Faith and Practice
Represented in Fifty-four
SERMONS
On the Principal Heads of the
Christian Religion;
Preached at Berry-Street, 1733.
BY
D. Neal M.A. || D. Jennings.
J. Guyse D.D. || J. Hubbard.
Published for the Use of Families,
Especially on the Lord's-Day Evenings.
THE SECOND EDITION.
VOL. I.

LONDON:
Printed for John Oswald, at the Rose and
Crown in the Poultry, near the Mansion-House.
M.DCC.XXXIX.
TO
WILLIAM COWARD
of Walthamstow Esq;
The following
SERMONS
On the Principal Heads of the
Christian Religion;
Preached at his Request,
And by his Encouragement,
Are humbly Dedicated
By his faithful Servants
THE MINISTERS.
THE PREFACE.

HERE are many excellent Treatises of instructive and practical Divinity among us, and Volumes of valuable Sermons composed on various divine Themes: Yet it has been the Complaint of several pious Families, who would spend their Lord's-day Evenings in a religious Manner, that they are not sufficiently furnished with single distinct Sermons, form'd upon proper Subjects, and limited to such a length as those Occasions and Seasons require. Shall we recom
recommend to them the Divines of the last Century? Many of the Writings of Dr. Manton and Mr. Flavel, and others, are well suited to this Design: they have been many Years employ'd in this Service, they are still rehearsed in Families with Pleasure and Profit, and may they continue long in the same Honour and Esteem.

Yet it must be granted, that every Age is best pleased with its own Phrases and Forms of Speech; and when the same divine and ancient Truths are explained and improved in such Method and Language, as is suited to the Taste of the present Age, there is Reason to hope they will be attended with less Weariness, and insinuate themselves with more Delight into the Hearts of those who hear them. On this account some later Authors have publish'd what they have preach'd on several Parts of our Holy Religion, and their Works have not been unuseful upon this Occasion: But still a greater variety is desired, and it
The PREFACE. vii

it has been often wish'd that the whole
Body of Christianity might be represent-
ed in such single short Discourses in a
practical Manner, as might at once lead
Persons into the Knowledge of the most
important Doctrines and Duties of the
Gospel, and warmly exhort them to a
correspondent Practice. It is to answer
these Desires, and to supply this Defici-
cy, that we have undertaken the pre-
sent Work.

For this purpose, at the Request of
that worthy Gentleman to whom these
Volumes are inscribed, we drew up the
most necessary and important Articles
of the Christian Religion into so many
distinct Heads, and form'd a Sermon
upon each of them, that by reading one
in a Week they might be finish'd in a-
bout a Year's time, and that whole Fa-
milies might receive some brief Instruc-
tion in all the most necessary parts of
Faith and Practice, in order to their e-
verlasting Welfare.

A 4
It must be confess'd, some of these Truths have furnished out large Matter for Speculation and Controvery in the World: But it was agreed among us, that when we treated of these Doctrines, we would improve them as much as possible to practical Godliness; and that we would not indulge our Thoughts to run out into learned and perplexing Debates, which might easily disturb common Hearers, and give them occasion to stumble at the Word.

It was further agreed, that we would discourse on these Subjects in a scriptural and evangelical Manner, that we would prove every Point chiefly from the Word of God, and shew the rich Advantage and the Glory of the peculiar Revelations of Christ reigning thro' the whole of our Religion. We purposed also to convey our Thoughts in such a plain, easy, and affectionate manner of Speech, as might, by the Influence of divine Grace, enter more readily into the Minds of ignorant Persons in a Family,
Family, and reach the Hearts of Children and Servants of the lowest rank, as well as edify those of superior Character, Years and Knowledge. And that we might not render this Evening-Worship tedious and disgusting, we resolved to limit each Discourse to such a number of Pages, as might be read with a grave and distinct Pronunciation in less than three quarters of an Hour.

It must be confessed that by this Confinement of our selves to fifty-four short Discourses, we have not been able to treat so distinctly of every particular Subject in Divinity; nor could we allow the instructive Part of our Sermons its full Measure, and at the same time indulge such a diffusive and affecting Style, as might address it self at large to all the Passions. But a sensible Reader will forgive this Defect, when he observes how often two or three considerable Subjects are united and crowded in the Title of one Sermon; nor could they be otherwise divided and disposed un-
less we had drawn out the Discourses to twice this Number, and raised the Volumes to a double Bulk and Price.

And for the same Reason we trust we shall meet with easy forgiveness, if the Words of each Text which stand at the Head of the Discourse, do not so completely include all that is inserted in the Title of it: for sometimes it was hard, if not impossible, to find out one single Verse of Scripture, that should plainly and expressly contain the whole Theme or Subject appointed: but we resolved to chuse such Place of Scripture for the Heads of our Sermons, as should be clear in themselves, and apposite to the chief Part of our design'd Argument, lest too much of the Time should be taken up in explaining the Words, or in critical or laborious Remarks upon them, to accommodate them to our purpose.

Upon the whole, we are conscious to our selves that our highest Aim and Ambition
The PREFACE.  

Exhibition in this Service has not been to seek our own Honour or Interest, nor to flatter and gratify the Passions and Humours of any of the divided Parties of Christians; but to teach the plain Doctrines of our divine Religion as we receive them from the Bible; and to exhort Mankind to the zealous Practice of Piety, Virtue and Goodness upon Evangelical Principles: and for this end we have endeavour'd to encourage and assist Christian Families to employ one Evening-hour of the Lord's Day to religious Purposes, which is so often squander'd away in trifling at home, or sauntering and gadding abroad, to the great dishonour of our Profession, to the neglect of serious Godliness, and the danger and ruin of immortal Souls.

With these sincere Views and Intentions we leave our Labours in the hands of our Lord Jesus Christ, who governs both the World and the Church, and rules over the Hearts of Men; humbly entreating his gracious Presence in those Households,
Houholds, or in those Chambers of Retirement, where these Discourses shall be read; and may the powerful Influences of his Spirit attend them, which alone can make his blessed Gospel effectual to the Salvation of Men.

January 10th 1734-5.
A TABLE
Of the Subjects, and the Texts of Scripture on which the Sermons are formed.

VOL. I.

Of the Knowledge of God.

SERMON

I. THE Knowledge of God by the Light of Nature, together with the Uses of it, and its Defects. By Dr. Isaac Watts.

Acts xiv. 15, 16, 17. The living God, which made Heaven and Earth, and the Sea, and all things that are therein, who in times past suffer'd all Nations to walk in their own Ways: Nevertheless he left not himself without Witness, in that he did good, and gave us Rain from Heaven, filling our Hearts with Food and Gladness. Page 1.

II. The Divine Authority, and Perfection of the Holy Scriptures. By Mr. Daniel Neal.

2 Tim. iii. 16. All Scripture is given by Inspiration of God, and is profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, and Instruction in Righteousness.
A T A B L E.

III. Of God, and his natural Perfections. By Dr. John Guyse.

John iv. 24. God is a Spirit. p. 42

IV. The moral Perfections of God. By Mr. Samuel Price.

Matth. v. 48. Your Father which is in Heaven is perfect. 61

V. The Doctrine of the Blessed Trinity; or, God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. By Mr. David Jennings.

Matth. xxviii. 19. —— Baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son; and of the Holy Ghost. 76

Of the Decrees of God, and his Transactions with Men.

VI. The Decrees of God concerning all his Works, and his beginning to execute them in Creation. By Mr. John Hubbard.

Eph. i. 21. Who worketh all things after the Counsel of his own Will. 94

VII. The Providence of God, as the Preserver, and sovereign Disposer of all Things, in the Natural World. By Mr. Jennings.

Psal. ciii. 19. The Lord hath prepared his Throne in the Heavens, and his Kingdom ruleth over all. 116

VIII. Of God, as the Governor and Judge of the Moral World, Angels and Men. By Mr. Neal.

Daniel iv. 35. —— And he doth according to his Will in the Army of Heaven, and among the Inhabitants of the Earth. p. 134

IX.
A T A B L E.

IX. The original State of Man, and the Covenant of Works. By Dr. Gwyse.

Ecclef. vii. 29. —— God made Man upright.

X. The Fall of Man and Original Sin; with Man's Inability to recover himself. By Mr. Hubbard.

Rom. v. 12. ——By one Man Sin enter'd into the World, and Death by Sin, and so Death past upon all Men; for that all have sinned.

XI. God's Election of a People for himself among Men, and giving them to his Son in the Covenant of Redemption. By Dr. Watts.

Eph. i. 3, 4, 5. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us in all spiritual Blessings in heavenly Places in Christ, according as he hath chosen us in him before the Foundation of the World, that we should be holy and without blame before him in Love, having predestinated us unto the Adoption of Children, by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good-pleasure of his Will.

XII. The various Dispensations of the Gospel, or Covenant of Grace, toward fallen Man before Christianity. By Mr. Price.

Luke i. 72. To perform the Mercy promised unto our Fathers, and to remember his holy Covenant.
XIII. The Excellencies and Advantages of the Christian Dispensation, with the Invitations and Promises of the Gospel. By Dr. Watts.

Heb. viii. 6. He is the Mediator of a better Covenant, which was established upon better Promises.

p. 240

Of the Facts on which Christianity is founded, together with the various Uses of them.

XIV. The Incarnation of Christ as the promised Messiah. By Mr. Neal.

Gal. iv. 4, 5. But when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son made of a Woman, made under the Law; to redeem them that were under the Law, that we might receive the Adoption of Sons.

261

XV. Christ's Personal Ministry, Miracles, and Prophetick Office. By Dr. Guise.

John i. 18. —He hath declared him. 279

XVI. The Sufferings and Death of Christ, with the chief Design of them, the Atonement for Sin as one part of his Priesthood. By Mr. Price.

1 Pet. iii. 18. For Christ also hath once suffer'd for Sins, the Just for the Unjust, that he might bring us to God. 298

XVII. The Resurrection and Ascension of Christ. By Mr. Jennings.

Acts i. 2, 3. Until the Day in which he was
was taken up; after that he, through the Holy Ghost, had given Commandments un-
to the Apostles whom he had chosen; to whom also he shew'd himself alive after
his Passion, by many infallible Proofs, being seen of them forty Days, and speak-
ing of the things pertaining to the King-
dom of God.

XVIII. The Intercession of Christ as another Part of his Priesthood. By Mr. Hubbard.
Rom. viii. 34. — Who also maketh Intercession for us.

XIX. The Exaltation of Christ to his Kingdom, and his sending down the Holy Spirit. By Dr. Watts.
Acts ii. 33. Being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the Promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear.

Of the Blessings of the Gospel more plainly reveal'd under the Christian Dis-
pensation.

XX. Effectual Calling with its Fruits, (viz.) Regeneration and Sanctification by the Holy Spirit. By Mr. Neal.
2 Tim. i. 9. Who hath saved us and called us with an holy Calling, not according to our Works, but according to his own Purpose and Grace which was gi-
A TABLE.

ven us in Christ Jesus before the World began.  p. 378

XXI. Pardon of Sin, Justification and Adoption. By Dr. Guyse.

Rom. iii. 24, 25. Being justify'd freely by his Grace, through the Redemption that is in Jesus Christ; whom God hath set forth to be a Propitiation, through Faith in his Blood.


Rom. xv. 13. Now the God of Hope fill you with all Joy and Peace in believing, that ye may abound in Hope through the Power of the Holy Ghost.

XXIII. Temporal Blessings, Support under Trouble, and sanctify'd Afflictions. By Mr. Jennings.

1 Tim. iv. 8. Godliness is profitable to all things, having Promise of the Life that now is, and of that which is to come.

XXIV. Assistance in Duty, Perseverance in Grace, and Preparation for Glory. By Mr. Hubbard.

Col. i. 9, 10, 11, 12. For this cause we do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye may be filled with the Knowledge of his Will in all Wisdom and spiritual Understanding: that ye might walk worthy of the Lord to all pleasing, being fruitful in every good Work, and increasing in the Knowledge of God: Strengthen'd with all Might ac-
A TABLE. xix

according to his glorious Power, unto all Patience and Long-Suffering with Joyfulness: Giving Thanks unto the Father, who hath made us meet to be Partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light.

P. 455

Of the Duties of Christianity in general.

XXV. Our perpetual Obligation to the Duties of the Moral Law, with the evil Nature of Sin, and its Desert of Punishment. By Dr. Watts.

1 John iii. 4. — Sin is the Transgression of the Law. Rom. vi. ult. The Wages of Sin is Death.

XXVI. Confession of Sin, Repentance, and Conversion to Holiness. By Mr. Neal.

Acts iii. 19. Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your Sins may be blotted out, when the Times of refreshing shall come from the Presence of the Lord.

Duties toward God, with the Sins opposite to them.

XXVII. Worshipping God only, and that in his own appointed Way, and doing all to his Glory. By Dr. Guyse.

Matth. xv. 8, 9. This People draweth nigh unto me with their Mouth, and honoureth me
A T A B L E.

me with their Lips; but their Heart is far from me. But in vain do they worship me, teaching for Doctrines the Commandments of Men.
SERMONS
ON THE
PRINCIPAL HEADS
OF THE
CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

SERMON I.
The Knowledge of God by the Light of Nature, together with the Uses of it, and its Defects.

Acts XIV. 15, 16, 17.

The living God, which made Heaven and Earth, and the Sea, and all things that are therein; who in times past suffered all Nations to walk in their own ways; nevertheless he left not himself without Witness, in that he did good, and gave us Rain from Heaven, and fruitful Seasons, filling our Hearts with Food and Gladness.

When the Apostle Paul gave Authority to his Ministrations at Lystra, by working a miraculous Cure on a Man who was born a Cripple, the Inhabitants imagined that he and Barnabas were Gods, and were immediately preparing a Sacrifice for them: but to divert this Madness and Superstition of paying divine Worship to Creatures,
Creatures, the Apostles, with holy Jealousy and Indignation, ran into the midst of them, and preached to them the Living and the True God. "We, say they, are utterly unworthy of these divine Honours; for we are Men of such Flesh and Blood as yourselves, and are liable to the like Sins; we preach to you, that ye should turn from these Vanities to the living God, who made Heaven and Earth, &c."

From which Words we may raise these three distinct Observations.

I. God may be known by the Light of Nature. Surely he that made Mankind, and doth them so much good, hath given them some Hints and Notices of himself; He hath not left himself without Witness.

II. The Knowledge of God, which is attainable by the Light of Nature, hath its various Uses; of which this is one, that it is a Witness for God and his Goodness among Men.

III. Yet this Knowledge of God, by the Light of Nature, hath great Defects and Imperfections in it. Notwithstanding all this Knowledge, which is within the reach of Men, yet all the Nations of Mankind besides the Jews, continued to walk in their own Ways, their Ways of Idolatry, of wild Superstition and various Wickedness. It is said indeed, that God suffered them to walk thus; not that he ever permitted them to do it as a Governor; but as a Creator and a Sovereign, he neither restrained them from it by his Almighty Power, nor by such special Revelations of Grace, as he made to the Jewish Nation; and their own natural Knowledge did not secure them from it.

Let
Let us begin with the first Observation, (viz.) God may be known by the Light of Nature. When I use the word God, I mean here the same thing which the lowest Rank of Mankind would understand by it, that is, The Being which made all things; or, in more learned Language, The first Caufe of all. And when I say, God may be known by the Light of Nature, I mean, that the Senses and the reaoning Powers, which belong to the Nature of Man, are able to give him so much Light in seeking after God, as to find out something of him thereby, or to gain some Knowledge of him. By our Senses, we are acquainted with his Works, and by his Works our Reaon may be led to trace out that more excellent Being who made them. This is asserted beyond all Dispute. Rom. i. 19, 20. That which may be known of God is manifest in them, i.e. in Men, for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the Creation of the World are, or may be clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal Power and Godhead.

Now if we inquire more particularly, What it is that we can learn of God by the Light of Nature, I answer in the following Particulars.

1. We may come to the Knowledge of his Existence, or that there is such a glorious Being who made all things.

This is evident and certain, that Nothing could make itself. 'Tis impossible, that any thing which once had no Being, should ever give Being to itself; or that once upon a time it should of itself burst out of nothing, and begin to be. Since therefore there is a World with millions of Beings in it, which are born
born and die, 'tis certain there is some Being, who had no beginning, but had Life in himself from all Eternity, and who gives Life and Being to all other things. This is the Being whom we call God.

Of all the visible Beings that we are acquainted with, Man is the highest and most noble; but he is forced to confess he is not his own Maker. By sending our Thoughts and Enquiries a little backward, we find, that we came into Being but a few Years ago; and we are daily convinced, that we perish and die in long Succession. Our Parents, or our Ancestors, were no more able to make themselves than we are; for most of them are dead, and the rest are going the way of all Flesh: they cannot preserve our Lives, nor their own; and therefore it is plain, that tho' we borrow'd Life from them at first, yet they are not the original and self-sufficient Authors of Life and Being to themselves, or to us; they are but Instruments in the hands of some superior first Cause, some original and eternal Maker of us all.

Or if some Atheist should say, We must run up from Son to Father, and from Father to Grandfather, in endless Generations, without a Beginning, and without any first Cause; I answer, That is impossible: for if ten thousand Generations cannot subsist of themselves without dependance on something before them, neither can infinite or endless Generations subsist of themselves without dependance. Suppose a Chain of ten thousand Links hung down from the Sky, and could not support itself unless some mighty Power upheld the first Link; then it is certain, a Chain of ten thousand times ten thousand Links, or an endless Chain, could never support itself.
SER. 1.  Its Uses and Defects.

As the Chain grows longer and heavier, the Addition of new Links can never make the Chain more independent, or better support itself.

There must be therefore some first Bird, some first Beast, some first Man, from whom all these succeeding Generations begun; and since they are all dead, and could not preserve themselves out of their own original Sufficiency, 'tis certain they could not make themselves, they all must depend therefore on some mighty Being, who has ever lived, and will ever live, and who is the first Cause and Maker of all things besides himself. Further Arguments for the Being of a God will appear under the next Particular.

2. We learn by the Light of Nature what God is, (viz.) that he is a Spirit, perfect in Wisdom, and perfect in Power, who knows all things, and can do all things, or who is Allwise and Almighty.

The amazing Works of God in the Heavens, the Sun, Moon and Stars, their regular and unerring Motions for so many thousand Years, the Progress of the Hours, the Changes of Day and Night, Winter and Summer, which depend on these Motions and Revolutions, they all abundantly discover that the Maker of them was wise, and skilful beyond all our Conceptions. If we observe the Operations of a Clock or Watch, which doth but imitate the Motions of these heavenly Bodies, and point out to us the Day and the Hour, and distinct Seasons; we say, it is impossible this curious Engine could be made without great Wisdom and Skill in some Artificer who contrived it; and can we be so foolish as to imagine, that this vast and glorious Engine of the Heavens, with all its bright Furniture, which makes Times and Seasons, Day and Night, could ever come
come into Being by chance, or be made without
Wisdom or Contrivance?

The wonderful Production of Plants, Herbs, Trees,
and Flowers, the astonishing Operations of living
Creatures, and their several Parts and Powers fitted
for the proper Ends and Designs of their Life, dis-
cover to us the deep Wisdom and Knowledge of the
Being that made them. When we observe the
strange and surprizing Actions of some Animals, of
Dogs or Foxes, of Hen and Chickens, of Bees and
Emmets, we can scarce with-hold ourselves from
ascribing Knowledge and Reason to them: and is it
possible that the Being, which made these active
Animals should not have Understanding and Reason,
and that far superior to all his Creatures? Should
Mr. Boyle, or Sir Isaac Newton descend from Hea-
ven, and begin a complete Lecture on this Subject,
it would last for Years, for Ages, even to the end
of Time; and every instructive Moment would ac-
quaint us with some new Glories of the Creator.

Let us consider but our own Natures, our Parts
and Powers; what Wonders are contained in every
Sense? In the Eye, what millions of Objects are
painted continually on one Spot of that little Ball,
are transfer'd inward to the Brain in all their distinct
Colours and Shapes, and are beheld without confu-
sion there? What Varieties of Sounds and Voices,
Language and Harmony, are taken in and dislin-
guished by the Ear in its winding Caverns? How
very various are the Tastes and Smells that we partake
of by the Palate and the Noftrils? How happily
contrived is our Sense of Feeling? not confined to
one part, but diffused throughout the whole Body,
to give speedy Notice of every thing within us, or
without us, that may hurt our Frame? What a
won—
wonderful Instrument is the Tongue, to convey our Thoughts in ten thousand Sounds to our Fellow-Creatures? And what an excellent Being is the Principle of Thought within us, even our Souls or Spirits, which can not only take in and converse about all the Millions of Objects, which our Senses give us notice of; but millions more of Numbers and Quantities and intellectual Ideas which our Senses cannot reach? Now can all these be form'd without infinite Wisdom and Skill? I might demand of the Sons of Atheism, in the Language of the Psalmist, Psal. xciv. 9, 10. 

He that planted the Ear, shall not he hear? He that formed the Eye, shall be not see? He that gives Knowledge to Man, shall he not know? He that made Spirits, hath not he all the Powers of a Spirit in him in a most transcendent Manner and Degree?

And as the Wonders of Contrivance in the Works of God declare his depth of Wisdom, so the difficulty of creating them out of Nothing argues his Almighty Power. When we survey the Heavens the Work of his Hands, the Moon and the Stars which he hath created; what a glorious and powerful Being must that be, which form'd these vast Bodies at first, and which upholds their stupendious Frame? What an Almighty Voice was necessary to call this whole Universe, these Heavens and Earth, and Seas, with all the Hosts of them, out of nothing into Being, and constrain them to obey the Call? Man can only change the Shapes and Qualities of things: he can make a Clock indeed, an elegant Engine to measure Time; but he must have Brass and Iron given him, for he cannot create these Materials, tho' he give them a new Form: but God's huge and astonishing Engine of the Heavens, whereby Hours and Days, Seasons and Ages are made and measured out,
were all formed by him without any Materials: he made all the Materials himself, and gave all the Wheels of Nature and Time their very Being, as well as their Shapes and their Motions, and they continue to observe his Orders. A Creator must be Almighty, He must be God.

Again, Let us think within ourselves, what a powerful Being must that be, who can make a Soul, a Spirit, a thinking Being to exist, so nearly like himself, with such a Faculty of Understanding, as to be capable of taking in so many millions of Ideas, and forming the Figures of the Skies and the Seas, and the thousands of Plants and Animals, which are found upon this Earth, each in their proper Proportion? an Understanding capable of knowing the Works of God, and of knowing God himself? How powerful is the divine Will, which could make a Creature with a free Will, to determine its own Choice, a Will which can move all this Frame of Flesh and Blood, and by these Limbs can give motion to ten thousand other Bodies round about us? What a glorious Power must that be, who could create such an Image of himself as a human Spirit is, and which bears such a near Resemblance of his own Perfections, both in his Understanding and his Will, in his Knowledge and his Power. We are his Image, we are his Offspring. Thus sung Aratus the Hea-then Poet, in Acts xvii. 28, 29. and spoke like a Christian.

And thus it appears beyond all controversy, that the Light of Nature finds, there is a God, and that this God is an Almighty and Almighty Spirit. If we were in doubt about his Existence or Being, these Reasonings would assure us of it; and if we seek after
after his Nature and his Perfections, these his Works discover them.

3. Another thing which we learn by the Light of Nature, is his supreme and absolute Dominion over all things, that God is the Sovereign Lord and Possessor of Heaven and Earth, so Gen. xiv. 19; and consequently that he hath a Right to dispose of all things as he pleases; Rom. ix. 20. Who therefore shall say to him, What dost thou? Shall the thing formed say to him that hath formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Shall the Vessel say to the Potter, Why didst thou mould me in such a Form? Why was I disposed of in such a Station; and why was I appointed for such a purpose? And the force of this Argument grows yet much stronger, when we consider, that the great God not only gives his Creatures their Form and Manner of Being, but he created the very Substance as well as the Qualities of every thing, and gave them their whole Nature and all the Being they have.

4. The Light of Nature teaches us, that tho' God is the absolute and natural Lord of all things that he has made; yet he is pleased to deal with his rational Creatures in a way of moral Government, that he rules them by a Law, and will some time or other reward them in Equity according to their Works. The Conscience which he hath formed in Man, may discover to him so much of the natural Law and Will of his God, as a righteous Governor of the World, if it be properly and wisely employed. Rom. ii. 14, 15. The Gentiles which have not the written Law which the Jews enjoy'd, yet they do by Nature the Things contained in the Law, that is, they are inwardly excited to do them: these having not the Law, are a Law to themselves, which knew the
the Work of the Law written in their Hearts, their Consciences also bearing Witness, and their Thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing them.

This Law written in their Hearts, and which they may find out by a diligent Use of their Reason, not only teaches them that Adoration and Worship, Prayer and Praise, are Duties which they owe to God; but it instructs them also to distinguish between Vice and Virtue, Good and Evil, as it relates to their Neighbours and themselves. It shews them the difference between Sobriety and Intemperance, between Kindness and Malice, between Honesty and Knavery, Truth and Falshood; and it teaches them also to expect some Vengeance to fall upon Transgressors. So Acts xxiv. 4. Surely this Man is a Murderer, said the barbarous Inhabitants of Melita concerning St. Paul, when a Viper fastened on his Hand; and tho' he hath escaped the Sea, yet Vengeance doth not suffer him to live.

Reason and Conscience might teach Mankind, that since God has given them an Understanding and Freedom of Will to chuse or refuse Good or Evil, he will certainly call them to account for their Behaviour, and will take some Opportunity to judge, reward, and punish according to their Conduct in the present State. In their own Consciences there is a kind of Tribunal erected before-hand, their Conscience excusing or accusing them, as a sort of Warning, an Emblem and Fore-runner of divine Judgment.

5. The Light of Nature teaches us further, that God is an universal Benefactor to Mankind, even above and beyond their Deserts, and notwithstanding all their Provocations. The Words of my Text declare, that tho' they walked in their own idolatrous Ways, yet God left them not without Witness of his Goodness,
Goodness, giving them fruitful Seasons, and filling their Hearts with Food and Gladness. Their own Consciences tell them they have sinned, and forfeit-ed all Favours from Heaven; but their very Senses assure them, that God does not presently insist upon the Forfeiture, nor seize away their Blessings; but that he waits long, and heaps the Instances of his Goodness upon them, even upon the Evil and the Unthankful in the midst of all their Iniquities and Unthankfulness.

Thus have I shewn, particularly what it is the Light of Nature teaches us concerning God.

II. The Second General Head of Discourse leads us to enquire, what are the various Uses of this Knowledge of God, which is attainable by the Light of Nature. I answer in general, it is to bear Witness for God in the World. But we must enter into Particulars.

1. This Knowledge of God, as our Maker and Governor, by the Light of Nature, is useful, not only to shew Men their Duty, but to convince them of Sin against the Law of God, and to lay all Mankind under a Sense of Guilt and Self-Condemnation. The Apostle Paul begins with this Doctrine in the first Chapters of his Epistle to the Romans, where his great Design is to shew Mankind the Guilt and Wretchedness of their State; for after he had introduced this natural Knowledge of God in the 19th Verse of the first Chapter, he proceeds to convince the Heathen World, and particularly the Philosophers, of their heinous Iniquities against God and Man, and leaves them in the middle of the 2d and 3d Chapters, under the Condemnation of their own Consciences and the Law of God: all have sinned and
and come short of that Glory of God, which they should have originally obtain'd by perfect Righteousness.

2. This Knowledge of God by the Light of Nature, as it is designed to awaken Men to the Practice of their Duty; so it has had some Influence on Mankind, at least by the fear of Punishment, to keep, preserve, and restrain part of them from the extreamest Degrees of Wickedness. This natural Conscience is the Candle of the Lord, which he has set up in the Heart of Man; and tho' it shines but dimly, yet it has sometimes kept them from being so vile and abominable, and from running into such Excess of Outrage and Madness, as otherwise they would have done. There have been some outward Virtues practised among the Greeks and the Romans, who had a little Knowledge of a superior divine Power: there was some Temperance, some Truth, some Honour, Justice and Goodness, now and then appearing among the Multitudes of their Vices: there was a secret Horror within, and a Foreboding of some divine Vengeance, that withheld them now and then from the Practice of Villany, especially in the extravagant Degrees of it. This natural Knowledge of God amongst the Heathen Nations, has been found there like a small Quantity of Salt, to preserve some part of Mankind in those Countries from being utterly over-run with Corruption and Putrefaction; and has answer'd some valuable Purposes in the Government of God among Men. Where there has been nothing of this Knowledge, Mankind have almost lost their superior Rank among the Creatures, and degenerated into a brutal Nature.

3. This natural Knowledge of God and his Goodness, gives some Encouragement to guilty Creatures to repent of their Sins, and to return to God by a general
Ser. I. Its Uses and Defects.

13

ral Hope of Acceptance, tho' they had no Promise of pardoning Grace. And this was the very Principle upon which some of the better sort of the Gentiles set themselves to practise Virtue, to worship God and endeavour to become like him.*

4. This

* I do not say, that Natural Religion can give sinful Men a full and satisfying Assurance of Pardon upon their Repentance; for the deepest Degrees of Penitence cannot oblige a Prince to forgive the Criminal: but still the overflowing Goodness of God, his Patience and Long-Suffering, notwithstanding their Sins, may evidently and justly excite in their Hearts some Hope of forgiving Grace: and I think the Words of my Text cannot intend less than this, that God has not left them without Witness, when he gave them Rain from Heaven, when he satisfied their Appetites with Food, and filled their Hearts with Gladness. What was it that these Benefits of their Creator bore witness to? Was it not that there was Goodness and Mercy to be found with him, if they would return to their Duty, and abandon their own ways of Idolatry and Vice. Surely, it can never be supposed, that the Apostle here means no more than to say, that the daily Instances of divine Bounty in the common Comforts of Life, allured them, that God had some Goodness in him, and Blessings to bestow on their Bodies; but gave them no hope of his Acceptance of their Souls, if they should return and repent never so sincerely. The Ninevites themselves, when threatened with Destruction, repented in Sackcloth and Ashes; for, said they, who can tell but God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce Anger, that we perish not? Nor were they mistaken in their Hope, for God saw their Works, that they turned from their evil Way, and be repented of the Evil that he had threatened, Jonah iii. 5—10. And there is yet a more express Text to this purpose, Rom. ii. 4. Dejpiesti therefore the Riches of his Goodness, and Forbearance, and Long-Suffering, not knowing that the Goodness of God leadeth thee to Repentance? And if God leads us to Repentance, by a Sense of his Goodness, surely he gives hope that our Repentance shall not be in vain: and tho', perhaps, I could not affirm it with Boldness, and Certainty by the meer Light of Reason, yet I may venture to declare, upon the Encouragement of these Scriptures, that if there should be found any Sinner in the Heathen World, who should be thus far wrought upon by a Sense of the Goodness of God, as to be led sincerely to repent of Sin, and seek after Mercy, God would find a way to make a Discovery of so much of the Gospel, as was necessary for him to know, rather than such a penitent Sinner should be left under Condemnation, or that a guilty Creature should go on to eternal Death in the way of Repentance. Cornelius the Centurion, who feared God, who pray'd God daily, and wrought Righteousness, according to the Light of his Conscience, had both an Angel and an Apostle sent to him, that he might receive more compleat Instruction in the Matters of his Salvation. Acts x. 1—6, and from 30—35.
4. This natural Knowledge of God, which is attainable by the Light of Nature, serves to vindicate the Conduct of God as a righteous Governor, in his severe Dealings with obstinate and wilful Sinners, both here and hereafter. This will leave them without excuse in the great Day, when God shall judge the Secrets of all Hearts. Their own Consciences will accuse them, and bear witness against them. Rom. i. 20, 21. and ii. 15. Is God unrighteous who taketh Vengeance on such Sinners? God forbid: for how then shall he judge the World? Rom. iii. 5, 6. As there have been many Instances of a righteous Providence, in the present Life, whereby the great God has already revealed his Wrath from Heaven against the Unrighteousness and Ungodliness of the Heathen World, Rom. i. 18. So in the World to come, not one condemn'd Sinner shall be able to say: God is unjust: Every Mouth shall be stopp'd, and the Heavens and the Earth proclaim his Righteousness, when he shall appear in his Son Jesus at the last Day, as the Judge of all Mankind:

5. This Knowledge of God by natural Light prepares the Way for preaching and receiving the Gospel of his Grace: and that it does many ways, (viz.) Unless Men are first acquainted that there is a God, who can make known his Mind and Will to Men, what Ground is there for preaching any Discoveries of his Mind and Will amongst them? Unless the Heathens are taught that he is a God of all Knowledge, and cannot be deceived himself; and that he is kind and good, true and faithful, and will not deceive his Creatures, how can they be persuaded to believe what he reveals? Unless they are instructed by the Light of Reason, that he is an Almighty God and the Lord of Nature, how can any Miracle give Testimony
timony to the Truth of what he reveals? for 'tis as the Sovereign Lord of Nature, that he sets the Seal of a Miracle to his divine Truths, a Miracle which is above the power of Nature to work.

Again, when Sinners, by the Light and Law of Nature in their own Consciences are laid under Conviction of Sin and Guilt, and they are in fear of the Wrath of God, they become more ready to receive the Gospel of Pardon and Salvation as Glad Tidings from Heaven.

We see the great Apostle St. Paul wisely managing his Ministry to the Athenians, of which we have but short Hints in Acts xvii. 22, &c. By discouraging first on Natural Religion, he comes at last to awaken Men to Repentance, and preaches Jesus with the Resurrection of the Dead and eternal Judgment, v. 31.

And agreeably to this Method of propagating the Gospel among the Heathen Nations, we find, in fact, that where there was any thing of the Knowledge of the true God, either by the Light of Nature, or by Tradition, there the Gospel was soonest received; the Minds of Men were better fitted and prepared for Faith in Christ the Son of God, by this Degree of Knowledge of God the Father. Those who in the Book of the Acts are styled the devout Persons, and such as feared God, they acknowledged the one Living and True God, and worshipped him; and they much more readily complied with the Gospel of Grace, and the Tidings of a Saviour, than the Idolaters who had these other Lessons to learn first.

Thus having shewn the various Uses of this Knowledge of God by the Light of Nature, I proceed in the
the Third place to consider, What are the Defects or Imperfections of it.

1. 'Tis but a small Portion of the things of God, which the bulk of Mankind can generally be supposed to learn merely by their own Reasonings. This is sufficiently evident by the History of past Times and ancient Nations, as well as by present Observation of the Heathen World. Tho' some of the Philosophers, particularly the Followers of Plato and Pythagoras, attain'd some considerable Knowledge of the Nature of God, and clearly saw his eternal Power and Godhead, as 'tis expres* Rom. i. 20. yet these were but very few in comparison of the rest of Men: the Bulk of Mankind, even in the learned Nations, as well as the rude and barbarous Countries, did actually know but little of the True God, or of their Duty towards him, or the Way of obtaining future Happiness.

2. The Light of Nature, even in those things which it did teach the Heathen World, is but dim and feeble, and leaves Mankind under many Doubts and Uncertainties in Matters of considerable Importance. A short Lesson of Knowledge in the Heathen Schools was obtain'd with long toil and difficulty: their Philosophy was rather a feeling after God in the dark, than a Sight of him in Day-light: so the Apostle expresses himself, when he is talking to the Athenians, who were the most learned of Mankind, Acts xvii. 27. That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him and find him. What feeble Words are these? how doubtful a Knowledge is represented by them? how wretchedly did their wise Men wander astray and bewilder themselves in their dark and blundering Searches after the True God? What endless Contests are found amongst them.
them, whether there was a God, and what was his Nature, and what was his Will, and what was their Duty? Into what gross Mistakes and shameful Fals­hoods did they plunge themselves, for want of a bet­ter Guide than their own Rea­sonings? and how ge­nerally, and almost without exception, did their Phi­losophers comply with the Idolatry of their Country, and worship’d God in the form of Beasts and Birds, and creeping Things, and changed the Truth of God into a Lye; or the True God into false and shameful Images. Rom. i. 23, 25.

Sometimes Appetite and Passion, Pride and Hu­mour spread a Mist over the Understanding of the Heathens; sometimes the Customs and Traditions of their Nation, the Authority of their Ancestors, or their Philosophers, or their own vile Prejudices, of various kinds, gave them a false Clue, and set them a running upon a wrong Scent: In other Places, the Tyranny of their Princes, and the Folly and super­stitious Madness of their Priests, either led, or drove them far away from the Truth. What shameful Vices were authorized by some of their great Men? Theft, in some places, was commended as a Feast of Dexterity, and Revenge as a point of Honour; while publick Robberies of Nations were the Glory of their Heroes. The Murder and Ravage of whole Countries, were allowed for the Enlargement of their Dominions; and the Blood of Kingdoms was made an Offering to the Ambition of Neighbour-Kings. In some Countries, the Youth and Flower of conquer’d Nations were doom’d a Sacrifice to their Idols; and sometimes filthy and a­bominable Lewdness were the Ceremonies of their Worship. How blind was the Eye of their Reason, not to see this Madness? and how feeble its Power,
that it made no Remonstrances against these Lewd and bloody Scenes of pretended Piety?

All these Instances indeed do not effectually prove, that Reason could not possibly teach them better; but the Experience of long Ages and of whole Nations, sufficiently shew us, that their Reason neither did inform them better, nor was ever likely to do it. Even the best of the Philosophers could give us but a sorry System of Religion compared with our Bible; so that St. Paul roundly expresses it, 1 Cor. i. 21. The World by Wisdom knew not God.

3. All the Knowledge of God which they arriv'd at, by the Light of Nature, had actually but little Influence to reform the Hearts or the Lives of Mankind. I say, it had but little Influence in comparison of what it might or should have had; for this Knowledge of God, which was attained by their own Reason, suffered the Gentile Nations to walk in their own ways, as my Text expresseth it, Acts xiv. 16. Wretched and perverse Ways of Idolatry and mad Superstition, with regard to God; and Falsity, Treachery, Hatred, Malice, Envy, towards their Fellow-Creatures. See the Iniquities numbered up in a large and detestable Catalogue, Rom. i. latter and end. The Histories of the Heathen World confirm these dismal Accounts given us by the sacred Writers, and enforce the Charge upon them with abundant Proof. And it is no wonder at all, that this Knowledge had so little Influence on the generality of Mankind, when so few of them ever attained it, when it was so imperfect as to the Discoveries of it, and so dim and feeble in its Evidences. It came into their Heads a little, but it reached not to their Hearts: or if it did touch them, 'twas but feebly, and with very small Authority, and was not enforced.
forced upon the Conscience with *Thus faith the Lord.* A single Sentence, with this Preface, has vastly greater Power on the Hearts and Consciences of Men, than whole Volumes of their dark uncertain Reasonings.

4. This Knowledge of God by the Light of Nature, doth rather serve to shew Men their Sin and Misery, than discover any effectual Relief; and in this respect, it comes infinitely short of what the Revelation of the Gospel of Christ hath done. It lays them under Guilt and a Sentence of Death in their own Consciences; but it discovers not the plain and certain Way of Salvation and Life: the Hope that it gives is but feeble, and there are but few who could spell it out *.

* This might be exemplify’d in several Particulars. The Light of Nature of itself gives no Assurance of Forgivness to the repenting Sinner; for the Repentance of Men is no Compensation to a holy God, to God as a Governor of the World, for their perpetual Rebellions against his Laws, and the daily Difhonour done to his Authority. Such Knowledge as the Ninevites had, Jonah ii. 9. when they said, *Who can tell but the Lord may turn away from his fierce Anger?* is but a feeble Motive to Repentance and new Obedience, in comparison of such a Word from God himfelf, as Exod. xxxiv. 6. *And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-fuffering, and abundant in Goodness and Truth, forgiving Iniquity, Transgression and Sin.* Prov. xxviii. 13. *He that confefeth and forsaketh his Sins, shall find mercy.*

The Light of Nature discovers no effectual Atonement for Sin, nor Relief to a guilty Conscience, by all the costly Sacrifices and Blood of Animals; but the Gospel points us to the Lamb of God that taketh away the Sins of the World, and assures us that if we confefs our Sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our Sins, and the Blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all Unrighteousness, John i. 29. and 1 Epift. i. 7. *

The Light of Nature points us to no effectual Mediator, or Advocate in Heaven; but the Gospel leads us to Jesus the righteous, as our Advocate with the Father, and by pardoning Grace, encourages us to love and obey a reconciled God, 1 John ii. 1, 2.

The Light of Nature, and our daily Experience, discover to us our Weakness to subdue Sin within us, to restrain our unruly Appetites, to mortify our corrupt Affections, to refist the daily Tempta-
Thus I have finished the three general Heads of my Discourse. I have shewn you as fully as such a narrow space of time would permit, that there is some Knowledge of God to be obtained by the Light of Nature; that this Knowledge is made subservient to some valuable Purposes in the Providence and Government of God; but that it hath such a variety of Imperfections and Defects, that considered in itself, it gives but feeble Influences to Repentance and Holiness, and very doubtful and uncomfortable Ground for a sure and satisfying Hope to rest upon.

I proceed to make a few Reflections on this Discourse.

Refl. 1. Since the rational Knowledge of God and natural Religion has its proper Uses, and especially to lay a Foundation for our receiving the Gospel of Christ, let it not be despised or abandoned by any of us. There may be some necessary Occasions for our recourse to it in a Day of Temptation, when our Faith of the Gospel may be try'd and shaken. The Gospel with all its Glories is built upon it as a solid

tions that surround us; but it points us not to the Fountain of Strength, even the promised Aids of the holy Spirit: these are the peculiar Glories and Blessings of the Gospel of Christ, which the Light of Nature could never reveal.

The Light of Nature and continual Observation shew us, that we must die, but give us no clear and certain Evidence of Happi-

ness after Death, for such sinful Creatures as we are, even in the midst of our Repentances: for since our daily Sins and Offences are so numerous, and the best of our Righteousnesses and Duties are so very defective, the Man of Virtue and Penitence might hope indeed to escape Punishment: but he might well doubt of any future Happiness, notwithstanding all the Comfort the Light of Nature could give him, or all the Discoveries it could make. But the Gospel sets these future Glories in a divine and certain Light before every Man, who reads or hears it. It encourages us to Repentance of Sin, to Diligence, Patience, and Perseverance, in the ways of Faith and Holiness, by the Joys unsurpassable, which are set before us, and builds our Hope of eternal Life on the well-attested Promises of a God, who cannot lie. and the Son of God who has Power given him to perform them all.
Ser. I. Its Uses and Defects.

Solid Foundation; and if these Foundations be destroyed or despised, we may be terribly shaken, and beat off from all our hope in some evil and unhappy Hour. This gives us a rational Ground for our Faith in God, and it is necessary in order to our Faith in Christ Jesus his Son. As St. Paul made glorious use of it in his Discourse with the Athenian Infidels, so we may be called by Providence to converse with Atheists and Unbelievers, and we should be furnished with the same Doctrines and Principles of Argument: for so far as they are just and true, they are divine, since they proceed from God, as the God of Nature who is the Author of our reasoning Powers, as well as of all the Revelations of Grace.

Refl. 2. Since this Knowledge of God, which is attainable by the Light of Nature, has so many Defects, let us never venture to rest in it. Dare not content yourselves with the Lessons of the Book of Nature, which are very imperfect and obscure, in comparison of the Discoveries of the Book of Grace. The Sun in the Firmament, with the Moon and all the Stars, can never give us that Light to see God, which is deriv'd from the Sun of Righteousness.

What a deplorable thing is it, that Multitudes in our Nation, where the Glory of the blessed Gospel shines with such brightness, should be running back to the glimmering Light of Nature, and satisfy themselves with Heathenism and Philosophy! that they should choose to walk in Twilight as the happiest and safest way, and refuse to be conducted by the Blaze of Noon, as though it were a deceitful and foolish Light! What an Affront against the Authority and Mercy of the God of Heaven to renounce his brightest Blessings!
Blessings! The God of this World hath blinded the Eyes of them who believe not; and we have reason to fear, he is leading them blindfold to eternal Darkness.

Refl. 3. Since the Nations, which have only the Light of Nature, are forced to feel out their Way to God through such dusky Glimmerings, let us bless the Lord with all our Souls, that we are born in Great Britain, a Land of clear Light, where the Gospel shines in its Beauty and Power, and surrounded with various Evidences; a Land where the Book of Grace lies open before us, as well as the Book of Nature, to teach us the Knowledge of God and his Salvation. Let us say within ourselves, And why was not I born a poor, ignorant African, a wild Indian, ignorant of God, and averse to seek after him, and without any Person near me to give me one Beam of Light, and point out my way to Happiness? Why was not I left merely to the dumb and silent Lectures of the Heavens, and the Earth and Sea, or the Instruction of the Trees, and Plants and Beasts of the Earth, to teach me the Knowledge of him that made me? Who am I, that I should be brought into Being in the midst of Sun-Beams, and not in a Region of thick Darkness under the Shadow of Death? Everlasting Glory be given to distinguishing Grace.

O how should we value the Bible as our highest Treasure, which gives us such blessed Discoveries of God and his Wieldom and Power, and his Mercy in Christ, which infinitely exceeds all the doubtful Twilight of Nature, and our own Powers of Reasoning. O may the blessed Bible lie next our Heart, and be the Companion of our Bosoms! 'Tis this lays a sure Foundation for our Recovery from all our Guilt,
Guilt, and Ruin and Wretchedness. You that have any Concern for your eternal Interests, love the Bible, walk by the Rules of it, and live upon its promised Grace; and I dare pronounce, in the Name of God and his Son, that you shall be for ever happy.

Ref. 4. Pity and pray for the Heathen World, the dark Corners of the Earth, the benighted Nations, where the Sun of Righteousness never rose, and where they can but feel after God thro' the Mist of Ignorance and Error. Let us remember those ancient times when our Forefathers in this Nation were led away into the same Errors and gross Idolatries, and exercise our Compassion toward those who are still left under the same Darkness. Now and then, O Christians, send a pathetick Sigh over the Nations, lift up one compassionate Groan to Heaven for them, and say, When shall the Day come, O Lord, that the Heathens shall become thy Worshipers, and Assyria and Ethiopia thy People? When wilt thou reveal thyself to the poor African Idolaters and the savage Tribes of America, that know not God? When shall the Ends of the Earth learn to know thee, and rejoice in Jesus thy Son the Saviour? When shall all Nations, People and Languages, begin their Songs of Salvation to him that sits upon the Throne, and to the Lamb, who has redeemed us with his own Blood? To him be Dominion and Glory for ever and ever. Amen.
SERMON II.

The Divine Authority, and Perfection of the Holy Scriptures.

2 TIM. III. 16.

All Scripture is given by Inspiration of God, and is profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, and Instruction in Righteousness.

The Divine Authority of the Holy Scriptures, and their Sufficiency to Salvation, is an Article of the highest Importance, as it is the Foundation on which all the peculiar Doctrines of Revelation are built: We ought therefore to be well established in this Truth before we call ourselves Christians.

There are but two possible Ways of acquiring the Knowledge of the Mind of God, and these are Reason and Revelation: Reason is that noble Faculty of the Soul, by which Man is distinguished from all inferior Orders of Creatures, and made capable of moral Government. When our first Parents were in a State of Innocence, this alone was sufficient to acquaint them with every part of their Duty; but upon their Disobedience it was so far eclipsed, that from this time, the World, with all its Wisdom, has neither been fully acquainted with the Per-
Perfections of the True God, nor with the right and acceptable Manner of worshipping him; as appears from the History of those Ages and Nations, which have not had the Advantage of Revelation. The Apostle Paul speaking of the Gentile World, says, they changed the Glory of the incorruptible God into an Image made like corruptible Man, and to Birds and Beasts, and Creeping Things; that they changed the Truth of God into a Lye, and worshipped the Creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever, Rom. i. 23, &c. He admits they had some little Acquaintance with God, but not sufficient to direct their Practice; for even at Athens the most learned City of Greece, there was an Altar with this Inscription, To the unknown God. If we look abroad into the barbarous Nations of India, Africa, and America, at this day, we shall find them buried in Ignorance and Superstition. How little do they know of the Nature and Perfections of the one Living and True God, and of his reasonable Service! and how dim are the Remains of natural Light, with regard to the Terms of Acceptance with him! all which demonstrates the Necessity and Usefulness of a divine Revelation, or of that clear and bright Discovery of his Will, contain’d in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, which, according to the Apostle, in my Text, are given by Inspiration of God, and are profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, and Instruction in Righteousness.

