is cast into the Lump, it presently begins to work and to ferment, till by degrees it has thoroughly changed the whole Mass. In like manner every Grace will be incessantly working, till it has wrought over the Heart to its own Likeness.

Now *Hope* is one of the principal Graces of the Spirit, so that we have it marshall'd with *Faith* and *Charity*, and placed immediately after *Faith*, in regard of the Method of its Operation, which is immediately consequent upon that of Faith. For what Faith looks upon as *present* in the *Promise*, that Hope looks upon as *future* in the *Event*. Faith properly views the *Promise*, Hope eyes the *Performance*. But the Scripture tells us, that

that *Faith purifies the Heart*, and casts out the Filth and Corruption naturally inherent in it: and if these are the Effects of Faith, they must needs be ascribed also to Hope, which is sown in the Heart by the same Eternal Spirit; and consequently is of the same Quality and Operation with that. For that it springs not from mere Nature, but from an higher Principle, is most manifest. Since it is the Spirit of God alone, that proposes to the Soul the Grounds of Hope, and lays before it the Object of Hope, and then by an immediate Almighty Power, enables the Soul fiducially to close with and rest upon that Object, upon those Grounds. *Flesh and Blood* cannot rise so high; bare Reason cannot furnish the Heart with such a Support. It may indeed cause us to *presume*, but it can never cause us truly to *Hope*.

2dly, The hope of future Glory has an Influence upon this Work of *purifying* ourselves upon a *Moral Account*; that is, by suggesting to the Soul such Arguments, as have in them a persuasive Force to engage it in this Work. Of which sort I shall reckon four.

1. And the first shall be drawn from the necessary Relation that this Work has to the Attainment of Heaven, as the use of the *Means* to the Acquisition of the *End*. Our way to Happiness does indispensably lie through Holiness; and God has so ordered things, that we cannot arrive at one, but

through the other. Now when the Purification of our Hearts is the proper Way and Means appointed, and consigned by God's own Institution, for our obtaining of Everlasting Felicity with himself; is it not the highest Strain of Folly and Madness that is imaginable, for a Man to pretend that he does earnestly hope for this Happiness, and yet in the mean time totally neglects that Course, by which alone it is attainable. Should we take such a Course in worldly Things, how cheap, how unreasonable, and ridiculous would our Hope appear! For does any one hope to reap, when he never sows, and expect Treasure from a far Country, with which he holds no Traffick or Commerce? Certainly notwithstanding all Words and Protestations, we should conclude that such Persons did not really hope for the things they pretended; or if they did hope for them, that they were incurably mad and besotted, and past all hope, at least as to the recovery of their Reason. The Apostle most rationally warns Men in *Gal. vi. 7, 8.* Not to think that they can *mock God* because they can *deceive themselves.* *For whatsoever a Man soweth, that shall he also reap. He that soweth to the Flesh, shall of the Flesh reap Corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap Life Everlasting.* For as it is absurd to hope to reap, and yet not to sow, so it is equally unreasonable to sow *one Kind* of

Grain, and to expect a Crop of *another*; to sow Tares, and yet hope to reap Wheat. There is no *reaping of Life Everlasting* (as the Apostles Phrase is) but *by sowing to the Spirit*; this is the only proper way to attain it. For this is an eternal Truth, that the *Works of the Spirit* have a necessary Subordination to the *Rewards of the Spirit*.

2. The second Argument by which the Hope of future Glory persuades the Soul *to purify itself*, shall be taken from this Consideration, that it is Purity alone that can fit and qualify the Soul for so holy a Place. He that is cloathed in Filth and Rags, is not a fit Person to converse and live in a Court; nor is there any one who designs the Course of his Life in such a Place, but will adorn and dress himself accordingly. *David* proposes and resolves the Question in *Psalms* xxiv. 34. *Who shall ascend into thy holy Hill? Even he that hath clean Hands and a pure Heart.* And again in *Psalms* xciii. 5. *Holiness becometh thine House, O Lord, for ever.* And therefore as God said to *Moses*, *pull off thy Shoes, for the Place on which thou standest is holy Ground*; so may we say to every one that hopes for Heaven, take away that Filth, that Enormity, and Corruption that cleaves to thy Life, for the Place whither thou art going is Holy; and therefore requires and admits of none but holy Inhabitants. In *Revel.* xxi. 27. it is said, that *nothing shall enter into*

the New Jerusalem that is polluted, or that maketh a Lie. It is with the *New Jerusalem*, as it was heretofore with the *Old*, where all the Filth, the Off-scourings, and whatsoever was noisome in the *City*, was carried to a Place without, and there burnt. And we all know, that there is a deep and dismal Place without the *New Jerusalem*, where every noisome, wicked, and polluted Thing shall be cast and burnt with *Everlasting Flames*.