In discoursing on these Words, I shall endeavour to prove,

First, That the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are given by Inspiration of God. Secondly,
Secondly, That they are sufficient to make us wise unto Salvation. And,

Thirdly, That they are perspicuous and clear in Points of the greatest Consequence.

First, I am to prove, that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are given by Inspiration of God. By the Scriptures, the Apostle, in our Text, means chiefly the Old Testament, for the Canon of the New was not yet finished; and by their being inspir'd, that those ancient Prophecies came not by the Will of Man, but holy Men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

Now, in order to judge, whether Persons are inspir'd, we must carefully enquire into their moral Character; into their Doctrine, or Message; and into the Credentials or Proofs of their Mission.

1. We must enquire into their moral Character: Are they virtuous and holy Persons? For tho' God may put a few Words into the Lips of a wicked Man, upon some very particular Occasion, as he did into the Mouth of Balaam; yet the Messengers of his Grace have been usually, Men eminent for their Piety towards God, and for their Honesty and universal Integrity towards all Men. These dare not deceive, or deliver any thing as a Revelation from God, but what they are fully satisfied they have received from him. The good Character of a Prophet gives a very considerable Weight to his Message; whereas we cannot with safety rely upon the Testimony of wicked Men. If a Pretender to Inspiration should denounce some remarkable Judgment to be inflicted speedily upon the Inhabitants of London, for the crying Sins of Drunkenness and Sodom; and should himself be notoriously guilty of those
Ser. II. Perfection of the Scriptures. 27

those Vices; it is not reasonable to suppose they should give Credit to his Message, or receive him as a Prophet sent from God: and therefore the disolute and wicked Life of the Impostor Mahomet is sufficient alone to discredit all his Pretences to Inspiration.

2. We must examine into their Doctrine, whether it be of God or from themselves. Is the Doctrine they teach according to Godliness? tending to promote Piety towards God, and universal Benevolence and Good-will towards Men? Or does it indulge Licentiousness or any of the hidden Works of Dishonesty? A divine Revelation must have a Tendency to promote divine Knowledge and Virtue, not only by teaching Men to deny Ungodliness and worldly Lusts, but also to live soberly, righteously, and godly in the World. Again, are the Doctrines that pretend to Inspiration suited to support the superior Dignity of God above Men? Do they exalt the Divine Glory and Majesty, and abase the Creature so far, as that no Flesh should glory in his sight? Are they consistent with right Reason? For tho' a divine Revelation may contain many sublime and incomprehensible Truths, which our shallow Capacities will never reach, yet 'tis impossible it should declare any thing that is absurd, or directly contrary to Reason, the great Glory of the Human Nature; because this would be to suppose the All-wise God to set up one Light, with a design to extinguish and put out another.

3. We must consider the Credentials, or external Proofs of their Mission; which are principally these two, Miracles, and the Fulfilment of Prophecy. There can be no stronger Evidence of a Divine Mission, than the working Miracles, when Moses was sent
fent with a Message to Pharaoh, to let the Children of Israel go out of Egypt, the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, When Pharaoh shall speak to you, saying, 

Shew a Miracle, then take your Rod, and cast it upon the Ground, and it shall become a Serpent.

Exodus vii. 9. By which it appears, that in those early Times Miracles were esteemed a convincing Proof of a Divine Mission. In like manner, our Blessed Saviour appeals, upon all Occasions, to his Miracles. When John the Baptist sent to enquire of him, Whether he was the Christ? He replies, Go tell your Master, that the Blind receive their Sight, and the Lame walk, and the Lepers are cleansed, and the Deaf hear, the Dead are raised, and the Poor receive the Gospel. Mat. xi. 5. How often did he point the Scribes and Pharisees to his mighty Works, as well as his own Disciples? John xiv. 11. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me, or else believe me for the very Work sake. As if he had said, "If you dare not rely upon my Word, give credit to the Miracles I have done among you. Whatever Suspicions you may entertain of my Veracity, there can be no Deceit in my Works. Can any Man do the Miracles I have done, except God was with him?"

The other external Proof of an inspired Person, is the Fulfilment of Prophecy. No meer Man can foretel what shall be on the Morrow, much less in Ages far remote. This is the sole Prerogative of the great God; as he alone searches and tries the Reins and the Heart, so he only can foretel the End from the Beginning. When therefore a Prophet speaks in the Name of the Lord, if the Thing follow not, nor come to pass, the Lord has not spoken by him, but the Prophet has spoken presumptuously; Deut. xviii. 22.

But
But if the thing come to pass, 'tis probable he was mov'd by the Holy Ghost.

Now all these Marks and Characters of Inspiration are no where so conspicuous as in the holy Scriptures. Moses, David, Solomon, Daniel, and the rest of the Prophets, were pious and upright Men, and 'tis no inconsiderable Proof of their Integrity, that they have left their own Faults and Infirmities upon Record. Their Doctrines are reasonable, just, and good, tending to promote the Glory of God and the Happiness of Men, in the Practice of true Virtue and Righteousness. What sublime Strains of Devotion are in the Psalms of David! What excellent Rules for the Conduct of Life in the Writings of King Solomon! And how glorious does the God of Israel shine throughout all the Prophets! How kind and gracious are his Promises, how awful his Threatnings! and how wonderfully is His Majesty supported by the numerous Representations, of the infinite Distance and Disproportion between him and his Creatures! These holy Men believed themselves inspir'd; for they tell us, the Word of the Lord came unto them at such a time; and when they speak, it is not in their own Names, but Thus faith the Lord. Upon these Evidences the Church of the Jews were so well satisfy'd with their Credentials, as to receive their Writings into the Canon, or Rule of their Faith; but we who live in these last Ages, have an additional Reason for our Faith which they could not have, (viz.) the Fulfilment of most of their Prophecies in the Person and Kingdom of the Messiah. If all these Arguments are duly weighed and put together, they must be sufficient to convince all reasonable Enquirers after Truth, that the Scriptures of the Old Testament were given by Inspiration of God.

The
The Divine Authority, and

The Case is different with respect to the Books of Apocrypha, so called from a Greek Word, which signifies hidden, because their Authors were not known, nor are the Proofs of their Mission upon Record; for which reasons their Writings were not received into the Canon of the Jewish Church: And tho' the Books of Apocrypha contain several good Rules of Morality, yet since some things in them are fabulous, and others evidently contradictory to Truth, as well as to many Parts of Holy Scripture, they ought not to be put upon a Level with the inspir'd Writings, by being read publickly in the Church.

But with regard to the New Testament, the Evidence of its divine Authority is as strong as the Nature of things will admit. The Apostle to the Hebrews tells us, that God, who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake to the Fathers by the Prophets, has in these last Days spoken to us by His Son. So that if Jesus Christ is the Son of God, it will certainly follow, that his Doctrine could be no other than a divine Revelation. And this appears in so many Prophecies of the Old Testament, which point directly to the time and manner of his Incarnation, to the Course of his Life, and the particular Circumstances of his Death, that one would wonder the Jews should dare to deny him. It was prophesied of the Messiah, that he should be incarnate before the Sceptre departed from Judah, or a Lawgiver from between his Feet; that he should be born of a Virgin, that he should be of the Seed of David, and of the Tribe of Judah; that the Place of his Nativitv should be Bethlehem a Village of Judea; that his Name should be Immanuel; that he should appear in the form of a Servant, and after a mean and contemptible Life, should be betray'd by one of his own
own Household, and cut off for the Sins of the People. It was therefore with the highest Reason, that our Saviour upbraided his Country-men and Disciples for their Unbelief in him, and for their Ignorance of the Scriptures, in these Words: O Fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the Prophets have spoken. Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his Glory? Luke xxiv. 25, 26.

Besides, how illustriously do the other Characters of Inspiration, already mention'd, shine forth in the Person of Christ; who was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from Sinners; whose Doctrines were so rational and sublime, that the People wondered at the gracious Words that proceeded out of his Mouth, and enquired whence has this Man all his Learning and Knowledge? The Miracles which he wrought in confirmation of his Doctrine were so clear and surprizing, that nothing but the extreme In obstinacy and Malice could withstand their Evidence; they were performed in the open View of all the People, and were so frequently repeated, that if they were all to be recorded, one of the Evangelists supposes, the World would hardly contain the Books that should be written. John xxi. 25. Is it possible, after all this, to suppose, that such a Person could be an Impostor, or capable of imposing upon Mankind? If the Facts of the New Testament may be believed, there can be no stronger Proof than is there to be found, that Jesus is the Messiah, the only-begotten Son of God, and that the Doctrines which he taught were not his own, (as he expresses it) but his Father's that sent him.

But forasmuch as there were many Doctrines necessary to be known, which the Apostles of our blessed Saviour could not receive from him in his State
The Divine Authority, and

State of Humiliation and Suffering; he therefore promised after his Ascension into Heaven, to inspire them with the extraordinary Gifts of the Holy Spirit, whereby they should be led into all Truth, and qualified to declare to the Gentiles the whole Counsel of God. Accordingly on the Day of Pentecost, when the Apostles were gathered together in one Place, the Holy Ghost came upon them, and enabled them, not only to speak divers Languages, but to confirm the Doctrines they taught with Signs and Wonders. Now, if the Apostles of Christ had ever the Gift of Inspiration, it must certainly be when they were writing their Gospels and Epistles for the Service of the Church, in future Ages; and 'tis plain, they apprehended themselves under the Conduct of an infallible Spirit at that time, because when they had not an express Revelation from Christ for what they wrote, they fairly and honestly tell us so: as 1 Cor. vii. 10, 12, 25. To the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord. To the rest, speak I, not the Lord. But concerning Virgins, I have no Command from the Lord; yet I give my Judgment, as one that has obtained Mercy of the Lord to be faithful. To all which we may add, the holy and mortified Lives of the Apostles, so agreeable to their Doctrine: the uncommon Marks of Integrity that appear in their Writings, together with the sublime and heavenly Truths contain'd in them, which had the most direct Tendency to destroy the Works of the Devil, and to promote undissimuled Piety and Sanctity of Life; the Miracles they wrought, and the Witness they bare to the Truth of what they had written and preached by their patient and courageous Martyrdom: all which Considerations are sufficient to silence the Objections of Unbelievers, and to give a rational
Ser. II. Perfection of the Scriptures. rational Satisfaction to all unprejudic’d Minds, that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are a divine Revelation.

Secondly, We come now to shew the Perfection or Sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures. It is said in the preceding Verse, that they are able to make us wise to Salvation; and in the Words of my Text, that they are profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, and Instrucion in Righteousness. By the Sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures, we mean, that they contain all things necessary to be believed and practised: The Law of Moses was so compleat a Direction of the Faith and Obedience of the Jews, that the Additions of the Scribes and Pharisees were both useles and vain, and are condemned as such, by our Saviour, Math. xv. 9. In like manner the Writings of the New Testament are a perfect Standard to us Christians; for all things that our Blessed Lord heard of his Father, he made known to his Apostles, and the Apostles made them known to the Churches, Acts xx. 26, 27. I take you to record, that I have not shunned to declare to you the whole Counsel of God; which Counsel remains for our Service in the Books of the New Testament: and ’tis probable that the Curses denounced against those who add to, or take from the Prophecy of the Book of the Revelations, were designed as an awful Guard upon all the inspired Writings. If any Man shall add to these Things, God shall add to him the Plagues that are written in this Book; and if any Man shall take away from the Words of this Prophecy, God shall take away his Part out of the Book of Life, and out of the holy City, and from the Things that are written in this Book. Methinks, such a solemn Threat-
 Threatening should strike Terror into the Hearts of those who pretend to supply the Defects of Revelation, by their unwritten Traditions.

But the Perfection of the Holy Scriptures may be further illustrated from the Particulars in my Text. As,

1. They are profitable for Doctrine, to acquaint us with our lost and miserable Condition by the Entrance of Sin into the World, and the Train of fatal Consequences that attended it; with our Recovery by Christ: The Covenants of Redemption and Grace; the Offices of Father, Son and Spirit, in the Work of our Redemption, and with all those other Mysteries, which were kept secret since the World began; but are now made manifest by the Holy Scriptures for the Obedience of Faith. Rom. xvi. 26.

2. For Reproof; or the Discovery of our pernicious Errors in Doctrine and Practice. When the Gospel was first preached among the Idolatrous Nations, their dumb Idols were thrown down, and their superstitious Vanities fled before it, as the Shadows of the Night before the Rising Sun. The Scriptures are now the Standard of Truth, and if Men preach not agreeable thereto, 'tis because there is no Light in them. A Text of Scripture rightly explained and apply'd, is as full a Confutation of Error to a Christian, as a Mathematical Demonstration to a Philosopher. Thus our Saviour confuted the Tempter; It is written, thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God: and thus every honest Christian may guard himself against dangerous Mistakes, by attending to the Directions of his Bible.

3. The Scriptures are profitable for Correction of Vice and Wickedness; Wherewithal (says the Psalmist) should a young Man cleanse his Way, but by taking heed thereto according to the Word of God? There we
we have a Collection of all Christian Graces and Duties, with their opposite Vices: The Fruits of the Spirit, and of the Flesh, are distinguished with the greatest Propriety; and the most engaging Motives to the Practice of the One, and awful Threatnings against the Other, are represented with the greatest strength and advantage.

4. For *Instruction in Righteousness*. That is, either in the Righteousness of God, which is by Faith of Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all, that believe; or in the Practice of moral Righteousness, the Nature and Excellency of which is better explain'd and illustrated in the Sermons of our Blessed Saviour, than in all the Writings of the antient Philosophers.

The Precepts of the Bible are so many excellent Rules for an holy Life, and the Promises are divine Encouragements to it: *Having therefore these Promises, Dearly Beloved, (says the Apostle) let us cleanse ourselves from all manner of Filthiness of Flesh and Spirit*; 2 Cor. vii. 1. In a word, the Holy Scriptures are sufficient to all the Purposes of Religion; so that the Man of God, that duly regards them, may be perfect and thoroughly furnished for every good Work.

III. The last thing I proposed was, to consider the Clearness and Perspicuity of the Holy Scriptures. One Reason why the Papists deny the Use of the Bible to the common People, is, because there are some things in it hard to be understood; and it must be owned, there are sublime Speculations, which may employ the Thoughts of the most learned Enquirer after Truth; as well as the deep things of God, which the Angels are desirous to look into: but then there are also the Principles of

D 2
The Divine Authority, and

the Doctrine of Christ; that is, the Milk of the Word, or the softest and gentlest Food which is fit for Babes, as the other is for strong Men. The Doctrines of greatest Consequence, such as Repentance towards God, and Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ; the Certainty of a future State; of the Resurrection of the Dead, and of a Judgment to come, are most clearly revealed. The Duties of the first and second Table summarily comprehended in these two; the Love of God, and of our Neighbour; together with the Necessity of universal Holiness, Charity and Good Works, run through the whole of the New Testament, and are placed in so strong a Light, that Persons of the meanest Capacities cannot but understand them. But there are two Arguments, which may further demonstrate this Truth.

1. The Holy Scriptures were written in the Vulgar Language, and therefore designed for the Use of the common People. The Old Testament was written in the Language of the Jewish Nation, and a Portion of it read in their Synagogues every Sabbath-day. The New Testament was written in Greek, which was then the most universal Language; and St. Paul's Epistles were read in the Churches. Now can we suppose, that the Scriptures should be read to the common People, and they not capable to understand them? Could not the Spirit of God write clearly; or would he not? To say the former, is Blasphemy; and to affirm the latter, is in effect to say, the Scriptures are no Revelation to the Churches: for if they cannot understand them after their best Enquiries, they might almost as well have been without them.

2. Our Saviour, in his Sermons to the People, appeals to the Scriptures, and exhorts his Countrymen
men the Jews to search them. Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal Life. John v. 39. 'The noble Bereans are commended for this Practice, Acts xvii. 11. and young Timothy appears to have been acquainted with them from his Childhood. If then it be proper to teach our Children the Scriptures; and if it be the Duty of grown Persons to search them; it must follow, that they are sufficiently clear in all Points necessary to Salvation.

It remains now that we make a few practical Remarks on this Discourse.

1. Hence we may learn, that the Religion of a Christian should be his Bible; because it contains the whole revealed Will of God, and is a perfect Rule of Faith and Practice. 'Tis also a more sure Word of Prophecy, or a more infallible Guide than the unwritten Traditions of Men, or the uncertain Deductions of natural Reason. A plain Christian, by Prayer and diligent Reading, may understand as much of it as is necessary, without the Assistance of learned Criticisms, or modern Pretenders to Inspiration. All Encroachments on the sacred Canon are dangerous. If we, (says the Apostle) or an Angel from Heaven, preach any other Gospel let him be accursed, Galat. i. 8, 9. How unreasonable then is the Practice of the Church of Rome, which, by denying the Scriptures to the People, takes away the Key of Knowledge, and shuts up the Kingdom of Heaven against Men? God has graciously given us a Revelation of his Will; but these Men withhold it from us, and will oblige us to believe as they direct: as if the Revelation was designed only for the Priests of the Church of Rome, and not for the rest of Mankind.

2. Let us be thankful that we have the Scriptures in the Vulgar Language. Christianity was professed a
a thousand Years in this Island before the Bible was translated into English. This was one of the peculiar Blessings of the Reformation; there was then a mighty Thirst after Christian Knowledge; a Leaf of the Bible being an invaluable Treasure. How happy then are we, who may read the Scriptures in our Houses, and hear them expounded in our publick Assemblys! How thankful would the Protestants of Poland, France, Hungary, Saltzburgh, and other Countries under the Dominion of Papal Tyranny, be for such a Privilege! who are taking joyfully the spoiling of their Goods, and content to suffer the Loss of all Things for it.

3. Let Christians of all Ranks and Capacities revive this neglected Duty of reading the Scriptures in their Families and Closets: 'tis both a delightful and useful Employment. Whatever things were written aforetime (says the Apostle Paul) were written for our learning; not only for us Apostles, but for others, who are weak and unstable, that we thro' Patience and Comfort of the Scriptures, might have Hope. Let us recommend it also to our Children, that instead of being conversant with Plays and Romances, many of which have an unhappy Tendency to debauch the Mind, they would acquaint themselves with the Holy Scriptures. Encourage them to read the History of the Bible for their Entertainment, and to study the Doctrines and Duties of it, for the forming their Minds to Religion and Virtue. It was enjoined the Israelites, upon their coming out of Egypt into the Land of Canaan, that they should not only love the Lord their God, but the Words which I command thee this Day (says God) shall be in thine Heart, and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy Children, and shalt talk of them when
when thou sittest in thine House, and when thou walkest by the Way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up; and thou shalt bind them for a Sign upon thy Hand, and they shall be as Frontlets between thine Eyes, and thou shalt write them on the Posts of thy House, and on thy Gates. Deut. vi. 5, 6, 7. How delightful and pleasant must it be for religious Parents, to see their little Children speaking the Language of Scripture; and impressing their tender Minds with the Truths contained in the sacred Oracles? I have observed this with pleasure in those foreign Protestants, whose Lot has been cast in Pophish Countries, where the People are forbid to read the Scriptures; and most of us must have seen the Refugees from those Countries, with their Wives and Little-ones, going into Banishment with nothing but their Bibles, admonishing and encouraging one another in their Distresses, with Psalms, and Hymns, and spiritual Songs, ;It would be happy for England, and a Presage for Good to the rising Generation, if this neglected Duty was revived in Families; for Christians can never be too well acquainted with their Bibles. Has God given us a Revelation from Heaven, and shall we hardly ever look into it? What an Affront is this to the Divine Majesty, and how great an Injury to our own Souls; and what abundant Reason have such to fear, that this will be their Condemnation hereafter, that Light came into the World, but they loved Darkness rather than Light, because their Deeds were evil?

4. When we read the Scriptures, let us consider them not as the Words of Men, but as in deed and truth the Word of God. If some things are above our Capacities, let us remember the Apostle's Expression, that the Foolishness of God is wiser than Man. We
We must submit our Reason to Revelation, and believe the Doctrines contained in our Bibles, if we have no other Reasons but because we find them there. Are there Mysteries in Nature, and in Philosophy; why then should we stumble at Mysteries in Religion? Let us read the Scriptures therefore with Reverence, and endeavour to understand them, as well as we can, by comparing spiritual Things with spiritual; and if every Truth is not level to our Capacities, let us not cavil, and find Fault, but as far as we have attained walk by the same Rule, and then in due time God will reveal even this unto us.

5. In judging of Controversies among Christians, let us not be carried away by the Authority of great Names, or the Numbers of them that are on one side; but keep close to the Scriptures. If our first Reformers had acquiesced in the Authority of the Church, we had been in Popish Darkness to this day; but they searched the Scriptures, and compared the received Doctrines of the Church with the Word of God. Let us follow their Example, and we shall not mistake in Things of Importance to Salvation. Catechisms and Forms of found Words, may be of great Service to young Professors; but these are not the Standard of Faith, nor to be received as of divine Authority. Councils and Fathers, and Synods, may be mistaken in their Decrees; but the Word of God is infallible. Here we are safe, and nowhere else.

6. When we read the Scriptures, let us pray for the Instructions and Teachings of the Holy Spirit; whose Office it is to remove the Prejudices, and enlighten the Understandings of those who are truly sincere: for 'tis not sufficient, that the Light of the Gospel shines around us, unless the Spirit of God, who
who once commanded Light to shine out of Darkness, shines into our Hearts, to give us the Light of the Knowledge of the Glory of God in the face of Christ. We read frequently of the Spirit’s opening Men’s Eyes, and turning them from Darkness to Light, as well as of his opening the Scriptures. We have them both together. Luke xxiv. 32, 45. Did not our Hearts burn within us (say the Disciples) while he talk’d with us in the Way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures? and (ver. 45.) Then opened he their Understandings, that they might understand the Scriptures. In like manner, the Lord is said to open the Heart of Lydia; and, I believe, there is no Christian, who is savagely illuminated, but has been more or less under his divine and heavenly Influences. When therefore we read or meditate on the Word of God, let us attend it with some short Prayer, that the Spirit of Truth may lead us into all Truth, and impress it so far upon our Minds and Consciences, that by beholding as in a Glass the Glory of the Lord, we may be changed into the same Likeness, and may be declared to be the Epistle of Christ, written not with Ink, but with the Finger of the Living God, in the fleshly Tables of our Hearts. Then shall we certainly be made wise to Salvation, and like Scribes fitted for the Kingdom of Heaven, be able to bring out of our Treasury things new and old. I conclude this Discourse with the Prayer of the Psalmist David, Psal. cxix. 18. Lord, open our Eyes, that we may behold the wondrous things out of thy Law.
SERMON III.
Of God, and his Natural Perfections.

John IV. 24.
God is a Spirit.

The Existence of God, and several of his Perfections, open themselves with shining Evidence in his Works, and in his Word: but the Manner of his Existence, and the Eminence of his Perfections, as they really exist in him, are wrapp'd up in thick and awful Darkness, as a Pavilion round about him. These are far, infinitely far, above the reach, not only of ours, but of all created Minds; for, who by searching can find out God, who can find out the Almighty to perfection? Job xi. 7. We can easier say what he is not, than what he is; and the best Ideas we have of God, are much more in a negative way, by removing all Imperfection from him, than in a positive way, by Sentiments answerable to the high Perfections that are in him: O may he assist our Thoughts, lest we darken Counsel by Words without Knowledge, while we speak concerning him!

In the Description our Text gives of God, the Terms, God and Spirit, are not to be taken as personal Characters, as if they were distinctive of the Father, who was spoken of in the foregoing Verse,
or were to be appropriated and confined to him, in
distinction from the Son and Holy Ghost; for they are
God together with the Father; and the Term Spirit,
when apply'd in Scripture by way of distinction to
any one Person in the Godhead, is usually appro-
priated to the Holy Ghost. We are therefore to con-
sider this Proposition as descriptive of the Divine Be-
ing, and declaring to us the Nature of God, that
he is a Spirit: And this suits our blessed Lord's Design
in alleging it, as an Argument why the Father re-
quires spiritual Worship, viz. that no other Worship
can be answerable to the Nature of God, because
he is a Spirit.

In farther discoursing on this Subject, we shall
humbly attempt to shew,

I. That there is but one God, or one Divine
Being.

II. That this God is a Spirit, or that he is a Spirit-
tual Being.

III. That he is an infinitely perfect Spirit, and so is
distinguished, in a transcendent manner, from all
other Spirits.

Let us begin with the first of these; which is,
I. That there is but one God, or one Divine Being.

The necessary and eternal Distinction of three Per-
fons in the Godhead, goes into the Province of an-
other of my Brethren: It may be sufficient to observe
for the present, that while we suppose the sacred
Three to be subsisting in the one only Godhead, all
partaking of its Nature and essential Properties, with-
out Division or Separation, their personal Distinction
is by no means inconsistent with the Unity of God;
whereas, to suppose them different in their Natures
and
Of God, and his

and essential Properties, is to break in upon that Unity, and must make more Gods than one. But that there is only one God, is the concurring Language of the genuine Light of Nature, and of Scripture-Revelation. We are led into this Sentiment,

1. By the Light of Nature.

The very Notion it gives us of a God, and the very same Arguments by which it proves that there is a God, must, if duly pursued, necessarily lead us into the Thought, that there can be no more Gods than one; for there can be but one necessarily existent Being, one first Cause, one absolutely infinite, one supreme; it is a Contradiction to suppose otherwise. Hence tho' the rude unthinking Multitude among the Pagans were led, perhaps chiefly by the wild Fictions of their Poets, into the absurd Notion of Gods many and Lords many; yet the soberer and wiser of their Philosophers had their Jupiter optimus maximus, their one supreme God, and all the rest were look'd upon but as petty Deities; and multitudes of these were once mortal Men upon Earth, who were supposed to be highly in favour with God, on the account of some eminent Virtues, or publick Usefulness to Mankind. Their most celebrated Writers go into this way of representing things; and it is notorious, that Socrates fell a Sacrifice to Athenian Fury, for asserting the Doctrine of one God, tho' it is said that he meanly betrayed the noble Cause for which he suffered, by ordering a Cock to be sacrificed to Æsculapius at his death. But we are still more abundantly assured of this important Doctrine,

2. By Scripture-Revelation.

The Great and Blessed God himself has given us the clearest Evidence of his Unity in his Word; this knows of no Distinction between a supreme and subordinate
ordinate God, in any proper Sense of the Term, or of any more Gods than one: He says of himself, I, even I am he, and there is no God with me, Deut. xxxii. 39. Before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me; If. xliii. 10. I am the first, and I am the last, and beside me there is no God; If. xliv. 6. And the sacred Writers, under divine Inspiration, have said of him, The Lord he is God, there is none else besides him, Deut. iv. 35. And, Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord, Deut. vi. 4. And, Thou art great, says the Psalmist, and dost wondrous Things; thou art God alone. Pf. lxxxvi. 10.

All this is evidently brought over by our Lord Jesus Christ into the Doctrine of the New Testament: He told the Scribe, that came to question him about his Religion, The first of all the Commandments is, Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord, Mark xii. 29. And he spoke with high Approbation of the Answer returned to this, in which the Scribe said to him; Well, Master, thou hast said the Truth; for there is one God, and there is none other but he. Verse 32, 34. Many other Passages of the Old and New Testament, might be added to this purpose; but what has been said may suffice for the first thing. We now go on to the next in order, which is,

II. That this God is a Spirit, or that he is a Spiritual Being.

God is a Spirit. This, as has been observed, relates to the Nature of God: And as a Spirit is the most excellent of Beings, that we have any Notions of, God is represented under this Character to heighten our Thoughts of him. We indeed know but little of the Nature of Spirits; the most of our Acquain-
Acquaintance with them lies in the Consciousness we have of our own Souls, which all allow to be the noblest Part of the Man. And the most natural, obvious Thought that arises in our Minds about a Spirit is, that it is an incorporeal and invisible Being, with Life and Action, Understanding and Will.

Let us then a little consider these by Pairs, as applicable to God.

1. He is incorporeal and invisible.

All corporeal Beings consist of Parts, and so are in their own Nature capable of Separation or Dissolution, of Alterations, Additions, or Dimensions, and of different Figures, Sizes, Shapes or Forms; but all this argues Composition and Impefection, utterly inconsistent with the Simplicity and Perfection of God, and with the Nature of Spirits, which have not Flesh and Bones, nor any thing that can be the Object of our Touch, or Sight, or other bodily Senses.

God can indeed, by his infinite Power, make what visible Appearances he pleases, as he did in various Forms, under the Old Testament, and at Christ's Baptism and Transfiguration, in the New; but these were not Appearances of the Essence of God itself, they were only outward Symbols, which he occasionally formed to notify his Presence for special purposes: But as to his own Nature or Essence, he is the invisible God, whom no Man has seen, or can see, Col: i. 15. and 1 Tim. vi. 16. Accordingly our Lord says of his Father, Ye have neither heard his Voice at any time, nor seen his Shape; John v. 37.

Whenever therefore we read in Scripture, of any Representations of God, as having Eyes, Ears, Hands, Feet and a Mouth; or as seeing, hearing, working, walking, speaking, and the like, we are by no means to
to imagine, that he hath such bodily Organs, or acts by them; for, To whom will you liken God, or what Likeness will ye compare unto him? If. xl. 18. No human, or other, Forms, can give us any Image or Likeness of his Nature, who is a Spirit: But all such Modes of speaking are to be understood in a figurative Style, as Accommodations to our sensitive and imperfect Ways of conceiving things, to intimate, that there are all the Powers in God, to which those answer, that we use to exert, by such bodily Organs and Actions. Hence,

2. He lives and acts, or is a Being that has Life and Action.

A Spirit, in the properest Notion of it, without Life, and Activity, is a sort of inconsistent Idea; and it must be most of all so, when applied to God, the most exalted of all Spirits: He is usually stiled, by way of Eminence, the Living God; he has Life in himself; and with him is the Fountain of Life; John v. 26. Pf. xxxvi. 9. All the Life of the vegetative, animal, and rational World, the Life of Nature, and the Life of Grace here, and the Life of Glory hereafter, are of him, and derived from him; and therefore certainly he himself must live.

And as he is a living, so he is an active Spirit: he is ever active within himself, in the Communion of the Sacred Three with each other in the one undivided Godhead, and in their eternal Counsels about all things else; ever active in the Thoughts of his Heart, in the Knowledge and Enjoyment of himself, in his Purposes and Designs to display his own Glory, and particularly the Riches of the Glory of his Grace, in and through a Redeemer; and ever active in his utmost Complacency in all these.

And
Of God, and his

And he is ever capable of acting ad extra, or out of himself, whenever he pleases: This Capacity ever was in him before any Creature was formed, otherwise he could never have begun to form them, as he did in the first Creation of all Things; and since that time, he hath been, is, and ever will be, incessantly active, in upholding, exciting, or restraining, guiding and governing all that he has made, to the Glory of his own great Name; for, Of him, through him, and to him, are all things, to whom be Glory for ever. Amen. Rom. xi. 36. Hence,

3. He has an Understanding and Will.

Had not God an Understanding, he could never have designed any thing; and had he not a Will, he could never have determined upon the Execution of any Design: He must have been a necessary Agent, or rather, no Agent at all. But, How manifold are his Works! in Wisdom has he made them all. Ps. civ. 24. And he works all things after the Counsell of his own Will, Eph. i. 11. He is wonderful in Counsell, and excellent in Working, If. xxviii. 29. And he does according to his Will, in the Army of Heaven, and among the Inhabitants of the Earth; Dan. iv. 35.

We might add another natural Notion of a Spirit, which is, that it is immortal; but this will more properly fall under the next general Head, to which we now proceed, and that is,

III. That God is an infinitely perfect Spirit, and so is distinguished, in a transcendent manner, from all other Spirits.

By his being an infinitely perfect Spirit, we may understand, that he is a Spirit posses’d of all possible Perfections, of every kind; or of all Perfections that infinitely surpass the most exalted Thoughts of Men or
or Angels, and that admit of no Limitation, Measure, or Bounds. These Perfections, as far as we know any thing of them, are usually called his Attributes, which are variously, tho' imperfectly distinguished in our ways of thinking about them: And the Distinction under which we shall at present consider them, is, that of his natural and moral Attributes. By his natural Attributes, may be meant such as belong to the Nature of God, considered merely as a Spirit; and by his moral Attributes, such as more directly belong to the Resititude of his Nature, considered as a most excellent Spirit.

By his natural Attributes, he is infinitely capable of doing whatever he pleases; and by his moral Attributes, it is absolutely impossible that he should ever please to use his infinite Capacities in any way unbecoming himself, or injurious to any of his Creatures, or unsuitable to the Relations they bear to himself, or one another.

'Tis only the first Branch of this Distinction, which relates to the natural Attributes or Perfections of God, that we can attend to, in the remainder of this Discourse; the other is to be considered in the next. Therefore,

1. God is an infinite Spirit.

Nothing short of Infinity can be ascribed to God; for he can neither limit his own Being and Perfections, nor can they be limited by any other: He cannot limit them himself, because they are natural to him, and because it is utterly incongruous to suppose, that he would go about to limit them if he could; nor can they be limited by any other, because all others are his Creatures, and entirely his Dependants. We are led to conceive of God, as thus infinite in his Being and Perfections, even by our natural Notions of him, which know
not where to stop; but the farther they go in En-
quiries after him, the more they lose themselves in solemn Wonder at his unsearchable Greatness. But, O how do we feel ourselves ingulphed, and, as it were, blinded with dazzling Light, and lost in our own Darkness and Nothingness, when we read the magnificent Accounts, the sacred Oracles give of him! Behold the Nations are as the Drop of a Bucket, and are counted as the small Dust of a Balance; behold he taketh up the Isles as a very little thing. All Nations before him are as nothing, and they are counted to him less than nothing, and Va-

2. He is a self-sufficient, independent Spirit.

His Existence is of himself, not as an Effect from its Cause; for that would suppose him to be, and not to be, at the same time. But he is of himself, as necessarily existing by the essential Perfection of his own Nature, without dependence on any other Being, or Derivation from it. His Name is, I am that I am; Ex. iii. 14. And He only has Immortality, in and of himself, 1 Tim. vi. 16. And as he is, by the Perfection of his Nature, self-sufficient for his own Being; so he is for his own Glory and Blessedness. His Glory necessarily re-

sults from, or rather consists in, this Perfection of his Nature; and his Blessedness is all summed up in the Possession and Enjoyment of his own infinite Self; he is exalted in himself above all Blessing and Praise, Neh. ix. 5. He is Debtor to none, but all are Debtors to him; he receives no Advantage from any, but every other Being receives its all from him. His Name is El Shaddai, God all-sufficient, and he is the Lord, that maketh all things, that stretcheth forth the Heavens alone, that spreads abroad the
Ser. III. Natural Perfections.

the Earth by himself; If. xliv. 24. Job xxii. 2, 3. For his Pleasure they are, and were created: But none can be profitable to God, as he that is wise may be profitable to himself, nor is it any gain to him that they make their Ways perfect. Rev. iv. 11. and Job xxii. 2, 3.

3. He is an eternal Spirit.

His Self-sufficiency and Independency make it impossible, that he should ever begin to be, or cease from Being: And if ever there had been a Time when God was not, it is absolutely impossible that he ever should be at all; for nothing can be a greater Contradiction than to suppose, that he himself once was not, and yet gave a Beginning to himself: nor could there be any thing else to give him a Beginning, because the very Notion of a God supposes him to be the first of all Being: And he that created all things, must have existed before any of them began to be. Before the Mountains were brought forth, or ever he had formed the Earth and the World; from everlasting to everlasting he is God. Pf. xc. 2.

He is without Beginning, and without Succession, of Time or Age; otherwise he would be older now, than he was some Ages ago: Shocking Thought! And he is without any End, since nothing within or without himself, can put a period to his necessary Being. The Lord shall endure for ever; he is the same, and his Years shall have no end. Pf. ix. 7. and cii. 27.

4. He is an unchangeable Spirit.

With him is no Variableness or Shadow of turning. Jam. i. 17. There can be no Change in him, as to Posture, Situation or Place; for, being an infinite Spirit, he is of no Form or Shape, and fills all Places with his Presence.
Of God, and his

He is unchangeable in his Being and Perfections; for they are necessarily what they are. It would argue either present or future Imperfection, to suppose that they could be changed for better or worse: And it is inconsistent with his Unity to suppose, that they should be changed into any thing different from what they are; for then he would not be the same God, as he was before.

He is unchangeable in his Glory. Tho' the Manifestations of his Glory, and due Ascriptions of it to him, may vary; yet he is, and ever was, infinitely glorious in himself, as glorious in his own Nature and Excellencies, before he made any Displays of his Glory to others, or received any Tributes of Praise from others, as he now is, amidst all the Rays of illustrious Light, that shine around him in his Works, and amidst the most exalted Hallelujahs of Saints and Angels; and he would be as glorious still, were they all henceforth to cease for ever.

His Blessedness is as unchangeable as his Glory; for as this consists in the Enjoyment of himself, so it neither can be increased or lessened, by any thing that Creatures can think, say, or do, for or against him: Look unto the Heavens, and see, and behold the Clouds, which are higher than thou. If thou sinnest, what dost thou against him? Or if thy Transgressions be multiplied, what dost thou unto him? If thou be righteous, what givest thou him? or what receiveth he at thine hand? Job xxxv. 5, 6, 7. And it may be said of our Lord's own mediatorial Goodness, that it extendeth not to him, so as that he should be a real Gainer by it. Ps. xvi. 2.

He is likewise unchangeable in his Decrees, or in the eternal Purposes of his Wisdom and Will; for He is of one mind, who can turn him? Job xxiii. 13.
SER. III. Natural Perfections.

The Counsel of the Lord standeth forever, the Thoughts of his Heart to all Generations, Ps. xxxiii. 11. And he has proclaimed, with the Majesty of a God, My Counsel shall stand, and I will do all my Pleasure. Yea, I have spoken it, I also will bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I also will do it. If. xlvi. 10, 11.

And he is unchangeable in his Covenant, Love, and Promises to his People; for the Mountains shall depart, and the Hills be removed; but my Kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the Covenant of my Peace be removed, saith the Lord, that hath Mercy on thee. If. liv. 10. And hence he says, I am the Lord, I change not; therefore the Sons of Jacob are not consumed. Mal. iii. 6.

When ever therefore we read in Scripture of God's repenting, and the like, it is not to be understood of any Alteration in his Purposes or Designs; for this would argue Weakness and Unhappiness in him, as if he were a fickle Being, or were disappointed in his Views, and had met with something unforeseen, that flung a Difficulty upon the execution of his Will. But all such Expressions are to be understood with relation to his outward Dispensations, which he varies, suitable to some present Circumstances of things: When these are turned into such a Course as seems to run counter to any Intimations of his Word and Providence, which might raise our Expectations of a different Procedure, he is then said to repent, because he therein alters the apparent Measures of his Conduct, as we use to do, when we repent of any Enterprize. But all these Changes in his Dispensations, or outward Acts of Government, are according to his own unchangeable Counsel and Will, which determined to make those Changes in them. The like may be observed.
of all those Affections of Love, Joy, Grief and Hatred, that are ascribed to God: These are not properly Affections, that take their Turns in his Heart, as they do in ours; but they are Expressions of the Agreeableness or Disagreeableness of Persons and Things to his holy Nature and Will, and of his Acting towards them, answerable to the various Changes that are in them, as we use to do, on like Occasions, when such Affections are working in us.

5. He is an omnipresent Spirit.

His infinite Essence spreads, in an unconceivable manner, thro’ infinite Space without any Parts or Bounds: It is intimately near to and in all Creatures in all places, in Heaven, Earth, and Hell, and in all possible Space, that is between and beyond them. Do not I fill Heaven and Earth, says the Lord? Jer. xxiii. 24. He is not far from any of us, for in him we live, and move, and have our Beings. Acts xvii. 27, 28. Where-ever we are, whatever we do, and whithersoever we go, there is no flying away from God, or getting out of his Reach, as he says of himself, Tho’ they dig into Hell, thence shall mine Hand take them; tho’ they climb up to Heaven, thence will I bring them down. And tho’ they hide themselves in the top of Carmel, I will search and take them out thence. Amos ix. 2, 3. And the Psalmist, in his elegant Description of him, says, Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? Or whither shall I flee from thy Presence? If I ascend up into Heaven, thou art there; if I make my Bed in Hell, behold thou art there. If I take the Wings of the Morning, and dwell in the uttermost Parts of the Sea, even there shall all thy Hand lead me, and thy right Hand shall hold me. P’s cxxxix. 7—10.

Whenever therefore we read of God’s dwelling in the
the Heavens, coming down from thence, and drawing near to us; or of his forsaking us, and returning to his place, and the like; such Expressions are not to be understood, as if, in his natural Being, he were more in one place than another; but they are to be understood of his Actions and Manifestations of himself, in a way of Mercy or Judgment, whereby he makes himself known, and is perceived to be present, in a way of remarkable Influence and Operation; or of his with-holding them in one place more than another.

6. He is an all-knowing Spirit.

His Omnipresence is with all Intelligence attending it, because he is an omnipresent Spirit. His Understanding is infinite, Ps. cxlvi. 5. He perfectly knows his own infinite self; and he knows all things besides himself, whether they be past, present, or to come, in our way of measuring them by time. As to all things present, or now existing, There is not any Creature that is not manifest in his sight, but all things are naked and opened unto the Eyes of him with whom we have to do. Heb. iv. 13. He knows all our Works and Ways, whether they be good or evil; His Eyes are upon the Ways of Man, and he seeth all his goings. There is no Darkness or Shadow of Death, where the Workers of Iniquity may hide themselves, Job xxxiv. 21, 22. He knows all the secret Thoughts of our Hearts; all our inmost Principles, Motives and Views; all the Sincerity, or Hypocrisy of our Souls; all our secret Sins and Sorrows, and all our secret Duties and Joys; for the righteous God trieth the Hearts and Reins. Pf. vii. 9. Hence, Peter could make his humble Appeal to Christ, Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee, John xxi. 17.
Of God, and his

And as to all things past, and to come, he challenges the Gods of the Heathen, as incapable of knowing them like him. *Let them shew the former things what they be, and shew the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are Gods.*

If. xli. 22, 23. But known unto the Lord are all his Works from the beginning of the World. Acts xv. 18. And he calls those things that are not, as tho' they were. Rom. iv. 17. Yea, he knows the most contingent of all Futurities: The Actions of free Agents, and all Events concerned in them, were always known with Certainty to him, tho' they be ever so contingent in their own Nature, or ever so uncertain as to us; witness the numerous Prophecies, relating to things of this kind, that have had a most exact and circumstantial Accomplishment, many Ages after the Prophecies themselves. And he knows what our Thoughts will be, before we conceive them in our Minds; *He understands them afar off.* Pf. cxxxix. 2.

All these things he knows of himself, without Information from others, and without any external Medium to assist him; for Who has taught him Knowledge; and shewed to him the way of Understanding? If. xl. 14. *He that teacheth Man Knowledge, shall not he know?* Pf. xciv. 10. He knows every thing perfectly and distinctly, with the utmost Accuracy. *Yea, the Darkness hideth not from him; but the Night shineth as the Day; the Darkness and the Light are both alike to him.* Pf. cxxxix. 12. *He brings out the Hoist of his Creatures by number, and calls them all by Names.* If. xl. 26. And, *The very Hairs of our Head are all numbered.* Matth. x. 30. His Knowledge is ever the same; it is perpetual, uninterrupted, and everlasting. *He neither slumbers*
nor sleeps; and a thousand Years in his sight are but as yesterday. Ps.cxxi. 4. and xc. 4. And he knows all things with infallible Certainty, in one comprehending View all at once; so that he never gets any new Ideas, nor loses any old ones, nor can any of them be called new or old to him. When therefore we read of his remembrance or not remembrance, or forgetting our evil or good Deeds, it is to be understood, not with relation to his Knowledge, but to his judicial Proceedings, that he will or will not charge the one, or graciously reward the other.

Once more, he knows all that possibly might be; for he is intimately acquainted with the Perfection of his own infinite Power, and with what he is able to do, if he pleases. How his Knowledge displays itself in his infinite Wisdom, belongs to the Consideration of his moral Attributes, which lie beyond my present Design. To conclude then,

7. He is an Almighty Spirit.

He is able to do all that can be the Object of Power, and that is every thing that don't imply a Contradiction, either to his own Perfections, or to the Nature of things themselves. And nothing can limit his Power, as to what he might do, but his own Wisdom and Will; for he is God Almighty, the Lord God omnipotent, and nothing is too hard for him to do; no Difficulties can be too great for him to surmount, and no Distresses too great for him to remove. The Works of Creation declare his eternal Power and Godhead, and he can do the greatest as well as the smallest things, with as much ease to himself, as he can will or command them to be done; By the Word of the Lord were the Heavens made, and all the Host of them, by the Breath of his Mouth: For he spake, and it was done;
Of God, and his
done; he commanded, and it stood fast. Ps. xxxiii. 6, 9. And he is able to do exceeding abundantly above all, that we ask or think, according to the Power that worketh in us. Eph. iii. 20.

APPLICATION.

1. How absurd and abominable are all pretended Images or Pictures of God!

None can draw the Figure, or carve the Image of his own Soul. How monstrously foolish then must it be, to offer at any visible Portraiture of the invisible God, who is a pure, perfect, and infinite Spirit! How doth it tend to debase our Ideas of God, and lead us into a Doctrine of Vanities and Falseness concerning him! Jer. x. 8, 14. It changes the Truth of God into a Lye, and degrades the Glory of the incorruptible God into the likeness of corruptible Creatures. Rom. i. 23, 25. He therefore has strictly forbid it, and we should never dare to provoke him by attempting it.

2. What awful Sentiments should we entertain of the great God, and what solemn Regards to him!

With what serious Attention and spiritual Frames of Heart, should we worship this infinitely great and perfect Spirit! With what adoring Reverence and profound Humility should we ever think and speak of him! With what Submission, Resignation and Obedience, should we yield up our Souls without reserve to him! With what Solemnity should we consider ourselves, as his entire Dependents, as always in his Sight and Presence, as accountable to him for all that we think, say, or do, as incapable of laying any Obligation upon him, and as infinitely indebted to him! How should we tremble at the
the Thought, that we have sinned against him, and be concerned that we may offend no more, but may seek and do the things that please him! How should we always labour to behave with a due Correspondence towards him, who is great, and greatly to be feared, and to be had in Reverence by all that are about him, and who has us and our All, for Time and Eternity, in his hands, as his Property, and at his Dispose!

3. What a dreadful Enemy, and what a comfortable Friend must this great God be!

It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. Can thine Heart endure, or can thine Hands be strong in the Days that I shall deal with thee? faith the Lord, Ezek. xxii. 14. and Who can stand before his Indignation, who can abide the fierceness of his Anger? But O who can rate the Happiness of having an Interest in the favour of the infinite, eternal, unchangeable, and almighty God! In his favour is Life, and his Loving-kindness is better than Life. This infinite Spirit is a suitable Good to our Spirits; he can enrich us with all the Blessings we are capable of, and defend us from all the Evils we are liable to. The Eternal God is his People's Refuge: And, if God be for us, who can be against us? If we have him for our Friend, with what safety may we commit our All unto him! With what Composure may we submit to his Disposals! And with what Satisfaction may we walk in the Integrity of our Souls before him, fetch in all our Comforts from him, and rejoice in hope of his Glory!