Nay further, Purity and Holiness does not only fit us for Heaven, so that without it we can have no Entrance or Admittance there; but it also so fits us, that if it were possible for us to enter into Heaven void of it, *Heaven* would be no place of *Happiness* to us in that Condition, but a Place of Trouble, Torment, and Vexation. As for instance, it is impossible for a Beggar in his Rags to be admitted to the Society, and Converse of Princes and Noblemen: but put the Case that he were, yet his beggarly Condition would never suffer him to enjoy himself in that Company, in which he could be nothing but a *Mock* and a *Derision*. In like manner, Heaven bears no suitableness to an impure, un sanctified Person. For a sinful Heart must have sinful Delights, and sinful Company, and where it meets not with such, in the very midst of Comforts and Company, it finds a *Solitude*, and a *Dissatisfaction*. The

Business we shall be put to in Heaven, is for ever to praise and admire the great God for the infinite Beauty of his Holiness, and the glorious Perfections of his Nature; but this surely is an Employment no ways either fit for, or desirable to a Sinner. It is indeed a blessed thing *to see God*, but it is so only *to the pure in Heart*; for to the Wicked and Impure the Vision of God himself could not be beatifical. Those that live in any Country, must conform to the Habit of the Country. Those that are Citizens of the *New Jerusalem*, must have the Cloathing and the Garb of such Citizens, even the long *white Robes* of a pure, unspotted Righteousness. In a word, no Hope can give us a *Title* to Heaven, but such an one as also gives us a *Fitness* for it.

3. The third Argument, by which the Hope of Heaven persuades the Soul to purify itself, shall be drawn from the Obligation of Gratitude. For surely if I expect so great a Gift at God's Hands as eternal Happiness, even Humanity and Reason cannot but constrain me to pay him at least a temporary, short Obedience. For shall I hope to be saved by him, whom I strike at and defy? Or can I expect that he should own me in another World, when I reject, despise, and trample upon his Commands in this?

God gives us righteous *Precepts*, and endears them to us by glorious *Promises*; and now can it stand with the Principles, not of
 Piety

Piety only, but of common Ingenuity, to baulk the *Duty*, and yet to snatch at the *Reward*? To expect the highest Favours from God's Mercy, and to offer the greatest Indignities to his Holiness? When Christ had promised Paradise to the Thief upon the Cross, would it not have been a prodigious Piece of Ingratitude for him to have joined with his Fellow Thief in cursing and reviling him, by whose Favour he expected presently to exchange his *Cross* for a *Crown*?

God promises to us a Kingdom, and makes the Condition of our Passage to it, only the *cleansing ourselves from all Filthiness of Flesh and Spirit*. A Work that is our Privilege, as well as our Duty; and shall we not obey him in this one Command? A Command so reasonable for him to *enjoin*, and so advantageous for us to *perform*? For shall he be willing to make us glorious, and we grudge to make ourselves pure? Shall he hold forth such vast *Wages*, and we not find in our Hearts to set about the *Work*? These Things are absurd and disingenuous, and such as the World would cry out of in common Converse. And therefore let no Man think, that that Disposition can *commend him to God*, that would justly make him *abhorred by Men*.

4^{thly}, and lastly, The fourth Argument, by which the *Hope of Heaven* persuades the Soul to *purify* itself, shall be taken from this Consideration; that *Purity* is the only Thing
that

that can evidence to us our Right and Interest in those glorious Things that we profess ourselves to hope for. It is infinitely fond and presumptuous for a Man to hope to inherit *that Estate*, to which he can shew *no Title*. The Reasonableness of our Hopes of Heaven, depends upon the sure *Right and Claim* that we have to it; and prove this we cannot in the *Court of our own Conscience*, much less in the *Court of Heaven*, but only by the Obedience and Purity of our Lives, and their strict Conformity to the excellent Precepts of the Gospel. No Man can ascertain himself that he is an *Heir* of Glory, unless he can prove himself to be a *Son*; and he shall never be able to find that *he is a Son*, till Holiness makes him like his heavenly Father; for where there is this Relation, there will be also some Resemblance.

And now I suppose, that from what has been discoursed upon this Subject, every one does, or at least may, gather a certain Mark or *Criterion*, by which to judge of his Hopes and Pretences as to the *Happiness* of his *future Estate*. It is *Grace* only that ends in *Glory*. And he that hopes for Heaven in earnest, will be as active in his *Repentance* as he is serious in his *Hopes*. Who almost is there that does not own himself a Candidate, and an Expectant of future Glory, nay, even amongst those whose *present Glory is only in their Shame*? But if such Persons did not wretchedly

wretchedly prevaricate with themselves, how could there be so much of Heaven in their Hopes, and yet so little of it in their Conversation? How comes their *Heart* to be in one Place, and their *Treasure* in another?

It is evident that the very Hope and Religion of every profane and vicious Liver is but Mockery and Pretence. For can any one of common Sense really expect to be *saved* in the constant Practice of those Enormities, for which the God of Truth himself assures him he shall be *damn'd*? It is infinitely vain for a Man to *talk of Heaven* while he *trades for Hell*, or to look *upwards* while he lives *downwards*; yet Thousands do so, and it is the common Practice of the deluded World, which shews how much Men trifle in the grand Business of their eternal Condition. They profess an *Hope* of that, of which they have scarce a *Thought*; and expect to enjoy God *hereafter*, tho' they live wholly without him *here*. But the Issue will be accordingly, neither they nor their Hopes can ever stand before the *pure Eyes* of him, *with whom live only the Spirits of just Men made perfect*.

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

F I N I S.



Handwritten text in a central rectangular frame, arranged in four columns. The text is written in a cursive style, likely a form of Chinese calligraphy. The columns are separated by decorative vertical lines, and the top and bottom edges of the frame are decorated with repeating floral or scrollwork motifs. The overall appearance is that of a traditional manuscript or a decorative page from an old book.