4. How thankfully should we embrace a Gospel-Revelation, which opens the way of sinful Creatures Access
Access to God, and Acceptance with him, thro' a Redeemer!

Without this Discovery of him, every Thought of his Greatness must make Creatures, conscious of Guilt, tremble before him; but in Christ we may behold him as a Father of Mercies, and a God of all Consolation, and as conversible, like a Friend, with sinful Men. In this View of God, his Terrors need not make us afraid to approach him; but all in him invites those Approaches, and encourages our Hopes of Acceptance with him; To whom, as the one only God, Father, Son, and Spirit, be Glory and Honour for ever and ever. Amen.
SERMON IV.
The Moral Perfections of God.

Matt. V. 48.
Your Father which is in Heaven is perfect.

The Knowledge of God being necessary to the Practice of true Religion, it greatly concerns us to form just Apprehensions of him. The Natural Perfections of the divine Being have been represented to you; those that are commonly call’d Moral, are to be the Subject of the present Discourse. These consist in the perfect Rectitude of God’s Will, which is always and invariably determined to do all those things, that his infinite Understanding perceives, and dictates to be proper and right. Moral Perfections are the same in God and Creatures, as to Kind, tho’ infinitely different as to Degrees: what we read in the Verse of the Text plainly supposes this; Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect.

The Perfections of the Moral sort, which we find ascrib’d to God in his Word, may be reduc’d to these five, Wisdom, Goodness, Holiness, Justice, and Truth. These shall be now distinctly consider’d; and under each Particular, I shall endeavour to shew what practical Improvement should be made of it by us; then conclude with some general Reflections.
I. God is **perfectly wise**. Wisdom implies Knowledge; it is the right use of Knowledge; it lies not only in the Understanding, but in the Will. He acts wisely, whose Will is directed by right Reason, who does that which is fit to be done. That Wisdom is a Perfection, will be readily granted: this *excelleth Folly, as far as Light excelleth Darkness*. Ecc. ii. 13. Nor is it less evident, that Wisdom belongs to God. Inasmuch as he is the first, he must be an absolutely perfect Being; for there was nothing to limit his Perfections. With what Brightness does his Wisdom shine in his Works! How vast are his Schemes of Creation, Providence and Redemption! With what exquisite Skill are their various Parts contrived, and adjusted, to promote his grand Design! The Displays of divine Wisdom, with which we are surrounded, would amaze our Minds, if we were not very stupid. When Persons that are rightly disposed set themselves to behold these, their Thoughts are soon swallowed up in Wonder. The Psalmist was thrown into a Rapture, at the Contemplation of some of God's Works here below; when he view'd their beautiful Order, he cry'd out, *O Lord, how manifold are thy Works!* in Wisdom hast thou made them all. Pf. civ. 24. The Consideration of a particular Branch of divine Providence, had the same Effect upon the Apostle Paul, which he thus express'd; *O the depth of the Riches, both of the Wisdom and Knowledge of God!* Rom. xi. 33. How has he abounded towards us in all Wisdom and Prudence, in the Contrivance of the Method of our Redemption by Christ Jesus! The Publication of this is spoken of as a Discovery of God's manifold **Wisdom**. Eph. iii. 10. 

It
It has pleased the Father of Lights to teach us more than the Beasts of the Earth, and to make us wiser than the Fowls of Heaven. Job xxxv. 11.

He has communicated much larger Measures of his Wisdom to the Angels, who dwell in the Regions of Light: yet the Scripture speaks as if the Character of wise was peculiar to him: he is filled again and again the only wise God. So transcendently wise is he, that all the Wisdom of Creatures is as nothing in comparison of his: he chargeth the Angels with Folly. Creatures, of such narrow Minds and short Views, as we are at present, are very incompetent Judges of the Proceedings of the great God, who is wonderful in Counsel: but whithersoever we turn our Eyes, we may behold Traces of his matchless Wisdom; which are so obvious, that Persons of the meanest Capacities could not fail of observing them, if they were not perverted by their Lusts.

Let me now shew what practical Improvement we should make of the Wisdom of God.

1. We should be hereby excited to seek Wisdom. To this we are exhorted and earnestly press'd by Solomon, the wisest of Men; Get Wisdom, get Understanding. Wisdom is the principal thing, therefore get Wisdom; and with all thy getting, get Understanding. Prov. iv. 5, 7. "Let this engage thy greatest Care, and most diligent Application." After he had spoken a great deal in commendation of Wisdom, in order to stir us up to a vigorous Pursuit of it, he mentions the Wisdom of God as the strongest, and most conclusive Proof of its Excellency. The Lord by Wisdom has founded the Earth: by Understanding hath he established the Heavens: by his Knowledge the Depths are broken up; and the Clouds drop down the Dew. Prov. iii. 19, 20. There is hardly
hardly any thing, of which Men are more ambitious, than to be thought wise: it would be happy for them if they were as much concerned, to obtain true Wisdom. God has vouchsafed to inform us what that Wisdom is, which we should principally seek: Unto Man he said, Behold the Fear of the Lord, that is Wisdom; and to depart from Evil, is Understanding. Job xxviii. 28. By a Fool, a wicked Person is commonly meant in the Book of Proverbs; and the Character of Wife is given to him that is virtuous and religious. The highest Wisdom to which we should aspire, is to know God, and his Will; and to pay that Honour and Obedience to him, which is our most reasonable Service. The Fear of the Lord is the Beginning, or the principal Part, of Wisdom; and the Knowledge of the Holy is Understanding. Prov. ix. 10. A good Understanding have all they that do his Commandments. Pf. cxi. 10.

2. Is God perfectly wise? then we should ask Wisdom of him to direct us in our ways. We are weak ignorant Creatures, easily impos'd upon, and prone to wander into hurtful Paths: we greatly need Guidance, whilst we are travelling through the Wilderness of this World; and to whom should we seek for it but to the only wise God, who is very communicative of his Wisdom? If any Man lack Wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all Men liberally, and upbraideth not: and it shall be given him. Jam. i. 5. Would we be made wise unto Salvation, which is of the greatest Importance to us, let us apply to Christ Jesus, in whom are hid all Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge? Col. ii. 3. He is made of God Wisdom to those that are in him, 1 Cor. i. 30. that receive him by Faith; submit to his Teaching, and yield themselves to the Conduct of his Spirit.
3. Is God perfectly wise? Then certainly it becomes us to resign to his Will, and acquiesce in his Appointments. What can be more reasonable than that we leave him to govern the World, who made it so wisely and well? How unfit is it, that we, who are of yesteray, and know nothing, should prescribe to him, whose Understanding is infinite! What can be more proper than that his Will should be done, which is ever determined by the wisest Counsel? Shall we, who are so unknowing, call him to an Account of his Matters? Shall we say to him, what dost, or wherefore dost thou so? It is highly befitting us to refer ourselves to his Disposition; and to be contented with whatever Condition is assign'd us by his infinite Wisdom. The Reasonableness of this will be further evident, if we turn our Thoughts to his Goodness, which we are to do in the next Place.

II. God is perfectly Good. His other Attributes are render'd amiable and engaging to us by his Goodness: it is upon the account of this, that he bears the endearing Character of a Father, in relation to us, which is given him in the Text: Your Father which is in Heaven. If God were not good, there never would have been any other Being besides himself: it was Goodness that moved him to create the World: he could not expect to receive any Benefit from his Creatures; for he was infinitely blessed from all Eternity in the Enjoyment of himself. The supreme Being delighted in the Communications of his Perfections and Happiness, therefore he made a vast Number of Beings capable of Happiness. As the Good-Pleasure of God raised the Universe out of nothing; so is his Goodness poured out, as it were, upon all his Works. They plainly appear
pear to be form'd by an infinitely Good, as well as an infinitely Wise Creator. When we observe with wonder their curious Workmanship, we may behold herein surprising Instances of Goodness: the nicest Skill discovers itself in their Formation, with a most evident View to their well-being. Moses, when he writes the History of the Creation, closes his Account of every Day's Work with this Expression, God saw that is was good; Gen. i. and at the Conclusion of all, when God had finished his Work of Creation, it is said, that upon a Survey of every thing that he had made, he beheld it to be very good. Gen. i. 31.

All his Creatures exactly answered his beneficent Design in the Contrivance of them; they were not only well fitted to enjoy all those Comforts and Benefits, that are suitable to the various Ranks and Orders, which he had appointed them, but to subservire the Good of the Whole.

How extensive is the Divine Goodness! The Lord is good unto all, and his tender Mercies are over all his Works: he openeth his Hand, and satisfieth the Desire of every living thing. Psal. cxlv. 9, 16. The Earth is full of the Goodness of the Lord. Psal. xxxiii. 5. It is said to be great above the Heavens. Psal. cviii. 4. It shines in the upper World with amazing Lustre: there is no exhausting of this, it endureth for ever. Those, who had no other Light but that of Nature, beheld such Impressions of Goodness upon the Works of Creation and Providence, that they usually spoke of the Author of them in this Stile, God the best and the greatest.

The Goodness of God, when exercised towards those who are in any Circumstance of Danger and Distress, is called Mercy in his Word: when it triumphs over great Unworthiness in the Objects of it, and
and confers Benefits, not only without, but contrary to their Deserts, it bears the Name of Grace. The Lord is gracious, and full of Compassion; slow to Anger, and of great Mercy. Ps. cxlv. 8. With what Patience does he endure this wicked World! Vile Rebels partake of the Bounties of his Providence: He maketh his Sun to rise, and sendeth Rain on the evil and unjust, as our Saviour speaks in the Context. But how astonishing was the Grace of God to a guilty lost World, in giving his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting Life! What aggravated Transgressions does God forgive through Christ! How does Sin abound! and yet his Grace does much more abound! Rom. v. 20. Well may this be said to reign through Righteousness unto eternal Life, by Jesus Christ, Rom. v. 21. The Goodness of the best of Creatures hardly deserves the Name, if compar'd with the divine Goodness: therefore our Saviour says, none is good save one, that is God. Luke xviii. 19. He alone is originally, essentially, and infinitely good. I am loth to leave this copious delightful Subject; but my time requires me to pass on to the Consideration of the Influence it should have upon us.

1. Is God perfectly good? Then all our Powers ought to be awakened to bless his Name. The Sense which the Psalmist had of God's Goodness, made him press his Soul with great Earnestness to offer Praise unto him upon this account. Bless the Lord, O my Soul; and all that is within me bless his holy Name. Bless the Lord, O my Soul, and forget not all his Benefits: who forgiveth all thine Iniquities; who healeth all thy Diseases; who redeemeth thy Life from Destruction; who crowneth thee with Loving-Kindness and tender Mercies. Ps. ciii. beg. How often does he repeat that Wish in Psalm cviii. O that Men

F 2 would
would praise the Lord for his Goodness; and for his wonderful Works to the Children of Men!

2. Is God perfectly good, how hateful then should Sin be unto us? As our Sinfulnes illustrates the Goodness of God; for the more vile and unworthy we are, the more wonderful and engaging does his Goodness appear in the Benefits he confers upon us; so the divine Goodness helps to discover the Malignity of our Sins: their being committed against an infinitely good God, adds an inconceivable Weight to their Guilt. The Riches of God's Goodness lead Men to Repentance; Rom. ii. 4. not only as they encourage their Return to God; but as they manifest the great Evil of their Transgressions, which are contrary and dishonourable to him who is so kind and bountiful.

3. Is God perfectly good? then we should be careful to practise Goodness. Ought it not to be our Ambition to imitate that Goodness, to which we are so much obliged? Does it not very ill become those who have lived upon the divine Bounty, to forget to do good, and to communicate? Our Beneficence should not be confined to those who are civil and obliging unto us; it ought to extend to such as have done us ill Offices: We should love our Enemies; bless them that curse us; do good to them that hate us, and pray for them that despitefully use us, if we would approve ourselves to be the Children of God; who dispenses his Favours to those that are very undeserving of them. It is with a particular View to this, that our Saviour requires his Disciples in the ver. where my Text is, to be perfect as their Father which is in Heaven is perfect, as appears from the preceding Verses.
III. God is perfectly holy. To be holy doth often signify in the Scriptures to be set apart from a common and ordinary to a peculiar and excellent use. In this sense the Sabbath-day is stiled holy; and the Character of holy may be given to God, to denote the transcendent Excellencies of his Nature, whereby he is infinitely separated and distinguished from all other Beings. Again, by Holiness, the Word of God does frequently mean a Separation from moral Evil. When the Apostle exhorts Christians not to suffer those sinful Lusts, to which they were obedient in their unconverted State, to regain a Dominion over them; he enforces this by saying, As he that hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of Conversation. 1 Pet. i. 15. Perfecting Holiness in the fear of God, stands in opposition to all Filthiness both of Flesh and Spirit. 2 Cor. vii. 1. Without doubt, God is infinitely holy in this respect. He stands at the utmost distance from every thing that is polluting, from what we call Sin. This is signified by that Representation, which is given of him by the Apostle, God is Light, and in him is no Darkness at all. 1 John i. 5. That is, no moral Imperfection, as is evident from what follows, v. 6. If we say we have Fellowship with him, and walk in Darkness, we lie, and do not the Truth. He is without Iniquity, Deut. xxxii. 4. There is no Irregularity in his Nature; Sin is absolutely repugnant to it: this is the abominable thing which his Soul hateth. He is of purer Eyes than to behold Evil, he cannot look on Iniquity, Hab. i. 13. But it may be said, all this is negative. Is there not something positive in God's Holiness? To be sure there is. The Beauty of Holiness, 2 Chron. xx. 21. which is a Description given
given of God, must needs signify not only a Freedom from all Blemishes, but the Possession of every thing that is excellent and amiable. All the Designs and Actions of God are exactly conformable to the Dignity, and the Perfection of his Nature; and becoming every Character that he sustains.

The Holiness of God is a Perfection, for the Honour of which he has a very high Regard; therefore he swears by it. Once have I sworn by my Holiness, that I will not lie unto David, Ps. lxxxix. 35. It is his most distinguishing Stile, that he is glorious in Holiness. Ex. xv. 11. Those who are best acquainted with the divine Glories, are represented in the Scripture as dwelling mostly in their Songs of Praise unto God upon his Holiness. The Seraphim cried one to another, saying, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Holiness. Is. vi. 3.

But what Use should we make of this glorious Perfection of God? We should press it on our Conscience, as a most powerful Argument to induce us to follow after Holiness. Thus God condescends to reason with us; it is written in his Book, Be ye holy, for I am holy. 1 Pet. i. 16. Seeing Holiness is a divine Attribute, it must have an intrinsick Excellence, and be deserving of our most earnest Pursuit: hereby our Nature will be dignify'd and perfected, because it will be hereby render'd godlike. Besides, it is of the utmost Consequence to us, that we be holy, inasmuch as God is holy; for we cannot otherwise enjoy him, who alone can satisfy the Desires of our Souls. God is the only Portion that can make us happy: they and they only are blessed, who dwell in his presence: this shall be the Felicity of those who are truly sanctified. Blessed are the pure in Heart, for they shall see God, Mat. v. 8. But unholy
holy Souls are not capable of enjoying an infinitely holy God. How can there be any Fruition, where there is no Suitableness? Well then, if we would not be debir'd a blissful Sight of God, let us follow after Holiness, for without this no one shall see the Lord; Heb. xii. 14.

IV. God is perfectly just. Justice is commonly distinguished into commutative and distributive. Commutative Justice lies in an equal Exchange of Benefits; and ought to be observed by us in our Dealings with each other; as when one Man buys Goods of another, Justice obliges him, by whom they are bought, to pay for them, according to their Value; as, on the other hand, it binds him, by whom they are sold, not to exact for them more than they are worth. But such are the Perfections of God; so entire is our Dependance upon him, that it is not possible we should lay any Obligations on him: therefore this sort of Justice can have no place in his Transactions with us. Who hath first given unto the Lord? It is not profitable to him that we are righteous.

Distributive Justice, which ought to be exercised by Rulers towards their Subjects, consists in the equitable Distribution of Rewards and Punishments to them, as they are criminal, or obedient to their Laws. We may be sure, that God is a righteous Governour. It is impossible he should swerve from the Rules of Justice thro' Ignorance: this is sometimes the Case with Men; notwithstanding their most careful Inquiries, they may be imposed upon by false Evidence, so as to give a wrong Judgment. But all things are naked and opened unto God: he knows the most secret
The Moral Perfections

The secret Motives, and all the Circumstances of every Action.

Again, the great God cannot be awed by any Power to pervert Judgment. Earthly Judges are too often influenced by fear of incurring the Displeasure of the Great and Powerful to act unjustly. But God has nothing to fear from any of his Creatures: he cannot be tempted with Evil: he can as easily crush the Great as the Small. Surely the Almighty will not pervert Judgment, but cause every Man to find according to his ways. Job xxxiv. 11, 12.

Again, God cannot be byaffed by the Prospect of any Profit to depart from that which is right: this is a Spring of a great deal of Injustice amongst Men. But the Most High is infinitely above every Temptation of this kind: no Addition can be made to his Happiness. The Lord your God is God of Gods, and Lord of Lords, a great God, who regardeth not Persons, nor taketh Reward: he doth execute the Judgment of the Fatherless and Widow. Deut. x. 17, 18. Nor are there any corrupt Affections, or Passions in the infinitely Holy God, to dispose him to that which is unjust. As there is no taking of Gifts, so there is no Iniquity with the Lord our God. 2 Chron. xix. 7. He is a righteous Lord, and he loveth Righteousness. Ps. xi. 7.

The Judgments of God are a great deep; they cannot be fathom'd by us at present: but his Righteousness is like the great Mountains, very obvious, easily discern'd. Ps. xxxvi. 6. Amidst the Difficulties, which exercised the Thoughts of the Prophet, he lays down this Assertion as a certain Truth, by which he was resolved to abide, Righteous art thou, O Lord. Jer. xii. 1. Let me now enquire how we ought to be affected with this Perfection of God.
I. Should not the Consideration of God's Justice awaken in us an holy Awe of him? The Psalmist declares, that his Flesh trembled for fear of God: he was afraid of his Judgments. Ps. cxix. 120. How should we dread to offend an infinitely righteous Majesty? What Horror should seize Sinners, when they think of the divine Justice? This Attribute has a most terrible Aspect upon them: O that they might be roused by it out of their Security!

2. Is God perfectly just? Is it not then of the greatest concern to us guilty Creatures, that we be found in Christ Jesus, having on that Righteousness, which is by the Faith of him? How shall we, whose Transgressions are innumerable, whose Duties are very defective, appear, as we are in ourselves, before a God of infinite Justice? Should we not then, without delay, apply ourselves by believing to Christ, whom God hath set forth to be a Propitiation through Faith in his Blood to declare his Righteousness for the Remission of Sins. — That he might be just, and a Justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. Rom. iii. 25, 26. God has in his Gospel given us ground to expect, that our sincere, tho' imperfect, Services, will be acceptable to him thro' Christ, 1 Pet. ii. 5.

and seeing it is agreeable to God's equitable Constitution to make them happy, who adhere with Faithfulness to the Gospel; and to punish those that are disobedient, and rise up in Opposition to it, we are told, that it is a righteous thing with him, not only to render Tribulation to the one, but to give Rest to the other, when the Lord shall be revealed from Heaven with his mighty Angels. 2 Thes. i. 6, 7.

I proceed to the

Vth. and Last of the Divine Perfections, I propos-
The Moral Perfections

fed to consider, that is, Truth. This, as it is a moral Virtue, signifies a Conformity of Words to Thoughts, then it is called Veracity; and a Conformity of Actions to Words, then it is called Faithfulness. God is perfectly true in each of these respects: as it is impossible for him to be deceived; so it is certain, that he will not deceive his Creatures, A God of Truth, and without Iniquity; just and right is he, Deut. xxxii. 4. His Faithfulness shall never fail. Ps. lxxxix. 33. The Mountains shall depart, and the Hills be removed; but the Covenant of his Peace shall not be removed; or made void. Isa. liv. 10. It is impossible for God to lie; Heb. vi. 18. for this would argue very great Imperfection: should he violate his Word, he would deny himself, which he cannot do. 2 Tim. ii. 13. No Difficulties can arise to render the Performance of God's Promises impracticable. The Faith of Abraham in the midst of great Discouragements was supported by this Consideration: it is said, That he stagger'd not at the Promise thro' Unbelief; but was strong in Faith, giving Glory to God; being fully persuaded, that what he had promised he was able to perform. Rom. iv. 20, 21. Nor is God liable to a Change of Mind: He is not a Man, that he should lie; neither the Son of Man, that he should repent. Num. xxiii. 19.

Let us now apply to ourselves what has been said under this Head.

1. We may hence learn, that we ought heartily to embrace whatever God has revealed to us: tho' our Reason cannot comprehend it, yet if we have sufficient Evidence of its being spoken by God, we may be sure it is true. There is no danger of our being led into any Error by the Word of the True God.

2. We may hence infer the Reaslonableness of a
Reliance upon God's Promises. Great is the Guilt of those, who will not believe God, they are said to make him a Liar. i John v. 10. Should not we dread being guilty of putting so gross an Affront upon the God of Truth?

I shall conclude with some general Reflections.

1. It should yield us great Satisfaction to consider that such a perfect Being as God is, governs the World. This gives unspeakable Encouragement to the Practice of Virtue and Religion. Let us adore and admire the divine Perfections. Let us love the Lord with all our Hearts, and serve him with all our Strength, who is infinitely wise, good, holy, just and true.

2. We should in our Contemplations of God, and Conduct towards him, have a strict Regard to the Harmony of his Attributes. He never displays any one of his Excellencies, but in a Confidence with the Honour of the rest of them. It is fit we should consider him not only as an infinitely good, but as an infinitely wise and righteous Being. A partial View of God's Perfections will be apt to lead us into dangerous Errors, both in Judgment and Practice.

3. Blessed are they, who upon good Grounds can call this perfect Being their Father, and their God. That this may be our Happiness, let us sincerely give up ourselves to God, thro' Christ, and take him to be our Portion for ever. Great is their Guilt and Folly who live as without God in the World, who prefer Vanities and Trifles to him; what the Psalmist said, addressing himself unto God, should be the unfeigned Language of every one of us, Whom have I in Heaven but thee? and there is none upon Earth that I desire besides thee. We should follow hard after him; it ought to be the constant Care of our Lives to secure to ourselves his Favour and Enjoyment.
SERMON V.
The Doctrine of the Blessed Trinity; or
God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Matthew XXVIII. 19.
---Baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

I HAVE chose this Text as proper to introduce a Discourse on the Doctrine of the ever-blessed Trinity, which falls to my lot in this Course of Sermons. Here each of the Sacred Three are distinctly mentioned by Name, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Their being named thus separately, implies a Distinction of Persons, and the Command of Christ to baptize into all their Names, denotes their Equality in Nature; or that each is God, that God to whose Service we should be devoted, and to whom all religious Worship and Obedience is most justly due. We are also led, by this Text, to consider our Concern with each of these Sacred Three; and what Regards, and what Duties we owe them, into whose Names we have been baptized, and to whose Service we have been consecrated. I need not tell you what mighty Disputes have been rais’d about this Doctrine, and what numbers of Volumes have been writ and published upon it: He must be a Stranger in our Israel that knows not these things. But, for my part, I have neither Time
Time at present, nor much Inclination to take any other Book under Consideration, in this Argument, but the Bible only. I shall content myself with laying the Doctrine before you as I find it there, without Gloss or Disguise; and I hope to do it, without offering any Violence to one single Text, to make it speak the Sentiment of any Party.

I shall range my Discourse under these five general Heads or Propositions, which will, I suppose, take in the Sum of what the Scripture doth certainly reveal to us, as necessary to be known, and believed concerning this matter.

First, That there is one only Supreme Being, to whom the Name of God does properly belong, to whom divine Attributes are properly ascribed, and who is the only proper Object of all religious Worship.

Secondly, That there are Three distinct Persons, mentioned in the Scriptures, even the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; to each of whom the Name of God is properly given, divine Attributes are ascribed, and religious Worship is due. From whence it will follow,

Thirdly, That these Three, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, are one God, the same in Substance, Power and Glory.

Fourthly, That a distinct Part and Province, in the Affair of Man's Salvation, is assigned in Scripture to each of the Sacred Three. And therefore,

Fifthly, That we have a distinct Concern, with each of these Sacred Three; and there are Duties which we owe to each of them severally.

Tho' the first of these Propositions does not ex-
The Doctrine of

presly treat of the Trinity, yet we shall find it highly necessary in this Argument, viz.

First, That there is one only Supreme Being, to whom the Name of God does properly belong, to whom divine Attributes are properly ascribed, and who is the only proper Object of all religious Worship.

That there is one only Supreme God, the first and the greatest of all Beings, is among the first, and the plainest Principles of Natural Religion: and there is no Doctrine to which the Scriptures give a more express Testimony, both in the Old and New Testament. *Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God is one Lord*, said Moses, the greatest Prophet of the Old Testament, *Deut. vi. 4.* Jesus our Saviour has confirmed that Testimony, *Mark xii. 29.* and he owned, that the Scribe answered discreetly, when he thus glossed on that Text; *There is one God, and there is none other but he,* ver. 32. that is, none other to whom that Name and Title does properly belong, but to the one Supreme God. For tho', as St. Paul says, *There are that are called Gods many, and Lords many, yet to us there is but one God,* i Cor. viii. 6. When, therefore, the Name GOD is given in Scripture to any other Beings, besides the One Supreme, it is only on account of some particular Property, or some Circumstance or other, in which they some way resembled God; but it is not given to any of them, as the Name that properly belongs to their Nature. Thus Moses was a God to Pharaoh; and Aaron was his Prophet; *Ex. vii. 1.* because Aaron received the divine Messages, which he carried to Pharaoh, immediately from Moses; whereas other Prophets received their Mes-

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Ser. V. the Trinitv. 79

sages to the People, immediately from God himself. In this one respect, Moses stood as in the place of God. Thus also the Idols of the Heathens are called Gods, because they were worshipped, though by Nature they are no Gods. So also Princes and Prophets are sometimes called Gods, either because they some way resembled God, in respect of Dominion; or because they appeared to exert a divine Power in some extraordinary Operations and Miracles. But God is the appropriate Name of the Supreme Being only: and whenever it is given to any Creatures, it is only in an improper Sense, because of some sort of Resemblance, which, in some particular respect or other, they bore to God. Therefore, Saint Paul distinguishes the True God, from them which by Nature are no Gods, on what account forever they are called by that Name. Galat. iv. 8. which plainly implies, that God is the natural and proper Name of the Supreme Being only. And so is the Name Jehovah too, which God does not allow to be given to any inferior Being, on any account whatever. I am Jehovah, says he, that is my Name, and my Glory will I not give to another. Is. xlii. 8. Thou, whose Name alone is Jehovah, art the most high over all the Earth. Pf. lxxxiii. 18.

I go on to observe, that there are certain Perfections and Attributes, which belong to the one Supreme God, and to none besides him: such as Eternity, Thus faith the Lord, the King of Israel, and his Redeemer the Lord of Hosts, I am the first, and I am the last, and besides me there is no God. Is. xlv. 6. Omnipotence, With God all things are possible, Matt. xix. 26. Omnipresence, or that He is present in all places, at one and the same time. Do not I fill Heaven and Earth, faith the Lord? Jer. xxiii.
The Doctrine of

xxiii. 24. Omniscience, is another peculiar Attribute of the one Supreme God. There is one Instance of it, which is, in a very particular manner appropriated to him in Scripture, viz. that he knows the Hearts of Men; Thou, even thou, only knowest the Hearts of all the Children of Men. 1 Kings viii. 39.

The last thing to be observed under this general Head is, that this one Supreme God is the only proper Object of religious Worship. This Honour of being worshipped, is so peculiarly the Prerogative of the great God, that he will, on no account, suffer it to be given to any inferior Being: It was the first Command which he gave to Israel, with such awful Solemnity, at Mount Sinai, Thou shalt have no other Gods before me; that is, no other Objects of religious Worship. And that Text, which our Saviour quoted out of the Old Testament, in answer to a Temptation of Satan, is most express to this purpose. Luke iv. 8: It is written, said he, thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. Some indeed have dreamed of a supreme, and a subordinate divine Worship; but it is plain, that our Saviour allowed of no such Distinction; for the Devil did neither demand, nor expect, to be worshipped as the Supreme God; no, he freely owned that all the Power which he had, over the Kingdoms of the World, was delivered to him; a plain Confession, that he was not the Supreme, Verse 6, and therefore it could be nothing else but a subordinate, or inferior divine Worship, which he would have persuaded Christ to honour him with. Now, had it been lawful, in any case, to pay divine Worship to a Creature, the proper Answer must, certainly, have been this; That he was but a Devil, and therefore not worthy of it, whatever some other
more excellent Creatures might be. But our Saviour flatly denies, that any sort of divine Worship ought to be paid to any Creature at all. He affirms, and proves it, by an express Text of Scripture, That God must be worshipped, and none but he.

Thus it appears, with very sufficient Evidence, that the Name GOD is the proper and natural Name only of the one Supreme Being; that to him alone divine Attributes are properly ascribed, and that he is the only proper Object of all religious Worship. We now go on to the next Proposition, viz.

Secondly, That there are three distinct Persons mentioned in the Scriptures, to each of whom the Name of God is properly given, divine Attributes are ascribed, and religious Worship is due; even the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

These Three are not only called by distinct and different Names; but they are revealed and represented to us under very distinct personal Properties, and Characters. Thus we read of one God the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and of one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him; and of one Spirit, or Holy Ghost, by whom, through Christ, we have an Access unto the Father. 1 Cor. viii. 5, 6. Eph. ii. 18. We read of the Father's begetting the Son, of the Son's being begotten, and sent by the Father, and of the Holy Ghost's proceeding from the Father, and being sent by him in his Son's Name. We read also of distinct and different Blessings, which are imparted to us from each of these Sacred Three; as of the Love of God the Father, the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Communion of the Holy Ghost. 2 Cor. xiii. 14.
And since they are thus represented to us in Scripture, under different personal Characters; it seems not at all improper to call them Three Persons; altho' that Phrase is not to be found expressly in the Bible: and tho' it must also be allowed, that the word Person, when thus applied, is not to be taken in the most common and natural Sense. For so three Persons would signify three distinct intelligent Beings, as Peter, James, and John are three Persons; or, as applied to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, it would signify three Gods. But yet, for want of some more proper Word, this has long been agreed on, and pretty generally used, to denote the Distinction of the One God into the Sacred Three, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. That the Names and Characters of Supreme Godhead, are applied in Scripture to the first Person, or the Father, I need not take up any time to prove; that is allowed on all hands. And, methinks, it is somewhat strange, that the same should be denied concerning the other two, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, by any who own the Authority of the Bible, and who are willing to submit their Faith to the Divine Revelation: when there are so many plain, and express Testimonies, in the Scriptures, to the supreme, and eternal Deity of them both. For,

1. There we find both the Son, and the Holy Ghost, expressly called God, in the same sense as the Father. Of Christ, it is said, The Word was God. Joh. i. 1. He was God manifest in the Flesh. 1 Tim. iii. 16. Emmanuel, or God with us. Matt. i. 23. Christ is over all, God blessed for ever. Rom. ix. 5. Nay, not only the Name GOD, is given to the Son, as well as to the Father; but the Name JEHOVAH too, which is on no account allowed
to be given to any Creature. He is *Jehovah our Righteousness*, Jer. xxiii. 6. And I make no doubt, but Christ our Saviour, is that Lord *Jehovah*, in whom the Seed of *Israel* should have Righteousness, and Strength; in whom they were to be justified, and in whom they should glory. *If.* xlv. 24, 25.

The Holy Ghost is likewise called God, for *to lye to the Holy Ghost*, is to *lye unto God*. *Acts* v. 3, 4. And *true Christians are said to be the Temples of God*, in as much as, *the Spirit of God dwelleth in them*. *1 Cor.* iii. 16. To him also the Name *Jehovah* is given in Scripture, as well as to the Son, and to the Father. For what the Lord *Jehovah* said, *If.* vi. 9. is expressly said by Saint *Paul*, to have been spoken by the Holy Ghost, *Acts* xxviii. 25. Thus we have seen, that the proper and peculiar Names of the one Supreme Being, *GOD* and *Jehovah*, are given in Scripture to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, as well as to the Father. And so,

2. Are the proper and peculiar Attributes, and Perfections of the Supreme Deity, ascribed both to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. Such as, Eternity. Is God *the first and the last?* so is Christ, *Rev.* i. 17. *I am the first and the last.* And the Holy Ghost is called, *the eternal Spirit*. *Heb.* ix. 14. Is Omnipotence peculiar to the Deity? We learn from Scripture, that Christ, the Son of God, is possessed of it as well as the Father; for he is called the *Mighty God*. *If.* ix. 6. *He has Power to subdue all things to himself*, *Phil.* iii. 21. And the whole Work both of Creation, and Providence, is ascribed to him, *Col.* i. 16, 17. *By him were all things created, he is before all things, and by him all things consist.* Again, to be Omnipresent, is the Perfection of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, as well as of the Father.
Of Christ it is said, that He filleth all in all, Eph. i. 23. that tho' he came down from Heaven, and dwelt here upon Earth, as the Son of Man, yet that he was still in Heaven by a superior Nature; for No Man hath ascended up to Heaven, but he that came down from Heaven; even the Son of Man which is in Heaven. John iii. 13. Or if the Argument from that Text should admit of any doubt; yet who but the immense God, could make such Promises, as Christ has made to his Church and Disciples? viz. that He would be with them always, even unto the end of the World. Matt. xxviii. 20. And that where two or three are gathered together in his Name, tho' there should be never so many Hundreds, or Thousands of such worshipping Assemblies, all at the same time, and these in the most remote and distant Parts of the World, from one another, yet that he would be in the midst of them all, and present with them all, and bless them all. Matt. xviii. 20. And as to the Omnipresence of the Spirit, or Holy Ghost, we have the Testimony of David, Ps. cxxxix. 7. Whither shall I go from thy Spirit, or whither shall I flee from thy Presence? If I ascend up into Heaven, thou art there, &c.

Omniscience is another peculiar Attribute and Perfection of God. He only knows the Hearts of Men: and yet it is expressly said of Christ our Saviour, that He knew all Men, and needed not that any should testify of Man, for he knew what was in Man. John ii. 24, 25, and that He knew their Thoughts, Matt. xii. 25. And the Holy Spirit is said to search all things, even the deep things of God. 1 Cor. ii. 10. Thus, we have very clear, and express Testimonies in the Scriptures, that divine Attributes and Perfections
tions belong to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, as well as to the Father.

3. The other peculiar and unalienable Prerogative of the one Supreme God, which I have mentioned before, is, that he is the only fit Object of all religious Worship. Yet it is written in the Scripture, That all Men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. John v. 23. And how many Instances have we in the New Testament, of Prayers and Praises being offered up to Christ, both before his Death, and since his Ascension into Heaven? To him the Apostle Paul made his Prayer, in an Hour of Temptation, That the Messenger of Satan might depart from him, 2 Cor. xii. 8. And Stephen, the first Christian Martyr, worshipped him, and prayed to him with his last Breath, saying, Lord Jesus, receive my Spirit, Acts vii. 59. To him the Worship of Angels is directed, as we read, Heb. i. 6. He said, let all the Angels of God worship him; and the glorified Saints in Heaven are represented, more than once, in the Book of the Revelations, as paying their divine Homage to the glorified Jesus, and celebrating his Praises in their sacred Songs, singing their Hallelujahs to Him that sitteth on the Throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.

It must be owned, that there is not in Scripture any direct Command, or Example, of offering up Prayers or Praises to the Holy Ghost; but the other Proofs of his Deity, from the Names, and Attributes of God being ascribed to him, are very sufficient. And if he is the Supreme God, as well as the Son, and the Father; it will follow, that he must needs be the proper Object of divine Worship as they are.

Having thus proved, that there is one only Supreme God, and that there are three distinct Persons, men-
tioned in Scripture, to each of whom the Names of God are given, divine Attributes are ascribed, and religious Worship is due; it will very evidently follow,

**Thirdly**, That these Three, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, are one God; or, that tho' they are really distinct from one another, they are all united in Deity. But how they are distinguished, and how they are united, how they are Three, and how they are One, I cannot pretend to tell you; and I suppose, it is above the weak Conceptions of any Men fully to comprehend it. We, who know so little, even of ourselves, and how our own Souls and Bodies are united in one Man, must not expect, surely, thoroughly to understand the infinite divine Nature. Methinks, it argues both Pride and Ignorance, for Men to refuse to believe what God, who only knows himself, has been pleased to declare to us concerning his own Nature, merely because their narrow Minds cannot comprehend the full Meaning of it. I desire humbly, and contentedly to take God's Word, and to believe whatever he tells me to be true, tho' I am not able to conceive every thing about it. And after all the Outcry that has been made of Absurdity, and Contradiction in Terms, in that Scripture Proposition, *these Three are One*, I cannot see any thing in it, that is shocking to Reason at all. That the same Being, or the same Thing, should be One in one sense, and yet Two or Three, or more, in another sense, where is the Absurdity of it? That Length, Breadth and Thickness, should be three Dimensions of one and the same solid Body: that the King of Great Britain, the Duke of Brunswick, and the Arch-Treasurer of the Roman Empire, should be one and the same Man, where is the Absurdity.
Ser. V.  the Trinity.  87

Furdity and Contradiction to Reason in all that? I do not mention these as any sort of Similitudes, or Illustrations of the divine Trinity and Unity; most probably, no proper Similitudes can be found, in all the Worlds of Creatures, to illustrate that by: but yet they are proper enough to shew, that it is not, in itself, absurd, 'tis no Contradiction in terms to say, These Three are One. Since the very same may be said, most reasonably, and most truly, in several other cases, and about several other matters: that in one sense, and in one respect, they are Three, or more, while in some other sense, and in some other respect, they are but One. And who then will take upon him to say, that it can in no sense be truly said of the divine Nature, and of the divine Persons, These Three are one God? To say that Three, are One, in the same sense, and in the very same respect, in which they are Three, would, no doubt, be a Contradiction in terms; as that three Persons are one Person, or three Gods are one God. But the Scripture says no such matter; all the pretended Absurdity, in this Doctrine, is made by the Objecters against it, and is no where to be found in the Bible. Three Persons, and yet One God, there is no Absurdity in that at all. It surpasses our present Reason, indeed, fully to understand it; and so do a thousand things besides, which yet we know are true and real. But here is no Contradiction to Reason at all in this Proposition, that these Three, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, are One God. The next Proposition is,

Fourthly, That a distinct Part, and Province in the Affair of Man's Salvation, is assigned in Scripture to each of the Sacred Three. Thus, for instance, Election is, in Scripture, ascribed to the Father. Blessed be God the Father, who hath chosen us in Christ.
The Doctrine of Christ before the Foundation of the World. Eph. i. 3, 4. Redemption is ascribed to the Son of God, as his proper Work and Province. He it is who took our Flesh and Blood, and dwelt amongst us, and gave himself for us, that he might redeem us. Tit. ii. 14. And it is in him that we have Redemption, even through his Blood. Eph. i. 7. And the Holy Ghost converts, and sanctifies all those, whom the Father elects, and the Son redeems. It is the Spirit that quickeneth, says Christ. John vi. 63. Regeneration, or the New Birth, is ascribed to his Influence. John iii. 5. And those Sinners, who become holy Persons, and are acceptable unto God, are sanctified by the Holy Ghost. Rom. xv. 16.

Again, The Scriptures represent it as the proper Province of the Father to pardon Sinners; of the Son, to make Attonement for their Sins, and so to render it consistent with the Justice, and Holiness, and Truth of God to forgive them, and to become reconciled to them; and it is the Province of the Holy Ghost to apply, and to seal the Pardon to those happy Persons for whom it is designed, and to whom it is granted. It is God that justifieth, it is Christ that died. Rom. viii. 33, 34. And whenever the Gospel proves an effectual Means of any Sinners obtaining Pardon, and Salvation, it comes to them in Power, and in the Holy Ghost. 1 Thes. i. 5. To him it belongs to comfort the Souls of Believers, with a Knowledge and Assurance of their Pardon, and Peace with God. It is by the holy Spirit of God that they are sealed unto the Day of Redemption. And He witnesseth with their Spirit, that they are the Sons of God.

A farther Instance of the distinct Province of each of the Sacred Three, may be in the Affair of our Access
Access to God in holy Duties. Thro' him, i. e. Christ, we have an Access, by one Spirit, unto the Father. Eph. ii. 18. We have Access unto the Father, Christ hath taught us to pray to Our Father, which is in Heaven. We are directed to pray, and to pay all our Devotions, in the Name of Jesus Christ the Mediator, who offers up the Prayers of all the Saints, with the Incense of his own Sacrifice, and obtains their Acceptance in Heaven. And it is the Office and Work of the Spirit of God to teach us, and help us to pray in a becoming Manner. The Spirit helpeth our Infirmities, and maketh Intercession for us, Rom. viii. 26. Thus we have Access unto the Father, thro' the Son, and by the Spirit; not but that it is very fit and proper, to pray to the Son and to the Holy Ghost too, especially for such Blessings as belong to the peculiar Province of each of them to bestow upon us. Thus, it is very proper to pray to Christ, the Son of God, as Stephen did, to receive our Souls on the other side Death, and present them to his Father; because that belongs to his Province as Mediator. But, generally, we are taught in Scripture, to offer up our Devotions and Prayers to God the Father, in the Name of the Son, and by the Assistance and Influence of the Holy Ghost.

I will add yet one Instance more of the distinct Part and Province of each of the sacred Three in the Affair of our Salvation. The Father bestows Heaven, and eternal Life on all true Believers. It is their Father's good pleasure to give them the Kingdom; and eternal Life is the Gift of God, thro' Jesus Christ. The Son of God our Saviour, presents his Saints and People to the Father for his gracious Acceptance and Blessing. To him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before
fore the Presence of his Glory, with exceeding Joy, to the only wise God our Saviour. Jude 24. And it is the work of the good Spirit to qualify Souls for Heaven, and to dispose them into a Meetness for that glorious Inheritance. They are chosen to Salvation, thro’ Sanctification of the Spirit. 2 Thes. ii. 13.

Thus you see how the Scripture teaches us to conceive, of each of the Sacred Three, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, as taking a distinct Part and Province in the grand Affair of our Salvation. From hence therefore we should be led,

Fifthly, To consider what distinct Concern we have with each of these Sacred Three, and what Duties we owe to each of them severally. As,

1. We should adore and praise each of the Sacred Three. We are bound to give thanks unto God the Father for his electing Love, and for his pardoning Mercy. We should give Honour and Praise to the Son of God for his condescending Goodness, in that he was pleased to manifest himself in our Flesh, and take upon him the form of a Servant for our Sakes, and to become a Sacrifice for our Sins, that he might bring us to God. And we should give Honour and Praise to the Holy Spirit of God for all his gracious and beneficent Influences on our Hearts and Minds. To God only wise be Glory, thro’ Jesus Christ, for ever. Amen. Thus we are taught to do Homage, and to give Praise to God the Father. Rom. xvi. 27. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our Sins, in his own Blood, to him be Glory and Dominion for ever and ever. Amen. So should we give Praise to the Son of God, as in Rev. i. 5, 6. And tho’ we do not find in Scripture any Doxology,
or Ascription of Praise to the Holy Ghost; yet, methinks, the Reason of the thing, his divine Character, our mighty Concern with him, and our vast Obligation to him, make it highly fit, and proper, that we should pay a distinct Honour to God our Sanctifier, and our Comforter.

2. We should devote and dedicate ourselves to each of the Sacred Three. This is one thing which seems to be implied in our being baptized into all their Names, viz. That we are thereby devoted to the Faith and Service of each of those divine Persons: for when ever we recognize our Baptism, and give our own Consent to the Ingagement, and take it upon ourselves; we then take God the Father for our Father, and our God; and we promise and bind ourselves to be his dutiful Children. We take Christ the Son of God, for our Redeemer, and Saviour; we consent to his gracious Proposals, and give up our selves to him, to be saved by him in his own way. And we take the Holy Ghost for our Sanctifier, Guide, and Comforter, giving up ourselves to his Conduct and Guidance, with a full Purpose to obey his Motions, and follow his Directions. Thus we should devote and dedicate ourselves to each of the Sacred Three.

3. We should seek to and depend upon each of these Sacred Three, for the Blessings that belong to that part of our Salvation, which each divine Person undertakes and executes. Thus, we should seek, and pray to God the Father for the Pardon of our Sins, through the Blood of his Son-Jesus Christ. We must come to Christ by Faith, and accept of his Righteousness, and receive him, and trust in him, hoping for his Mercy unto eternal Life. And we must pray for the Influences of the Holy Spirit, and take
The Doctrine of

take heed that we do not grieve him, nor quench, nor reftift his good Motions on our Hearts and Minds. We muft believe in God the Father, and we muft believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. John xiv. 1. And we muft believe and wait for thofe Supports, and Aids, and Confolations of the Holy Ghost, which are promised us in the Gospel. And how defirous fhould we be, that our Fellowship may be with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ, and that the Communion of the Holy Ghost may be always with us? I will add yet once more,

4. May we not expect fome distint Happiness, that will be communicated to us in the heavenly World, from each of these Sacred Three? for there we read, The pure in Heart fhall fee God; and there they fhall ever be with the Lord Chrift, and fee him as he is, and be made like him. And is it not probable, that in Heaven, the Communion of the Holy Ghost will furnish out a part of the Happiness of the glorified Saints, now raised, and improv'd to a much greater Perfection than ever it was before? and that his blefl'd Influences fhall attend them ftill, to which they owed all their former spiritual Comforts, and all their reviving Earnefts and Foretastes of Heaven, before they came there.

I will now shut up this Discourse with two Inferences.

1. How great, and how glorious a Work muft that be, about which all the Sacred Three are fo much concerned, even the Work of Man's Salvation! It was, to be fure, a very difficult Affair which made it necessary, that each divine Person fhould take a distint Part and Province, in order to accomplifh it. It was to pardon and fave Sinners and Re-
bels against God, without injuring the Honour of divine Justice and Truth. It was to redeem and rescue the Bond-slaves of Satan, to sanctify vile polluted Creatures, and make them meet for Heaven. What a Notion must this give us of the Gospel-Salvation! We may, in some measure, compute the Value of it from the Price which it cost, and from the Labours and Sufferings whereby it was procured for us. 'Tis the joint Concern, and Care, and Work of the Sacred Three, to save poor worthless Sinners. No doubt, but that is a very great, and a very glorious Salvation, which is designed for them.

2. Let the Enemies of God and Holiness know, and remember, that all the Sacred Three are engaged against them, to punish them for their Contempt of this great and glorious Salvation. Each divine Person is highly offended and injured in his Honour by it. What is this but treading under foot the Son of God! What is it less than doing Despite unto the Spirit of Grace? And is not this an abusing and slighting the Father's Love to a very sad degree? therefore they will all join to take vengeance on the impenitent unbelieving Sinner. Remember this, you that forget God, you that make light of Christ, you that resist the good Spirit now; the time is coming when you will cry, but cry in vain, to the Rocks and Mountains to fall upon you, and hide you from the Face of him that sitteth upon the Throne, and from the Wrath of the Lamb.

SER.
SERMON VI.
The Decrees of God concerning all his Works, and his beginning to execute them in Creation.

Eph. I. ii.
—Who worketh all Things after the Counsel of his own Will.

The only way we have in our present State, of conceiving God's intellectual and moral Perfections together with his Operations, is by Analogy; that is, by attributing to him in an infinite degree every real Excellency which belongs to his Creatures, without any of the Weakness and Imperfection that is inseparable from Finite Beings. Now according to this Rule applied to Divine Operations, must we not apprehend, that they will have every Perfection requisite to intelligent, free, and wise Action; and this as one, that God designs and determines them before he does them, yet still without any of that Deliberation and Suspense which takes place in the Counsels of Men?

Again, it follows from the Infinite Perfection of God, that he thus equally determines within himself all his own Works at once. God cannot, sure, but be capable of this, by his Knowledge of all Possibilities, and Wisdom to judge at one View which of them were fittest to be carried into Existence through
through boundless Ages. And is it not the Wisdom of every Agent, before he sets about a Work of any Compass, to fix in his Design, as far as he can, all things that any way relate to it? Now all God's Works from the beginning of the Creation to the Consummation of all Things, are one Whole, one entire grand Scheme, whose ultimate End lies at a vast distance from the Beginning; and all the intermediate Operations, as so many Parts, conspire to it in a regular Connection. How then, can it be consistent with his most perfect Wisdom, to leave any of them to an After-thought, when he had Fore-thought sufficient to provide for all alike?

Once more, God's Fore-knowledge of all Futurities evidently infers his Purpose to be some way conversant about all of them *. Does he for instance certainly fore-know, tho' in a manner inconceivable by us, all that free Agents would do in every Situation and Circumstance? Whenever therefore he wills to bring them into any State of Existence, and into any Circumstances, surely he must also will to suffer the foreseen Consequences to take place. Thus God fore-ordains whatsoever comes to pass, by purposing to do himself whatever is necessary or proper for his

* Whether God's Fore-knowledge or his Purpose has the Precedence, is a Question which admits of different Answers according to the different nature of the Objects. It is not my Business here to enter far into this intricate Question. I shall only observe; tho' we cannot conceive any thing to be actually and certainly foreknown by God as really future, without some previous Will in him concerning its Futurity; yet we can no more conceive but that he foreknows some sort of Events would happen in certain Circumstances, antecedently to his willing that they shall. For to admit that all Events alike, as well those which God does not effect, particularly his Creatures Sins, as those which he does, are first willed immediately by him, and no other way foreknown at all, would, as far as I can see, destroy the Difference supposed between these two kinds of Events, and argue God to be the Author of both.
his own Power to perform, and to permit all Things else *.

And since he would not knowingly suffer any thing utterly inconsistent with his Glory, as he had Power to hinder it, he has, no doubt, fixed such Bounds and Limitations to all his Creatures, that no- thing shall be produced by any of them, which may not have a proper Place and Use in the Sum of Events. He has settled also particular subordinate Ends to in- dividual Events, and a general good End on the whole, which they shall all together subserv.

It is easy to see how the Scriptures represent the Doctrine of God's Decrees, agreeably to this Deduction of it from rational Principles. Of him, we are told, and through him, and to him are all Things. Rom. xi. 36. The Counsel of the Lord standeth for ever, the Thoughts of his Heart to all Generations. Psal. xxxiii. 11. They reach at once over all Transactions of the successive Ages of Time, and are invariably pursued and executed through them and at the End of them. And how express is our Text, to this purpose, God worketh all Things after the Counsel of his own Will? God's working here seems to mean not only his own strict and proper Agency, but his ordering and dis- posing

* Let it not be thought that God's simple Permission of Things requires not his Will to be at all concern'd about it. For with his Foresight he had the Power of Prevention. Therefore whatever he permits he chooses to permit rather than to prevent, as best in the whole View of Things; partly for the sake of the Original Constitution being judged so right in it self as not fit to be changed, be- cause of Consequences which however wrong would still be owing to the Default of his Creatures; and partly for the sake of the Ends worthy of God, every thing permitted by him would be over-ruled too. For, as Infinite Wisdom must have perceived if any Consequences of such a Constitution would be absolutely inconvenient; God's Will, as directed by it, would, doubtless, have determin'd the Constitution otherwise, (as he was free and able to make it what he pleased) that so another Course better answering his wife De- signs might flow from it.
posing even the Actions of rational Creatures, and all Events whatsoever (with which his own Operations are perpetually intermix'd) to Ends worthy of himself. And this he does according to the Counsel of his Will, that is, his wife, steady, and unalterable Purpose beforehand.

I am to discourse at present,

I. Of the Counsel or Purpose of God concerning all his Works, or all things in general.

II. Of Creation, the first of those Works, which he performs answerably to his Counsel.

I. Of the Counsel or Purpose of God concerning all his Works or all Things in general. Here let us consider, 1. The Extent or Objects of God's Purposes. 2. The Properties of them.

1. As to the Extent or Objects of God's Purposes; it appears from the Principles already establish'd, that every thing which happens has a Place in the Divine Decrees, in a manner suitable to its Nature. And indeed, if we go about to except any Thing, there would be no knowing where to stop: such is the Series and Connection of one with another.

Let us take a brief Survey of some Instances, especially such as relate to our World. As,

1.) The Work of Creation with all the Effects of God's Providence over the Natural World. Creation is so absolutely God's own Work, that his Comprehension of the whole Model, his Determination of the Kinds, Numbers, Uses, and Manner of Existence, of all his Creatures, before any were made, can be no Question where the Author is own'd. Hence God pronounced good, all Things he had made, as answering exactly in all their Parts and Uses, to his original Idea of them. Thus also, the more stable and uni-
form Effects in the Natural World, such as the regular Revolution of the Heavenly Bodies, the Propagation of all Plants and Animals from their respective Seeds, the Qualities and Virtues of each Species continuing the same from the Creation, though several of them have not been found out till later Ages, the Force of Gravity and Attraction, which is exerted all over the Universe and keeps its Parts together; these carry plain Signatures of a Decree appointing them from the first, and that with a vast Reach forward even to the end of the World. Nor is there any reason to doubt the same of those Effects which appear variable to us, such as the Changes of the Weather and the like. For they also are the Effects of God's own Will and Power. God has appointed the Ordinances of Heaven and Earth, according to which they continue to this day. Jer. xxxiii. 25. Psal. cxix. 91.

2.) The Purpose of God has before determined all the great Revolutions and Events of Nations, Kingdoms and Societies of Men. These may well be judged of too great Consequence to Mankind to have been left unsettled, and are scarce thought so by any. And we are assured, that God's Providence, whereof his Purposes are the Standard and Ground-work, is supremely concern'd in all publick Affairs. God is the Judge who putteth down one, and setteth up another; who changeth the Times and the Seasons; who ruleth in the Kingdom of Men, and appointeth over it whomsoever he will. Psal. lxxv. 7. Dan. ii. 21. Chap. v. 21. And besides this, most of the considerable Occurrences of the World for a long Series, are foretold in Scripture.

3.) All Events that befall particular Persons in this World, were likewise settled by a Divine Decree. For in these, the Scripture interests Providence no less than
than in those of a more extensive Influence. The very Hairs of our Head are all number'd, and even a Sparrow does not fall to the ground without our heavenly Father. Matt. x. 29, 30. Since God has determined the Times before appointed, and the Bounds of their Habitation for all the Nations of Men, as we are told, Acts xvii. 26. what should hinder his equally determining and fore-appointing all Events with all their Circumstances for every individual Person? as his Birth, his Complexion of Body and Mind, his Station, and Employment, his Relations and Condition, with all the Changes of any of them, and no less his Death? Man's Days are determined; the Number of his Months is with God; he hath appointed his Bounds that he cannot pass. Job xiv. 5. As contingent as these Things may be in themselves, so that a very small Turn and Variation would put them into a different Course; yet the Foreknowledge and Purpose of God comprehends without any Possibility of Error the whole Train of Incidents, and connects them as they are united in Fact.

4.) The Actions of Men also are not exempted from God's previous Purpose. It is certain upon Experience, and God's moral Government makes it necessary, that Men are and should be free in what they do. Be it so: They are also dependent on God their supreme Lord; they are no less his Creatures and Servants to his Pleasure, than they are moral Agents and accountable to him for their Conduct. Their Actions are Parts of the whole System of Things, which of course must be considerably influenced by them, and they will prove of great moment to themselves, to their Fellow-Creatures, and to the Glory of God. Did it not then highly become the Independency and infinite Wisdom of God,
originally to take a provisional Care of them, so to limit and fix them as to secure a certain End in all the Affairs of the World; and yet to preserve the Principle of Human Liberty inviolate? A Province the more worthy of God, the greater Nicety and Difficulty there is in it, and to which he must surely be equal.

5.) The Dispensation of the Gospel and Means of Grace, the Revelations of the divine Will which have had a respect all along to the Oeconomy of Salvation by Christ as well as that Oeconomy itself, were adjusted in the Counsels of God. These Revelations were appointed to be made in that Variety of Ways, and in those Parts and Degrees, as also to such Persons, and at such and for so long a Time, as has since fallen and will fall out. These Purposes of God are often mention'd in Scripture, especially by St. Paul in his Epistles. So likewise is the Purpose respecting the final and eternal State of Men; which having a Place allotted to it by itself in the Course of these Sermons, I now wave, and pass on,

2. To the Properties of God's Decrees.

1.) They are sovereign and free Acts of his Will. God, though a necessary Being, is not a necessary Agent. To suppose this, would be to make him no Agent at all. Whatsoever he determines and acts, he does it from himself and of choice; and never the less freely, because of the Wisdom and Reason of what he does; since being naturally capable of doing otherwise, he with Consciousness and Complacency prefers what is wisest and best. And yet who knows, if in some Cases and Circumstances of Things, several ways equally proper for accomplishing one and the same end may not be possible
possible to infinite Wisdom and Power? For certain, all the Reasons of God's Counsels are within himself; they are subject to no Account nor Controll from any of his Creatures, and are above their full Comprehension. Hence the Scripture fitly resolves his Purposes into the Good-pleasure of his Will, as their fundamental Ground and Principle: And in this it becomes us to acquiesce.

2.) They are eternal: Not indeed in the same absolute Sense as God's Nature is, which always was and could not but be what it is: For how would that consist with their being Acts of Will and Liberty? But they are so eternal, as that it is impossible to assign or conceive any Time when they were first form'd. They all together co-existed in the Mind of God, before the Foundation of the World, before the World began, before all Ages, as the Scripture speaks of some of them: And the Reason as to all is the same. The End of all Things was known and provided for from the Beginning; so as to leave no room for God's taking new Counsels about any of them in Time. All such new Counsels are superseded and anticipated, as I may say, by the entire Comprehension his Understanding always had of what was fit to be, and what should be; and by the perfect Rectitude and Activity of his Will, which must be supposed immediately to concur with his Judgment. Temporary occasional Purposes cannot be ascribed to God, without an unworthy Limitation of his Knowledge, or an absurd Separation of his Will from his Wisdom.

3.) They are infinitely Wise. For they form a Scheme of a prodigious Compass, which reaches to endless Ages, and whose various Parts are all laid out and disposed together, for Execution in the best
Manner and to the best Ends. How could it possibly be otherwise? For God could not but know and approve what was best; all Creatures with their Powers of acting were to depend entirely on himself; and his own Power, whereof he was fully conscious from all Eternity, was almighty to perform whatever he should please. The greater Part of God’s Works both in Nature and Providence discover the most obvious Marks, and afford the plainest Indications of a wise Design. But if the Secrets of Wisdom are double to what we see; nay, if many Things appear to us irregular and answering no good Purpose, but rather the contrary; Is not want of Reach and Penetration in us rather than in God, the more modest and just Account of it? Is it any more than a necessary Consequence, when a finite and very contracted Understanding contemplates an immense Work with the most curious and distant Connections among the Parts? Just as it happens to the Eye, which while it beholds a large Prospect or a distant Building, sees nothing distinctly, and in due Order and Proportion?

4.) They are Holy. *The Lord is righteous in all his Ways, and holy in all his Works.* Psal. cxlv. 17. Consequently, he is holy in all his Purposes which are the Beginning of his Ways, and which are accomplished in them. The infinite Rectitude and Blessedness of God is sufficient Security, that he could neither design nor act any Thing contrary to Justice and Goodness. *His Counsels of old are Faithfulness and Truth.* H. xxv. 1. They are intrinsically right, and therefore fit, as well as sure, to be fulfilled.

5.) They are absolute and unchangeable. *Known unto God,* as having been certainly appointed by him, are all his Works from the Beginning of the World. *Acts*
Ser. VI. God's Decrees. 103

Acts xv. 18. And yet many of them are inseparably connected with the free Actions of his Creatures; so that both these sorts must have a Place together in his determinate Counsel and Foreknowledge, or neither of them could.

We are expressly assured that this was the Case in respect to one of the wickedest Actions which was ever done in our World, the crucifying the Lord of Glory, Acts ii. 23. and that nothing was done against him, but what God's Hand and Counsel determined before to be done, Acts iv. 28; though no question in perfect Confidence both with Men's Freedom, and God's Holiness. What reasonable Doubt therefore can there be, but that the same holds true of all the Actions of Men, whether Evil, Good, or Indifferent, in such a Sense as it does of any of them respectively, and as the Scripture afferts it concerning some of each kind?

*No Contingencies then which belong to Things in their own Nature, no Conditions on which particular Events are suspended can affect God's Will as in himself, so as to hold it in Suspense and undetermined, or render any Event uncertain to his

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* Whatever conditional Will belongs to God; it forbids not his knowing and withal his determining precisely and peremptorily what the real Event, both of the Condition, and on the Condition shall be. Thus it is plain, that God's willing that all in the Ship with Paul should escape if they abode in it, but, if not, that they should be lost, would not contradict or deny his absolutely willing that they should both remain in it and be saved. Acts xxvii. 22, 31. The truth is, a conditional Declaration never signifies the Will of God as to Events, farther than to establish and keep a certain Connection between some and others: And therefore it can only be falsified, where they are willed or ordered to be otherwise than according to that Connection. But so they never are by God. He wills antecedent and consequent Events, whether to permit or to work them, only in that Order and Relation which is proper to them; and he wills all Events with their Perquisites and Circumstances in the very Series wherein they happen.
Foreknowledge and Counsel. There are many Devices in a Man's Heart; nevertheless the Counsel of the Lord, as penetrating through them, as settling the Issue of them, and the Issue of Things too whether according to any, or against all these Devices, that shall stand. Prov. xix. 21. God's Decree being thus absolute and determinate about all that comes to pass, is therefore unchangeable; so we read of the Immutability of his Counsel, Heb. vi. 17. His Wisdom in forming it is a Reason why himself will not; and his supreme Power and Providence, why others cannot alter it.

Let us now briefly improve this Subject. And,

1. Hence we learn, that there is no such Thing, as Chance or necessary Fate, or the supreme independent Government of two opposite Principles, Good and Evil; but all Events are subject to the Purpose and Providence of one intelligent, all-knowing, infinitely wise, powerful, holy and good Being. And, O how great, how adorable does God appear in having plan'd out the whole Scheme of future Events in his eternal Counsels? Thus is his Work all before him; it has always lain under his Eye and under his Hand. Nothing can ever arise to surprize him, or cast any Difficulty and Perplexity on his way; he having already from Eternity settled the proper Measures of Conduct in every Case that shall emerge. How incomprehensible and wonderful in Counsel, as well as excellent in working is God? And what Reason have we to cry out, O the Depth of the Riches both of the Wisdom and Knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his Judgments, and his Ways past finding out? Rom. xi. 33.
2. Let us own, and let us quietly submit to the supreme Will of God as fulfilled in all that befalls us. We should consider, that, even when we suffer wrongfully from Men, *the Will of God is*, 1 Pet. iii. 17. He uses them as his Instruments, and wisely and righteously permits what they wickedly enough practice. Let us then receive all our Allotments with this Language of Resignation, *The Will of the Lord be done*, Acts xx. 14. And ceasing from an Opposition which would be as vain as it is wicked, from an anxious Enquiry whether Things might not have been otherwise, and from all sinful Anger against God or Men; let us be wholly intent on our Concern with God in whatever occurs to us, and on a Compliance with his Designs.

3. This Doctrine of God's Decrees may inspire us with a good Confidence about the final Issue of all Things. How securely may we trust in God for a fair Account at last, of the worst Appearances, of the most corrupt and disorderly State of the World? Since they have not escaped his Eternal Foresight and Provision.

4. What a Spring is it too of generous, brave and noble Undertakings in the Cause of God? When we believe that he has taken, even from Eternity, the wisest and best Care of all Events, what remains for us to care about, but only to do our Duty, and to apply to it so much the more vigorously, as we have no need to distract our Minds about the Issues of Things? With what Serenity and Fortitude may a good Man *commit himself to God in well-doing*? What has he to fear, that should deter or divert him from the most difficult and dangerous Services he is warranted or called to engage in? For he knows that nothing is left to Chance, or to the Will and Power of Creatures, but all Occurrences are
are regulated by the Decree of Heaven, which often brings forth what could never be expected from the outward Face of Things, and which is so far interpreted by God's Word in general, that fall how it will, the good Man shall be better'd not worsted by it.

5. We should beware of abusing this Doctrine; either by fondly expecting any Good in the Neglect of prescribed or prudent Means; or by pleading God's Decrees as a Reason or Justification of our own Sins and Follies; or when our own Foolishness has perverted our Way, by suffering our Hearts to fret against the Lord, his Purpose or Providence. Prov. xix. 3. Let us alway remember, that whatever God's Decrees are, they leave us to the full Use of our rational Powers, and under an Obligation to pursue the Dictates of right Reason and the Word of God for our temporal and eternal Wellfare as much as if there were no Decrees at all. God's Law, which we may and should know, not his Decree which we cannot know till the Event reveals it, is the only Rule and Measure of the Part we are to act. Though God will not indeed lose his own Ends for our Sins and Follies; yet he wants not these for the Accomplishment of his Purposes. Consequently, whatever general good Issue he will over-rule them to; they will yield to the Agent himself no other but their own proper evil Fruit, unless prevented by sincere Repentance and better Caution learn'd for the future.

I must just add a few Words on,

II. The Creation, which was the first of God's Works, wherein he fulfilled his Counsels. By this is meant both the Production of Things into Being which did not exist before at all, and the Disposition of
of them into Forms constituting the specific Nature and Use of particular Things and a regular System of all together.

Now there must have been a Creation in the first and most proper Sense, that is, out of Nothing, however it surpasses all our Ideas; and this was certainly the Work of God. For this is the only Way to account for the Existence of Things, which does not imply a Contradiction. That Things should begin to be which were not before, has no absurdity at all in it. For this is very different from their being, and not being at the same time. Nor does it import an Effect without a Cause. For the Power of God as infinite and extending to all Things possible must be a sufficient Cause without pre-existing Materials; which if it needed to work with, it would be limited by them. But how palpable a Contradiction is it to suppose that Things should make themselves, or begin to be without any Cause at all, or flow in an eternal Succession one from another, all alike dependent, without any one at their Head independently and necessarily exist? Nor is it less a Contradiction, that any but God only should exist of himself by Necessity of Nature. For to this, such an universal infinite Presence and Activity is required, as contains the utmost Perfection of Being, and must be so wholly engrossed by one, that more cannot be supposed, but either they will be one and the same, or none of them will be necessary and absolutely perfect. It remains therefore an undeniable Principle of Reason, that God alone is the Original Author of all other Things, whether Spirit or Matter. And Matter, sure, has the least Pretence to Exemption: it has nothing in its Nature like Necessity or a Principle of Existence within itself; it is made up of Parts; it is altogether
altogether passive, and only fit to be acted on; it neither now exists every where, nor seems capable of doing so.

Thus also, through Faith we understand that the Worlds were framed by the all-powerful Word of God, so that Things which are seen were not made of Things which do appear. Heb. xi. 3. This is the Language of Scripture throughout. And it further informs us, beyond all the Discoveries of Reason, that God made all Things by his Word and Spirit; not as Instruments and precarious Beings themselves, (a Notion most unworthy of God, and confounding the essential Distinction between the Creator and his own Works) but as joint Agents and essential Principles of one Godhead with the Father, though in a personal inconceivable Distinction.

As then a Creation out of nothing is God's Prerogative: so no less is Creation in the secondary Notion of it, that is, forming the several Creatures. Whatever the Laws of Motion might do as to the inanimate Parts of the World; and yet those of greatest Consequence to the Frame of Nature do not necessarily belong to Matter, but depend wholly on God for their Being and continued Force: They will not all of them together account for the Original Formation of Plants and Animals *. In the History of the Creation, every Species, and all the Parts of the rising World are refer'd to God's immediate and sole Agency, Gen. i, ii. 1—7. Thus how often are we told, that God made Heaven, Earth, the Sea, and

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* Matter and the Laws of Motion, the Sun, Earth, and Water and all the Powers of Nature in conjunction, are able to do nothing at all towards the producing any thing induced with so much as even a vegetable Life. Therefore it must be unavoidably granted, that they are originally the Work of an intelligent Being and created by him. Dr. Clarke's Demonstrate. Ed 6. p. 55.
Ser. VI. Creation.

and all things that are therein? He giveth to all, Life and Breath, and all Things. Acts xiv. 15. xvii. 24, 25. He stretcheth forth the Heavens alone, and spreadeth abroad the Earth by himself. Is. xliv. 24. And of the Angels it is observed, that they attended as Spectators with their Songs, but not as Partners in the Work. Job xxxviii. 6, 7.

The Manner, Time and Order wherein all Things were created is in the last place to be taken notice of. The Magnificence and Ease of Performance is admirably represented by the beautiful Simplicity and Majesty of the Description. God gave forth the Word of Command, Let it be so; and the Effect was wrought by Divine Power, as soon and just as he willed it. And the whole was finished in six Days; each of which had its proper Work assigned to it. So short a Time employed in so vast a Work argues a supernatural Energy exerted quite through it, and shews the Vanity of all Attempts to reduce it to the present Laws of Nature which were then settling by itself.

Hence there appears no great Difficulty in conceiving that so short space of Time should be sufficient; or that the Effects of some Days should seem to exceed those of others, in proportion, it may be, to their depending more or less on the immediate Power of God which wants no Time to work whatever he wills. But perhaps we may wonder, that God should take up so much Time, and proceed so minutely and gradually, in raising the Fabric of the World; which, if he had pleased, he could have produc'd perfect in its entire Form and Beauty at once. However, one good moral Reason for it is obvious, that it gave the Angels who were present at the whole or most of the six Days Creation, an Opportunity of knowing more intimately the Works of God.
God in their Nature and mutual Dependencies, and so of more fully celebrating his Glories display'd in them. Might it not also be so order'd, that the Narrative of the Creation which God intended to give to the World, might have the same Effect on Mankind in a lower Degree; that it might better settle in their Minds a steady Belief of all Things from the highest to the lowest proceeding from one and the same Divine Original; and that it might affect them with a proper Sense of the Dignity of Human Nature, as made with peculiar Solemnity, the last and the End of the other Works? Nor might it be the least Use of God's taking six Days to create the World, that he made it the Ground of a standing and universal Law given to Man from the first, after the Example of his Maker to work in the common Labours of Life but six Days together, and devote the seventh to sacred Rest.*

I shall only further observe how very convenient the Order of the several Days appears in a general View and Reference to the Earth, the Formation and Accommodation of which seems chiefly to be regarded in the Mosaiick History. Thus how naturally and properly is Light made to spring up as the first Remove from a Chaos involv'd all in Darkness?

* What was the Extent of the whole six Days Work, or the precise Production of each, especially the four first: Whether, if the visible Heavens, with all the fix'd Stars belong'd to this Period, yet the Scripture Account of Angels, good and bad, will admit them, with the invisible and highest Heavens into it also: Whether all the Matter of the Universe was created at once and b gun to be disposed quickly after its Existence, as of no Use to lie long in a formless confused Chaos: What was contain'd in the Chaos, the Earth alone, or the Sun and Planets with it: Whether there might not be more than one Chaos, all wrought off in some such manner and at the same Time, as that of our System, which can scarce be thought less considerable, and why then of a later Origin than any other? These, and such like Enquiries are too deep and curious to be here discus-sed.
Whether this Light might be of use to the Angels, in their viewing the Process of the other Days or no; it serv'd, no doubt, to adorn and beautify the rising Face of Nature, and to forward by its concomitant Heat the succeeding Productions.

The Produce of the second Day was the Firmament or Atmosphere extracted out of the circumfused Waters. How fitly now does Air take the next Place to Light, and precede Vegetables and Animals, neither of which can live at all without Air?

On the first Part of the third Day, the Waters which hitherto cover'd the whole Surface of the Earth were drawn off into Channels at the same time prepared for them. And this could not so well be before, since the Air might better be rais'd out of the Waters while they were diffus'd all abroad than when they were collected into one Place. But then it was necessarily previous to the Production and Growth of that useful and pleasant Variety of the Vegetable Kinds, which at the second Fiat of this Day the Earth plentifully brought forth. And both these Works of the third Day must need go before the Formation of all living Creatures, that they might have a proper Seat for their Reception, and Store of Food for their Sustenance against their Appearance in the World.

Yet one Day is interpos'd between furnishing the Seat, and introducing any of its Inhabitants; in order to make a standing Provision of Light and Heat. The Sun, Moon and Stars were now on the Fourth Day lighted up in Heaven, and fix'd in their respective Orbs, and their Courses and Uses appointed them, which they have constantly fulfilled from that Time. How wisely was this Work deficient
ferred till now, but no longer; were it only for greater Decorum and Harmony, that the Parts of the Universe purely material and void of Sense might be finish'd together, and this as most glorious come last? Besides, perhaps the same Degrees of Light and Heat might not be so convenient to the World, while it was forming, as when it was compleatly form'd and inhabited. Those hitherto employ'd, probably had answer'd their utmost Use and Intention in the Plantation of the World; and were incapable of nourishing and improving what they might conduce to raise, either because they were too feeble or else too powerful and intense. Much less may they be thought adapted to the more delicate and complicated Frame of Animals; which requires the Communication of Light and Heat to them at an exact Medium, at once to suit their Organs of Sight, and to cherish in them a due vital Warmth.

Now follows, where it ought, and where only it well could, the Production of all sorts of living Creatures: And first on the fifth Day, Fishes great and small, were produced, to stock the Sea and Rivers, and all the feather'd and winged Tribes to fly in the Air. These were both made of the same watry Materials, and before the Terrestrial Animals; as having their Texture more simple, and the Places of their Residence, the Water and Air, sooner ready for their Accommodation.

On the sixth Day God form'd out of the Ground now grown solid and firm enough to support the Bodies and Steps of its destin'd Natives and Inhabitants, all the various Species of them; the irrational first, as Beasts both wild and tame, and creeping Things innumerable; and last of all one only rational Creature, to have the supreme Dominion over and
and Use of all the rest, even Man to whom quickly after was join'd the Woman made out of him. Thus was the Master-piece and chief End of this goodly Frame referred to crown the whole; as was certainly most meet for his Honour, Convenience, and Entertainment. Most of the preceding Operations were absolutely necessary to make him a Seat fit to live in. All together contributed such Furniture and Ornaments, as left nothing wanting to the immediate Gratification of his Nature as soon as it was form'd: And as they prepared the Way for his Entrance, they so declared his superior Rank and Preeminence.

Application.

What abundant Cause does this excellent Order which God observ'd in framing the World, as well as the Quality of the Creatures, which had all their Parts fitted to a proper Use, and were made subservient to one another for the good of all, afford us to break forth into that Celebration of Divine Wisdom? Psal. civ. 24. O Lord, how manifold are thy Works! in Wisdom hast thou made them all! Not only the whole when finished, but every Thing as successively wrought off each Day, might well be pronounced Good. Since, besides the stated Ends they were afterward to serve, they all answer'd a present Use in their first Place and Rank of Appearance, and carried on the Plan by gradual Ascents, to its perfect Consummation. O with what agreeable Surprize must this strike the Angels, as the several Scenes of Creation rose up in Order to their View! Thus also the New Creation of Grace in Christ Jesus, is executed gradually after the same Model, which is the more from hence confirm'd to be a Point
Point of Wisdom and Beauty. And how will the conducting it from a spiritual Chaos of Darkness and wild Disorder, through various Periods and Gradations to a glorious Issue, excite the most ravishing Admiration in the Saints, when they shall be able to carry their Views from the Beginning to the End of both these Creations at once? How should we adore likewise the Divine Power as infinitely great and wonderful in Creation? Here, as in its proper Province, Omnipotence acted illustriously from first to last, and was only laid open to a more distinct Survey in the wise Order of its Proceedure. O! the unparallel'd and stupendous Power of God, that first made his own Materials, which all other Artificers must have ready to their hands; and then with a Word it wrought them into those various Bodies of exquisite Workmanship that compose the World, which they could never have ranged themselves into, nor could any other have framed them! How great also is his Goodness, and how great is his Beauty, which are conspicuous in these his Works; thus wondrous fair as they yet are, and still dispensing such Riches of his Bounty all abroad, though Sin has enter'd into the World and in part tarnish'd and deprav'd them?

Hence how horrid an Evil does Sin appear? It is this only that spreads Deformity and Ruin through the Works of God, which were all originally very good. And it is the most unnatural Rebellion against him the universal Parent. O how should we hate it, and shun it as the vilest and most monstrous thing in the World?

Finally, since God as our Maker, is our undoubted Sovereign and Proprietor, and appears evidently possessed of unbounded Power to do what he pleases;
pleases; Let us never dare to dispute his Commands or Displeasures; Let us never willingly incur and abide under his Displeasure. Cannot he who brought us into Being as easily strike us out of Being? Nay which is far worse than that, can he not uphold our Being only to make us for ever miserable? And thus will he indeed deal with all who go on in their Sins, and never truly submit to him in the Way laid open in the Gospel of Christ. He that made them will not have Mercy on them, and he that formed them will shew them no Favour. O, how much does it concern us all, being moved with Fear of God's all-powerful and irrefistible Wrath, to seek in the Methods of Gospel-Grace to secure him for our Friend? And then, having his Omnipotence for our Guard, what Evils need we be afraid of? having his All-sufficiency for the Source of all our Supplies, what Good may we not hope for? And how confidently may and ought we to trust in him for whatever we are warranted to expect, in the Face of the strongest Difficulties and Oppositions?
SERMON VII.
The Providence of GOD, as the Preserver, and Sovereign Disposer of all Things, in the Natural World.

Psalm CIII. 19.
The Lord hath prepared his Throne in the Heavens, and his Kingdom ruleth over all.

This is a very grand Representation of the Majesty of the great God. As an earthly Monarch sets up his Throne, and keeps his Court in some one Capital City, and from thence extends his Dominion and Government over a whole Kingdom; so, in allusion hereunto, the great and mighty God, who is King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, is here represented as having prepared his Throne in the Heavens, and from thence extending his Sovereign Dominion and Influence as wide as universal Nature, over all Creatures, and over all Worlds. By the Kingdom of God, we are here to understand his Providence, or his preserving and governing all his Creatures, and all their Actions. The Subjects of this universal Kingdom may be distinguished into Natural and Moral. By the moral World, we mean, the rational Part of the Creation, or those Creatures who are fit Subjects of a moral Law, as Angels and Men, consider'd as reasonable Creatures. By the natural World, we understand the whole Mass of Matter, which
which is variously disposed into a multitude of Shapes and Forms, and different sorts of Creatures, as Sun, Moon, and Stars, Air, Earth, and Sea; with all the vast Variety of Plants and Animals, with which they are stor'd, and by which they are inhabited. God's Providential Kingdom is absolutely universal, and over All. But my Province, at present, is to consider the Providence of God, as the Preserver and sovereign Disposer of all things, in the Natural World only.

My Method in handling this Subject shall be,

First, To prove that there is a Providence.
Secondly, To explain and to illustrate the Providence of God in the Natural World, by the principal Acts of it.
Thirdly, To mention some Properties of this Providence.
Fourthly, To make a practical Application.

First, To prove that there is a Providence, which presides over the whole Course of Nature, and all the Worlds of Creatures. This may be argu'd,

1. From the Perfections of God: and of those we need only single out, his Knowledge, and his Wisdom, his Goodness, and his Power: for if we believe, that God is infinitely possessed of such Perfections as these, it will hardly be possible for us to stop short of believing his Providence. Does God know all things, and the Nature and State of all the Creatures, and what Condition is most fit and proper for every one of them? Is he infinitely Wise, to appoint and order all things in the best manner? And is he as Good and Powerful, as he is Wise and Knowing? Who can believe this, and not believe a Providence?
The Providence of God,

Providence? For will not his Wisdom and Goodness incline him to take care of his own Creatures, and to conduct and govern them in the best manner? Can we suppose the universal Parent of all Creatures and Worlds, to be like the foolish Ostrich? who is careless of her Brood, and is hardened against her young ones, as if they were not hers. Job xxxix. 16. And since God is Almighty too, and can do whatever he pleaseth; no reasonable Doubt can remain of his Providence. It must certainly, therefore, be owing to their Ignorance of God, that many of the ancient Heathens had such doubtful and imperfect Notions of Providence: tho' they acknowledged a Providence in great and important Affairs; yet they imagined, that it no way concerned itself about ordinary and common Matters. But juster Notions of God will certainly inform us, that it is not too much for that Wisdom, and Goodness, and Power, which is infinite, to take notice, and to take care of every thing.

2. One may produce many express Testimonies out of Scripture, for the Proof of a Providence. There, it is said, that God upholdeth all things by the Word of his Power; and that they continue according to his Ordinance. He appointeth the Moon for Seasons; and maketh the Sun to know his going down. Ps. civ. 19. He bringeth the Winds out of his Treasure; and Storms and Tempests fulfil his Word. As for the Earth, it is full of his Riches, and so is the great and wide Sea; and the Inhabitants of both of them wait upon him, and he giveth them their Meat in due Season. Ps. civ. 24, 25, 27. God is the supreme Governor among the Nations, and he ruleth unto the Ends of the Earth. There, we are told, how extensive, and how particular this Providence of God
God is: That it presides not only over great and important Affairs; but that it reaches to the minutest Concerns of the meanest Creatures. As in Matt. x. 29, 30. *Are not two Sparrows sold for a Farthing? and not one of them shall fall on the ground without your Father; the very Hairs of your Head are all numbered.* But I should transcribe a great part of the Bible, should I collect all the Proofs of a Providence that are to be met with there. I will only further hint to you one Article of the Doctrine of Providence, which we learn from Scripture, viz. That the Kingdom of Providence is administered by Christ our Saviour. It is by him that all things consist, Col. i. 17. And to him is all Power given both in Heaven, and on Earth, Matt. xxviii. 18. The whole Administration of Providence, over all Creatures, and all Worlds, is committed into the Hands of the Mediator Jesus Christ; which speaks both the Dignity of his Person, and the Safety and Happiness of his Friends and People: They, and their Enemies too, are in his hands, as the great God of Providence; neither Men, nor Devils can harm them without his Permission; and he hath shewed how he loves them, by his once dying for them. *Happy is the People that is in such a case; yea, happy is the People whose Beloved and Friend is Christ the Lord.* If any further Proof of a Providence was wanted, one might,

3. Appeal to the Appearance of things; to the Frame of Nature, and the continued Order and Harmony of the whole Creation; where we have as good Testimonies to a Providence, as to the very Being of a God. For it is no less absurd to imagine, that the World is govern'd by Chance, than to think it was made by mere Chance at first. Can it be only by chance, that *Day and Night,* and *Summer and Winter,*
The Providence of God, ter, so regularly, and constantly succeed to one another? Did all things happen by mere chance, it would be altogether uncertain when the Spring, or the Autumn Season would come; or whether either of them would come any more; nay, it would be ten thousand times more likely, that all things would presently run into Disorder and Confusion. It is certainly, therefore, most reasonable to ascribe it to the Providence of a wise and powerful God, that Seed-time and Harvest, and Cold and Heat, and Summer and Winter, and Day and Night, do not cease; but that Seasons revolve, and return in so just an Order.

Many other Illustrations of this Argument will occur in the Sequel of this Discourse, while I am considering the Nature and the Actings of God's Providence towards his various Creatures; which is the next thing that now falls under Consideration, viz.

Secondly, To explain and illustrate the Providence of God in the Natural World, by some of the principal Acts of it; and they may all be reduc'd to these two Heads. 1. God's preserving. And, 2. His disposing of and governing his Creatures and their Actions.

1. The Providence of God is exercis'd in preserving his Creatures. And here we may distinguish providential Preservation, into two Branches. 1. The Preservation of the several Species, or Kinds of Creatures. And, 2. The Preservation of the several Creatures in their individual Beings.

(1.) The Providence of God is signally display'd in the Preservation of the several Species or Kinds of animal Creatures: so that tho' all the Individuals die, and perish one after another; yet no Species is lost out of the Creation, but most probably, and as far as we can learn from the most ancient Account of Things,
Things, there are all sorts of Creatures still in the World, that were made at first. And this is truly wonderful; especially if we consider, what a natural Enmity there is betwixt some Animals and others, and with what Diligence Men have endeavour'd, in all Ages, to destroy some whole Kinds of them: it is very wonderful, that many a whole Species has not been quite destroy'd long ago; what can we ascribe it to, but a Providence, that watches over, and preserves every part of the Work of God?

The due Proportion of the various Inhabitants of the World to one another; and especially of the Males to the Females, which is so constantly preserved throughout the Animal Creation, is a very sensible Instance of providential Care. What can we ascribe it to, but a Providence, that it has never yet happened to any of the Animal Tribes, that either all proved Males, or all Females; nor that one sort was produced out of proportion to the other; which must have quite wasted the Species, or reduc'd it to a very few? To what, but a wise Providence, can we ascribe that very remarkable Provision, which appears by long Observation to be constantly made in our own Species, for the extraordinary waste of the Males, (by Seas, and Wars, and other untimely Deaths, which several dangerous Trades expose Men to,) by the Surplus of one Male in about fourteen, above the number of Females, which are born every Year; that so the just Proportion of the two Sexes to each other might be always preserv'd? Can this be mere Chance? No certainly; but it is such an Instance of a Providence, as would, one should think, be sufficient, was there no other, to convince an Atheist. Thus Providence is exercised in preserving the several Species or Kinds of Creatures.
God preserves them by his Providence in their individual Beings, 'till the End has been answer'd for which he made them. The same Power that gave Being to the Creatures at first, is continually exerted to uphold them in their Beings; otherwife they exist and live independant on God; which is as absurd to Reason, as it is contrary to Scripture. It is God that holdeth our Soul in Life. In him we live, and move, and have our Beings. We are the living Instances of divine Preservation; but God has helped us, has holden us up from the Womb, and fed us all our Lives long. From how many Dangers and Deaths, does he continually preserve us? Did we more regard a Providence, every Day's experience would furnish us with abundant matter of adoring Thankfulness, to a good and gracious God, who guards our Lives, and wards off a thousand Dangers that constantly surround us. Nor is God's Providential Care confin'd to Men, but it extends to the very leaft and meanest of his Creatures. He heareth the young Ravens when they cry; He openeth his Hand, and satisfieth the Desire of every living thing. Not a Sparrow falls to the ground without our Father. Not the meanest and weakest Creature shall be destroy'd out of the Creation, within the prefix'd Time that God has set for its Continuance. Thus much for the first Act of God's Providence, the preserving of his Creatures.

2. As God preserves, so he also disposeth of, and governs all Creatures, and their Actions, by his Providence. Here we may consider the divine Providential Government, as it is exercis'd as well over the inanimate, as over the animal Creation.

1.) Over the inanimate Creatures. He who fix'd the Laws of Nature in the first Creation, does still
still by his Providence continue their Force and Power, or sometimes suspends, and countermands them, at his sovereign Pleasure. *He binds the sweet Influences of Pleiades, and looses the Bands of Orion: He brings forth Mazzaroth in his season, and guides Arcurus with his Sons. He lifteth up his Voice in the Clouds, and the Lightnings go at his Word. Job xxxviii. 31, &c. He giveth the former, and the latter Rain; and he stays the Bottles of Heaven, 'till the Dust groweth into Hardness, and the Clods cleave fast together. Thus does God keep the Springs of universal Nature in his own hand, and turns them which way soever he pleaseth. What can be a more sensible Instance of God's Providential Government of the World, than the frequent Changes of the Weather? And it is such a one as falls under every one's Observation. We account for Rain, by supposing that the Heat of the Sun, and the natural Warmth of the Earth, send up a moist Steam into the Air, which falls down again in Showers. But then how comes the Weather to change, from a wet to a dry, and from a dry to a wet Season? for the longer it has rain'd, the Earth is grown the moister, and there is therefore the more Vapour to be exhaled from it, to form new Clouds; and consequently the more likelihood of the Rains continuing still: and the longer a Drought has lasted, there is the less Moisture to be drawn up from the Earth, and therefore the less natural Probability of its raining any more. But the Wind changes, and either carries away the Clouds from us, or brings them to us from the Sea, or from some other Region: But then how comes the Wind to change? Here all our Philosophy is nonplus'd; and every body is forced to own a Providence. "If it pleases God to send Rain
"or fair Weather," is common Language with all sorts of People. The Scripture gives the best, and only satisfactory Account of this Matter, when it tells us, that God holdeth the Winds in his Fists, and bringeth them out of his Treasures, and causeth them to blow which way soever he listeth.

2.) The governing Providence of God is no less remarkable in the whole Animal Creation. The Beasts of the Forest are his, and the Cattle upon a thousand Hills; they are all his Creatures, and the Subjects of his Providence. What but a Providence, could direct and guide every Beast, and Bird, and Insect, where to seek its most healthful Food, and its most convenient Habitation? What is it but Providence that teaches every Parent Animal, how to take the properest Care of its Young; to feed, and nourish, and train them up in the way that is most suitable to their different Natures? What can it be but Providence, that guides the way of the Fishes in the Sea? that conducts them always, in the right Season, to the fittest Shore, where to leave their Young, and offer themselves, as it were, to the Net for the Use and Service of Men. Or, what is it that conducts those Birds, who shift their Country and Climate at certain Seasons of the Year, in their Passage to some distant Land, where Multitudes of them never were before? How does the young Crane, or Swallow know, that it is necessary for him to take so long a Journey, and seek a more convenient Habitation for himself against an approaching Winter? Yea, the Stork in the Heaven knoweth her appointed times, and the Turtle, and the Crane, and the Swallow observe the Time of their coming. Jer. viii. 7.

Had they Reason like Men, how little would it help them, to find their way thro' the pathless Air, without
without Needle or Compass? What is their Guide then, but Providence? If we call it Instinct; yet what do we know of it, and in what does that differ from Providence? What is it, but some such immediate Operation of the Almighty, as that which determines all the Particles of Matter to gravitate to their proper Centre? These few Instances may serve, out of many thousands, to illustrate God's providential Government over the Animal Creation. And thus we have considered the principal Acts of God's Providence in the Natural World, in his preserving and governing the Creatures, and their Actions. I proposed,

Thirdly, To lay before you some of the most remarkable Properties of God's Providence, as it appears in the Natural World. Such as,

1. The Wisdom of Providence. A Property so remarkable, and so manifest, that one may very well apply those Words of the Apostle, Rom. xi. 33. to the Mysteries of Providence, as well as to those of Grace: O the Depth of the Riches both of the Wisdom and Knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his Judgments, and his Ways past finding out! How is the Wisdom of God display'd in his preserving and governing the whole Frame of Nature! and all the several Species and Kinds of Creatures in so regular and orderly a manner. It is by this, the Sparrow is directed to find a House, and the Swallow a Nest for herself, where she may lay her Young. How admirably is the Wisdom of Providence display'd, in the different Instinct of the various Tribes of Animals! which is so effectual, as to all the purposes of their Creation, while, at the same time, it is limited merely to such Matters as are necessary to their State, and Manner of living, to the Preservation and Propagation
tion of the Species; and by which it is effectually distinguished from what we call Reason in Men. Can we observe, for instance, the prudent Care of the Hen over her tender Brood? while yet she is not able to distinguish to what Tribe they belong, nor does she know a young Duck from a Chicken. Can we observe the Skill of the industrious Bee? who extracts Honey and Wax out of almost every Flower; or the Labours of the Horse; or even the watchful Service of the faithful Dog: or, if we descend to the Vegetable Creation, can we observe how artfully the Hop twines itself round the Pole; and with what seeming Sagacity the Vine lays hold by its Tendrils to support its feeble Branches, and climbs upwards to expose its Fruit to the Air and Sun-shine, that it may be ripened for the Use of Man? Can we observe these things, and a thousand more of the same kind! and not confess and admire the Wisdom of Providence?

Or, again, if we hearken to the Voice even of Storms and Tempefts, they will further declare to us the admirable Wisdom of that God, whose Word they obey, and whose Designs they execute; for he brings them out of his Treasuries in their most proper Seasons: as, usually, pretty early in the Spring, to loosen the Roots of the Trees in the Ground, and thereby to prepare them the better to grow, and thrive, and bear Fruits in the Summer: and, commonly again, about the End of Autumn, to agitate the Air, after the Calm and Heat of the Summer; and thereby to keep it from stagnating, and growing putrid and unhealthy. Who, upon even such a little View of the Wisdom of Providence in the Natural World, as I have here given you, can forbear saying with the pious Psalmlift, O Lord, how manifold
Ser. VII. in the Natural World. 127

manifold are thy Works, in Wisdom hast thou made them all! Pf. civ. 24. Another very remarkable Property of God's Providence is,

2. The Goodness and Kindness of it. And we need not go far for Instances and Proofs of this; for The Earth is full of the Goodness of the Lord. Pf. xxxiii. 5. There is not a Creature that lives in all the World, but bears a Testimony to the Goodness of Providence. What kind Provision doth it make for all the Animal Tribes? Every Creature is directed by it, where to seek, and find its Food. These all wait upon God, and he giveth them their Meat in due Season; that which he giveth them, they gather, he openeth his Hand, and they are filled with Good. Pf. civ. 27, 28. God extends his kind Regard to many thousands of Creatures, who have no Capacity of knowing, and praising their Benefactor. Thus we read, that when he had threatened the Destruction of Nineveh, the very Cattle, as well as the young Children, afforded a Motive to his Compassion. Shall not I spare Nineveh, said God, that great City, wherein are more than six score thousand Persons, that cannot discern between their right Hand and their left, and also much Cattle? Jonah iv. 11. And, methinks, this should be an Argument with us against practising any unnecessary Cruelties upon any of the meanest Creatures; as to set them a fighting, and destroying one another, to make us sport; 'tis barbarous Sport, unworthy of a Man, and very unlike to God.

Again, how does the Goodness of Providence shine forth in the large and rich Variety of good things, wherewith it replenisheth the Earth every Year, for the Support and Comfort of its various Inhabitants? He causeth the Grass to grow for the Cattle,
Cattle, and Herb for the Service of Man, that he may bring forth Food out of the Earth; and Wine that maketh glad the Heart of Man, and Oil to make his Face to shine, and Bread which strengtheneth Man's Heart.

Pf. civ. 14, 15. And as God has plentifully stored the Earth with the Blessings of his Goodness; so his Providence kindly directs us to find out their various Uses, whether for Food, or Phyfic, for necessary Support, or for Convenience, and Delight. It teaches the very Brutes to distinguish betwixt healthful and unhealthful Food; and every one knows its Enemies, and how to guard, in the very best manner, against the Dangers, which it is exposed to.

The Goodness of God's Providence may be further observ'd in the kind Distribution which he makes of his various Bounties; in that he ordinarily supplies us with the most useful things, in the greatest plenty. Healthful Food is by far more plentiful, than such things as chiefly minister to Luxury and Intemperance. Thus Spices grow but in one Climate; while Bread Corn grows, and thrives in almost any Country, and in almost any Soil. So Gold is to be found but in few Places; while Iron, that most useful Metal of all, is dug up in almost every Land. But Instances of the Goodness of Providence, which the World affords, are more than we can number: we are encompassed with them on every side, and several of them can hardly escape our notice any Day we live.

Before I leave this Head, it may be proper to take a little notice of one single Objection, which some Persons may be apt to make against the Goodness of Providence in the Natural World, viz. its supporting and maintaining several hurtful Creatures, as Lions, and Tygers, and poisonous Serpents, and various
rious kinds of little *Insects*, which offend and harm us. We fancy we should be much better without them; and, we judge, that it would be a kinder thing in Providence, to rid them all out of the World. To which I answer, That very probably, all those Creatures are design'd for some good and valuable Purpose, such as more than ballances all the Harm and Mischief which they do: this, we certainly know, is the Case, as to some of them; and we have Reason to believe it is so as to all. The poisonous *Viper* affords a noble Medicine, which does us more good, than his Poison does mischief; very few Men are killed by his Poison, but many sick Persons are recovered by his Flesh. And may not some of those *lesser Insects*, that we complain of, be wisely and kindly design'd, to oblige us to Cleanliness in our Persons and Houses, which is so very necessary to our own Health? And so the seeming evil of those Creatures, is abundantly over-ballanced by the good which they, some way or other, bring to us. I will mention yet one more Property of Providence, viz.

3. It is very powerful. God upholdeth all things by the Word of his Power. The continued Harmony of Nature, and the constant and regular Revolution of Seasons, are sensible Demonstrations of the Power of God. *Thou hast established the Earth, and it abideth, they continue this Day according to thine Ordinances.* Pl. cxix. 90, 91. This vast Machine of the World, does not go like a Clock, by the Power of its own Springs or Weights; but the same Hand that made it, does continually uphold, and move it. God *brings forth Mazzaroth in his Season, he guides Arcturus with his Sons. He reneweth the Face of the Earth after the Death of Winter; and presents us every Spring with a sort of new Creation.*
The Providence of God,

And the same Almighty God, who created this World at first, and still upholds the whole Frame of Nature, will one Day display his mighty Power, by dissolving it again, and changing it into another Form. The Day of the Lord will come as a Thief in the Night; in the which the Heavens shall pass away with a great Noise; and the Elements shall melt with fervent Heat; the Earth also, and all the Works that are therein, shall be burnt up. Nevertheless we, according to his Promise, look for new Heavens, and a new Earth, wherein dwelleth Righteousness. 2 Pet. iii. 10, 13. Thus, I have given you a cursory View of the Kingdom of Providence over the Natural World. Now, the improvement we should make of this Branch of the Subject of Providence, is,

First, To raise our admiring Thoughts of the Great God. What a great and mighty Being must He be, who is able thus to wield, and manage the whole Frame of Nature! How prodigiously Great must his Power be! How Immense his Being! and how extensive his Knowledge and Understanding, who can take such particular Notice and Care, of so many thousands and millions of Creatures, and all at the same time! How large and how manifold is his Wisdom, by which he hath established the World, and stretched out the Heavens! by which he guides and governs those rolling Orbs of Light, that are over our Heads, and all the Tribes and Creatures in this lower World. And how abundantly rich is the Goodness of this God! from whence all his Creatures receive their various Supplies. He satisfieth the Desire of every living thing. Such a Use, methinks, we should readily make of this View of Providence, even to raise our admiring Thoughts of God.

Secondly
Secondly, We may infer how terrible the Wrath of this great and mighty God must be, and of what Importance it is to secure his Favour. How much should it be our Concern and Care, who have sinned against God, to make our peace with him, who governs all the World? What can be so bad, as to have this God for our Enemy? who is so great and mighty, who can punish us a thousand ways, who can curse our Blessings to us, or strike them out of our hands, whenever he pleaseth. So Pharaoh and the Egyptians found it a very dreadful thing to have that God against them, whose Kingdom ruleth over all; who had Beasts and Insects, Hail and Fire, Light and Darkness, every Element and every Creature, absolutely at his dispose. Only to be without God in the World, to be without his Favour, is a very sad Circumstance; how much worse to have him for our Enemy; to live under his Curse, and to fall into his hands at last, as a God of just and almighty Vengeance? O! how much is it our Interest; how much should it be our Concern and Care, while as yet there is hope, to seek after Reconciliation and Peace with this great and terrible God! With what earnest Attention should we hearken to his most gracious Calls and Invitations, in the Gospel! With what ready Compliance, should we entertain his Proposals of Peace! with what Joy and Gladness, should we embrace his Promises of Mercy! Blessed be his Name, adored be his Grace, that he is willing to be at peace with us; that he has provided a way for our Return and Acceptance; and if we return to him, in his appointed way, he will be at peace with us; yea, he will delight over us to bless us; and, he that has all Nature at his dispose, promised, that he will make all things work together for our Good.

Thirdly,
Thirdly, Let the reconciled Friends and People of God learn from hence, to trust and acquiesce in his Providence, without anxious Carefulness, and without murmuring and repining. Let them know, and remember what a safe and happy Condition they are in, who have this God, for their God; their Covenant Friend and Father, who has been pleased to engage himself, by many a Promise, to bless them, and to bestow upon them every suitable good thing. Let them reckon themselves always safe in his hand, and secure in their Obedience to his Will. How needless and vain is their anxious Carefulness? How sinful are the distrustful Fears of such Persons? Can God, who has all Nature at his dispose, and most absolutely in his power, be ever at a loss for Ways and Means to bless his Children? And has he not promised, that he will bless them indeed; and that he will never suffer them to want any good thing; any thing which he knows will be good for them? Rather than he will suffer his Promise to fail, he will countermand the ordinary Course of Nature, and work Miracles: he will make the Sun stand still, but that his favourite People shall have Day-light enough to subdue their implacable Enemies. *Josb. x. 12.* The-hungry Lions shall lose their savage Fierceness, rather than they shall kill a Prophet, whom God has determined to save. And the greedy Ravens shall carry their Prey, to feed another Prophet, in a lonesome Desart. Fear not, O Christian! let thy Wants be never so many, thy Afflictions never so great, and the Prospect before thee never so sad and gloomy; thy God who is the God of Providence, whose Kingdom ruleth over all, is able to deliver thee, is able to relieve and help thee. And let your Belief of God's Providence reconcile you to
to his Fatherly Corrections, and teach you Submission to his Will, under all Dispensations. Hence learn, with patient Job, to bless a taking, as well as a giving God. It is the Lord that gives, and the Lord takes away; blessed be the Name of the Lord; for he can, and most certainly will, in every Dispensation of his Providence, bless his Children and do them good. He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up to die for them; how shall he not, with him, freely give them all things?

Fourthly, Let us all learn to observe and adore the Providence of God in all that befalls us; and to bless him for all our Enjoyments and Comforts, temporal, as well as spiritual. How would it sweeten our Enjoyments to us! and how would it lighten the Burden of Afflictions! did we but regard God and Providence more, in all these things; and could we but see both one and the other coming to us from a Father's hand. And what Praise and Thanksgiving do we all owe to this God! who has created a World of Creatures for our use; and who, tho' we have forfeited all Blessings by our Sins, does yet preserve them for our Service, and governs them for our Benefit. Still he maketh his Sun to shine upon the Evil and upon the Good; and sendeth Rain to the Just and to the Unjust. What Love, and Duty, and Honour, do all Men owe to him, who is so good to all, and whose tender Mercies are over all his Works!
SERMON VIII.
Of GOD, as the Governour and Judge of the Moral World, ANGELS and MEN.

Daniel IV. 35.
And he doth according to his Will in the Army of Heaven, and among the Inhabitants of the Earth.

These are the Words of Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, whose Understanding was now returned to him, after he had eat Grass with Oxen, till his Hair was grown like Eagles Feathers, and his Nails like Birds Claws; but at length being restor'd to his Kingdom and the Use of his Reason, he blesses the most High, and praises and honours him, whose Dominion is an everlasting Dominion, and whose Kingdom is from Generation to Generation; and who does according to his Will in the Army of Heaven, and among the Inhabitants of the Earth. In these last Words, he acknowledges the absolute Dominion of God over ANGELS and MEN, which are the only Orders of Creatures we know of, endued with intellectual Faculties, and capable of moral Government.

First, God is the Sovereign Lord and Governour of ANGELS, who are described by the Apostle to the Hebrews as Ministering Spirits. They are Spirits, that is, rational and intelligent Agents, perfectly free from the gross incumbrance of Matter; tho' upon occasion,
occassion, capable of assuming Bodies, and appearing in human Shape, as they frequently did under the Old Testament. The Angels are endued with greater and more excellent Perfections than Man, as they not only discern between Good and Evil, but know all things that are in the Earth. 2 Sam. xiv. 17, 20. They excel in Strength, and on account of their great Activity and Swiftness of Motion, are represented with Wings flying thro' the midst of Heaven. Jer. viii. 13. The Number of Angels is very great. In my Text, they are called an Army; and in other places, the Host of Heaven: the Apostle to the Hebrews calls them an innumerable Company; and St. John in his Revelations, ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands. But we have the most magnificent Account of their Numbers in this Prophecy of Daniel, Chap. vii. 9, 10. I beheld till the Thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of Days did sit, whose Garment was white as Snow, and the Hair of his Head like the pure Wool: his Throne was like the fiery Flame, and his Wheels as burning Fire; a fiery Stream issued and came forth before him, thousand thousands ministered to him, and ten thousand times ten thousands stood before him. Among this glorious Order of Beings, there are different Degrees, as Archangels, Thrones, Dominions, Principalities, and Powers; but what these several Names import, would be mere Presumption for us to determine, because the Scripture is entirely silent. Nor are we acquainted with the precise time of their Creation, or Trial; but this we know, that they were all created in an exalted State of Happiness, with which some not being content, rebelled against their Maker, and being cast down from Heaven, are reserved in everlasting Chains under Darkness, to the Judgment
Of God, as the Governour and

Judgment of the great Day. But what particular Laws God gave them for the Trial of their Obedience, whether moral or positive, the Scripture has not informed us. The Angels therefore are now divided into the Good and the Evil.

The good Angels are those, who having maintained their Integrity, and persevered in their Allegiance and Duty to God their rightful Sovereign, are unalterably confirmed in a State of perfect Happiness, and are therefore called the elect Angels, holy Angels, and Angels of Light. These are the proper Inhabitants of the Heavenly World, and always behold the Face of their Father with a holy Transport, and receive the most delightful Tokens of his Love; they constantly surround his Throne with Songs of Praise, ascribing Blessing and Honour, and Glory, and Power to Him, and unto the Lamb. They are also the Ministers of his Providence, and stand in a continual Readiness to obey his Will: for tho' the great God can do whatever he pleases in Heaven and Earth, without any Instruments; yet he has sometimes been pleased to send down these noble Creatures into our World, with Messages to the Sons of Men. An Angel foretold to Abraham the Birth of his Son Isaac. Others were sent to Jacob, to Lot, to Sampson, on special Occasions; and they frequently attended our Saviour when he dwelt on Earth. All good Men are supposed to be under their Protection, according to the Psalmist, Ps. xxi. 11, 12. He shall give his Angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways; they shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy Foot against a Stone. Again, The Angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them. Ps. xxxiv. 7. And as they are the Guardians of good Men, against the innumerable
Ser. VIII. Judge of the Moral World. 137

innumerable Temptations and Dangers of Life, they are also appointed to assist them in their last Conflicts with Death, to be ready to receive their departing Spirits, and convey them into the blissful Regions of everlasting Rest; and at the End of the World, when the great Day of righteous Judgment shall come, God will send forth his Angels with the Sound of a Trumpet, to gather his Elect from the four Winds, from one end of the Heavens to the other; and when they are gathered together, to sever the Wicked from among the Just, and to cast them into the Furnace of Fire, there shall be weeping and gnashing of Teeth. Matt. xiii. 49, 50.

The Evil Angels are those, who through the Pride of their Heart, rebell’d against their Maker in the Day of Trial, and were therefore cast down from their Station in Heaven, and are now reserved in Dungeons of everlasting Horror and Despair. We cannot determine the exact Time of this great Revolution, of which the Apostle gives an Account, Rev. xii. 7, 8, 9. but it was probably within the compass of the six Days Creation; for when God laid the Foundations of the Earth, the Morning Stars sang together, and all the Sons of God shouted for joy. Job xxxviii. 4, 7. and yet it was a fallen Angel in the shape of a Serpent, that tempted our first Parents in Paradise to eat of the forbidden Fruit. Among these also there are different Degrees; their Captain or Chief, is called in Scripture, the God of this World, the Prince of the Power of the Air, Beelzebub, the Prince of Devils, Satan, the Old Serpent, the Dragon, the Accuser of the Brethren. And his Angels or Servants, go to and fro over the whole Earth, sometimes like cunning Serpents infinuating into the Hearts of Men; and at other times like
like roaring Lions, seeking whom they may devour. They are said in Scripture to work powerfully in the Children of Disobedience, and by transforming themselves into Angels of Light, to deceive if possible the very Elect. *Our Name is Legion,* says one of them, *for we are many.* Matt. v. 9. Now tho' the fallen Angels have forfeited the Favour of God, and are banished from his more immediate Protection and Government, yet they are subject to his absolute Control, and can do no Mischief without a divine Permission. *Satan could not hurt Job* nor his Family, 'till he had obtained leave; nor could a number of *unclean Spirits* enter into the Swine, 'till they had besought our Saviour to suffer them. *Our blessed Lord has them all at his Command;* when he was on earth the People observed, that *with Authority and Power, he commanded the unclean Spirits, and they came out of those that were possessed,* much more now he is ascended into Heaven, and is set down at the right Hand of God, are these Angels, Authorities and Powers made subject to him. He has the Keys of the bottomless Pit at his Girdle, and all the infernal Inhabitants in his Custody. The good Angels are his Servants, and the evil ones his Slaves; and as the *Most High* does according to his Will in the Army of Heaven, He has the absolute Disposal of the Spirits, that are now in Prison.

*Secondly, We proceed to consider the Government of God over Mankind, or the Inhabitants of the Earth.* Man is a *free Agent,* endued with a Power of determining his own Actions; not a Machine, or Piece of Clock-work moved by Weights and Pulleys, but so far free as to be accountable for all his Actions, and consequently the Subject of mo-
Ser. VIII. Judge of the Moral World. 139

ral Government. The Government of God over Men may be divided into Providential and Racional.

1/7, The Providential Government of God, is his directing and influencing the Actions of Men, and the Occurrences of the World, so as to make them subservient to the Purposes of his own Pleasure. Some Philosophers have fancied, that God sits on the Circles of the Heavens as an idle Spectator, without concerning himself with human Affairs. Others, that all things are governed by Fate, or a necessary Chain of Causes and Effects; both which Opinions are subversive of all Morality and Religion: for if every thing that comes to pass, is so necessary as not to be alterable by God himself; or if the Almighty Maker of the World does not upon any Occasions interpose in our Affairs, what Foundation can there be for Devotion? Why should we pray to him for the Mercies we want, or praise him for the Blessings we enjoy? 'Tis absurd to suppose a Creature to act independently of his Creator. As there are Laws of Motion for the inanimate World, and natural Appetites and Instincts for Animal Nature, there are Laws appointed for the rational World. The Winds and the Waves obey the divine Command; a Sparrow does not fall to the ground without his Providence; and the Most High does whatsoever he will, among the rational Inhabitants of the Earth: there are Marks of a wise and beautiful Design upon the Face of the whole moral World. The Formation of our Bodies and Minds, and the several Talents and Capacities, suited to the different Parts. We are to act upon the Stage of Life, are lively Demonstrations of the Wisdom of the Creator: but when God has furnished us with these Qualifications,
tions, it is not to be supposed, that he turns us loose to act at random, but like a skilful Mariner at the Helm of the Ship, influences and directs our Conduct to serve the Purposes of his Government. The fortuitous Actions of Men are managed and overruled by an infinitely wise God; the Archer draws his Bow at a venture, but the Arrow is directed by a higher Hand between the Joints of the Harness. When Joseph's Brethren sold him into Egypt, the Scripture says, *it was not They that sent him thither, but God.* Gen. xlv. 8. They thought evil against him, but God meant it for good. All the Calamities that befall the People of God in this Life, however grievous and troublesome for the present, are sanctified and overruled for their advantage; they are sent but in measure, or in proportion to their Strength, and in the end shall yield the peaceable Fruits of Righteousness: God will bring his suffering People out of the Furnace, as Gold that has been tried and purified with Fire, and make them admit, that it has been good for them that they have been afflicted. The divine Influence extends over the whole Universe, from the highest Angel to the smallest and most inconsiderable Insect. No second Cause, tho' never so powerful, can act independently on the First; the Revolution of Kingdoms and Nations, are by a divine Appointment, as appears from the Example of Nebuchadnessar in our Text, whose Kingdom was taken from him by a Decree, 'till he knew that the Most High ruled in the Kingdom of Men, and gave it to whomsoever he pleased; the Circumstances of particular Persons, as the Time and Place of their Birth, their Condition of Life, and all the minute Incidents that befall them, are directed by him, who knows their down-
Sitting and uprising, who compasseth their Path, and is acquainted with all their Ways. Tho' God is not visible to our bodily Senses, he is present in all Places, and interests himself in all human Affairs. The good Actions of Men are excited and influenced from above, and the evil are permitted and made subservient to wise Purposes; when Atheists' and Infidels imagine, they are walking in their own ways, the great Lord and Governour of the World is managing them in a secret and imperceptible Manner, to do whatever his Hand and his Counsel had before determined to be done: sometimes he chooseth the foolish things of the World to confound the wise, and at other times makes the Wisdom of the Wise to perish, and the Understanding of the Prudent to be hid: He usually lets things take their course, without any visible Interposition; but upon particular Occasions, he comes forth with his awful and tremendous Judgments against those, who bid defiance to his Laws and Government, 'till they are made to acknowledge that verily there is a God, that judgeth in the Earth, whose Hand none can stay, nor may any say to him, what dost thou?

2dly, We are to enquire into God's Rectoral Government; and to consider him as the Sovereign Lawgiver and Judge of his rational Creatures: And,

First, What Laws he has established for the Government of Mankind.

Secondly, In what manner he has provided for the due Observation of those Laws.

Thirdly, The Account he will require of their Conformity to them.
Of God, as the Governour and

First, What Laws has God established and settled for the Government of Mankind? I answer they are of three sorts; such as are purely moral; or of a mixed Nature; or purely positive and ritual.

1. God has appointed the moral Law, or the Light of Nature, as a Rule of Duty, to his reasonable Creatures, Rom. ii. 14, 15. For the Gentiles which have not the Law, (that is, not the written Law) do by Nature the things contained in the Law,—which show the Work of the Law written in their Hearts. Every Man's Conscience is a Law to himself, and will accuse or excuse him according as he acts agreeably or disagreeably to its Dictates; and tho' it must be confessed, that the Light of Nature is dim and imperfect, yet it remains a Rule still; The Apostle John assures us, that if our Heart condemn us, God is greater than our Heart, and knows all things; but if our Heart condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God. The moral Law is summarily comprehended in the ten Commandments, and is divided by our Saviour into these two Branches: the Love of God, and of our Neighbour. Matt. xxii. 37, 38. To love God is to esteem him as the best and most perfect Being in himself, and as the Fountain of all Happiness to his Creatures; and as a Consequence from hence, to adore and worship him, to devote ourselves to his Service, and to pay a dutiful Regard to all his righteous Commands. The Love of our Neighbour is described by our Saviour in these Words, Matt. vii. 12. Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that Men should do to you, do ye even so to them. This is a Compendium of the whole of our Duty to our Fellow-creatures; and they who observe the Golden Rule, will fill up every Relation of Life with advantage; they
they will be just in their Dealings, kind to their Neighbours, charitable to the Poor, serviceable to the Publick, and meek and gentle to all Men.

These two Capital Precepts are obligatory upon all Mankind; upon Jews and Gentiles, Heathens and Christians, Rich and Poor, upon them who have not the Advantage of Revelation, as well as upon them that have, because they are the Result of that Light, which enlightens every Man that comes into the World. Every one's Conscience must condemn him, if he hates God, or does to another that which he would be unwilling to have done to himself in the like Circumstances, whether he has his Bible to consult or not.

They are also unchangeable, because founded not only in the Will of God, but in the Nature of things; no Change of Circumstances, or Force of human Laws, can dispense with our Observation of them. Our Obligations here are eternal; as long as we act at all in this or the other World, they must remain our Rule.

2. There are Laws of a mixed Nature, which tho' not evident by the Light of Reason, yet when reveal'd, appear most consonant and agreeable to it. They are an Improvement of the moral Law, and render it more beautiful and perfect; such are those Precepts of our Blessed Saviour, Matt. xv. 44. I say unto you, love your Enemies, bless them that curse you, and pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you. And those others, of denying our selves, of taking up our Cross, and of suffering Death for the Name of Christ. Natural Reason, in its highest Improvements, did not dictate these things to the wise and learned Philosophers of ancient Times; but being taught, and commanded by our Blessed Saviour,
Saviour, they appear highly deserving our Regard, and are binding upon all Christians, not only as part of our Master's Will, but from their own intrinlick Fitness and Excellence.

3. There are also positive and ritual Laws, which depend entirely upon the Will of God, and are obligatory only because he has enjoined them; such were the Rites and Ceremonies of the old Testament, as Circumcision, the Passover, Sacrifices, Purifications, the Distinction of Meats, &c. which had their Uses, not from any inherent Virtue, but from the Appointment of God; separate from this, They were Commandments that were not good, and Precepts by which Men could not live. Such also are Baptism and the Lord's-Supper in the New Testament, which derive their Efficacy, not from any moral Excellency in the Elements, but from the Institution of Christ, who has given them a place in his Religion, and oblig'd his Followers to observe them to the end of the World: for then are we his Friends, if we do whatsoever he commands us. There is this further Difference between moral and positive Laws; the former are of an eternal Obligation; but the latter are binding no longer than they continue to be the Will of God, and therefore the Sacrifices and Purifications of the Old Testament, are long since set aside, which the Precepts of the moral Law can never be.

Secondly, We are to consider in what Manner God has provided for the due Observation of his Laws. For tho' they are just and reasonable in themselves, and design'd for the Benefit of Mankind, yet such is the Depravity of our Natures, and the Enmity of our Minds against God and his righteous Precepts, that
that it became necessary for him to secure their Honour, not only by Rewards and Punishments, but by Promises of extraordinary Assistance, as well as more immediate Influences on the Hearts of Men.

1. God has provided for the Honour of his Laws, by extraordinary Rewards and Punishments: for tho' every Law must have a Sanction or Penalty as a Terror to Evil-Doers, it is not necessary that Rewards should be promised to the Obedient. The Law that was given our first Parents in Paradise says, That in the day they eat, they shall die; but makes no express mention of a Reward to their Obedience, nor even of an unalterable Continuance of the Happiness they enjoyed. But as God has, since that time, published to the World divers new Laws, by his Servants the Prophets, and by his only begotten Son Jesus Christ, he has been graciously pleased to encourage the Observation of them, by Promises of great and undeserved Rewards, both in the Life that now is, and in that which is to come. Those annexed to the Law of Moses were chiefly temporal; a Catalogue of which we have, Deut. xxviii. Blessed shalt thou be in the City, and in the Field; in the Fruit of thy Body, and the Fruit of thy Ground. Blessed shalt thou be in thy Basket, and in thy Store, when thou comest in and when thou goest out, and in all thou settest thine Hand unto. But those of the New Testament are Spiritual and Heavenly; To them who by patient Continuance in well-doing seek for Glory, and Honour, and Immortality, eternal Life, Rom. ii. 7. This is the Will of him that hath sent me, that every one that believeth on the Son may have everlasting Life, and I will raise him up at the last Day. John vi. 40. These extraordinary Rewards, (as the Apostle observes) are not of Debt, but of Grace. God was
not obliged to appoint them, nor can our most perfect Obedience deserve them; for when we have done our best, we are unprofitable Servants: but they are the Offspring of the divine Bounty, and are given to encourage our dutiful Observation of his Laws. On the other hand, there are Threatnings of inconceivable and everlasting Punishments to the Disobedient, such as Tribulation and Anguish, Indignation and Wrath, upon every Soul that does Evil: together with a great many Curses denounced against them, who continue not in all things written in the Book of the Law to do them.

2. God has further promised all necessary Assistance to those who sincerely endeavour the Discharge of their Duty: for since the Fall of our first Parents, no Man is of himself able perfectly to fulfil the Law of God. The great Apostle Paul confesses, to will was present with him, but how to perform that that was good, he found not. And that there was a Law in his Members, which warred against the Law of his Mind, and brought him into Captivity to the Law of Sin and Death. Rom. vii. 18, 23. In order therefore to assist our weak and feeble Powers, God has graciously promised extraordinary Supplies of Strength from himself. — I will strengthen thee, I will help thee. — Ask and ye shall receive, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you; — My God shall supply all your need out of his Riches in Glory. So that we, who of ourselves can do nothing, through the Assistance of Christ may do all things. We are further assured, that the Holy Spirit will help our Infirmities; and if any of us fall into Sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous, who will be our Propitiation.

3. Besides
3. Besides the necessary Assistance to Duty, God has promised to subdue our indwelling Corruptions, and to check the Malice and Rage of Satan. The Seeds of Wickedness in the Hearts of Men would produce most direful Effects in the World, if they were not under a divine Restraint; for from within out of the Heart proceed not only evil Thoughts, but Murders, Adulteries, Fornications, Thefts, falfé Witness, Blasphemies, Pride, Covetousness, and all kinds of Wickedness. Matt. vii. 21. These are the genuine Fruits of corrupt Nature, which would throw the World into Confusion, if the All-wise God was not pleased to restrain or over-rule them. *I withheld thee* (says God to Abimelech) from sinning against me, Gen. xx. 6. And the Psalmist declares, *That the Wrath of Man shall praise the Lord, and the Remainer of Wrath he will restrain.* Pfi. lxxvi. 10. In like manner he frustrates the Devices of Satan, by quenching his fiery Darts, and not suffering him to tempt his People above what they are able. *When a Messenger of Satan was sent to buffet the Apostle Paul, because he was in danger of being exalted above measure, through the abundance of divine Revelations;* Upon his Application to Christ, he was assured, that his Grace should be sufficient for him, and his Strength made perfect in Weakness: so that tho' the Devil and wicked Men, will always be implacable Enemies of the Kingdom and Laws of Christ, they shall not be suffered to prevail; for his Kingdom must be an everlasting Kingdom, and his Law is the Truth. If our Blessed Saviour spoiled Principalities and Powers, when he hung upon the Cross, much more now he is upon the Throne will he reign, till he has put all his Enemies under his Feet.
4. God is pleased further to excite in his People's Hearts, such good Motions and Dispositions, as make the Ways of Religion appear both reasonable and pleasant. For which purpose he not only enlightens their Minds and awakens their Consciences by his holy Spirit, but makes them willing in the Day of his Power, which is the primary Cause of their Conversion to God; for Men will not be persuaded to break off their Sins by Repentance, and to enter upon a religious Life, merely by the Eloquence of the Preacher, or the Strength of his Arguments, without a divine Efficacy; the Orator may almost persuade a Man to be a Christian, but 'tis a higher Power that must crown the Work. *My Speech and my Preaching* (says the Apostle to the Corinthians) *was not with the enticing Words of Man's Wisdom, but in Demonstration of the Spirit and Power.* 1 Cor. ii. 4. The like Influence is necessary to our Perseverance in well-doing; and therefore the same God that begins the good Work, has promised to preserve and perfect it to the coming of Christ. By such a variety of Methods does the First Cause of all things govern and direct all his moral Creatures, and all their Actions.

Thirdly, We are to consider the Account to be given of our Obedience to the divine Laws. As God is our Lawgiver, he must be our supreme and primary Judge; therefore, among other high Titles given him in the Old Testament, this is one, *the Judge of all the Earth*; but we have since been told by our Blessed Saviour, that the Father has committed all Judgment to the Son, and therefore he has commanded his Apostles and Ministers to preach.
preach and to testify, that it is he, who is ordained of God to be Judge of the quick and dead; which is a convincing Proof of his divine Perfections: for he could not be equal to this high Office, nor be capable of distributing impartial Justice to the whole Creation, if his Understanding was not infinite, so as to search and try the Reins and the Heart, and acquaint himself with the Motives of all our Actions. When therefore the Son of Man shall sit upon the Throne of his Glory in the end of the World, before him shall be gathered all Nations, in order to give an Account of their whole Behaviour in the present Life, and to hear their final Sentence from his Lips; for God will bring every Work into Judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or evil. The Proceedings of this solemn Day will be according to the Dispensation Men have lived under. As many as have sinned without the Law, shall perish without the Law; and as many as have sinned in the Law, shall be judged by the Law. Rom. ii. 12. The Heathens that have not had the Benefit of the written Law, shall be judged by the Law written in their Hearts. The Jews that lived before our Saviour, by the Law of Moses; and Christians, by the Gospel of Christ. As God, in the various Ages of the World, has made different Revelations of his Will, he will no doubt make different Allowances to his Creatures, as far as is consistent with impartial Justice; the times of Ignorance he winked at, says the Apostle, Acts xvii. 30. And if they that despised the Law of Moses were condemned without Mercy, under two or three Witnesses, how shall we escape, if we neglect so great Salvation? But after all, the very best and most righteous Man that lives, must fly to the Mercy of his Judge, for the Pardon
Pardon of his manifold Violations of the divine Laws; which Mercy may reasonably be expected thro' the all-sufficient Atonement of the Mediator, who gave himself a Ransom for many, that they might receive the Forgiveness of Sins.

I come now to make some practical Remarks on this Discourse.

First, This View of the divine Government may lead us to a Contemplation of the infinite Perfections of that BEING, who does whatsoever he pleases in both Worlds. How immense must he be, who fills all Space, and is intimately present with all his Creatures! who meteth out the Heavens with a Span, and comprehends the Dust of the Earth in a Measure! If the most consummate human Wisdom and Policy is requisite to govern a small Kingdom among Men, how much surpassing ours must that Wisdom be, that conducts the Affairs of the whole Universe, and whose providential Influence extends equally to the meanest Insect, and the noblest Seraph! How great must be his Power, who reigns Sovereign over all the Worlds, and whose Government is without Limit or Controll; who not only upholds the Universe with his Arm, but keeps the several parts of it in order; and by a secret Energy upon the Minds of Men, makes their voluntary and free Actions subservient to the Counsels of his own Will! When therefore we think, or speak, of the Most High God, let it be with holy Admiration of his Perfections, and let us always address him with the profoundest Reverence.

Secondly, We may learn from hence the Nature of the divine Government over the rational World; which, tho' absolute, is nevertheless directed by the other
other Perfections of his Nature, and suited to the different Capacities of his Creatures. It is not fit, that sovereign and irresistible Power should be lodged in the hands of earthly Governours, because they are Men of like Passions with ourselves, and may employ their Power to the enslaving their Subjects; but we can be under no such Apprehensions from the Blessed God, who is a most perfect Being, void of all Passion and irregular Appetite, and therefore not capable of doing any Wrong. All his Determinations and Acts of Government are under the Direction of infinite Wisdom, Justice and Goodness; he cannot do an unwise, an unreasonable, or an unkind thing, but is good to all, and his tender Mercies are over all his Works. He governs his Creatures by Laws, suited to their moral Natures, and to their fallen Circumstances, so that none shall with reason call him a hard Master, reaping where he had not sowed, or gathering where he had not strawed. How happy is it for us, that the World is not left to move at random, by the casual Concourse of second Causes, but that all human Affairs, whether more publick or personal, are under the Direction and Influence of an infinitely wise and powerful Governour!

Thirdly, The Consideration of the divine Direction and Influence over all human Affairs, may administer some Relief to good Men under the Afflictions and Troubles of the present Life; Affliction cometh not forth of the Dust, neither doth Trouble spring out of the Ground. Chance and Fortune is the Language of Atheists; but if there is a God, there must certainly be a Providence, which has the Direction of every thing that comes to pass. And if the very Hairs of our Head are numbred, the smallest and
Of God, as the Governour and

minute: Affairs must be within the Compass of his Notice. "And shall not I trust him with my Affairs (says the devout Soul) who has every Event under his absolute Direction, and whose sacred Word stands engaged, that all things shall work together for the good of them that love him? Are not those Perfections, which are equal to the Government of the whole System of Nature, more than sufficient to direct my little Concerns? Could I but see into the Compass of divine Providence in managing the Whole; the Beauty and Proportion of every Part would shine forth, and discover the infinite Wisdom and Goodness of the great Governour. Let me not then be afraid of second Causes, when they are under the Direction of the wisest and best of Beings: How gloomy over my present Circumstances appear, it is the Will of my God they should be so; and it is my Interest and Duty, not only to acquiesce, but to think that best, which infinite Wisdom thinks so."

Fourthly, We may observe from hence the Excellency and Perfection of those Laws, by which God governs his reasonable Creatures. The Law of the Lord is perfect, converting the Soul; the Testimonies of the Lord are sure, making wise the Simple; the Statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the Heart; the Commandments of the Lord are pure, enlightning the Eyes. Psa. xix. 7. Every part of our Conduct is under a Law; our very Thoughts, as well as our Words and Actions; the Law of God forbids Concupiscence, or committing Adultery in the Heart; it forbids Evil-speaking, and assures us, that every Work will be brought into Judgment. How careful then should we be of the whole of our Behaviour,
Behaviour, which must be examined and tried by such a perfect Rule!

Fifthly, Since we are to pass under so strict and impartial a Trial, what Obligations are we under to the Lord Jesus, for the Covenant of Grace, by which penitent Sinners are assured of Pardon and Acceptance, thro' the Merits of his Death? How hopeless would our Condition be, if our Happiness depended on our perfect Obedience, whenas the Scripture says, by the Deeds of the Law no Flesh living can be justified; and as many as are under the Law, are under the Curse; blessed therefore be God, that has set this Dispensation aside, and appointed his Son to be the Mediator of a better Covenant, established on surer and better Promises, who having satisfied the Requirements of that Law which We had broken, is the End of it for Righteousness to every one that believes: so that we are now saved by Grace thro' Faith, not of Works, lest any Man should boast. In the New Covenant, there is room for Repentance and Pardon, of which there was no mention in the Old. How happy is the Change! May we all be persuaded to secure to ourselves an Interest in this Saviour, by complying with the Terms of the New Covenant, that we may be translated from under the Law of Works, and be Sharers in the Benefits of the Covenant of Grace!

Sixthly, Tho' the Law of Works is no longer a Covenant of Life, it will always remain a Rule of Duty. Think not (says our Blessed Saviour) that I am come to destroy the Law and the Prophets, I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil it. And again, Do we then make void the Law through Faith? God forbid; yea, we establish the Law. Rom. iii. 31. The Doctrine of Salvation, by the free Grace of God,
through the Merits of the Redeemer, is no Doctrine of Licentiousness; beware therefore of turning it into Wantonness, or of continuing in Sin, that Grace may abound. But having so many Encouragements to a dutiful Observance of the Laws of God, let us cleanse ourselves from all manner of Filthiness of Flesh and Spirit, depending upon the Aids of divine Grace, to help our Infirmities: And when we have done our best, let us not rely upon our good Works, as the meritorious Cause of our Salvation, but be willing to receive the Pardon of our Sins and eternal Life, from the hands of free and undeserved Goodness; for as many as walk by this Rule, Peace will be upon them, and Mercy, and upon the whole Israel of God.
SERMON IX.
The Original State of Man, and the Covenant of Works.

Eccles. VII. 29.
—God hath made Man upright.—

AS Man is the uppermost Rank of Creatures in our World, and we bear a Place in that Rank, an Enquiry into his original Constitution must be worthy of our serious Notice and Regard. The Conjectures of the Heathen about it, are all puzzled with Doubts and Darkness; but Divine Revelation sets it in a clear and certain Light, and tells us, in a few Words, what Reason and Philosophy could only guess at. Hence Solomon calls our Attention to a Discovery that he had made, under the Inspiration of the Almighty, Lo! this only have I found, that God hath made Man upright; but they have fought out many Inventions.

This was the only thing he could find, to give a just View of Human Nature, to clear the Holy God from being the Author of Sin, and to lead us to the true Origin of all the moral Evil that abounds in the World; and now he has suggested it to us, it appears to be a natural Thought, and is readily assented to by a sober and considering Mind.

The
The first Branch of this Declaration is all that we are now to insist upon; and my Design, in speaking to it, is humbly to attempt a Representation of the Original State of Man, as he came out of his Maker's hand. In order to which, we may consider,

I. His natural Form or Constitution, as Man.
II. His moral State or Condition, as an upright Man.
III. The Tenure by which, or the Terms upon which he was to hold this State.
IV. The Concern that all Mankind had therein.

I. The natural Form or Constitution of Man, as Man.

He is a compound Being, consisting of a Soul and Body. By his Soul, he is allied to God and Angels; and by his Body, to the Beasts that perish, and to the Dust under his feet. In the first Production of Man, God created a single Pair, Adam and Eve, to be the Parents of all the rest. The Body of the first Man Adam, was formed of the Dust of the Ground; and the Body of the first Woman Eve, the Mother of all Living, was made of one of his Ribs, and taken out of the Man. Genes. ii. 7. She was Bone of his Bones, and Flesh of his Flesh, which might carry an Instruction to them and us, of the mutual Tenderness and Affection, that should cement and soften the conjugal Bonds; for therefore shall a Man leave his Father and his Mother, and shall cleave unto his Wife; and they shall be one Flesh. ver. 21, 23, 24.

The Formation of the Body is exquisitely curious and exact; it is fearfully and wonderfully made, Psal. cxxxix. 14. Its Stature, Form, and Proportions; its
its Composition of Flesh and Bones, Muscles, Arteries, Veins, and Nerves; the Structure and Offices of the Brain; the Motion of the Heart; the Circulation of the Blood and animal Juices; the Situation, Order and Uses of the several Parts of the Body; and the vital Heat which spreads thro' the whole, raise the Admiration of every pious and observing Eye, and have employed the Thoughts and Pens of the learned World, to set out the Wisdom, Power, and Goodness of the great Creator. The erect Posture of the human Body, and its easy Poise in that Posture, give it a Distinction from the lower Ranks of Animals, are admirably suited to all the Uses of the active, busy and social Life, and remind us, that all our Views should be aspiring upwards, towards the God who dwells on high.

The primitive Bodies of our first Parents were not subject to the Deformities and Infirmities, the Fatigues of Labour, and the Injuries of Climates, or Seasons, nor to Distempers, Violence and Death, which we are now exposed to; and no doubt but they were built with various Beauties of due Proportions, Colour and Form, vastly superiour to all that now appear in the Ruins of human Nature: And perhaps, in their original State, there was an amiable and awful Lustre shining all around them, and covering them as with a Garment, something like that which shone in Moses's Face, when he had been with God in the Mount.

But the chief Glory of the natural Form of Man lies in his Soul, which is an incorporeal, invisible and immortal, intelligent, free, and active Being, and so bears the natural Image of God, as he is a Spirit. Genes. ix. 6. Jam. iii. 9. It was immediately created out of nothing, as a distinct Sub-
stance from the Body, and is capable of subsisting without it, tho', by the Law of the sovereign Ar-
chitect, it is personally united with the Body, to
form the wonderful Creature called Man. God
breathed into his Noftrils the Breath of Life, and
Man became a living Soul. He formed the Spirit
of Man within him. Genef. ii. 7. And when its
Union with the Body is dissolved, as now it is by
Death, the Dust returns to the Earth, as it was, and
the Spirit to God, who gave it. Ecclef. xii. 7.

This Soul of Man has an Understanding and Will,
which constitute it a rational and free Agent. It is
endow'd with surprizing Powers of apprehending,
reasoning, recollecting and reflecting; of moving
and governing itself, and the Body it animates; of
conversing with visible and invisible, with present
and distant Objects, with God, its self, and his va-
rious Works around it; and of turning its Thoughts,
in an instant, from one end of the Earth to the o-
ther, and from the lowest parts of the Earth to the
highest Heavens. And some of these natural Pow-
ers were undoubtedly much superiour in their original
State, to what they have been since they were hurt
and weakened by Sin.

The Bands of Union between this Soul and Body,
and the way of their influencing and impressing one
another, lie among the unsearchable Mysteries of Na-
ture, of which we have no Ideas. But this we know,
that by their Union with each other to constitute a
human Person, the Glories of the upper and lower
Worlds are in a sort epitomiz'd and shadow'd out in
Man. Hence in the Creation of all other Parts of
our World, God only said, Let it be so, and it was
so; but when he came to create Man, he seem'd to
make a solemn Pause, as if the Sacred Three went
into
Ser. IX. and the Covenant of Works. 159

into a Consultation upon this curious Piece of Workmanship, saying, Let us make Man. And he is indeed one of the greatest Wonders of God's Works, which, as far as we know, cannot be matched by any other Species, in the whole Scale of created Beings. This leads us to consider,

II. His moral State or Condition, as an upright Man.

God hath made Man upright. It is not to be imagined, that this relates to the Posture of the Body; the Word יְעָשֹׁה used in our Text, signifies right or righteous, and is opposed to the many perversive Inventions that Mankind have since found out. It relates to their moral State and Condition, which, in the first Formation of Man, was right; it was such as it became the Holy God to put him into; such as was suited to an intelligent and free Creature; such as was answerable to the Relation in which he stood to God, as his Governor, to his Fellow-Creatures, and to the Law under which he was created; it was such as bore a moral Resemblance of him who made him; and such as God look'd upon with high Approbation, as right and good. Hence, when he had added Man to the rest of his Works, then, and not till then, he heighten'd the Expression of his Approbation, and pronounced upon them, that they were very good. Genef. i. 31.

This moral State of Man, in which he was created, may be considered with respect to his Rectitude, and his Happiness.

1. With respect to his Rectitude.

God created Man in his own Image; in the Image of God created he him. Genef. i. 27. He did not first make Man, and then put his Image upon him;
him; but created him in his Image, it was concreated with him. This Image of God chiefly consisted in a Conformity to his moral Perfections; with respect to which, it might be said of Man, tho' in infinitely lower Degrees, that he was holy as God is holy. 'Tis herein principally, that any Creature can be said to be like its Creator. And that this, inclusive of Knowledge, was Man's original Likeness to God, the Apostle intimates, in the summary Account he gives of the Image to which he is restored, since the Fall, by renewing Grace. This is represented as consisting in Knowledge, Righteousness, and true Holiness, after God, or after the Image of him that created him, Ephes. iv. 24. Col. iii. 10. And from hence we may naturally infer, that his Understanding, Will, and Affections, were all adorned with this Image of God.

(1. His Understanding was full of Light. Great Penetration, Judgment and Compaß of Thought discovered themselves, in Adam's giving proper Names to every living Creature, immediately upon God's bringing them to him. His Mind was free from Error, tho' liable to Mistakes, his Light was clear and extensive, his Apprehension quick, his Judgment solid, and his Memory tenacious; all his reasoning Powers were strong and vigorous; his Conscience was a wise and faithful Monitor; and he could, with Ease and Judgment, turn his Thoughts to any Objects, fix his Attention upon them without weariness, and entertain himself with them as he pleased. And he had just, tho' not adequate Ideas, of Right and Wrong, of God and Religion, of his own Dependence upon God, Relations and Obligations to him, and of the Way of pleasing and enjoying him. In a word, the Law of Nature, which
Ser. IX. and the Covenant of Works. 161

which is summarily comprehended in the Ten Commandments, was written in his Heart.

And besides the Light that arose from the natural Powers of his Mind, God revealed many Things to him by a supernatural Light; such as the Creation of Eve, in a manner which made her Bone of his Bones, and Flesh of his Flesh; the Food he was to live upon; the Right he had to exercise Dominion over the Creatures round about him; the Signification of the Tree of Life; the Charge not to eat of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil; and the Observation of the Seventh Day, as a Sabbath to the Lord: And to these we may suppose many other Discoveries were added, in which the Glory of God and his own Advantage and Delight, were concerned.

(2. His Will was perfectly holy and free.

He was not created with any Proneness to Evil, nor with an Indifference toward Good or Evil; but with an Aversion to all Iniquity, and Approbation of all that is excellent: He had a strong and holy Bias toward the great and blessed God, to admire, chuse, and adore him, to worship and serve him, to love and honour him, to commune with him, and devote himself to him, as his supreme Good and ultimate End, and to do every thing that is right and worthy, in obedience and conformity to him. God's Law as written in his Heart, was natural to him; it suited his original Frame; all his Propensions were correspondent to its Holiness; and he had sufficient Abilities to will his own standing, and to stand if he would.

But his Will was entirely free to act according to his original Light, and holy Inclinations; or to turn aside to evil. It did not become the wise and holy God,
God, absolutely to secure him against an Abuse of this Freedom of his Will; for he was to be, for some time, in a State of Probation; but that would have made it a State of Confirmation, before the time of Trial was over: And his giving him sufficient Light to direct him, the strongest Motives to act up to his Light, and a self-determining Power, in a due Dependence on the first Cause, to use his Liberty as became him, was all that could be expected, on the foot of Creation-Goodness.

(3. His Affections and Appetites were all pure and regular.

There was no Depravity, Jar or Discord, Tumult or Disorder among them; they were all duly pois’d, all calm and peaceful, and all harmonious among themselves, all fitted to be exercised in the worthi-est manner, and directed to their proper Uses and Ends, and all free from the Ruffles of Malice, or Envy, Jealousy or Despair, Pride or Scorn. His Love and Hatred, Desires and Aversions, were naturally carried out to Good, and in opposition to Evil; and he had nothing to fear, but every thing to hope for, whilst he continued in his Uprightness. All his Passions and Appetites were subjected to the Guidance and Government of his rational and free Powers; so that, unless he himself would, they could not enslave and tyrannize over him, but must follow Judgment and Choice, and invigorate every Thought, Design, and Action, suitable to his Interest and Obligations; and all the Members of his Body were under the despotick Government of his Soul, so that he could order and use them just as he pleased. This leads us to consider the original State of Man,

2. With respect to his Happiness.
This may enter into the Notion of his moral State, as it is the Happiness of a rational free Creature, under God's Government and Influence, and as some Parts of it especially bear the Similitude of his Blessedness. The original State of Man was happy, as it was holy; and his Happiness lay in the very Constitution of his upright Being, in his Communion with God, and Sense of his Favour, and in the pleasure of his Situation, with the free Use and Government of all the Creatures round about him.

(1. He was a happy Creature, in the very Constitution of his Being, as an innocent upright Man.

The pleasure of a regular, easy, vigorous, healthy and beautiful State of the Body, and that secured from Violence and Harms, was great; but the pleasure of a wise, holy and well-disposed Soul, was inexpressibly greater still. The bright and exalted Ideas, that perpetually sprung in his Mind, must be very entertaining; the Composure of his Temper, and the free Motions of his Heart, toward God and Goodness, must be very sweet to his uncorrupted Taste; and the Harmony of all the Powers of his Soul, with a due Subjection of his bodily Passions, Appetites and Aims, to the superior Influence of his Understanding and Will, must be very delightful. A good Man is satisfied from himself, Prov. xiv. 14. and in keeping God's Commands there is great Reward. Psal. xix. 11. How great then must have been the Satisfaction of Man, in his upright State, full of all Wisdom, Goodness and Peace, Regularity and Obedience!

(2. He was a happy Creature, in his Communion with God, and Sense of his Favour.

He had free Access to his Maker, and rich Discoveries and Communications of his Goodness. He could
could think of the great and blessed God, as his God, in Friendship with him, and all-sufficient for his Happiness; he walked in the light of his Countenance, and could taste the pleasure of his Presence, and of his own Hopes in him. His Meditation on the Divine Glory, his Faith and Love, his Adoration and holy Wonder, his Homage and Obedience, his Gratitude and Praise, were all accepted of God; and the Exercise of those Duties, together with his Sense of that Acceptance, must be a Spring of unutterable Joy, of such Joy, as nothing could damp, but the fear of losing it; and, as he knew himself able to stand, he could have no more fear of that, than was necessary for his Caution. His perfect Love cast out tormenting Fear, 1 John iv. 18. and he could delight himself in the Lord.

(3. He was a happy Creature, in the pleasure of his Situation, with the free Use and Government of all the Creatures round about him.

He was placed in a Paradise, all delightful for agreeable Beauties, Fragrances, Tastes and Sounds, to regale his Eye, his Smell, his Palate and his Ear, and for pleasing Accommodations of every kind. Its Climate was serene and cheerful, and it was store'd with the utmost Profusions of Divine Bounty, with Shades and Streams, and charming Melodies of the winged Tribe, and with rich Varieties of Grasfs and Flowers, Herbs and Trees, and delicious Fruits; and he had an unlimited Freedom to eat of all the Trees of the Garden, that might suit his Convenience and Delight, excepting one, from which he was restrained, as the Test of his Obedience. Genes. ii. 15, 16, 17.

He had likewise an Help-meet for him, Ver. 18, a dear Companion to assist the Joys of the social Life;
Life; and had all the inferior Creatures for his Use, and under his Command. God gave him dominion over the Fish of the Sea, over the Fowls of the Air, and over every living thing upon the Earth, Genef. i. 28. that he might serve himself of them, and order them like a Lord; but not riot upon them like an Epicure, nor abuse them like a Tyrant. And what more than all this could be requisite for the Happiness of Man, as a compound Being, who consisted of Soul and Body, and stood related to God and the Creatures all around him? Let us now consider,

III. The Tenure by which, or the Terms upon which he was to hold this moral State.

It was not entailed upon him by any absolute Promise, that he should continue in it; nor was it put upon a mere Act of Divine Sovereignty, whether he should hold or lose it; the first would have left no room for a Trial of his Obedience, in the strictest Sense of the Expression; and the last would have taken away a grand Article of his Encouragement to that Obedience, and of his pleasure in it: But he was to hold it by a Covenant of Works, upon condition of perfect Obedience to the End of that State of Probation, in which it became the Wisdom of God to place him. Perfect Obedience was indeed to be continued ever afterwards; but then I conceive it would have been considered, rather as an indispensible Obligation of the Law of Nature, than as the Condition of the Covenant.

How long this probationary State would have lasted, we are not able to determine; some suppose it would have been till Adam should have Children capable of yielding Obedience, or of finning in their own Persons; but, if I may be allowed to of-
The Original State of Man,

fer a Conjecture in this Case, perhaps it was to have been no longer than the Fruit of that Season should hang upon the forbidden Tree. However, be this as it will, we may reasonably suppose the Goodness of God made the Period of his probationary State as short as might well consist with the Honour of his Government, in passing an Act of Confirmation upon his fulfilling it without Default.

God might, if he pleased, have demanded all possible Obedience perpetually, without making any Promise of Confirmation in Holiness and Happiness. The Law of Creation necessarily required such Obedience, and the sovereign Lord of all might have left the Obligation to it, merely upon the foot of that Law, referring to himself the Liberty of confirming or not confirming the obedient Creature, or even of continuing or not continuing his Being itself: But he graciously condescended to deal with him in the way of a Covenant, wherein he promised, that, provided he should, for a certain Season, obey a positive Law, relating to the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, he should ever afterwards continue in a State of confirmed, and probably of additional, some suppose even of heavenly Happiness; but threatened, that in case of Disobedience, he should be punished with Death: For the Lord God commanded the Man, saying, Of every Tree of the Garden thou mayest freely eat; but of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, thou shalt not eat of it: For in the Day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die. Genef. ii. 16, 17.

As Adam could not but be obliged to keep the eternal Law of Nature, written upon his Heart, and to observe every positive Precept of his Creator; so God was pleased to single out this particular Precept,
as an easy Test of his Obedience, and of his Readiness to comply with his Will and Command, in every Instance whatsoever. This Law, tho' of a positive Nature, was worthy of God to enjoin; for he thereby asserted his uncontrollable Dominion over all, and his sovereign Right to dispose of his Bounties as he pleases; and he thereby intimated, that Man's bodily Appetites were to be kept under government, that he had not yet attained the utmost Happiness he was capable of, and that his Happiness could not be found in Creature-Enjoyments, further than God allowed the use of them, but chiefly consisted in God himself, and in an entire Subjection to him. And this was a Law which Adam was certainly capable of observing, with the greatest ease. It did not put any hard Thing upon him, it only required him to forbear eating of a certain Tree. Nor could there be any reasonable Temptation to break this Law, considering the liberal Allowance God made him of all other Fruits, and the Warning he gave him of the dreadful Consequence of touching this.

The threatening of Death, in case he should eat of this Tree, strongly implied a Promise, that, provided he should not eat of it, he should thereby obtain a Covenant-Right to Life, which he had not before, and should be confirmed in a deathless State, with all its Advantages and Improvements, under the Smiles and Tokens of God's Favour and Love, as the holy Angels are in Heaven. And 'tis unreasonable to suppose, that the Goodness of God would leave him at Uncertainties about this important Point, relating to Life, as well as Death, in his State of Probation. Hence, he appointed a Tree of Life, and gave him a Right to eat of it, at least as a sacramental
cramental Sign of Immortality, in case he should continue in his Obedience; as appears by his driving him out of the Garden, immediately upon his Fall, left he should attempt to make use of a Sacrament, which no longer pertained to him, and so should put forth his Hand, and take also of the Tree of Life, and eat, and live for ever. Genef. iii. 22, 23, 24. *i.e. left he should take and eat, vainly expecting that he should thereby live for ever*.

This, then, was the Proposal that God made to Adam, as the Condition of Life; Only forbear eating of the Tree of Knowledge, and thou shalt live for ever. And this Condition was so easy and reasonable in itself; the Promise to encourage his abstaining from this Act, was so condescending and gracious; and the Threatning, to caution him against it, was so equal and righteous, that we may suppose he freely accepted the Proposal, or approved of, and consented to these Terms of Life, unless we suppose him not to have been the wise and holy, the perfect and obedient Creature he then was. And all this distinguished God's Transaction with him herein, from the mere Notion of a Law, and gave it the formal Nature of a Covenant; the plain Tenor of which was, The Man who doth these Things, shall live by them, Rom. x. 5. This leads us to consider,

IV. The Concern that all Mankind had therein, God made Man upright; but they have sought out many Inventions. This remarkable Change of the singular Number into the plural shews, that the Term Man, in our Text, is to be taken collectively for all Mankind, as included in Adam, the first Man. He, whom God created after his own Image, is

* Vid. Ainsworth in loc.
to be considered as a publick Person, who was to hold or lose that happy State, not only for himself, but for all his natural Offspring: Had he stood, we had all been blessed, and confirmed in Blessedness with him, as upon his Fall, Scripture and Experience assure us, we lost it with him; for 'tis highly dishonourable to the Divine Perfections and unsuitable to the Nature of a Covenant, to suppose that the Promise, in case of Obedience, should not extend to the same Subjects, as the Threatening, in case of Disobedience. And as it was fit that the rest of Mankind, as well as Adam, should be included in the original Covenant of Life, and have the advantage of standing fair for Happiness upon that foot; so it was impossible, in the Nature of things, that this Covenant should be made personally with them, as it was with him, because they were not then existing, nor could they ever begin their Existence in a perfect State, if he should fall: For, according to the Law of their Creation, they were to spring in a Course of Generations from him, as their common Father, and so derive a Nature from him after his own Likeness. They therefore must have been treated with for Happiness, according to this Covenant, by a publick Head and Representative, or not at all.

And who but God should appoint such a Head for us? He had an undoubted Right to do it, as he is the sovereign Lord, Proprietor and Disposer of his free Gifts, on what Terms he pleases; and as has been observed, he did it with our first Parents own Approbation and Consent. He herein likewise chose a Representative for us, as well as we could possibly have chosen for ourselves; and it might fairly be presumed, that, had it been possible for us to have been present at that time, and to have made our own Choice, we should willingly
willingly have ventured our All upon that bottom, and have fixed upon Adam, rather than any other, as the fittest Person to represent and act for us, and as more likely than any of ourselves, to have secured his own and our Happiness: For he was the common Father of us all, who were included in him, as our natural Root; he was as wise and perfect, as desirous and capable of performing the demanded Obedience, as any of us could have been supposed to be; and the peculiar Concern that lay upon him, to consult the Honour of his Maker in the whole human Race, and to take care of his own dear and numerous Offspring, as well as of himself, was an additional Obligation and Motive to use the utmost Circumspection and Diligence, in improving his Abilities, for entailing Happiness upon them, together with himself, that God might be glorified in him and them.

This Constitution therefore, as seems to me, was fit and right; and the very History of Adam's original State shews, that all human Nature was concerned in it together with him. The Order to be fruitful and multiply, to replenish the Earth, and subdue it, and to have Dominion over the Fishes, the Fowls, and every living Thing upon Earth, and the Grant of Herbs and Fruit for Food, Genef. i. 28, 29. tho' given personally to him, related to his Posterity, as well as himself; the Appointment of a Sabbath, the Declaration that it was not good for Man to be alone, and the Law of Marriage, Genef. ii. 3, 18, 24. related to them, as well as him. And that they were concerned in the Covenant-Transaction we have been speaking of, and were included in him, as their publick Head, appears, with high Evidence, from Rom. v. where he is called,
Ser. IX. and the Covenant of Works. i71

The Figure of him who was to come, meaning Christ, ver. 14. And this is explained at large, in the following Parts of the Chapter, with relation to the publick Characters they sustained, and the moral Influence they spread to their respective Seeds; one conveying Condemnation and Death, and the other Righteousness and Life to them severally. Accordingly, Adam and Christ are opposed to one another, and spoken of as two Men, with an Emphasis and Peculiarity, as if there had been no other Men in the World besides them. One is called the first Man, and the other the second Man; one the first Adam, and the other the last Adam. 1 Cor. xv. 45, 47. And this is spoken with respect to their different Influence of a moral Nature upon those that derive from them, and hold under them, as the Context shews at large; and therefore, it supposes that the first Adam was as truly the publick Head of the first Covenant, as Christ is of the second. This is sufficient to answer my Design, and leads the way to the Doctrine of the Fall; which is to be considered, in the next Sermon, by another of my Brethren.

USE.

1. This shews what dreadful work Sin has made in the World.

How remarkably different was human Nature, in its original State, from what it now is! Where is the Light and Strength, the Ease and Peace, the Rectitude and the Blessedness, in which we were at first created! How unlike are we to what God made us! And how is the State of Friendship turned into a State of Variance with him! Surely the Glory is departed, and the dark Remains of human Ornaments:
ments and Delights are only the Rubbish of the beau-
tiful Temple, where God once dwelt.

And, oh! whence is all this hideous Change, but
from Sin? 'Tis Sin, that has broke God's Covenant,
defaced his Image, and set us at variance with him.
'Tis Sin, that has disrobed human Nature of its
Glory, struck out its Light, disordered all its Fa-
culties, and plunged it into all Confusion and Mi-
fery, as at this day. The Crown is fallen from our
Head, wo unto us that we have sinned. Oh de-
testable Sin! Who would think favourably of it, or
have any Fellowship with it? who would not abhor it,
as the most mischiefous of all Evils, and the abomi-
nable Thing which God hates?

2. This shows that all Good is from God, and all
Evil from ourselves.

Human Nature was in its Fountain holy and hap-
py; that is the lovely Form which God gave it. But
it is Man himself, that has brought the present dismal
Catastrophe upon it. Every good Gift, and every per-
fect Gift, is from above, from the Father of Lights,
&c. Jam. i. 17. He was the Author of the origi-
nal Rectitude and Blessedness, in which Man was
created; he would have perpetuated that happy State,
and probably with rich Increase, had not Man a-
bufed the Power and the Liberty he gave him. And
where any thing of his Holines and Blessedness is
now found among us, it is all entirely owing to his
free Favour, which restores it to us through Jesus
Christ, and will perfect it for ever.

But all the Sin, Sorrow, and Death, that human
Nature groans under, or is expos'd to, are from
itself, from its Unwatchfulnes, and Abuse of its
noble Liberty at first, and from its Perverseness ever
since: These take their rise from our own Folly,
we have fought out many Inventions, and brought 
Ruin upon ourselves. To God therefore belong 
Righteousness, Goodness and Mercy; but to us 
Shame and Confusion of Face. We have destroy-
ed ourselves; but in him is our Help: and as Sin 
has reigned unto Death, even so Grace reigns thro' 
Righteousness unto eternal Life, by Jesus Christ our 

3. Let us be deeply affected with the present State 
of human Nature.

With what Compassion may we now be moved 
towards it, while we think what it once was, and 
now is, how wretched and forlorn, how guilty and 
vile! And with what Regret may we reflect upon 
its primitive Beauty and Splendor, while we see and 
feel its present Confusion and Disgrace! How 
humble should we lie under its dismal Ruins, as we 
are all involv'd in them! How should we bewail its 
defaced and shattered State! And with what Eager-
ess should we breathe after its Repair, that we 
may be renew'd in Knowledge, Righteousness, and 
true Holiness, after the Image of him that created 
us, and may be restored to Favour and Communion 
with the God from whom we have revolted!

4. Let us turn our Eyes to the better Covenant, 
and the better Head, which God has provided for 
our Recovery.

The first Covenant, being broken, can no longer 
be a Covenant of Life to us; and the first Covenant 
Head can now convey nothing with our Beings, but 
Sin and Misery, Condemnation and Death.

But, blessed be God, he has set up a better 
Covenant than the first, a Covenant of free and 
gracious Promises, which secures its own Establish-
ment, by undertaking for him and his People too; 

hence
hence it is an everlasting and unchangeable Covenant, ordered in all Things, and sure. And blessed be God, that he has provided a better Head of this new Covenant, to all its Seed; he has given the second Adam, the Lord from Heaven, to be the Mediator and Surety of this Covenant, to purchase and convey all its Blessings, and to secure the Enjoyment of them to every one who believes. And this is a Head that never can fail, as the first did; he has finish'd the Work his Father gave him to do, and lives for ever, with all Power in his Hands, to give eternal Life, to as many as he has given him. Our Nature is dignified and exalted in his divine Person, beyond what it was before; and the Persons of Believers shall be enrich'd and adorn'd with brighter Glories, and brought nearer to God, thro' him, than Adam himself was in his original State.

In this Covenant, therefore, and in this Head, let us seek a Recovery from all the complicated Destruction, that is brought upon us by the Failure of the first Covenant, and its Head. Hither let us betake ourselves for all Righteousness and Grace to eternal Life. And let us lay hold, by Faith, on Christ, and on God's Covenant in him, with humble Dependance on the Grace there provided, that we may walk with God, as his Covenant-People here, till at length, as we have bore the Image of the Earthly, we may perfectly bear the Image of the Heavenly, and live and reign with Christ in Glory for ever.
SERMON X.
The FALL of MAN, and ORIGINAL SIN; with MAN'S INABILITY to recover himself.

Rom. V. 12.
—By one Man Sin enter'd into the World, and Death by Sin: and so Death pass'd upon all Men; for that all have sinn'd.

As these Words begin a new Paragraph, and may be taken for a distinct Proposition, I shall enter, at once, on the following Heads they contain:

First, The Sin which was first committed in our World, by the general Parents of the whole human Race.
Secondly, The Concern which all Men, their Descendants, have in this their first Sin.
Thirdly, Its dreadful Consequences to their Posterity, as well as to themselves. All these Consequences may be fitly included in the general Name of Death, which is distinctly applied to each of them in Scripture; though I will not pretend to say, they are all at once, or alike meant by Death in my Text.

First,
First, then, Let us consider that Sin which, by one Man Adam, (including Eve) enter'd into the World. And,
I. What it was, and in what manner committed.
II. Its Heinousness.
I. What this Sin was, and how it came to be committed.

The Sin itself, as to the outward Act, is well known to be their eating of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, contrary to the positive and express Command of God, forbidding it on pain of Death. As to the manner of doing it, the following Particulars may be collected from the History of the Fall, Genef. iii. compared with other Scriptures. The Devil, the chief, as is most probable, of the apostate Angels, in the assumed Form of a Serpent, was the Tempter to this Transgression. Mention is made in the History of the Serpent only; which sufficiently proves that a real Serpent was employed. But then the Ascription of Speech to a Serpent, and the Representation of the Devil, in manifest Allusion to the Transactions of the Fall, as a Murderer from the Beginning, and the Father of Lies, John viii. 44. as having the Power of Death, whose Works Christ came to destroy, Heb. ii. 14. 1 John iii. 8. and as the old Serpent and Dragon, Revel. xii. 9. chap. xx. 2. make it evident, that not a mere Serpent, but the Devil animating one, managed the Temptation. And various were the Methods of Fraud and wicked Cunning whereby he conducted this Plot; for it was not by Force or Compulsion, but only through his Subtilty that this Serpent beguiled Eve. 2 Cor. xi. 3. One Instance may be the very Choice of the Instrument; who being more Subtile than all the Beasts of the Field, as the Serpent is described, Genef.
Ser. X. Man's Fall.

Genef. iii. 1. might be less liable to raise Suspicion of a superior Agent acting through him, what his own natural Sagacity might suggest some account of. Besides, he is reasonably supposed, in his original State to have been of a most beautiful, and glorious Form, and such, perhaps, under which, angelic Appearances had been made before to Adam and Eve.

Another Wile of the Devil's was, his applying to the Woman first, and by herself. He rightly judged that he might easier prevail on either of our first Parents separately, than on both together, but chiefly on Eve, as less perfect in intellectual Endowments; and yet that the Seduction of one, would draw with it that of the other.

Great Policy and Dexterity appear also in his Address itself, in the gradual Advances he made, and in the plausible Colours he put on Falshood. He first accosts Eve in the Language of humble and modest Inquiry; Yea, has God said; Ye shall not eat of every Tree of the Garden? Genef. iii. 1. Innocent as this seemed, it might obliquely glance at God's Bounty as too scanty if any thing were denied them, in the mixt Air of Surprize, Disdain, and vast Solicitude for Mankind appearing in the Delivery.

In the next Step, after Eve, perhaps, under some innocent Flutter occasion'd by this Address, had declared their free Use of all the Trees, except one which God had commanded them not to touch left they die, he waxed more bold. As one assurred she had mistaken the Case, and willing to set her right, he flatly denied the Truth of the Threatning in any such evil Sense wherein the understood it, Ye shall not surely die, Genef. iii. 4. He promised also

Vol. I.
Man's Fall.

a considerable Increase of Knowledge and Happiness to them, on their eating of the forbidden Fruit; and for this he most fallly and impudently vouched God himself with tacit Reflections on him, as if he had amused them only with a Mock-threatnning never intended to be executed, or in which the Death foretold might even mean a Change for the better in their State, or as if God through Envy deter'd them from the Use of that which he knew had a Power in itself to advance their Condition. For God knoweth, that in the Day ye eat thereof, then your Eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as Gods knowing Good and Evil. ver. 5. Had the Tempter begun thus, an Imposture might have been suspected and his Design defeated, by venturing too far at once. But the insinuating Question before, made the readier way for these bolder Assertions afterward; especially as some deceitful Medium was, no doubt, made use of to give them the fair Appearance of Truth: For the Devil could never expect to be believed on his bare Word, against the express Word of God, without offering some specious Proof. Now, the Artifice he most probably used for this purpose, was to feign himself transformed and exalted, by means of the forbidden Fruit, casually taken and eaten, from the Rank of Brutes, to the Possession of Reason and Speech, to a kind of angelical Nature supposing any Resemblance of his present Form to that wherein Angels had appear'd*.

Supposing what is said 2 Cor. xi. 14. that Satan himself is transformed into an Angel of Light, has a Reference to his Seduction of Eve, as seems probable enough from this being expressly mentioned v. 3. yet I cannot see how he could personate a Good Angel in any other manner than that which has been suggested. For to appear as such, with the Pretense of a new Revelation from God altering or in a quite contrary way explaining the Original Revelation, would have made the Temptation too hard for Man. And without such a Pretense what was said would have been too bare-faced, and not agreed to the Character of a good Angel.
On this ground, how plausible an Argument might be form'd? "If I, originally no better than a "mere irrational Serpent, have, by the Virtue of "this Fruit, gain'd the Life of Reason, and such "considerable Improvements of my State, instead "of dying: You, by eating it, shall certainly no "more die; but, like me, in proportion, you shall "attain a far better Life; a Life angelical, or even "divine instead of human." On this ground too, the Declaration ye shall not surely die, which so peremptorily contradicted God's own, appears not so shocking, as at the first sight; it was but the natural Conclusion of one who had found the greatest Benefit from the Tree in question, and could not persuade himself, that what was so good to him, should be hurtful to others.

Such was the Method of Satan's tempting Eve; and answerable to it was the Manner of her finning. Her close and steady Attention being won over from the Law and Threatning of God, to the strange and surprizing Discourse of the Serpent, she first doubted, and afterwards disbelieved or perverted the Word of God, in proportion to her entertaining an Opinion of the Innocency and Goodness of the forbidden Object, according to the artful Infinuations of the Tempter. She then gazed on the Tree, and hereby, at once, confirm'd the good Opinion she had conceived of it, and inflamed the sensual Appetite together with the Desire of bettering her Condition. And so (what could she less, her Mind being already tainted?) she took of the Fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her Husband with her; and he did eat, after her Example, and by her Persuasion and Influence. Gen. iii. 6. Let us now proceed to consider,
II. The Heinousness of this Sin of our first Parents.

1. In that it contain'd many Sins at once.
2. Because of several special Aggravations that attended it.

1. It contain'd many Sins at once in it. The whole Law of God which they were subject to, was violated by it, not only as the Authority of the Lawgiver is denied, by one Transgression, as really as by many; but as all the Sins they were capable of, in their present Circumstances, met and conspired in it. As,

1.) Direct Disobedience and Rebellion against God, the Sovereign and Ruler of the World, in counter-acting his express Will and Command, was the formal Nature of it.

2.) Unbelief, as the first Spring sent forth all the other corrupt Streams; and this was mixt with a weak and wretched Credulity in believing the Father of Lies, before God the Fountain of Truth.

3.) Luxury and inordinate Indulgence to the sensual Appetite was another Ingredient in the first Sin. No sooner was the Awe of God's Command and Threatning taken off by Unbelief, but the carnal Sense was gratified first in beholding with an eager and longing Eye, then in enjoying the forbidden Fruit.

4.) Pride and Covetousness had a main Part in this Sin. The Lust of Ambition, in aspiring after an higher State of Knowledge and Felicity, than God had placed them in; nay, rivalling his own, and independent on him, (so boundless was their Reach!) wrought in conjunction with the Lust and Intemperance of a carnal Appetite, and wrought more powerfully of the two: For this was the grand Bait
Bait the Devil offer’d them, Ye shall be as Gods; and they suffered themselves to be taken with it; looking on the Tree, as desirable to make wife, as well as good for Food. Genef. iii. 6.

5.) An envious Discontent with God enter’d also into this Sin. The great God was, at once, the Mark of their Emulation and Resentment. When they had allowed themselves to judge and covet more, as due to them, than they had already; and when they had imbibed the Notion slyly instilled into their Minds by the Tempter, that God was more an Enemy to them than a Friend, that he hindered rather than promoted their Good, and that he designedly debarr’d them from the Means they had in their power of raising themselves even to some kind of Equality with himself: What inward Risings of Displicency and Rancour against God must they feel in their Breasts, so returning on him that Envy and Ill-will which they most injuriously imputed to him?

6.) There was the Guilt of Sacrilege in this Sin. For they robbed God; they stole from him what he had appointed to stand untouch’d as the sacred and sole Mark of his supreme Right in all they posses’d.

7.) Idolatry likewise mingled itself with the first Transgression; partly while the Trust and Confidence which is due to God only, was transfer’d to the Devil; partly while they stupidly and scandalously made an inanimate Tree a God to themselves, and expected from it nobler and greater Benefits than their Maker either could or would bestow on them.

8.) Horrid and monstrous Ingratitude was wrapt up in this Sin. When our first Parents had so newly received their Being, with so many excellent Endowments
dowments and Favours from God, above all the Creatures of this lower World; to break through all these Engagements at once, and to cast off so quickly all due Sense of his Goodness, Tenderness for his Honour, Awe of his Majesty, Reverence for his Authority, and Care of pleasing him, what could be more ungrateful and basely disingenuous? When they had been obliged by him in so many things, to the full of their reasonable Desires; to disoblige him in the one only Thing he had reserv’d to prove their Allegiance by; what could be an higher Despite of the Riches of God’s Goodness; as if all were nothing, unless they had every thing they had a mind to?

9.) This was a Sin of flagrant Injustice and Cruelty not meerly against themselves, but against all their Posterity, whose Welfare was intrusted with them and hereby sadly exposed.

Lastly, Atheism, or a secret Disbelief of God and his Providence, insensibly winding itself into their Minds, may be justly reckon’d to pay its Contributions to the finishing of this evil Deed. Does not their ambitious Affectionation of a State of Independence, and this expected from the natural Virtue of a Tree, plainly bespeak and resolve into this?

But pass we on to the

2d Measure of its Heinousness, arising from some special Aggravations which attended this Sin; such as,

1.) It was committed in a direct manner against God, and strook at all his Perfections at once. His Supremacy, Authority, and glorious Majesty, were treated by it with the utmost Irreverence and Contempt. His Truth was palpably arraigned, as though he had dealt deceitfully with his Creatures,
and had spoken what was equivocal or false, only to bring them into a servile Submission to himself, and strike a needless Terror into their Minds. His Omnipotence was impeach'd, by the hope of escaping an Evil certainly threaten'd, and of acquiring an imaginary Good, without and against him. His Goodness, in the large Measures it had distributed already, was contemned by Ingratitude, and for what it was only fancied to withhold, was aspersed by Envy. Finally, his Omnipresence, All-sufficiency, Wisdom, Justice, and Holiness, all shared in the Affront.

2.) It was perfectly voluntary, being done against the clearest Light, the fullest Conviction of their Minds, and an express Confection on the spot, that God had forbidden it. The Sense and Reality of the Command was so manifest, as to be liable to no pretended Ambiguity, were the Threatning, though unreasonably enough, thought capable of it; so that they plainly condemn'd themselves in the very thing they allow'd. In proportion also to the Resistance made by the Principle of Integrity, the Bias to moral Good and Righteousness, which was planted in their Nature from the first, that it might be a Guard on their Virtue, and a Guide to the right Use of their Liberty; the more willful and resolute must the Purpose be which over-ruled it. There was indeed a Tempter; but he had no power to constrain. There was a Bait, and a Sleight made use of to draw to it. But there was a sufficient Capacity to discern and avoid it, had the Mind but duly and steadily apply'd to the Consideration of God's clear and express Will, which ought never to have been out of view. So that this was no Ex
cuse; and the less still, if, as is very probable, a
previous Warning was given of a Temptation. Our first Parents then fin'd with entire Liberty; they first voluntarily drew their Minds off from God, and then as freely set their Eyes and Hearts on the forbidden Object, and so of choice took and enjoy'd it.

3.) The Eafinefs of the trying Command, does not a little aggravate the Breach of it. For it required nothing to be done, but only somewhat to be forborn; and this was so small and well to be spared, that it could give them no trouble in obtaining, or Pain about the Issue of their Trial. On a just Estimate therefore, the Offence must rise high, as the Temptation or Lure to it sunk so low. A moderate Degree of Difficulty and Self-denial, as proper to keep them on their Guard, and to exercise their Virtue, may indeed be well allow'd in keeping this Precept. It call'd for a constant Watch and Restraint on the sensitive Appetite, as the forbidden Fruit grew near the Tree of Life, would come often in view, and was of a lovely inviting Aspect. It no less gave Occasion for a Check on the Intellectual Appetite, and for their moderating the natural Thirst of Knowledge, and Curiosity of searching into things secret; while the Name of the Tree hinted some Knowledge withheld from Man: which, of what kind it was, they could not beforehand tell. But then all this Difficulty, heighten'd too by Satan's Imaginary Suggestions, vanish'd away as nothing before the Motives and Means of Obedience they had. Their Appetites were now in an easy Subjection to their Reason, and a delicious Plenty was always at hand innocently to gratify them. The Restraint they were under, was but of one Tree out of a Paradise, nay, a World, and this of the mildest fort,
as it was never tasted before. They could not but know, that their All both in Possession and Reversion would be greatly hazarded by their breaking through this Restraint. And right Reason, on the least Recollection, might assure them, that nothing could impart what it wanted itself, (how then should a Tree give Wisdom?) and that no good could come to them against God, or from him out of his Way.

4.) The Place wherein this Sin was committed, is a Circumstance that enhanced it's Guilt. It was Paradise, not only the most delightful Spot of the whole Globe, but a sort of consecrated Place, honour'd with the special Presence of God and his ministering Angels. Here also, as he had vouchsafed already free and friendly Communion to our first Parents, and had fix'd the Tree of Life for a standing Pledge of their continued Happiness, so he might design to manifest himself to their Descendants, as well as to receive their most solemn Worship in future Ages. To sin here, what was it but to sin eminently before God's face, and to profane his holy Place; which therefore quickly spurn'd out of it the Offenders, as unworthy to tread there any more? I shall just add,

5.) and Lastly, that this Sin must needs be a vast and big Iniquity, in that it was the first in our World, a leading and a fruitful Evil, which gave birth to the innumerable Sins and Calamities, that have swarm'd in the World ever since, and may be justly charg'd to its score, as without it they might never have been. Nor could Adam and Eve be ignorant of that publick Character and Relation to their Offspring they sustain'd, which would make them all share with them in the Consequences of their doing well or ill under their Trial.

But
Secondly, How their Sin affected all their Descendants. It is then to be considered as the common Fault and Guilt of the whole human Nature; it is reckon’d and placed to the Account of all Mankind, so that for the sake of it, as if done by themselves, they became liable to the Penalty of Death assigned to it in the original Threatning, wherein they also from the first were concerned in common with their Primogenitors who federally represented them. However, it must be owned that some Circumstances in this Sin were peculiar to our first Parents, and rendered them far more guilty than their Descendants, who never personally did it. The main Proof of the Equity, as well as Reality of the Imputation of this Sin to the Sons and Daughters of Adam, results from the Covenant of God with him, which has been well established in the foregoing Sermon. I shall therefore only take notice of two Scripture-Arguments confirming the Truth of this Imputation, both found in Rom. v.

1. All Men are declared to suffer, to be condemn’d, and to die for the sake of Adam’s Sin. Death, says the Apostle, v. 14. reign’d from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the Similitude of Adam’s Transgression; that is, not actually as Infants, or not against a Law given to them in their own Persons, with the Penalty of Death annex’d, as was the Case for the most part with Mankind before the Law of Moses. And how it received its Dominion, both then and ever since, over all Men; viz. not from the absolute Pleasure of God, but from Sin, and from what Sin; he had in part show’d before, and more fully expressed
presses in the following Verses. It is through the Offence of one many are dead, ver. 15. The Judg-
ment was by one [Offence] to Condemnation, ver.
16. And that upon all Men, ver. 18. By one Man's
Offence, Death reign'd by one, ver. 17. The Death
of all Men is plainly here derived as a penal Effect
by virtue of a judicial Sentence, and not in the way
meerly of natural Consequence, from the first
Transgression. But how can this possibly be con-
ceiv'd just and rational, unless that Transgression
were in a moral Account the Sin of all, in which
they had some Concern and legal Interest? For 'tis
a standing Maxim equally applicable here as in any
Case whatever, that Sin is not imputed where there
is no Law, ver. 13. So then, since this Sin is thus
far for certain imputed to all, that they are punish'd
for it; the Law which it violated, and the Sentence
which it incur'd, must originally have included all
Men in the Person of him, to whom they were im-
mediately delivered. But then,

2. The Apostle twice in this Chapter speaks of the
first Sin, as belonging in the Guilt of it to all Men.
So in our Text, Death, says he, pass'd upon all
Men, for that all have sinned. Sinned, how?
Why, in Adam their common Father and Head.
It is plain that this is his meaning, because in all the
following Parts of this Discourse he derives the Sen-
tence and Execution of Death on all Men from A-
dam's Transgression, and not from their own personal
Offences, as we have seen. Nor can sinning here be
possibly understood of Mortality, the Effect, figura-
tively express'd by its Cause; since it is assign'd as the
Reason of that very Effect in the Case of all Men,
with as clear a Distinction between one and the other
in this latter Member of the Verse, as it is in the for-
mer,
mer, where Sin and Death by Sin in the Case of Adam for himself, will undoubtedly be own'd by all to be distinguish'd as Cause and Effect. Thus, again, the Apostle shuts up his Discourse of the Relation all Men have to the first Man for Sin, Condemnation and Death, with an express mention of their Interest in the Guilt of his first Act of Disobedience, in virtue of God's original Constitution, comprehending them with and under him; and this as a Reason also of a Sentence unto Condemnation passing on them for that Sin, v. 18, 19. Therefore by the Offence of one, Judgment came upon all Men to Condemnation: For by one Man's Disobedience many were made, or constituted Sinners.

But proceed we now to the

Third and last Part of this Discourse, the dreadful Consequences of the first Sin to all the Posterity of Adam and Eve, as well as to themselves. Now these are threefold; natural Death, with a long Train of Miseries in Life preceding it; the Punishments of another World: And a Third, which commences in every Man on the first Union of Soul and Body, is the Want of habitual Rectitude, or of effectual Principles to incline and enable him to do what is truly good and pleasing to God, together with the Presence and Inherency of a corrupt Principle, an evil Habit and Bias prompting and disposing him to sinful Actions.

The first and second of these will come into another Part of these Sermons. I shall but just observe in respect to the second, that as the Accounts of future Punishment in Scripture are drawn up with an Eye to adult and actual Sinners, it becomes us to use the utmost Caution, if not rather to be wholly silent.
silent, concerning the future Condition of Infants who die under the pure Guilt of original Sin; since it cannot be certainly and exactly determined from those Accounts. 'Tis only the third mention'd Consequence of the Fall which requires a little of our further Consideration at present. And the following Thoughts may serve for the brief Illustration and Confirmation of this Point.

1. Is it not evident in fact, that Aversions to Goodness, and violent Propensities to Vice very early exert and show themselves, in all born into our World? Who does not see in others, and has not felt in himself from the tenderest Age, from the first Openings of the rational Capacities, before there was any room for the Influence of Imitation and Custom, a strong Disinclination and Disaffection to what is spiritually good, join'd with as strong an Addictedness to Vanity, Pride, Lying, Stubbornness, Revenge, and other things unlawful in themselves, or in the measure of the Disposition towards them? These Evils we learn and practise of ourselves without a Master and Prompter, nay, against the best of Teachers and Examples, under whom with great difficulty we learn and practise any good. In consequence of this, there is not a just Man on the Earth, who has lived up to the Law of his Nature, who has done good, and sinned not? Eccl. vii. 20. All have gone out of the way, Psal. xiv. 1, 2, 3. and that, to such an Extent and Degree, that, Who can understand all his Errors? Psal. xix. 12. And can so steady, constant, permanent and unexceptionable an Effect, as actual Transgression of the Law of their Nature, in all the Individuals of Mankind, and this beginning as soon as it possibly could, be without a Cause proportionably steady and fix'd? Must there not be more in this Matter,
Original Sin.

Matter, than the bare Abuse of Liberty as a Power supposed to be in Men, of doing Good as well as Evil? For had they indeed such a Power, which were it of itself sufficient for their doing the whole of their Duty; how strange is it, that it should have this Effect on none, but so much the reverse, that a Course of Sins in every one of our Species capable of acting, may as certainly be depended on, as the Sun's rising every Morning? What then can it be ultimately resolved into, but a Weakness and Depravity rooted in Nature itself, an Aversion to God and true Holiness and a Proneness to Sin, so deeply fixed in the Hearts of Men, that even in virtue of their own free Choice, they are morally unable to do the Good which they ought, and which otherwise they might do, having still a Power to act much better than any of them do, and to forbear such and such particular Sins?

2. The supernatural Way revealed in the Scriptures, to save whoever are now saved of the Children of Men, viz. the Redemption that is in Christ Jesus, the washing of Regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, reflects an Evidence on a moral Insufficiency and Corruption naturally belonging to all. The Necessity of a new and spiritual Birth for every Man, is not only insisted on by Christ, but it is traced out of the first Formation of present Nature, and through its Operations and Effects by itself, all along, as never amounting to true Holiness, the same with what the sanctifying Spirit produces. John iii. 5, 6. That, says he, which is born of the Flesh, whatever belongs to, and proceeds from Men as born into the World, and in their present natural State, is Flesh; it is meerly natural, and has nothing of that Spirit in it, which in way of Opposition
position is said to be born of the Spirit, that is, nothing spiritually good which now proceeds only from the renewing Influences of the Spirit of God; even as the Apostle declares, that *in his Flesh* or unrenew'd Nature *dwelleth no good thing*, Rom. vii. 18. Thus also our blessed Lord in his mediatorial Work is represented a Provision for all Ages, a Saviour wanted by all Men, *the way to the Father, out of which none cometh to him*, John xiv. 6. *the Name than which there is none other under Heaven given among Men, whereby they must be saved*. Acts iv. 12. And does not this strongly imply an universal Incapacity in human Nature to prevent Sin, and the Curse of the Law due to it, and to place itself above the need of the Satisfaction and Righteousness of a Redeemer for Pardon and Acceptance with God; which, as knowing our Frame, he has ordain'd for a standing Relief against it? Hence has God done for us by *his Son sent as a Sacrifice for Sin, what the Law could not do*, in that it was weak through the Flesh; Rom. viii. 3. and Christ has died for us, when we were without Strength. Rom. v. 6. And we thus judge, says the Apostle, *that if one died for all, then were all Dead*, 2 Cor. v. 14.

3. Many Passages of Scripture more directly confirm this sad Truth. Thus, Seth, who was rais'd up in the room of righteous Abel, that in his Family the Church of God might be propagated, is said to be begotten by his Father Adam, *in his own Likeness after his Image*, in immediate contradiction to the Likeness of God, mention'd just before, where-in Adam himself was made. Gen. v. 1, 2, 3. What less can this mean, than that Seth receiv'd by Generation a Nature stamp'd with Adam's sinful Likeness, as most directly opposite to the primitive Image
Image of God in Man, as much as with his mortal Likeness, and that this is a leading Case or Example? God's own Judgment and Declaration pass'd on Mankind after the Flood, as a Reason of his not bringing another such universal Desolation on the Earth, which they would always give just cause for, is to the same effect, that the Imagination of Man's Heart is evil from his Youth, or earliest Capacity of acting. Gen. viii. 21. Of Man in general it is affirm'd, that he is vain and born like a wild Ass's Colt, Job xi. 12. that is, utterly averse to be under the Law and Rule of God, headstrong and furiously bent on his own lawless Will and Ways. He certainly proceeds from those that are morally unclean; and, Who can bring a clean thing, fit to come into Judgment with God, and to pass his Approbation, out of an unclean? not one. Job xiv. 3, 4. For what is Man that he should be clean? and he which is born of a Woman that he should be righteous? Job xv. 14. David in the midst of his penitent Confessions pour'd out from a Heart most seriously affected and deeply humbled for his Sins, cries out, Behold I was shapen in Iniquity, and in Sin did my Mother conceive me. Psal. li. 5. Is it reasonable to think, that he makes so solemn a Transition from well-known Sins, that were a heavy Load on his Conscience, to what had only the Name and Appearance of Sin in his Original, according to an Hyperbolical Strain of Language, or to any Sins of his Parents, which some have supposed without any Ground in History, or Pertinency to the present Occasion, and when the Words themselves signify nothing like this? 'Tis certainly a sinful Inclination habituated in his very Nature, and convey'd with it, which he here owns. The Expressions fairly import this, and nothing short of it: And it bore
bore a proper place in his Humiliation, as it highly
aggravated his late Fall, presumptuously to trust him-
self, with such an innate Disposition to Evil, in the
way of Temptation. As certain also it must be from
Parity of Reason, that this could belong to David
no other way than it belongs to all Men without
any Difference but in a particular Turn to different
Vices. To the same purpose speaks the Apostle in
the name of the whole Body of Christian Converts:
\[\text{We all were by Nature the Children of Wrath, even as others, Eph. ii. 3.}\]
There is no need to suppose the usual if not constant Sense of Nature in Scripture
here receded from, and all meant by it to be only
Custom in Sinning: The Words may be thus un-
derstood, most agreeably to their obvious Sense;
and to the Context. \[\text{We are all by Nature the Children of Wrath, as the present Frame and Constitu-
tion of all Men coming into the World carries on it}
the Marks of divine Resentment and Desertion, in
the absence of that Image of God from our Nature,
which it was first created with. We are all, yet
further, \text{the Children of Wrath by Nature, as the}
Tendencies and Propensities, the Motions and Incli-
nations, together with the whole Conduct which
Nature left intirely to itself, without divine Influ-
ences, now excites and forms in us all, are and certainly
will be so irregular and evil, that God can have no
pleasure in us, and we hereby become justly obnoxi-
ous to his Wrath and Punishment *.

\* The Limits set to this Discourse allow me not to trace out the
bad Effects of Original Corruption on all the Faculties; nor to argue
this Point further from what is said of Men's having their Understand-
ing darken'd, of their being alienated from the Life of God, of their be-
ing dead in Sins, of the carnal Mind being Enmity against God, whose Law
it cannot be subject to, neither can they who are in the Flesh please God.
These and other such like Representations in Scripture of so entire and
high a Degree of the Depravation of the Powers of the Soul do indeed
primarily
I shall close this Discourse with a few practical Reflections.

1. Let us learn from the first Sin growing into such an enormous size, though conversant about a Matter in itself inconsiderable, never to account the doing of any thing which God forbids a slight Trespass, and never to venture on it under such a Pretence. O the communicative and infectious Nature of Sin! How strong and diffusive is its Poison? The smallest Drop, may it not cast into the most irregular Ferments the whole Frame of Nature? How soon will it bring a Mist over the Eye of the Mind, stupify Conscience, swell the Soul with Rage and Rancour against God and his Law, and introduce a World, a very Hell of Wickedness into the Heart and Life? 

A little Leaven leaveneth the whole Lump, 1 Cor. v. 6. Behold, how great a Matter a little Fire kindleth! James iii. 5. Let us also be warn'd by this Example, as the first Means of our Safety, to repel a Temptation to Sin, as soon as it offers, to cease to hear the Instruction that causeth to err from the

primarily and immediately respect those who by a long Course and Custom of actual Sinning have contributed to it themselves. Yet if it be considered how soon and how surely Nature now works or yields in all to the Commission of Sin, which if let alone would certainly draw after it all these said Consequences; if it be considered also that renewing Grace is constantly maintain'd in Scripture to be the only effectual Remedy against these Evils; such Accounts then may be well regarded as expressing in the main the State, Course and Operation of unassisted and unrenewed Nature, what it is, or what it will be in all Men, notwithstanding particular Differences as to their moral Character, as such there were in the Heathen World which still in the gross is described in this manner.

I have also purposely waved (as being unsuitable to the Design of these Sermons) to offer any thing relating to that difficult and puzzling Question, how a moral Corruption is convey'd from Parents to Children in the successive Generations of Mankind. It may be enough, perhaps, for us to know that this is Fact, though no satisfactory Account could be given of the Manner. However, as we are sure this
the Words of Knowledge. Let us immediately break off and reject all Parleys with the Devil and his Agents, when once any thing is insinuated contrary to the Word and plain Command of God, and in favour of what he has forbidden. For if thus the Devil could by Degrees prevail to impress a wrong Bias on Nature, which had none before but a contrary one, how much more may he now draw it that way which it is set to already?

2. Let us be sensibly affected and deeply humbled before God, for original Sin without us, even that of our first Parents, which tho' not done by us is yet upon us by a just Imputation, and for original Sin within us. Are not the Ruins of human Nature in ourselves and others, too sadly visible, vast and hideous, to be either denied or look'd upon with Indifference? How can we be insensible of a prodigious Weakness and Disorder in all the Ingredients of our present Frame, this is not owing to God's infusing any vicious Taint into the Soul; as his Concern in this matter can at most be only forming it without his Image in habitual Righteousness; there scarce remains any other way for our conceiving how this should happen, but the Impression of the Body on the Soul, which as it is void of a Spiritual Bias and Inclination, is so much more easily subjected to the Body and sensible terrene Objects.

I shall only further observe, that the moral Depravity which now cleaves to human Nature from its first beginning in all Men, is an additional and strong Confirmation of the Imputation of Adam's first Sin to all his Posterity. To me it seems clear, that God's subjecting all Men to such a Dependence on the first Man that from him becoming morally unclean, they in the way of ordinary Generation and Decent would proceed unclean likewise, and derive a Nature weak to Good and prone to Evil, far otherwise and worse than what himself had from God and they should else have derived from him; that this, I say, necessarily implies in it self his being constituted by God the federal Head of all his Seed. Consequently then, God in suffering, on his Sinning, this Law and Course of Nature actually to take place in all Men, even in the foresight of all the Corruption which has since overspread the World, appears plainly to treat them as having
Original Sin.

Frame, and of our Minds in their native and easy Bent turning off from all close and spiritual Converses with God to a thousand Vanities, Follies and Evils, as also that thus it ought not to be? We cannot sure, be insensible of all this, without being guilty of that Ignorance of ourselves, Partiality, and Pride, which prove the thing we are willing to disown, without greatly narrowing and contracting the Obligations of the Law of God which we are under, without lessening the Provisions of Gospel-Grace, and preventing our perfect Use of them? Let us then never overlook the Plague of our Hearts, which has thrown out all those Spots that appear in our Lives, and which renders us all over unclean and corrupt within, far beyond what ever comes into the View of the World. O how thould we mourn, that we are by Nature vile and evil, as well as that we have by Practice made our selves till more vile; that in us, while unrenew'd, Sin reigns to the utter Exclusion of true Holiness; and that it dwells in us ever after in this Life, to hinder ving a legal Interest in his Transgression. Had they flood altogether on a personal pour, and been quite independent of Adam and his Conduct in point of Relation to him as a common Representative; why should they not have the same Advantages which God originally prepared and judged proper for the human Nature as much in case of his finning, as if he had not finned? And could not God easily enough, notwithstanding Adam's Sin have secured to them thefe Advantages, and provided for a more pure Conveyance of their Nature to them? Might not a less extraordinary Interposition at leaft (as we may well suppose) have prevented the bad Influences of our first Parents sinning on their Offspring, than what has since been applied to remedy the Evils which have followed on the Permission of them? 'Nor can I see how the Provision of a Remedy even as universal as the Malady (which yet cannot be proved to be the Cafe) solves the Difficulty as long as the Constitution itself of human Nature is insufficient to prevent the Malady; and such it is at present and has been ever since the Fall, nor was it ever perfect and effectual to this Purpose but only in our first Parents before they finned, who are therefore most reasonably judg'd both to possess and to change it under a common Character and Relation to all Mankind.
hinder and mar all that Good which the Grace of God works in us? Let us withal, look to the Rock whence we were hewn, look to Adam our first Father, and to Eve that bare us; and with an interested Concern let us remember how grievously they sinned and transgress’d against the Lord, for which cause he has profaned, abandon’d and given to the Curse the whole human Nature included in them as its Root and Covenant Head. Thus shall we be prepared to justify God in all the Evils which the first Sin has let out on the World, and to own and seek after all Good as the Fruit of God’s Grace through a Redeemer.

3. Let us see that we abuse not this Doctrine, by charging all our Sins so to the score of original Corruption, and a depraved Nature, as by the pretence of a Necessity, either to take an unbounded Liberty in sinning, or to extenuate the Guilt of what we do knowingly with free and full Consent of Will, in omitting our Duty and practising Iniquity. On the contrary, ’tis incumbent on us to watch, strive and pray the more carefully and earnestly against Sin as it easily besets us. We must never yield ourselves willingly to it where we can re sist it, and never cease to implore divine Grace against the inward Love of it, and our Aversion to have to do with God; which is the proper Core of original Sin, and truly above our Power to mortify. But while nothing of this is done, the Plea of Nature aggravates instead of diminishing the Guilt of both actual and original Sin; and we make the latter more fully our own, by approving, cherishing, and increasing it.

4. And lastly, Let us take occasion from the View of our Fall in the first Adam, with its sad Consequences,
Original Sin.

Consequences, to admire and thankfully use the way of our Recovery in the second, which is in exact Opposition to the former, only with superior Efficacy and Advantage; see Rom. v. Did Adam sin, being tempted? Christ was tempted also by the Devil; and that, all manner of ways. He was tempted not once but often, and under far more disadvantageous Circumstances than Adam was; not in a Paradise and Fulness of all things, but in a Wilderness, in a low Estate, and in the Want of every thing for the Comfort of Life. He was tempted not with the single Bait of an Apple, but with the Lure of all the Glory of this World. And yet he became superior to all the Wiles of the wicked one, more experienced as he was now grown in his tempting Arts, and fulfil'd all Righteousness for a long Course of Years. Is Adam's Sin the Sin of us all, to subject us to Death and Condemnation? So is, so will be the Righteousness of Christ, the Righteousness of all who believe on him for Justification and Life. Do we derive by Succession from the first Man a vitiated Nature, void of true Holiness, and prone to Evil? Is not the second Adam made a quickening Head, full of Grace and the Spirit without measure, and that not for himself alone, but for all who receive him? Let us all then, from the Sense of our manifold Guilt and Pollution, and of our utter Inability to relieve ourselves, apply to him with Desire, Truth and Hope of Righteousness, Grace and Strength; and for what any of us have receiv'd and further expect, let us thank God through Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

SERMON
SERMON XI.

God's Election of a People for himself among Men, and giving them to his Son in the Covenant of Redemption.

Ephes. I. 3, 4, 5.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual Blessings in Heavenly places in Christ; according as he hath chosen us in him before the Foundation of the World, that we should be holy and without blame before him in Love: Having predestinated us unto, the Adoption of Children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his Will.

If we enquire who are the Persons thus blessed with all spiritual Blessings, chosen to be holy, and predestinated to become the Children of God, the little Word, us points plainly to the Apostle Paul himself, who wrote this Epistle, who was a Jew, and the converted Ephesians, to whom he wrote, who were Gentiles. These were the Persons thus favoured of God. It does not seem to me to be the de-
sign of this Text, to tell us that God chose part of the Ephesians, as well as other Gentiles, to be an outward visible Church, with meer visible Privileges, as the Nation of the Jews were of old, who were a Type and Figure of the Church invisible; but that he chose some Jews and some Gentiles to be parts of his invisible Church, for they are said to be blessed with spiritual Blessings, with the privilege of Adoption, and the real work of Holiness and divine Love in their Hearts. All the following parts of this and the next Chapter seem plainly to declare this Sense.

If we ask how, or by what medium this Grace was exercised, we are informed, it was all in and thro' Jesus the Son of God: they are blessed in Jesus Christ, they are chosen in him, and thro' him they are adopted, or made Children and Heirs. Without entering nicely into all the Meanings of these Words, Chosen in him, I shall content myself at present in general to say, that when they were first chosen to be made holy and Heirs of Heaven, they were committed to the Care of Christ, to have all this Grace fulfill'd in them, and these Blessings convey'd to them. Having said thus much with relation to the Text, I shall immediately apply myself to the two great Branches of the Subject appointed me, and which are both expressed in the Words:

I. That God, before he made the World, chose some Persons of his own free Grace to become his Children, or to be made holy and happy.

II. That God from the beginning appointed his Son Jesus Christ to be the Medium of exercising all this Grace, and gave his chosen People to the Care of his Son, to make them Partakers of these Blessings.
Let us consider each of these Heads more at large.

First, God chose certain Persons of his own free Grace, before the Foundation of the World, to be made holy and happy. This I shall endeavour to prove briefly in four plain Propositions.

Prop. 1. There is a manifest Difference between the Children of Men in this World. Some of them are holy and religious, they fear God and worship him, they appear to be the Children of God, for they imitate his Holiness, they love and obey him, they practise Virtue and Goodness in this Life, and are aspiring to the Blessedness of Heaven; while the rest go on to indulge their vicious Appetites and Passions, to pursue earthly things as their chief Good, and are walking evidently in the road of Sin to Misery and Destruction. I need not cite Scriptures to prove this Point: our daily Observation abundantly confirms it.

Prop. 2. This Difference between Men, or, this Distinction of the righteous from the wicked is not ascribed in Scripture, originally and supremely, to the Will and Power of Man, as the Cause of it, but to the Will and Power of God, and to his Spirit working in them. I do not deny that the natural Powers of Man, his Understanding and his Will concur to make this difference, but 'tis under the original Influence and Operation of God. 1 Cor. iv. 7. Who maketh thee to differ? What hast thou that thou hast not receiv'd? When St. Paul had described the Gentiles, as dead in Trespasses and Sins, Eph. ii. 1. he ranks himself in the 3d Verse among the Children of Wrath by Nature, and as walking in the Lusts of the Flesh and the Mind, and confesses himself also to have been dead in Sin, ver. 4. but we are quickened, faith he, to a Life of Holiness, by God who is rich in Mercy, ver. 4, 5. In themselves they
they were all without Strength, Rom. v. 6, but they are raised to a spiritual Life, by the exceeding Greatness of that Power which raised Christ Jesus from the dead, Eph. i. 19, 20. They were in themselves carnal and sensual, nor could they make themselves spiritual and heavenly; and therefore they must be born again, not of Blood, nor of the Will of the Flesh, nor of the Will of Man, but of God. They must be born of the Spirit, John i. 13. and iii. 5, 6. i.e. they must have a mighty Change pass upon their Natures by the operation of the blessed Spirit. In Eph. ii. 8, 9 neither Faith nor good Works are originally of ourselves; Faith is the Gift of God, and we are his Workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good Works. Thus you see this blessed Work of Conversion, of changing the Heart of Man, is described in such Language as excludes Man himself from being its original Author: 'tis Regeneration or a new Birth, 'tis a Resurrection from the dead, it is a new Creation; all proper Expressions to shew that the Work is divine, and must have God for the Author of it.

Prop. 3. The distinction that is made by this Work of God in the Heart of Men, is attributed in Scripture, not to any Merit in Man, which God foresaw, but to the free Grace of God toward his People, and his special Choice or Election of them, to be Partakers of these Blessings. So the Words of my Text: We are chosen to be made holy, according to the good Pleasure of his Will. If some among the Jews, who were God's chosen visible Church did believe in Christ, and receive this Salvation, they were chosen of God, from among the rest of that Nation, to become part of his invisible Church by mere Grace. When the greatest part of Israel rejected the Messiah, yet
yet there was a Remnant of Jews, according to the Election of Grace, who became Christians; and if it is of Grace, then no more of Works, otherwise Grace would be no more Grace, Rom. xi, 5, 6. Works and Merit are inconsistent with an Election of Grace. If some of the Ephesian Gentiles receiv'd the Gospel, they also were chosen from among the rest that lie dead in Sins, and were quicken'd and saved by the Grace of that God, who is rich in Mercy according to the great Love wherewith he loved them, Eph. ii. 4, 5, 7, 8. And the Apostle ascribes his own Salvation, as well as that of other Sinners, Tit. iii. 5, not to Works of Righteousness, which we have done, but according to his Mercy he saved us. This is the Fountain of all Blessings, whether confer'd on Jew or Gentile, Rom. ix. 15, 16. God has Mercy on whom he will have Mercy, and Compassion on whom he will have Compassion. Time would fail me to shew how full this Chapter of St. Paul is of the Distinctions, which are made between Men by divine Grace, even before they had done good or evil, whether it be for a temporal or eternal Inheritance, and the one as a Type of the other. St. John concurs in the same Doctrine. If we love God, the first Source of it was his Love towards us. 1 John iv. 10, 19. Herein is Love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us: and if we love him, 'tis because he loved us first.

Prop. 4. This Choice of Persons to Sanctification and Salvation by the Grace of God is represented in Scripture, as before the Foundation of the World, or from Eternity. So my Text expressly declares; and indeed it must be so in the Nature of Things, for whatsoever the Power or the Mercy of God doth in time, he decreed to do it from Eternity. He has no new Designs. Known unto God are all his Works from
from the beginning of the World. Acts. xv. 18. So
2 Thess. ii. 13. God hath from the beginning cho-

sen (or taken) you from amongst the other Gen-
tiles, unto Salvation thro' Sanctification of the Spi-
rit and Belief of the Truth, and to this he called
you by our Gospel. There was a Book of Life writ-
ten before the Foundation of the World, Rev. xiii. 18.
All that dwell upon the Earth, i.e. all this part of
the World to which the Prophecy refers, shall wor-
ship the Beast, or follow after Antichrist, except those
whose Names are written from the Foundation of the
World in the Book of Life of the Lamb that was
slain; for that I take to be a much more proper
Translation of the Original. In this Book of Life
were written the Names of those Persons who should
not yield to Antichristian Idolatry, and should be
preserved from the general Corruption that came up-
on the Christian World.

Upon the whole it appears from the Language of
Scripture, that those who are sanctified and saved
by divine Grace, were before chosen of God to be
made holy and happy.

I proceed now to the second general Head of my
Discourse, (viz.) That God from the Beginning
appointed his Son Jesus Christ to be the Medium of
exercising all this Grace, and gave his chosen People
to the Care of his Son to make them Partakers of
this Salvation. This seems to be the Meaning of
my Text.

Are we blessed with all spiritual Blessings? 'tis as
the Members of one Body, in Jesus Christ as our
common Head. Are we chosen? it is still in Christ
the Son of God. In all Things he must have the
Preeminence: He is the Head of the Body the Church.
Colos.
Ser. XI. in Jesus Christ.

Colos. i. 18. He was first chosen by the Father to be the glorious Head of a holy and happy Number of Mankind, and we are chosen in him that we might become his holy and happy Members. He is called the Elect of God, in whom his Soul delighteth, Esai. xlii. 1. The mighty one on whom God has laid our Help, who was exalted and chosen out of the People, Psal. lxxxix. 19. You may observe he is represented here to be chosen, as a Man from among the People of Israel to be their Lord and Saviour; but that he might be equal to this Work, and mighty to save, he was one with God, all the fulness of the Godhead dwelt in him bodily, Col. ii. 9. He is the Word who was with God, and who was God. John i. 1. And in due time this Word was made Flesh and dwelt among us. ver. 14. Are we chosen that we might be saved? 'Tis in and thro' Christ, who was chosen to be our Saviour.

Are we predestinated to the Adoption of Children? 'tis still in Christ, who is the original Son, the Brightness of his Father's Glory, the express Image of his Person, and who was appointed to be Heir of all Things. Heb. i. 2, 3. And we are appointed to be conformable to his Image, to be Heirs of God, and Joint-Heirs with Christ, and Possessors of the Inheritance. Rom. viii. 17, 29.

Is there a Book of Life written? it is the Lamb's Book of Life: the Names of all the chosen Sons and Daughters of God were written down in this Book, but his Name stands first there in divine Characters, as the first chosen, and the Head of all the rest; for before the Foundation of the World, God gave the Care of all these Persons to his best beloved Son.

Hence it is you find our Saviour so often speaking of those who were given him by the Father, out of this
this World, John xvii. 2. Thou hast given thy Son power over all Flesh, that he should give eternal Life to as many as thou hast given him; which the 20th verse of this Chapter teaches us to apply to all who should believe on him, through the Word of the Apostles, as well as to the Apostles themselves. And in v. 24. All that the Father hath given me, must be with me where I am. And John vi. 37. All that the Father hath given me, shall come unto me, that they may have Life. Hence also arise those glorious Expressions of St. Paul, 2 Tim. i. 9. God hath saved us, and called us with an holy Calling; not according to our Works, but according to his own Purpose and Grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the World began. Tit. i. 1, 2. St. Paul speaking of the Faith of God’s Election, he adds, in hope of eternal Life, which God that cannot lie, hath promised before the World began. Here is Grace given to Men, before the Beginning of the World; but it is given more immediately to Christ their Head, in trust for them: Here is a Promise of eternal Life made before the Creation; but it was made to Christ for them, before they had a Being. Examples of this kind are common among Men, when one Person is made Trustee of an Estate for many Children, or Heirs that are yet unborn, and he stands engaged to make them Possessors of it in successive Seasons.

I have put all these Texts together, that we may observe the whole Current of Scripture running this way, and leading our Thoughts to this great Doctrine, (viz.) that as God hath chosen his People before the Foundation of the World to Holiness and Salvation, so he has given them for this purpose into the hands of his Son. Nor did the Son of God refuse this glorious Trust, but cheerfully undertook the
the Work: so he is represented in the Old Testament, Psal. xl. 7. Lo, I come; in the Volume, or rather the Beginning of the Book it is written of me: I delight to do thy Will, O my God. Whether this Book be the secret Book of Life, or the publick Book of Scripture, I will not here determine; both are true. And so it is written also, in the History of the Life of Christ; for he speaks often with sacred Pleasure, that he came to do his Father's Will, and to take care of those whom the Father had given him, to keep them from perishing, and to raise them up at the last Day.

Now this is what our Divines generally call the Covenant of Redemption, even these sacred Transactions between God the Father, and his Son Jesus Christ, before the Foundation of the World: and I think the Scripture calls it the Covenant, Psal. lxxxix. 28. When the Psalmist has represented Christ under the Character of David, as chosen of God from among the People, to lay our Help upon him, he adds, My Covenant shall stand fast with him, (faith the Lord) his Seed will I make to endure for ever; and tho' they may sometimes fall into Sin, yet I will not suffer my Faithfulness to fail: my Covenant will I not break, nor alter the Thing that is gone out of my Lips. Once have I sworn by my Holiness, that I will not lye unto David; i. e., I will fulfil the Promises that I have made to my Son, the true David, the King of Israel, or the Head of my chosen People; for I have confirmed this Covenant with him, by Divine Solemnities. And I am sure, the five first Verses of the Seventeenth of John, wherein our Saviour pleads with his Father, carry in them the plain Language of a Covenant, as every Reader may observe.

The
The only Thing which remains on this Head, is briefly to run over the Articles of this Covenant, or the mutual Engagements between God the Father, and his Son Jesus Christ.

First then, Let us consider what it was Christ undertook, as the chosen Saviour of his People. The only begotten Son of God, who lay in the bosom of his Father, and had Glory with him before the World was, John i. 18. and xvii. 5. agreed to come forth from the Father, and to come into this World, and to be emptied of that Glory for a Season, John xvi. 28. Phil. ii. 7. to take Flesh and Blood upon him, Heb. ii. 14. to be born of a Woman, Gal. iv. 4. and to be made in the Likeness of sinful Flesh, Rom. viii. 3. and in the Fashion of a Man, that he might be Bone of our Bone, and Flesh of our Flesh, and become a proper Head for such Members as we are, Eph. v. 30. and that he might be our Brother, and a Kinsman, who should have a Right to redeem our lost Inheritance. He who was in the form of God, consented to take upon him the form of a Servant, Phil. ii. 7. and past thro' a Life of various Labour, Reproach, and Suffering, as well as performed the Duties of the Moral and Ceremonial Law, not only that he might become a Pattern to us, of Patience and universal Holiness, but that he might do all the Will of God, and fulfil the Righteousness of that Law which Mankind had broken. Psal. xl. 7, 8. He undertook also to become a Preacher of Righteousness and of Grace, and to explain the Law of God, and proclaim the Gospel of Salvation among Men. Psal. xl. 9. Esai. lxi. 1.

And besides all this, he consented to take upon him the Sins of Men, i.e. by way of Imputation, as a Sacrifice, to bear our Sins on his Body, on the cursed
cursed Tree, to be made a Sin-offering for us, and to expose himself to painful Sufferings, and a bloody Death on that account, that he might make a proper Atonement for Sin. 2 Cor. v. ult. 1 Pet. ii. 24. Heb. x. 5—12. Rom. iii. 25. The good Shepherd came to lay down his Life for his Sheep. John x. 15.

And in John xiv. 16: when he was about to leave this World, he promised to intercede or pray for them. And when the Father should exalt him to the Kingdom, and put all Power into his hand, he engaged to call them by his Word; to bestow on them Repentance, and Forgiveness, to send down the sanctifying Spirit upon them, and in general to rescue them from every Evil; to bear them through all the Difficulties and Dangers of Life, and to convey them safe to the possession of the appointed Inheritance. It would not be possible, in this short Discourse, to cite at large all the Scriptures that reveal and support these Truths. Whatsoever our blessed Saviour perform'd in the Execution of his Mediatorial Office, we may justly suppose it was an Article and Agreement in that Original Covenant made betwixt him and his Father: And in many of the Instances which I have mentioned, the Scripture expressly teaches us, that he performed them as the appointment of his Father.

In the next Place, let us take a brief Survey of the Articles of this Covenant on God the Father's side. Whatsoever Powers, or Honours, or Employments he bestow'd on his Son, we have reason to suppose, 'twas in pursuance of this Original Covenant of Grace and Salvation.

First then, we may justly conclude, That God engaged to employ him in the Work of Creation, as a Foundation of his future Kingdom among Men;
by him God made Angels, and they shall be his ministering Spirits, for the Men who shall be Heirs of his Salvation; by him God created Mankind, and he shall be Lord of them all; by him the blessed God made his own People, and he shall save them. He spread abroad the Heavens, and he laid the Foundations of this Earth; even all the Provinces of his future vast Dominion, with all their Inhabitants, are of his own making; for without him was nothing made that was made. John i. 3. and Colos. i. 14, 15.

Again, We may suppose it was agreed by the Father, that he should be the King of Israel, which was the visible Church of God, as a Type of his Kingdom, and the Government of his invisible Church; that he should fix his Dwelling in a Cloud of Glory, in his Holy Hill of Sion, Psal. ii. 6, 7. and should govern the Jewish Nation by Judges, or Priests, or Kings, as his Deputies, till he himself should appear in the Flesh.

God the Father undertook also to furnish him with every thing necessary for his Appearance and his Ministry here upon Earth, to prepare a Body for him, Heb. x. 5. to give him the Spirit without measure, John iii. 34. Ezâ. xi. 2. to bear him up through all his Sufferings, to accept his Sacrifice and Atonement for Sin, to raise him up from the Dead, to exalt him not only to the former Glory which he had with him, before the World was, which he asks for as a Matter of Agreement, John xvii. 4, 5. but to honour him at his right Hand with superiour Powers. He gave him the Assurance of a People to obey him, or a Seed to serve him; he promised the Gentile Nations for his Inheritance, and to make him Lord of all Things in Heaven and Earth, that he
he might govern all for the Good of his Church. He gave him also the Promise of the Holy Spirit, Luke xxiv. 49. that he might send him down in a variety of Gifts and Graces, upon his Apostles at first, to begin his Gospel-Church on Earth, and upon all his chosen People for their Sanctification thro' all Ages, to the end of the World. He appointed him of old to be the Judge of Men and Angels; and all this Authority and Glory was promised him in that early Covenant, partly as a proper Recompence for his Sufferings, and partly as a Means to enable him to fulfil all the Articles of his Engagement to God his Father. Father, said he, glorify thy Son, for he hath finished the Work thou gavest him to do on Earth; and thou hast given him (i. e. promised to give him) Power over all Flesh, that he may give eternal Life to as many as thou hast given him.

These things are recorded in a variety of Scriptures, which it would be too large at present to rehearse. A glorious Covenant! with sacred and divine Engagements, which are fulfilled on both sides, with perfect Honour and Faithfulness! What an effectual Security is derived hence, for the Salvation of all that believe in Christ! What an Assurance is hereby given, that none of his chosen ones shall perish! What Matter of delightful Meditation of holy Wonder and devout Thankfulness may the Saints of God derive from this blessed Covenant, which reaches beyond the Limits of this World and Time, and extends from one Eternity to another! In condescension to our Understandings, the holy Prophets compare the Firmness of this Covenant to the Ordinances of Heaven, to the Foundations of the Earth, to the certain Periods of the Moon, and the establish'd Course of Nature: But by the Light of the

P 2
God’s Election of Men

New Testament, we may venture boldly to rise higher, and say, That when these Heavens shall be folded up as a Curtain, when the Sun shall be turn’d into Darkness, and the Moon be deprived of her Light, when the Foundations of the Earth shall totter, and all things in it be burnt up, this Covenant shall remain in its full Force, shall bring everlasting Honours to God the Father, and his Son Jesus, and for ever establish all the Children of God in Holiness and Joy.

There are yet four Things that remain to be done, with relation to this great Doctrine of the Election of Sinners in Christ to be made holy and happy. There are some Difficulties attend the Belief of it, which ought to be relieved. There are some proper Uses to which this Doctrine should be applied. There are some practical Abuses of it, against which we must set a Guard; and there are some Remarks or Inferences which may be form’d upon the whole Discourse.

First, As for the Difficulties which attend it, and the many Cavils and Objections which are raised against it, I shall not interrupt this Half-hour with Controversy, so far as to take notice of any of them in the Body of my Discourse.*

* There is one Objection of the greatest Importance and Weight, and therefore I would say something to relieve it in the Margin.

Some Persons have argued thus; If God has chosen a certain Number to be made holy and happy by Jesus Christ the Mediator, while others are left out of this Choice, and go on in Sin to their final Destruction, will they not justly complain of God, at the last Day, as having laid a Bar against their Salvation, by not chusing them? Will they not say, There was no Mediator to undertake their Cause, no Pardon, no Salvation provided for them; and therefore the Offers of Pardon and Salvation, which are made to them in common, with other Sinners in the Gospel, are mere delusive Words, and have no Truth in them? But far be this Imputation from the God of Grace and Truth!

Answer.
\[\text{Ser. XI. in Jesus Christ.}\]

I proceed therefore immediately to the Second Thing I proposed, which was to shew what are the proper Uses of this Doctrine of God's Election of Sinners to Salvation, and giving them into the hands of his Son. This great Truth is not design'd to be a Matter of mere Speculation, and much less to be toss'd and bandy'd about in noisy Quarrels and Controversies among the Disciples of Christ, but it hath its sacred and glorious Uses; among which are such as these:

I. Use. Since we are chosen to be holy, as well as happy, we may search and find out our Election by our Sanctification, and make it sure and evident.

\[\text{Answ. 1. The Offers of Salvation by a Mediator, are made in general Terms to all Sinners wherefoever the Gospel is preached, and every one that applies himself to Christ in the appointed way, and is sincerely willing to receive this Salvation, shall have it bestowed upon him. John iii. 16. God so loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes on him, should not perish, but should have everlasting Life. So far was our blessed Lord appointed the common Mediator of Mankind, that none shall be able to complain in the Day of Judgment, that they perish for want of a Mediator. This is the Will of God who sent him, or the grand Commission with which he came into the World, not only that he should take care of those whom the Father had given him, but it runs in general, that he should receive all that came to him, and be will by no means cast them out. See John vii. 37-40. None shall complain, that their Sins are unpardon'd for want of a Sufficiency in the Merit or Atonement of Christ. And tho' it is confessed, that his Blood and Life were paid down as a Price for the certain Redemption and Salvation of all that the Father had given him, yet the Blood of him who was God manifest in the Flesh, had a sufficient Value in it to procure Pardon, Heaven and Happiness, for a whole World of sinful Men: and the Reason why Unbelievers and impenitent Sinners are condemned is, because they did not apply themselves sincerely to this Mediator, they did not chuse to lay hold of this Salvation, which consists in a Likeness to God as well as in his Favour, in Holiness as well as Happiness.}\]

\[\text{Answ. 2. Nor shall any be able to say at that Day, that they mis'ed of the Salvation of Christ, for want of sufficient natural Powers to lay hold of it, and receive it. Sinners who hear the Gospel have a natural Understanding to take in the Meaning of the Word preached; they}\]
God's Election of Men

So the Apostle Peter advises, 2 Pet. i. 10. **Give diligence to make your Calling and Election sure, i.e. to make your Election sure by your Calling, by your Obedience to the heavenly Call.** And St. Paul infers, that the **Theffalonians were Elect of God, because the Gospel came to them not in Word only, but in Power, and they became Followers of him, and of Christ.** 1 Thess. i. 4, 5, 6. Have you chosen God for your Portion and Happiness, as he reveals himself by **Christ Jesus** in the Gospel? then his Word will assure you God has chosen you in **Christ.** Have you given up your Souls to the Hands of **Jesus** the Saviour, without reserve, that you may be made holy and happy? then you may infer with Assurance, that God has given you also into the Hands of **Christ** for

they have also a Will to accept or refuse the Proposals of Grace, to receive or reject this all-sufficient Saviour: But there is an Aversion in them to attend to and obey the Gospel, through the corruption of their Nature by Original Sin; their Minds will not learn Divine Things, because they shut their Eyes; their Wills refuse to receive the Grace of the Gospel, they shut it out of their Hearts; they have a Delight in Sin, a Dislike of **Christ,** and of his Salvation, which consists in Holiness and the Love of God; they have a rooted Obstination of Will against the Methods of divine Mercy. **This is their Condemnation, John iii. 19. that Light came into the World, and they loved Darkness rather than Light;** and therefore they must die in their Sins, because **they would not come unto Christ,** that they might have Life. John v. 40.

I confess this Aversion, this Obstination of Mind, and Will against the Gospel may be call'd Natural, or rather Native, as it comes to us by Nature in its present corrupted State; and in Scripture it is sometimes represented as Impotence or Inability to repent, to return to God, to receive **Christ** and his Grace. John vi. 65. **No Man can come to me, except it were given him of my Father.** And it is termed Blindness of Mind and Hardness of Heart, and a Death in Sin; not that there is really such a natural Incapacity in their Mind and Will to receive this Grace, as there is in a blind or dead Carcass; but 'tis a moral Impotency, as it is well expressed by our Divines, because the Aversion is so strong and so rooted in their Hearts, that they will never renounce Sin, and receive the Salvation of **Christ,** without the powerful Influences of Divine Grace.

And that it is a moral Impotency and not properly natural, appears by the moral Remedies applied to cure it (viz.) **Commands, Promises, Threatnings,**
for this blessed Purpose. Have you the Characters of the Children of God upon you, and are you made like to his first beloved Son? you may assure yourselves then, that you were predestinated to the Adoption of Children by Jesus Christ. O Divine Science! O blessed Skill of searching into the Secret of the Decrees of God, and of finding that our Names are written in the Book of Life!

II. Use. Let those who by a sincere Search have found the blessed Marks and Evidences of their Election in Christ Jesus take the Comfort of it, rejoice in it, live upon it, and walk worthy of so divine a Privilege. See that you keep your Evidences of Grace ever clear and bright by holy Watchfulness, that ye may have a strong Defence in every Hour of Temptation. "Shall I who "am chosen out of the World that I may be holy, "shall I mingle myself with sinful Men, and in-

Threatnings, &c. which it would be uselesse and ridiculous to apply to natural Impotence, i. e. to make the Blind see, or the Dead arise.

Both the first and second Answer to this Objection, may be represented by a very fair Similitude. Suppose God has decreed, that he will make the rising Sun-beams shine so effectually on a thousand certain Persons, that they shall be roused thereby to their Morning-Work, and enjoy the pleasure of it: May we not say, The Sun has Beams sufficient to enlighten the whole Nation, and they have all a natural Power to behold and enjoy this Light; tho' perhaps only that thousand will see the Sun rising, because their Sloth confines the rest to their Beds, they have an Aversion to the early Business of the Morning; and this lazy Humour hangs so heavy upon them, that they cry, They cannot rise. Thus tho' the Sun of Righteousness has Light and Grace enough in him to save all Mankind, yet their own Sloth and Obstinate, and evil Inclinations, exclude them from this Salvation. Both these Events arise without a just Complaint against the God of Nature, who called up the Morning-Sun to enlighten the Nations, or against the God of Grace, who sent forth the Sun of Righteousness, to blest the dark and sinful World.

Answer. 3. No condemned Sinner shall have reason to say, that there was any Bar or Hindrance laid in the way of his Salvation, by this Decree of God, or by his chusing some Sinners, and giving them to Christ: for tho' he provided effectual Grace for those whom he cho
God's Election of Men

"dulge Iniquity? Shall I who am adopted into God's "Family, live like one of the Children of Satan?" This is a sweet Refuge also for us to have recourse to in every outward Distress. "Shall I faint and be "overwhelm'd under a present Sorrow, who have "the holy Evidences of Election upon me, who "am chosen and prepared of God for everlasting "Happiness?" Let us walk in this daily Practice, in this Joy of the Holy Spirit, and wait for a rich and abundant Entrance into the Kingdom and Glory of our Lord and Saviour.

The Third Thing I proposed to mention was, the Abuses of this awful Doctrine. There is nothing so true,

chose to certain Salvation, yet he only left others to their own natural State, as corrupted by the Fall of Adam; he left them to the wilful Blindness of their own Minds, and the wilful Hardness of their own Hearts. While this original Counsel of God, this Decree of Election provides and secures Grace and Glory to some, it does not in the least hinder others from receiving and obeying the Gospel.

Answ. 4. None shall be condemned at last, because they were not chosen in Christ, but because they were impenitent Sinners, who in some measure have resisted the Light of their own Consciences, under whatsoever Diffentiation they have lived, whether under the Law of Nature, the Law of Moses, or the Gospel of Christ. These Consciences of theirs shall lay them under a dreadful and unanswerable Conviction of their own Guilt, shall give Sentence against them, and confirm the condemning Sentence of Jesus, the Judge of all.

There are other Difficulties which are started against this Doctrine, which might perhaps be as easily answered, if time would allow. But if all our reasoning Powers should fail us in the Vindication of this Sovereignty of God, in chusing particular Perfons to be the Objects of any of his Favourites, whether earthly or heavenly; yet St. Paul teaches us to answer, Rom. ix. 11-24. O Man! who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the Thing formed say to him that formed it, Why haft thou made me thus? God will have Mercy on whom he will have Mercy; and that not among the Jews only, but also among the Gentiles. Nor is there any Unrighteousness with God, in any of these Transactions; and the Purpose of God according to Election must stand. And we may remark by the way, that such a sort of Answer as this makes it pretty evident, that our Doctrine is the same with that of St. Paul: for if Persons were chosen of God on the account of foreseen good Works, there would have been no room for such an Objection, and such an Answer.
true, so sacred and so divine, but it may be abused thro’ the Wickedness or the Weakness of the Hearts of Men, and the Temptations of the Evil-One.

I. One Abuse of this Doctrine is, when we pervert it to nourish Presumption, and to indulge our Sloth and Negligence, when we sit with folded Hands like the Sluggard in the Neglect of Duty, or allow ourselves in a Course of Sin, upon this Pretence, “That if I am elected, I shall be called, and sanctified, and saved; the Grace of God will take hold of me some time or other, and bring me to ‘Faith, and Holiness, and eternal Life.””

Answ. 1. Do you dare venture to argue thus foolishly in the common Affairs of this Life, or to act under the Influence of such Arguments? You believe that God has determined the time of your Continuance in this World, and do you live idle, and refuse to procure Food, or to partake of it, on this pretence, that God will prolong your Life to his appointed Hour, and that he will provide Food for you, and make you eat and drink, if he design you shall live? No: You apply yourselves with diligence to obtain your daily Bread, and to partake of it; you take care to make use of the appointed Means to preserve natural Life, notwithstanding God’s Decree: and why do you not practise the same with regard to your Salvation, and seek after Faith and Holiness as the appointed Means? But it is a sign you value eternal Life at a very low rate, if you will venture the loss of it upon such a weak Pretence, as you dare not trust to in the Things of this Life. That Man that goes down to the Grave, or goes down to Hell upon these Principles, perishes like a Fool, and deserves to perish.

Answ. 2. Electing Grace, as it works in calling and converting us to Faith and Holiness, generally operates
operates in so gentle, so imperceptible a manner, and so suitably to our natural Faculties, by awakening them to seek after Heaven, that we can hardly distinguish it from the Operation of our own Spirits, but by the blessed Effects of it; and if we will never stir up ourselves and our natural Powers to seek after the Salvation of Christ, it is a dangerous sign, that we are not elected. For tho' Divine Grace be really the first Agent in our Salvation, yet it never doth violence to our natural Powers, nor will it ever save us without our own Activity and Diligence in Duty.

II. Another Abuse of this Doctrine is, when Persons indulge despairing Thoughts under this pretence: "If I am never so watchful, never so diligent, I cannot be saved, unless I am elected; and therefore it is in vain for me to seek after Salvation: for the Scripture tells me, Rom. ix. It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth Mercy."

Answer. But remember also, O tempted and despairing Soul! that there was never any one who had a Will to obey the Gospel, and who did run the Christian Race, but that he obtain'd the blessed Prize of Salvation. It is granted indeed, that the Holy Spirit is the first, but secret, Agent in this important Affair: Pray earnestly then for the Holy Spirit, and set thyself in a Course of Duty, according to the appointment of Christ in his Gospel, and thou hast many Promises to support thy Hope, that such Prayers shall be answered. Luke xi. 13. Your heavenly Father will give his Holy Spirit to them who ask him. Thy first Business is not to enquire after thine Election, which is a secret thing, but hearken to the publick Call of the Gospel, repent of every Sin, and receive the Grace that is there offer'd;
offer'd; and when thou art become a Lover of God, and a Believer in Christ, thou mayst then trace up these Graces to their original Spring, even to thine Election in Christ Jesus, before the Foundation of the World,

The last thing I proposed is, to make some few Remarks on this Subject.

Remark 1. I infer, that there are some Doctrines wherein the Reason of Man finds many Difficulties, and which the Folly of Man would abuse to unhappy Purposes, which yet are plain and express Truths asserted in the Word of God. Among these, we place the great Doctrine of the Election of Sinners in Christ to be made holy and happy. We intreat our Brethren who differ from us in this Point, to be so candid as to suppose, that we feel the Difficulties as well as they, and we see the awful Consequences which seem to affright them from receiving it; we have had our Doubts about it, and found our reasoning Powers a little perplexed and unwilling to receive it, left God should be represented as partial in his Favours, and left Man should cavil against his Proceedings: But we feel ourselves overpower'd with Evidence and Conviction, when we see the Doctrine so plainly and frequently asserted in Scripture, that we cannot resist the Light and Force of it: the express Words of God demand our Submission and constrain our Belief, and we are persuaded our Brethren would believe it too, if they saw it in the same Light.

We are sensible also of the Abuses of this Doctrine, and the sinful Purposes to which it is sometimes perverted; yet since it is a Truth God has seen fit to reveal, in several parts of his Word, and since it has some valuable Purposes and Uses in the Christian Life,
Life, we cannot but think it proper sometimes to mention it on special Occasions, as part of the Counsel of God toward our Salvation.

*Rem. 2.* However this Doctrine may be opposed by the Reasonings of Men, and even ridiculed by a bold Jeft, yet, if it then appear to be a divine Truth, as the Scriptures now seem to teach us, the blessed God will not be ashamed of it in the last great Day; then shall he unfold all the Scheme of his original Counsels, and spread abroad his Transactions toward Mankind, before the face of all his intelligent Creatures. *Revel. xx. 12.* When the Judgment shall be set, and the Books shall be opened, i.e. the Book of Divine Laws, and the several Dispensations of Grace, as well as the Book of Divine Records, wherein the Lives and Actions of Men were written down, there shall also another Book be opened, even the Book of Life: And as those former Books compared together, (viz,) the Records of the Behaviour of Men, whether good or evil, compared with the Laws and Dispensations of God, shall shew the Equity of the great Judge in his Rewards and Punishments; so the Lamb's Book of Life, wherein the Names of his People were written down as elected in Christ, before the World began, shall discover the blessed Correspondence between the final Sentence of Happiness pronounced on holy Believers, and the original Grace of God which chose them in Christ Jesus unto Faith and Holiness, and secured this Happiness for them. A glorious Harmony of Divine Wisdom, Grace, and Providence!

I cannot think, that any of the Cavils of Wit against this Doctrine will stand before the Light of the great Tribunal. Banter and Ridicule of electing Love, and of the Names written in the Book of Life,
Life, however they may be applauded in a degenerate Age, will meet with no Applause before that tremendous Appearance. Every Mouth shall be stopped, the Righteousness of God shall be cleared from every Imputation, the Grace of God shall be glorified in all his chosen ones in that Day, and Christ shall be admired in all his Saints. But this leads me to the third Remark.

Rem. 3. The whole Chain and Current of our Salvation, from the beginning to the end, arises and proceeds all the way from the free Grace of God, thro' the Mediation of his Son Jesus Christ. God and his Son must have the Glory, and Pride must be hid from Man for ever. Are we chosen, are we called, are we justified and sanctified, and at last advanced to Heaven? it is all by the Mercy of the Father, by the Mediation of the Son, by the Power and the Grace of God and his Spirit, exerting themselves in all the Stages of our Salvation, before Time began, and when Time shall be no more. Grace and Christ run thro' all, and reign and triumph thro' the whole Scheme of our Happiness, from the very Foundation of it: And when the Top-stone of this blessed Building shall be laid in Heaven, the Inhabitants of that World shall join all, their Voices, and shout together, to the honour of Christ and Grace. And that I may conclude this awful Subject with the Language of sincere Charity, I am persuaded there will be found many, holy Souls there, whose Voices shall join in this Triumph, and this Song of Glory to Electing Love, who had not learnt this Doctrine till they came to Heaven, nor knew the eternal Spring of their own Salvation, till they were made Possessors of the Blessing. Amen.
SERMON XII.

The various Dispensations of the Gospel, or Covenant of Grace toward fallen Man, before Christianity.

LUKE I. 72.

To perform the Mercy promised to our Fathers, and to remember his holy Covenant.

Though several Ages passed, after the Entrance of Sin into this World, before the Saviour appeared; yet God made an early Revelation of his gracious Purpose, to deliver Mankind from their guilty wretched State. Some Notices of his pardoning Mercy were requisite to encourage their Repentance, and Return to his Service: There is Forgiveness with thee, faith the Psalmist, that thou mayst be feared; hereby plainly intimating, that if there was no Hope of Forgiveness with God, there would be nothing of his Fear and Worship found amongst sinful Creatures.

The Salvation of apostate perishing Men through a Mediator, was the Mercy promised to the Fathers: This is the Sum of the Gospel, or Holy Covenant, mentioned
Ser. XII. Dispensations of Grace, &c. 223

mentioned in my Text; which was always the same, in Substance; though its Blessings, and the Method of dispensing them were set in a clearer, and more determinate Light, as the Fulness of Time approached, wherein the Sun of Righteousness was to rise, and shine on the Earth.

A Survey of the various Dispensations of the Gospel, or Covenant of Grace, towards fallen Man, before the Coming of Christ, may be of great use, both to raise our Esteem, and establish our Belief of Christianity; for we shall find them all pointing to, and consummated in this. I shall, as the Limits of my Discourse will allow, set before you the Account which the Scripture gives of them in these several Periods of Time.

1. From Adam to Noah.
2. From Noah to Abraham.
3. From Abraham to Moses.
4. From Moses to the Coming of Christ.

Let me set before you what may be found of the Gospel, or Covenant of Grace in the Scriptures, within that Period of Time which reached from Adam to Noah. Immediately after the History, which is given us of the Sin of our first Parents, we read, that God said unto the Serpent, who tempted them to the Commission of it, The Seed of the Woman shall bruise thy Head, and thou shalt bruise his Heel. Genef. iii. 15. The Occasion upon which these Words were spoken, was very important and awful; it is very evident, that God designed Consolation by them, to those who were seduced through the Subtilty of the Serpent: But if we understand him
him as speaking here only to a natural Serpent, would it not look like trifling? What Comfort would it afford Adam and Eve, when they stood before God, under great Confusion of Soul, and Anguish of Conscience, upon the account of their Guilt, to hear it said, that their Posterity should now and then kill a Snake, which would cost them painful Bruises? Surely then our first Parents may be reasonably supposed to take these Expressions, as referring principally to a malicious invisible Spirit, by whom the Serpent was acted in tempting of them. It was fit he should be spoken to, in Terms adapted to the Condition of the Creature, under whose Cover he vented his Malice: and inasmuch as the most effectual way to destroy a Serpent is to crush its Head, the Destruction of Satan’s Power, the Defeat of his Policy is expressed by bruising his Head. These Words plainly imply a Promise of Salvation to them, who were overcome by him; for how could the Devil be subdued, and his Contrivance baffled, which is signified by his Head being bruised, unless they were rescued from that miserable Condition, to which they were reduced, through his cunning Artifice? This was to be effected by the Seed of the Woman, whereby some eminent Person, descending from the Woman, was meant. This Character is very applicable to our Lord Jesus Christ, who was made of a Woman, in such a peculiar Sense, as no one else of the Human Race ever was: It was foretold, that he should be the Son of a Virgin, Isa. vii. 14. the Accomplishment of which Prophecy, is related Matth. i. 18. It is also expressly declared, that for this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the Works of the Devil. 1 John iii. 8.

Possibly,
Possibly, it is added, that the Serpent should bruise the Heel of the Woman's Seed, to intimate the manner wherein his own Head was to be bruised. The New Testament informs us, that Christ, through the Suffering of his Inferior, his Human Nature, destroyed him that had the Power of Death, that is the Devil. Heb. ii. 14. And it is certain the evil Spirit had a great hand in the Sufferings of Christ: when his Enemies came to apprehend him, he said unto them, Now is your Hour, and the Power of Darkness. Luke xxii. 53. Satan, the Prince of Darkness, instigated wicked Men, his Seed, to take and crucify him: and by thus bruising the Heel of our Saviour, his own Head was bruised.

It may be reasonably supposed, that Sacrifices were instituted by God, soon after he spoke these Words to the Serpent. We have indeed no express mention of the Divine Appointment of them, at this time; but it is written in one of the following Verses, that God made unto Adam and his Wife Coats of Skins. These, very probably, were the Skins of Beasts offered in Sacrifice; for there seems to be no other use for which they should be then slain, seeing Man was to live on the Herb of the Field, ver. 18. There is an Account in the next Chapter, Genes. iv. 4. that Abel brought of the Firstlings of his Flock, and the Fat thereof; and the Lord had respect unto him, and his Offering. It is not to be thought, that this Service would have been acceptable to God, if he had not required it, if it had been an Instance of Will-Worship. And what could be the Design of God in the Institution of Sacrifices, but to direct the Faith of his People to that great Sacrifice, whereby the Seed of the Woman was, in due time, to make Atonement for their Sins. Hardly any thing could be
be more absurd, than to imagine, that the Blood of Beasts could expiate the Guilt, and make Satisfaction for the Iniquities of Men, in the sight of a holy God. This Testimony is given of Abel, Heb. xi. 4. that by Faith he offered a more excellent Sacrifice than Cain. By Faith in what? It must be by Faith in the Promise, implied in the Words spoken by God to the Serpent; for we find nothing else recorded upon which he could ground his Faith. It was by Faith in this same Promise, that Enoch, and the rest of the Patriarchs from Adam to Noah, pleased God.

2. Let us proceed to consider, what may be found in the sacred Records, that has a special respect to the Gospel, or Covenant of Grace, in that Period of Time which reached from Noah to Abraham.

When God gave notice unto Noah, of the Destruction which he was determined to bring upon all Flesh, because Mankind was become exceeding corrupt; and had directed him to prepare an Ark, he tells him, that he would establisb his Covenant with him, Genes. vi. 18. The Word importeth, I will faithfully keep my Covenant. God seems to speak here not of a Covenant which was to be made, but of one which was then subsisting: And what Covenant could this be, but that of the promised Seed? Genes. iii. 15. For we have no Account of any other, that God had made yet with Men. And was not this a very proper Season for him to declare, that he would inviolably keep that Covenant, when there was an apparent Danger of its Failure, by the Desolation, which he said, was coming upon all Flesh wherein was the Breath of Life? ver. 17. Noah rely'd upon the Faithfulness of God, that he would fulfil this Covenant; therefore is he said to become the
Ser. XII. Grace before Christianity. 227

The Heir of the Righteousnes which is by Faith. Heb. xi. 7.

When Noah understood with what Decency Shem and Japhet behaved in covering his Nakedness, which Ham had endeavoured to expose, he said, Blessed be the Lord God of Shem. Genef. ix. 26. These Words plainly imply some peculiar Grace that was to be conferred upon Shem, who is the first Man in Scripture, that has expressly this Honour of having the Lord stiled his God. This Expression probably denotes his being a God in Covenant with him, as it undoubtedly does, when the Lord is afterwards called the God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Jacob. Noah foreseeing, by the Spirit of Prophecy, that God would enter into a special Covenant with the Posterity of Shem, taking them to be his peculiar People, and binding himself to be their God, was ravished with Joy at the Consideration of so great a Privilege, and breaks out into an Ascription of Praise to God upon this account. Of Japhet, it is said in the 27 ver. that he should dwell in the Tents of Shem. This Prophecy was fulfilled, when the Gentiles, the Progeny of Japhet, were taken into the Covenant and Church of God, which had been a long time confined to the Offspring of Shem.

This is the proper place to consider Melchisêdeck; for he was under the Noaical Dispensation. It is written of him, that he was King of Salem, and Priest of the most High God. Genef. xiv. 18. This Man was a remarkable Figure of Christ, of whom it was prophesied, that he should be a Priest upon his Throne, Zech. vi. 13. which exactly corresponds with what the New Testament speaks of him; where he is stiled our great High Priest, whom God hath exalted with his right Hand to be a Prince and a Saviour.
The Interpretation of the Word Melchisedec is King of Righteousness; and King of Salem signifies King of Peace, as the Apostle observes, *Heb.* vii. 2. How properly do these Characters belong to our Lord Jesus Christ! A Scepter of Righteousness is the Scepter of his Kingdom, *Heb.* i. 8. and he dispenses Peace to his Subjects. When he was about to leave his Disciples, as to his bodily Presence, he told them, *My Peace I leave with you, my Peace I give unto you.* *John* xiv. 27. But Melchisedec is said to be made like unto the Son of God, *Heb.* vii. 3. more especially as to his Priesthood: it is in respect of this, that he is spoken of as without Father, without Mother, without Descent, having neither beginning of Days, nor End of Life: he had no Predecessor, nor Successor in his Priestly Office; there is no Record kept of his Pedigree, as there was of the Genealogy of the Levitical Priests, in the Right of which, they were invested with the Priesthood; therefore is it asserted, that Christ is made a Priest for ever, after the Order or Appointment of Melchisedec; because he hath an unchangeable, or untranslatable Priesthood. *Heb.* vii. 24.

3. I come to that Period of Time which reached from *Abraham* to *Moses*; wherein we may observe the Gospel, or Covenant of Grace more clearly unfolded, than it was in the foregoing Ages.

When the World was almost overrun with Idolatry and Wickedness, God was graciously pleased to separate *Abraham* and his Family from the other Kindreds of the Earth, to be a People for himself. He promised them various Blessings, particularly the *Land of Canaan*; which they were to consider as a Type and Pledge of the heavenly Inheritance: therefore
Ser. XII. Grace before Christianity. 229

therefore God fìles the Covenant whereby he engag- 
ed to bestow it upon them an everlasting Covenant, and says, that he would give it unto them for an everlasting Possession. Genef. xvii. 7, 8. This Covenant God confirms by an Oath unto Abraham, Genef. xxii. with this Addition, that in his Seed all the Nations of the Earth should be blessed, ver. 18. By the Seed of Abraham here, one particular glorious Descendant of his was meant. That Abraham and his Houfhold thus understood the Expression, may be reasonably supposed: to this, in all likelihood, is to be ascribed that uncommon Eagerness, with which the good Woman of that Family desired Children; each of them hoping she should have the Honour of being the happy Parent of the blessed Seed. Why so grave and judicious an Historian, as Moses certainly was, should relate several Instances of this kind while he passed by Affairs of far greater Importance in themselves, cannot be conceived; unless they were designed to evidence such an Hope, which After-Ages were greatly concerned to know.

When our Saviour came into the World, it is plain the Jews expected the Messiah should be the Seed of Abraham: hence it was, that the Evangelists and Apostles speak so often of our Lord Jesus, as descending from that Patriarch. The Account given of his Genealogy is thus introduced by Matthew, chap. i. 1. The Book of the Generation of Jesus Chrift, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham. The Penman of the Epiftle to the Hebrews expresses the Incarnation of Chrift, by his taking on him the Seed of Abraham, chap. ii. 16.

According to God's Promise, that in the Seed of Abraham all the Nations of the Earth should be blef- sed, we read of Persons being redeemed unto God,
by the Blood of Christ, out of every Kindred, and Tongue, and People, and Nation; for which they sing his Praises. Revel. v. 9. And our Lord commissi- 
ned his Apostles to go and teach all Nations, Matth. xxviii. 19. They are directed to begin at Jerusalem, and to proceed from thence to all Nations, preaching among them Repentance, and Remission of Sins in his Name. Luke xxiv. 47.

God appointed Circumcision to be a Seal of that Covenant which he made with Abraham; and perhaps it was one great Design of the Institution of that bloody Rite, to signify, that the Blessings of the Covenant were to be communicated through the Blood of the promised Seed; therefore, when the Blood of Christ was shed, Circumcision was abolished, and Baptism was substituted in its room, to be the initiating Sign and Seal of the Covenant.

The Promise which the Lord made to Abraham, that in his Seed all the Nations of the Earth should be blessed, was renewed and limited to Isaac, Genef. xxvi. 4. and so it was to Jacob, chap. xxviii. 14. Very probably Esau disclaimed his Pretensions to the Privilege of this Promise, when he sold his Birth-right for a Mess of Pottage. I can think of no other Reason for which he should be called prophane, upon the account of his Sale of it, as he is by the Apostle, Heb. xii. 16.

There was a farther Limitation made of this Promise to Judah, by the prophetic Spirit which directed Jacob, when his Death was approaching, to tell his Sons what would befall them in the last Days. Genef. xlix. 10. The Scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a Lawgiver from between his feet, un- till Shiloh comes; and to him shall the gathering of the People be. " The Nations of the Earth shall be gathered
"gathered to him, to be blessed in him." This Prediction was fulfilled in our Lord Jesus, who sprang out of Judah, to use the Apostle's Expression, *Heb.* vii. 14. before that Tribe lost all form of Government, to which condition it was soon reduced, after the Coming of Christ; and to him did the Gentiles become subject, in him did they put their Trust.

This is the most proper place I can think of, to mention the extraordinary Faith and Hope in the Redeemer, expressed by Job, whose Book learned Men take to be more ancient than the Writings of Moses. *Chap.* xix. 25, 26, 27. *I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter Day upon the Earth: and though after my Skin, Worms destroy this Body, yet in my Flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine Eyes shall behold, and not another, though my Reins be consumed within me.* I pass on, in the

4th Place, to that Period of Time which reached from Moses to the Coming of Christ. The Apostle, speaking of the Children of Israel, who were under the Mosaic Dispensation, says, that *to them the Gospel was preached, as well as unto us.* *Heb.* iv. 2. It was preached unto them,

1. By the merciful Provisions, which God made for their Support, and Relief in their Travels through the Wilderness.

2. By the Law of Moses.

3. By several prophetic Declarations.

1. The Gospel was preached to the Israelites, who were under the Mosaic Dispensation, by the merciful Provisions, which God made for their Support and Relief in their Travels through the Wilderness.
The Dispensations of

derness. As particularly, he rained down Manna upon them, which is called Bread from Heaven; upon this they lived many Years; and it is stiled by the Apostle Spiritual Meat, 1 Cor. x. 3. because it was a Type of Christ; who said of himself, that he twas the true Bread from Heaven, John vi. 32. meaning hereby, that he was the Substance, whereof Manna was but the Shadow; and he declared, that who so eateth his Flesh, and drinketh his Blood, that is, believeth in him, hath eternal Life, ver. 54.

Again, when the People were in great Diftress, because they wanted Water to drink, God directed Moses to go to the Rock in Horeb, and to smite it with his Rod; which he did, and Water came out of it, whereby they were preserved from that Death, which they feared their Thirst would bring upon them. The Apostle tells us, that this Rock was Christ, 1 Cor. x. 4. It was a Type of him, that is the Import of the Expression; it represented the rich Supplies of the Blessing of the Spirit, which the People of God receive from Christ, for their Preservation and Comfort in their Passage through the Desart of this World, by the means of his being smitten, and made a Curse for them. Gal. iii. 13, 14.

Again, when the Israelites were bitten by fiery Serpents, and many of them died, God orders Moses to make a brazen Serpent, and to set it upon a Pole; and he promised, it should come to pass, that every one that was bitten, when he look'd upon it, should live. Numb. xxi. 8. Moses obeyed the Command; and God fulfilled his Promise. Ver. 9. If a Serpent had bitten any Man, when he beheld the Serpent of Brass, he lived. That this had a Reference to Christ, may be learnt from his own Words, John iii. 14, 15. As Moses lifted up the Serpent in the
the Wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal Life. The Old Serpent has infused his mortal Poison into our Natures; but Jesus Christ was lifted upon the Cross, and he is held forth in the preaching of the Gospel, that all the Ends of the Earth may look unto him, and be saved. Isaiah xlv. 22.

2. The Law of Moses had a Shadow of good Things to come. This indeed had the outward Form of a Covenant of Works; Keep my Statutes and Judgments; which if a Man do, he shall live in them, was its Language. Lev. xviii. 5. It pronounced a Curse upon him that did not confirm all its Words to do them. Deut. xxvii. 26. So that by the Deeds of the Law no Flesh living could be justified; for the Jews, as well as the Gentiles, had sinned, and come short of the Glory of God. The Law was added because of Transgressions, Gal. iii. 19. to convince Men of their Guilt, and of their need of a Saviour, who was exhibited to them in many of its Appointments: therefore is Christ said to be the end of the Law for Righteousness to every one that believeth. Rom. x. 4.

The Law was given by Moses, but Grace and Truth came by Jesus Christ. John i. 17. Truth is not to be taken here, as it is opposed to Error, for in that sense, Truth came by Moses; but as it stands in opposition to that which is typical. So that this is the Import of the Words, what was signified by the figurative Representations contain'd in the Law of Moses came by Jesus Christ. These were many, I can but just mention a few of them.

The High Priest, which the Law appointed, was a Type of Christ. How precious and splendid
did were the Garments wherewith he was to be ar-ray'd, when he appeared before the Lord! One part of his Ornaments was a rich Breast-Plate, wherein were the Names of the Children of Israel, which he was to bear upon his Heart, when he went into the Holy Place, for a Memorial before the Lord continually. Exod. xxviii. 29. Hereby the glorious Excellencies of the Lord Jesus Christ were shadowed, who is entered into Heaven, to appear in the Presence of God for us. Heb. ix. 24. Aaron and his Successors did, in a special manner, represent Christ, in what they were commanded to do, on the great Day of Atonement; they were then to take the Blood of the Sin-offering, and to bring it within the Vail, where they were to sprinkle it before the Mercy-seat. Lev. xvi. This signified Christ's Entrance into the Holy Place, not made with Hands, by his own Blood, having obtained eternal Redemption for us. Heb. ix. 11, 12.

As there were several things in the Ministra-
tions of the legal High Priests, which refer'd to Christ; so there were Defects attending them, that might teach those for whom they ministred, to look for a better Priest: they were obliged to make Atonement for their own Iniquities; and could it be reasonably expected, that those, who were Sinners themselves, should be capable of reconciling others to God? Such an High Priest became us, as is holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from Sinners, Heb. vii. 26. they were mortal Creatures, and were not suffered to continue by reason of Death, Heb. vii. 23. which was an Evidence of the Imperfection and Mutability of their Office: therefore Christ's Ability to save them to the utmost, who come unto God through him, is concluded from his ever living to make Intercession for them. ver 25. Again,
Again, The Levitical Sacrifices were typical of that Sacrifice, which Christ has made of himself. If they are not look’d upon in this Light, it will be hard to reconcile the Appointment of them with the Wisdom of God: that they could not take away Sin, appears not only from the Nature of Things, but from the frequent Repetition of them; this shews, that they could not make the Comers thereunto perfect. Heb. x. 1. Doubtless, then, it must be the design of their infinitely wise Institutor, hereby to lead the Thoughts of those who were obliged to use them, to a Sacrifice of sufficient Virtue to atone for their Offences, whereby they might be justified from all things, from which they could not be justified by the Law of Moses. Acts xiii. 39.

The Paschal Lamb was a Type of Christ; it was to be without Blemish; being sacrificed for the Children of Israel, they were to eat the Flesh, and to strike the Blood of it upon the Side-Posts, and upper Door-Posts of the Houses wherein the Passover was celebrated; which was the means of their Security from the Destruction which befell the Egyptians, Exod. xii. This was a Shadow of that offering which Christ made of himself, as a Lamb without Blemish whose Blood, being applied to us by Faith, will secure us from the destructive Vengeance of the Almighty: therefore is he called our Passover, which is sacrificed for us. 1 Cor. v. 7.

Again, the Lambs, which were to be offered by Fire unto the Lord, on the Morning and Evening of each Day continually, Numb. xxviii. 3. were Types of Christ, whose Blood we daily need to cleanse us from our Iniquities. To these the Baptist had a respect, when pointing to Christ, he said, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the Sin of the World! John i. 29.
3. The Gospel was preached to those who were under the Law of Moses, by several prophetic Declarations.

When the Law was given by Moses, the Children of Israel might be apt to think, that they were to expect no farther Revelation of the Divine Will and Mind; and to prevent their resting in what they had received, God tells Moses, Deut. xviii. 19. that he would raise them up a Prophet from among their Brethren, like unto him. A Prophet could not be like unto Moses, unless he brought in a new Dispensation; which none of the succeeding Prophets did, till Christ appeared; who must be therefore intended by that Prophet, whom God was to raise up unto the Children of Israel from among their Brethren like unto Moses.

When Judah's Scepter flourished in David's time, who expressed a well-regulated Zeal for the Worship of God, which the Law of Moses prescribed, the Israelites might be ready to apprehend, that God had fulfilled all his Promises to them. Now, to keep up their Expectation of Blessings yet to come, the Spirit of God speaks by David, of a far greater King than he was, and of a much more excellent Priest, than any of the Aaronical Order: Psal. cx. 1, 4. The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou at my right Hand, until I make thine Enemies thy Footstool. The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, thou art a Priest for ever, after the Order of Melchisedek.

Isaiah speaks in such a particular manner of one that was to bear the Sins of many, by whose Knowledge they were to be justified, that he is stiled by Divines the Evangelical Prophet.

The Family of David was brought to a very low estate
estate in the days of Jeremiah; the Church seemed then to be in great danger of being swallowed up by her powerful Enemies; therefore God, to support the Hopes of his People, assures them by that Prophet, chap. xxiii. 5, 6, that he would raise unto David a righteous Branch, and that a King should reign and prosper, and execute Judgment and Justice in the Earth: in his days Judah should be saved, and Israel dwell safely; and this is the Name whereby he should be called, the Lord our Righteousness.

After Jerusalem and the Temple had lain a long while in Ruins, and all things relating to them appeared to be in a desperate Condition, God was pleased to reveal unto Daniel the Time, and the gracious Design of the Messiah's Coming, chap. ix. 24. Seventy Weeks are determined upon thy People, and upon thy Holy City, to finish Transgression, and to make an end of Sin, and to make Reconciliation for Iniquity, and to bring in everlasting Righteousness.

I shall conclude with a few Reflections upon what you have heard.

1. The imperfect Account which has been given of the several Dispensations of the Gospel, or Covenant of Grace, before the Appearance of Christ, plainly shews their Harmony and Connexion with one another. May we not from hence infer their Divine Contrivance, that they were appointed by the infinitely wise God, to whom all his Works are known from the Beginning to the End? We have likewise seen, that what was typical or prophetical in them, has been exactly accomplish'd in Christianity; which surely ought to establish our Belief, that it came from God.

2. Does
2. Does the Old Testament contain so much of the Gospel, as has been represented? then certainly it ought to be the Subject of our Study. Indeed the New Testament casts a great Light upon the Old, and this serves to illustrate and confirm the Writings of the Evangelists and Apostles; therefore it should not be neglected by the Professors of Christianity. Eph. ii. 20. we are built upon the Foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief Corner-stone.

3. It is plainly the great Design of the ancient Dispensations of the Covenant of Grace, to raise Men's Regards to Christ: He is the Mercy promised to the Fathers, the principal Article of God's Holy Covenant. Does it not then become us, who are favoured with the Christian Dispensation, to be looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our Faith, in all our Transactions with God?

Lastly, Has God performed the Mercy promised to the Fathers, by sending his Son into the World, though it was some thousands of Years after the Promise was first made? Let this strengthen our Faith in the Promise of Christ's second Coming. God has declared, that his Son shall come again to be glorified in his Saints, and admired in all them that believe; and he has highly magnified his Word; shewn an inviolable respect to it: for when the Fulness of Time was come, he sent forth his Son made of a Woman, as he had spoken many Ages before, to be the Redeemer of his People. Wherefore, gird up the Loins of your Mind, and hope to the end, for the Grace that is to be brought unto you, if you are true Believers, and real Saints, at the Revelation of Jesus Christ.

According to the outward Appearances of things, there seem'd to be very often but little Probability that
that the Promises relating to the first coming of Christ would ever be accomplish’d; yet were they all in due time punctually fulfill’d. God made good his holy Covenant in spite of all Oppositions. Are not his Power and Faithfulness still the same? Let us not then doubt of the Performance of what we read in the word of God concerning the future Appearance of Christ, though we can see nothing in the aspect of things that has a Tendency to it. The Lord is not slack concerning his Promise, as some Men count Slackness; yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry, beyond the proper appointed Time. Let us wait for him; Unto them that look for him shall he appear the second Time without Sin unto Salvation. Amen.
SERMON XIII.

The Excellency and Advantages of the Christian Dispensation, with the Invitations and Promises of the Gospel.

Heb. VIII. 6.

He is the Mediator of a better Covenant, which was establisht upon better Promises.

This Better Covenant, which the Apostle here commends, is the Christian Religion, or the Dispensation of the Gospel under Jesus Christ, the Messiah and the Mediator. Now, in order to shew the superior Excellency of the Christian Dispensation, 'tis necessary to take a brief Review of all those former Dispensations of Grace, which are more largely explained in the foregoing Sermon.

The first is that of Adam. No sooner was Man fallen from his State of Innocency, and had lost all reasonable Hopes of Happiness, according to that Constitution and Covenant in Paradise which our Divines have generally called the Covenant of Works, but the Goodness of God was manifested in revealing to Adam the Covenant or Constitution of Grace, as it was contain'd in this obscure Promise, the Seed of
of the Woman shall bruise the Head of the Serpent; which, in the Language of the New Testament, signifies that the Saviour, in the Fulness of Time, should be born of a Woman, and should destroy this Work of the Devil. This first Promise, doubtless, was more largely explain'd to our first Parents, which encouraged sinful Mankind, by the Hopes of a Saviour and of Acceptance with God, to repent of their Transgressions and return to their Maker in a way of new Obedience. This is that Gospel which is the same in all Ages, and which runs through all the Bible; (viz.) that there is Forgiveness for sinful Men who return to God, and this is to be manifested through a Saviour. But in the several Discoveries of this Gospel to Men, there were several additional Duties or Promises, or both, which distinguish them into what we call different Dispensations.

This Constitution or Covenant of Grace, in its Dispensation to Adam, had the Appointment of Sacrifices superadded, which were Figures of Christ, the true Sacrifice of Atonement. This Covenant was also confirmed to Noah and his Sons after the Flood, with some further Precepts about the Distinctions of Meats, and the Punishment of Murder, and the Promise that the Earth should be no more destroy'd by Water, of which the Rain-bow was an appointed Seal: This is that Dispensation by which Job and Melchisedeck also were saved, with many others in that early Age of the World.

The same Covenant was continued to Abraham, with some clearer Promises of the Messiah or Saviour. The Gospel was preached to Abraham, Gal. iii. 8. together with the Addition of a promised Inheritance in the Land of Canaan, as a Type of Heaven.
ven, and the peculiar Precept of Circumcision, which was a Figure of the Mortification of Sin. This is called the Dispensation of Abraham.

The same gracious Covenant or Gospel was yet farther revealed to Moses, and by him to the Nation of Israel, in the Wilderness of Sinai. This was called the Levitical or Mosaical or the Jewish Dispensation. Heb. iv. 2. The Gospel was preached to them as well as unto us. And here the Law and Will of God were more explicitly set before them, and their Encouragements to Repentance, and Hope in Divine Mercy for eternal Life grew greater, by the many Discoveries of Grace they enjoy'd, and by the dwelling of God among them upon the Mercy-seat. Here also there were a multitude of Emblems or Signs and Pledges, both of the Blessings of God and the Duties of Man, which are usually called the Jewish Ceremonies.

But it must be observed, that in this Dispensation of Moses there were very many Precepts and Promises of a carnal and temporal kind superadded to the Gospel of Grace, which Precepts and Promises together with the Ten Commands considered a-part from the Gospel, made up that Sinai-Covenant, which was really a Covenant of Works; it was made between God, as the political Head or King of that People; and the Jews, as his Subjects; and it was by the Observance of this outward Covenant the Jews were to enjoy the Land of Canaan, and temporal Blessings therein.

Let it be well considered, that this Sinai-Covenant (which is often called the Law in Scripture, and which in this Chapter is called the first Covenant) was a distinct thing from the Covenant of Grace or that Gospel, which secretly ran through all
all the Dispensations, and which was included in this Dispensation also; that Gospel which in some clear Expressions, and many Types and dark Hints, was witness’d by the Law and the Prophets, Rom. iii. 21. and by which both Abraham and David, and the pious Jews, were pardoned and saved, as St. Paul proves in Rom. iv. The great Apostle, in his Epistles to the Romans, and Galatians, and Hebrews, is often teaching them, that this Sinai-Covenant, this Law of Moses, with all the Ceremonies of it, could not give them Life, Gal. iii. 21. that is, Pardon of Sin, and eternal Salvation, when ’tis considered as a distinct thing from the Constitution or Covenant of Grace, which was shadow’d out by it: And ’tis in this Sense chiefly the Apostle, in the Verses following my Text, tells them, The first Covenant was not faultless, i.e. was not sufficient to save sinful Men, or make them holy and happy; and therefore, he often warns them against trusting in it for Salvation, and assures them, that it waxed old in his Day, and was vanishing away, ver. 7, and 13, and that a new Covenant is now introduced, that is, the Christian Dispensation, or the Gospel itself, in the most spiritual Manifeflation of it. Now as Moses was the Mediator of this Covenant of Sinai, and Aaron the Priest obtain’d the Ministry thereof, as in the foregoing Chapters, so in my Text the Son of God, being manifefl in the Flesh, is that High Priest who hath obtain’d a more excellent Ministry than Aaron, and is the Mediator of this Covenant, which is better than that of Moses, and which is establih’d upon better Promifes.

Here let it be observed also, that this Christian Dispensation of the Covenant of Grace, which is called the second or new Covenant, is not only better...
than the mere outward **Covenant of Sinai**, or **Jewish Law of Works**, by the Observance whereof the Jews were to obtain temporal Blessings; but it is better than the whole **Dispensation of Moses**, even as including in it the spiritual Constitution or Covenant of Grace; 'tis better than all the former Dispensations of this Covenant of Grace that God ever gave to Men; and that will appear in the following Particulars.

I. The **Christian Dispensation**, or the **New Testament**, tho' it be a rich Discovery of Grace, yet it contains the fairest and fullest **Representation of the Moral Law**. That Law which is of eternal Obligation upon all Mankind, is more particularly explain'd here, than in any of the former Dispensations. The Beauties of Holiness which run through this Law, shine with a fairer Light under the Gospel of Christ. The **Duties of Worship, Obedience and Submission**, which we owe to God; the **Duties of Justice, Truth and Love**, which we owe to our Neighbour; and the **Duty of Sobriety and Temperance**, which we owe to ourselves, are set forth more at large in the **New Testament** by the Apostles; **Jesus Christ** having begun this Work, in his excellent Sermon on the Mount, in the 5th, 6th, and 7th Chapters of **Matthew**. Here the Commands of the Law of God are represented in their full Extent, as they require the Obedience of the Heart as well as of the Life, as they relate to our inward Thoughts and Affections as well as outward Actions. As for the **Doctrine and Duty of Christian Love, Forbearance, and Forgiveness of Enemies**, and a Readiness to return Good for Evil, it is either raised to higher Degrees than before, or at least it is explain'd in a more spiritual and sublimer Sense than the
the Jews were ever acquainted with, and enforced by superior Motives, and through the Aids of Divine Grace thousands of Christians have lived honourably in the Practice of it.

II. In the Christian Dispensation, the Gospel or Covenant of Grace is revealed more perfectly and plainly than ever before; not in obscure Expressions, in Types and carnal Metaphors, but in its own proper Form and Language, i.e. as a Covenant relating to Things spiritual and eternal. Every Covenant between God and Man, in the most complete Sense of the Word, implies some Engagements on our side, which are appointed Duties, and some Engagements on God's side, which are promised Blessings. Now in both these respects, the Covenant of Grace is revealed in the New Testament, in a much more plain and express manner than in former Dispensations. The Blessings of the Covenant of Grace, are Regeneration or a Change of Heart, Pardon of Sin, Justification, and Acceptance with God, Adoption into his Family, whereby we are made his Children, Sanctification of our Natures, or being renewed after the Image of God, Assistance to perform Duties, and Support under Troubles, comfort in Life and Death, and everlasting Joy in another World in the Presence of God and our Blessed Saviour. These are most plainly described in the New Testament. The Duties of this Covenant are Faith or Trust in a Messiah, who is much better known now having actually appeared in the Flesh, unfeigned Repentance toward God, Confession of Sin, Converse with God in secret Prayer, Love to God as a Father, Delight in him, joyful Hope in his promised Mercy, Zeal for his Honour, and sincere Obedience arising from a Principle of Faith and Love. All these are more expressly required in our Gospel.
I grant that the chief of these things were contain'd also in the former Dispensations, particularly the Jewish; but many of them were there vail'd under Types and Figures, and dark Shadows; so that the Jews were ready to take up with these Shadows, instead of the Substance. And besides, these spiritual Promises and Precepts of the Gospel were then mixt with so many carnal Commandments, and temporal Promises of the Sinai-Covenant, that the Jews knew not well how to distinguish them: they were too often ready to neglect the inward and spiritual Constitution or Covenant of Grace, that ran through all the Dispensations of God, as well as the more spiritual Duties of the Moral Law; they were ever mistaking their Covenant of Sinai, which consisted of so many political and ceremonial, as well as moral Precepts and temporal Promises, for the very Covenant of Grace and Salvation itself: And accordingly, by an outward Observance of these Precepts, they hoped for the Pardon of all their Sins, and eternal Life. This was the Mistake into which they were always running, and which kept them from receiving the Gospel of Christ.

But now the Christian Dispensation sets the Covenant of Grace and Salvation before us, in its own spiritual Language, in a clear and distinct Light, and without a Vail; so that we plainly behold the free and rich Grace of God in this Covenant, how it has wrought in every Age, towards the Recovery of Mankind from the Ruins of our Fall, how it proceeds from Step to Step in its own glorious way, how it works to restore us to the Favour of God and his Image, and becomes more abundantly effectual to turn the Hearts of sinful Men to God, and bring them to Blissedness. The Vision of Grace and Glory
Ser. XIII. Christian Dispensation. 247

ry in the New Testament is written so plain, that he that runs may read it; the High-Way of Repentance, Faith and Holiness, which leads to eternal Life, is laid so open, that the Stranger and wayfaring Man, tho’ a Fool, shall not err therein, as the Prophet Isaiah hath foretold. Isa. xxxv. 8. And it may be observed, that when the ancient Prophets speak of these Evangelical Duties and Blessings in the clearest Language, it is generally in some Prediction of the Christian Age, and the Happiness of this last Dispensation.

III. The Rites and Ceremonies which are superadded to the Covenant of Grace, in the Christian Dispensation of it, are much preferable to those in former times, and that in three respects; they are fewer, they are clearer, and they are much more easy.

They are much fewer than the Ceremonies of the Jewish State. What a Multitude of Ceremonies were they incumber’d with! What a numerous Train of Actions and Abstinences are required in the Law of Moses! What Washings and Sprinklings, what numerous Purifications by Water and Blood, what continual Danger of new Defilements at home and abroad, by night and by day, so that Man, Woman and Child were forced to be upon a perpetual Watch, lest they should be polluted in their Food, in their Raiment, in their Habitation, or in the common Actions of Life? And what innumerable Ceremonies of Worship belong’d to the Service of the Tabernacle and Temple! What frequent Journeys from one end of the Land to the other, and multiplied Forms of Religion at the Tabernacle! Whereas in the Christian State there are but two Ceremonies appointed, (viz.) that of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper. There is no danger that the spiritual
The Excellency of the part of it should be overwhelm'd, buried and lost in the Multitude of Rites and carnal Ordinances, which was often the Case under the Jewish State.

Again, These Ordinances of the New Testament are much more easy, and less burthensome and expensive than those of the former Dispensations. To wash with Water, to break a little Bread, to pour out a little Wine, and to eat or drink in a small Quantity, are no such Yokes of Bondage as those who went before us in every Age have sustain'd. As for the Mosaiick Rites, they were exceeding expensive and burthensome indeed, beyond all our present Power of Description; and even the Dispensations of Adam and Noah, with their continual Sacrifices, and the Rite of Circumcision, which was added in Abra-

ham's days, had something in them much more costly, bloody, and painful than these two easy Ceremo-

nies of the New Testament.

And as the Ceremonies of Christianity are fewer and easier, so they are much clearer in their De-

sign and Manner of Representation, than most of the Rites annexed to the former Dispensations: they have a more natural and direct Tendency to explain and illustrate the Covenant of Grace, and to assist the Observance of it. When the Body is wash'd with Water in Baptism, it very clearly represents, that our Souls must pass through the Laver of Re-

genation, or that we must have the Spirit of God shed down upon us, to cleanse us from our Defile-

ments. The Bread broken, and the Wine pour'd out in the Lord's Supper, distinctly represent the Body of Christ broken on the Cross for our Sins, and his Blood pour'd out as an atoning Sacrifice: and the Actions of Eating and Drinking do as evidently hold forth our partaking of the Blessings purchased by the Blood.
Blood and Death of the Son of God. This Rite also solemnizes and confirms the Covenant of Grace, which God hath made with us through his Son Jesus Christ, by our hearty Consent thereto, which is expressed by eating and drinking in his Presence, and at his Table.

IV. The Son of God, who was the real Mediator of the Covenant of Grace, through all former Dispensations, has condescended to become the visible Mediator of this Dispensation. So faith my Text, He is the Mediator of this Better Covenant. He began his Office of Mediation between God and Man indeed in those early Counsels and Transactions with God the Father, before the World was made, which are called the Covenant of Redemption, and of which you have heard in a former Discourse: He appeared in the Old Testament in the Form of God; and tho' he was sometimes called the Angel of the Lord, and the Angel of his Presence, yet he often appeared as God himself, as Jehovah dwelling in a Cloud of Glory, in Light or Flame; and as he was one with the Father, so in his visible Appearances he represented God, even the Father, both to the Patriarchs and to the Jews, in his Grandeur and Majesty, as well as his Mercy. But in this last Dispensation, he appears visibly and plainly as the one Mediator between God and Man, when he discovers himself as the Son of God, and as the Man Christ Jesus. Joh. iii. 16. And so St. Paul more expressly speaks in 1 Tim. ii. 5. The Lord Jesus in the Course of his Ministry, and especially at the end of it, gave some Notices that he was our Mediator with God, and that he came to give his Life as a Ransom for Sinners, and to make Peace with his Blood: before he died and rose again, and ascended, he gave us a Pattern
Pattern of his pleading with the Father, in the 17th Chapter of the Gospel of John; and he appears now as St. Paul represents him, as our Mediator and Intercessor in his human Nature, before the Throne of God. Moses the Mediator of the Jewish Covenant, with all his Virtues and Graces, with all the sacred Intimacy to which God admitted him, and with all the shining Honours with which God invested and surrounded him, was not comparable to the Mediator of the New Covenant, the Son of God himself, the Brightness of his Father’s Glory, the express Image of his Person, who lay in the Bosom of the Father before the Foundation of the World, but seventeen hundred Years ago, was made Flesh, and dwelt among us. John i. 14, 18.

And let it be further observed here, that every thing which we have to do with God by a Mediator, is much more clearly and expressly set before us in the New Testament, than in all former Dispensations. Tho’ Jesus was always the Mediator of the Covenant of Grace, yet the Antients knew so little of him under this express Character, that you find neither Abraham, nor David, nor Isaiah, nor those which were most enlighten’d in divine Things, make much use of his Name in their Addresses to the Father, nor make plain mention of drawing near to God by a Mediator. But if we Christians call upon God, and draw near to him, we have the prevailing Name of Christ given us to plead at the Throne; if we apply to the Mercy of God, it is by Jesus Christ, the great Reconciler; if we offer our Sacrifices of Praise and Thanksgiving to the Father, they will be well received through Christ his first beloved Son. We must do all and every thing in the Christian Life through Jesus Christ, and there we are secure of
of finding Acceptance with God. Colos. iii. 17. Whatever ye do in Word or Deed, do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving Thanks to God and the Father by him.

V. This Dispensation of the Gospel is not confin'd to one Family, or to one Nation, or to a few Ages of Men, but it spreads through all the Nations of the Earth, and reaches to the end of Time. That of Moses was confined to one Nation only; that of Abraham to one Family, and chiefly limited to his Son Isaac. The Dispensations of Adam and Noah are more general indeed, and may be represented as given to all Mankind; because these were the two great Fathers of all, one before the Flood, and the other after it: But then each of these Revelations was left to the Care of one Family to publish it to all Mankind, who were to be their Posterity. But the Christian Dispensation is and shall be convey'd through the World, to all the Heathen Nations, as well as to the Jews, and that by a Multitude of Messengers, by Apostles and Evangelists, Prophets and Teachers, endowed with the Gifts and Powers of the Blessed Spirit, and sent forth for this purpose. And it has been preserved and convey'd even to our Nation, and to our Day, by the Writings of the Apostles, and the Ministrations of the Preachers of the Gospel through every Age, and it spreads the rich Grace of God, and the Salvation of Christ, to the very Ends of the Earth; nor shall any other Dispensation succeed it. Other Religions of God's own Appointment are worn out, and vanished away, but this being once introduced, must abide for ever.

VI. I might add here some other Characters of the Christian Dispensation, which the Apostle gives it in
The Excellency of the

in 2 Cor. iii. whereby he exalts it above all the Religion of the Jews, and especially far above the Sinai-Covenant. That was, faith he, the Ministration of the Letter, a Dispensation which consisted much in outward Forms and Figures, and Types, this is the Ministration of the Spirit, i.e. either of the Substance and the Thing signified in these Types, or wherein the Spirit of Grace is more eminently pour’d out on Mankind, for Conversion and Salvation: either of these Senses may give it this Name. That was written only in Tables of Stone, this in fleshy Tables of the Heart, by the Spirit of the living God. That was a Ministration of Terror and Condemnation and Death, in outward terrible Appearances of God on Sinai, and it kept the People under a Spirit of Bondage and Fear: this is the Ministration of Righteousness and Life, inasmuch as all the Springs of Pardon and Life, Hope and Happiness are set open in the Gospel of Christ. But I proceed to the VIIth and last Particular. The Encouragements and persuasive Helps which Christianity gives us to fulfil the Duties of the Covenant, are much superior to those which were enjoy’d under any of the former Dispensations. Now these consist chiefly in Examples and Motives.

Do Examples invite us to our Duty, and by a soft and secret Influence encourage and lead us on to the Performance of it? Such indeed were the Names of Abraham and David, each in their Day a happy Pattern to their several Ages: But in my opinion all the Praiseth which are due to David and Abraham, fall far short of the Labours and Sufferings, the Zeal and Patience, the Holiness and the Love of that Divine Man St. Paul, whose Life is recommended as an Example to the Christian World: And,
And neither David nor Abraham, nor any of the ancient Saints, who had each of them their Blemishes, are to be compar'd with the more excellent and perfect Pattern of Jesus the Son of God, who was holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from Sinners, who was without the least Blemish in Heart and Life: he hath given us a glorious Example of Piety, Virtue and Goodness, incomparably superior to all former Ages; 'tis most inviting indeed, and yet imitable by all that follow.

Let us next consider our various Motives to Duty under the New Testament.

Are the Motives of Love and Gratitude powerful Principles to encourage and persuade us to every active Service? Such indeed were the Blessings and Gifts which God bestow'd on Men under former Dispensations. But what were all those Gifts and Blessings in comparison of the unspeakable Gift of his own Son, to die as a Sacrifice in our stead, which is one of the chief Themes and Glories of the Christian Revelation? The Love of God to us, made visible in the Sufferings of the Son of God for our Sins, carries with it a more abundant Force of Persuasion to work upon our Gratitude and our Love, than all the Discoveries of Grace from the Days of Adam till this Day. How can we sin against such astonishing Goodness? against such a sublime Instance of Divine Compassion?

Are the Promises and Threatnings of God another Set of Motives to Duty? Do the awful Glories and Terrors of a future and eternal World work upon all the Springs of our Activity and Diligence, by Hope and Fear? Yes certainly, in a high degree. But the former Dispensations had but few of these eternal Terrors and Glories, these Threatnings and Promises
The Excellency of the Promises relating to an invisible State. All beyond Death and the Grave had a Gloom and Darkness upon it in former Times, except here and there a Glimpse of Light that was shot in between the Clouds. A few bright Sentences collected from David, Isaiah, and Daniel, were some of the chief Discoveries that we know of in those ancient Ages; but in the New Testament the Gates of the other World are thrown open; a Heaven of Happiness and a Hell of Misery are discovered there, and set before us in a divine Light. The Blessedness of departed Saints who see the Face of God, and the Agonies and Outcries of the Sinner, who lifts up his Eyes in the Place of Torment, are reveal'd to us and describ'd in the Speeches of Christ and the Writings of his Apostles. The awful and glorious Scene of the Day of Judgment is spread out at large in the Christian Dispensation, together with the Decision of the eternal States of the Righteous and the Wicked according to their Works, when everlasting Joy or everlasting Sorrow shall be the Portion of every Son and Daughter of Adam. If Hope and Fear have any Power in Mankind, to awaken them to an Abhorrence of Sin, and the Practice of Holiness, surely these Motives of the New Testament, which have so transcendent an Influence on our Hope and Fear, are of the most effectual and constraining kind.

But this leads me to the second Part of my Text, which corresponds with the appointed Theme of my Discourse; and that is, The Excellency of the Promises of the New Covenant, as St. Paul tells us, This New Covenant is establish'd, appointed or constituted, upon a Set of better Promises.
The Promises of the New Testament will appear to be much superior to those of the Old, if we consider what was hinted before, that they contain in them such Blessings as were scarce known under the former Dispensations, or at least were so express'd, that it was hard to read them: but in the Gospel these future Scenes of solemn Glory are set before our Eyes in the clearest Language. We hear the Voice of the Archangel, and the Trump of God; we see the Dead arising out from their Graves, a glorious Army of Saints and Martyrs springing at once out of the Dust, and their Bodies all bright and active, vigorous and immortal. We behold Jesus the Saviour and the Judge upon the Throne, and his faithful Followers at his right Hand, invested with publick Honours. We hear the happy Sentence pronounced upon them, Come, ye Blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom. We behold them, as it were, reigning with Christ, upon his Throne, and ascending with their Lord, to dwell for ever in his Presence.

Again, The Apostle has taught us to look upon all the Promises, as sealed to Believers by the Blood of the Son of God, and secured to Christians by the Resurrection and Exaltation of their Mediator; for the Father hath put all Power into his hand, and he has taken possession of the heavenly Inheritance in our Name; Because I live, ye shall live also. John xiv. 19.

Yet farther, the New Testament confirms all the best Promises of the Old, and claims them for itself; for they were eminently made with a design for the Days of the Messiah, as many of them expressly inform us. New Hearts and new Spirits, taking away Iniquity, and remembering Sins no more, writing the
The Excellency of the
the Law in the Heart, and the dwelling of God amongst them, and their Assurance of not departing from God, are such Promises as the Prophets Jere-

miah and Ezekiel more directly pronounced on the Subjects of the Kingdom of the Messiah. And there is a new Light cast upon them in the Gospel, which teaches plain Christians to make use of them, and apply them to their own Consolation and Joy. They were all written for our Learning, that we th'o' Patience and Comfort of the Scriptures might have Hope. Rom. xv. 4. Thus we Christians become much richer in Divine Promises, than all the Ancients, having a common Interest in all the most valuable ones of the Old Testament, as well as a peculiar Property in those of the New. What an invaluable and everlasting Treasure are these exceeding great and precious Promises which God has given us in Christ Jesus? 'Tis by these we are made Partakers of the Divine Nature, i.e. the Image of God, and by these we are enabled to escape the Corruption that is come into this degenerate World th'o' Lust, 2 Pet. i. 4. 'Tis by these we are quickened when we are slothful, we are supported when we are sinking, we are encouraged to run the Race of Duty, and to combat with every Opposition. 'Tis from these that Christians derive Courage in their dying Moments, and they triumph over Death itself, the last Enemy, when a Promise sets the Prize of eternal Life and the Crown of Glory just before them. Be thou faithful to the Death, and I will give thee a Crown of Life. Revel. ii. 10.

And how are all the Invitations of Grace in the Old Testament animated by the Son of God come in the Flesh? How many new ones are superadded? And how much is their Force of Persuasion increased, when the Power and Success of them has ap-
peared in such wondrous Instances as the New Testament sets before our Eyes? How are the worst of Sinners encouraged to lay hold of a Promise of Mercy, and to rest upon it, when our blessed Saviour received Publicans and other notorious Criminals, when Levi and Zaccheus were so favoured by him, when Mary Magdalen found Pardon for the guilt of a publick and shameless Life, when Paul the Persecutor and Blasphemer obtained Mercy, and was made a Favourite and an Apostle, and when he assures us that his Conversion was designed to this blessed Purpose, as a Pattern of abounding Grace? 1 Tim. i. 16.

How powerfully are humble and despairing Christians supported, and Backsliders encouraged to return to God in a way of dutiful Obedience, when Peter, who fell in the Hour of Temptation and denied his Lord, was recovered to Repentance by a compassionate Look of Christ, and not only received to Forgiveness, but advanced to the first Rank of Office in the Kingdom of Christ, and did glorious Service for him? But it is time to put an end to this Discourse, and it shall be concluded with a few Inferences.

Inf. 1. Tho' every part of our Bible be sacred and divine, yet the latter part of it is much more valuable to us than the former: The New Testament far exceeds the Old, because it reveals to us this better Covenant, and makes us Possessors of these better Promises. The Books of Moses and the Prophets, and the Psalms of David, contain admirable Discoveries of the Majesty and Mercy of God, but where the Beams of Jesus the Sun of Righteousness shine, there is not a more glorious Light to direct our Steps and to enliven our Spirits, but there is a new Lustre shed abroad over the Psalms and the ancient Prophets, and the typical Ceremonies and Promises of Moses, So.
that in Great Britain and in our Age, we understand those ancient Divine Writings much better than the Israelites in the Land of Canaan could understand them, even better than Moses and the Prophets understood what they themselves were inspired to write. John the Baptist was greater than all the Prophets, because he could point to Jesus the Messiah, Behold the Lamb of God! and since the Death and Resurrection of Christ, and pouring down of the Spirit, the least Minister, or perhaps the least Member in the Kingdom of Christ, knows much more of the Messiah and his Kingdom than John did, and than all the former Ages, and the Writers that lived in them. Matt. xi. 11.

Inf. 2. What abundant Thanks and Praises are due to the blessed God, who brought us forth into the World under this last and best Dispensation, who hath train'd us up in the Christian Doctrine, and not made us Jews? We are not call'd to that troublesome, and expensive Kind of Worship, which consists in the killing and burning of Bulls and Goats, and the choicest Lambs of the Flock. The bleeding Flesh of Animals, and Fire and Smoak make no part of our religious Solemnities. Jesus the Lamb of God is already offer'd as an All-sufficient Sacrifice; there is no need of another Atonement: He has by one Offering for ever perfected them that are sanctify'd. Heb. x. 14. We are not obliged to travel three times a Year to distant Parts of the Nation where we dwell, in order to adore our Maker, at one single Tabernacle or a Temple, for in every Place, that God who is a Spirit is worship'd now, even by publick Assemblies, in Spirit and in Truth. John iv. 23. We are not forced to spell out the Mercies of God, by Types and dark Figures; but we see his overflowing Goodness, in the Person and Offices of his beloved Son Jesus; we read the Par-
don of our Sins in his Blood, and our Sanctification by his holy Spirit. There is no such Vail spread over the invisible World, as cover'd the antient Dispensation. Heaven and Hell, and all the awful and eternal Things that belong to them, are discover'd in a clear and surprizing Light. We are not left to live upon the Promises of temporal good Things, and to search out the spiritual Blessings, that are cover'd and wrapt up in them; but the spiritual and everlasting Mercies which are provided for the Saints, stand open to Sight, in the Promises of the New Testament: They seem to court our Embraces, and invite us to rejoice in Hope. We need no longer be subject to a Bondage of Spirit through Fear of Death, for Death is conquer'd by the Son of God; Life and Immortality are brought to Light by his Gospel, and God hath not given us the Spirit of Bondage and Terror under the Christian Dispensation; but the Spirit of Courage, and Faith, and Love, and Joy unspeakable. For ever blessed be the Lord, who hath called us to be Christians.

Inf. 3. Do we enjoy the Privilege of knowing this better Covenant, and shall any of us content ourselves without a certain Interest in the Blessings of it? Do we hear of these better Promises, and shall we be satisfy'd without a Title to them? Shall we belong to that wretched Tribe of Despisers, who behold this great Salvation, and wonder, and perish? A&I. xiii. 41. What double Anguish will seize our Consciences, when the Judge shall pronounce at the last Day, "Go ye Curfed into endless Misery, ye had all the "Glories and Joys of Heaven brought nearest of all "to you in this better Covenant, and offer'd to you "in these better Promises, and yet ye refus'd to ac- "cept them?"

Inf. 4. If we Christians live under a better Cove-
The Excellency, &c.

nant, and enjoy better Promises, we must needs reproach ourselves if we find our Faith and Obedience fall below that of the Jews. Have we nobler Assistances in our Holy Race to Heaven, and yet shall we move on slower than they, and lagg behind them? Have we brighter Encouragements, and yet shall our Zeal be colder? Are our Duties set before us in a far clearer Light, and shall our Obedience be more defective? Does Divine Mercy reign in the Promises of the Gospel with superior Glory, and shall our Faith in these Promises be more feeble and wavering? O let us set the Pattern of Abraham and David, and other antient Saints before us, and shame ourselves out of our Earthiness of Spirit, our lazy Humour, our cold Affection to Divine Things, and our languishing Hope of Immortality. Let the Name, and Pattern, and Spirit of the blessed Jesus inspire us with new Vigour to follow him, who is the Mediator of this new and better Covenant, till he shall have brought us to the Accomplishment of all these better Promises. Amen.
SERMON XIV.

The Incarnation of CHRIST; as the promised MESSIAH.

Galat. IV. 4, 5.

But when the Fulness of Time was come, God sent forth his Son made of a Woman, made under the Law; to redeem them that were under the Law, that we might receive the Adoption of Sons.

The Design of St. Paul in this Epistle is to confute those false Teachers, who had perverted the Galatians from the Simplicity of the Gospel, by maintaining that Christians were still obliged to the Observation of the Law of Moses; whereas the Law was to be our School-Master till Christ; and was then to be abolished. This he illustrates by the Similitude of an Heir, who is under Tutors and Governors 'till he comes of Age: even so we [Jews] when we were Children, or before the Christian Dispensation, (says the Apostle) were in Bondage under the Elements of this World, being obliged to the Observance of numerous and burdensome Rites and Ceremonies: But when the Fulness of Time was come, God sent forth his Son made of a Woman, made under the Law, to redeem them that were under the Law; that
First, The Character of the Person spoken of; the Son of God.

Secondly, His Mission, or sending into this World.

Thirdly, The Manner of his Appearance; He was made of a Woman, and made under the Law.

Fourthly, The Time of his Incarnation; and,

Fifthly, The principal End and Design of it, which was to redeem them that were under the Law, that we might receive the Adoption of Sons.

First, We are to consider the Character of the Person spoken of; the Son of God. A Name given our Blessed Saviour at his Conception, Incarnation, Baptism, Transfiguration, and other Times. When God the Father brought his first-begotten Son into the World, he said; let all the Angels of God worship him; when he was coming out of the Water, after he had been baptized by John, the Heavens open'd, and lo a Voice from Heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son. Again, when he was transfigur'd, a bright Cloud overshadow'd him, and a Voice out of the Cloud proclaim'd, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. There are various Senfes, in which Persons are called the Sons of God in Scripture; all Mankind are his Sons by Creation; and they who believe and obey the Gospel are his Sons by Adoption: but when this Title is given to our Saviour, it is in a higher and more exalted Sense, and usually with some particular Mark of high Distinction; as, his own Son, his dear Son, his Beloved, his first-begotten, his only-begotten Son; to teach us that he is more intimately related to
to the Father than any Creatures whatsoever, as will appear from the following Considerations.

1. Christ is called the Son of God by virtue of his miraculous Conception, for he had no real Father on Earth, being born of a Virgin, by the immediate Power and Influence of God himself. Luke i. 35. The Angel said unto Mary [the Mother of Jesus] the Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the Power of the Highest shall over-shadow thee; therefore that Holy Thing, that shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God.

2. He is so called by virtue of his Office, or Mission into the World; Moses was faithful in God's House, as a Servant; but Christ, as a Son, over his own House. Heb. iii. 5, 6. When the Jews called him a Blasphemer for assuming this Title, he appeals to his Mission, Say ye of him, whom the Father has sanctified, and sent into the World, Thou blasphemest, because I said I am the Son of God? In this Sense our Blessed Saviour was obedient to his Father, in all things, not doing his own, but his Will who sent him.

3. Christ was declared to be the Son of God, by his Resurrection from the Dead; which was a kind of new Creation. As God gave him animal Life at first; so he restored that Life again, and declared him to be his Son with Power according to the Spirit of Holiness: Rom. i 4. This was a convincing Proof to his Disciples, that the Character he assum'd in the time of his Ministry on Earth was really his Right; for had he been an Impostor, the Father would not have appeared on his side, by loosing the Bands of Death, and delivering him from the Prison of the Grave.

4. Christ is the Son of God, as he is his Heir; in allusion to the Practice of great and rich Families,
where the eldest Son is appointed Heir. Thus God the Father having constituted Jesus our Saviour, Heir of all Things, has thereby declared him his Son. Heb. i. 1, 2. God who in sundry times and in divers manners spake to our Fathers by the Prophets, hath in these last Days spoken to us by his Son, whom he has appointed Heir of all things.

5. There is yet a higher Sense, in which Christ is called the Son of God, and that is by virtue of his being the Brightness of the Father's Glory, and the express Image of his Person. When our Saviour called himself the Son of God, the Evangilist John says in one place, that the Jews would have stoned him, because he made himself equal with God; and in another, because being a Man he made himself God; which shews they apprehended the Son to be of the same Nature with the Father. The Names, the Titles, the incommunicable Perfections of Godhead are ascrib'd to him: as Omniscience, Omnipresence, Almighty Power, Immutability, &c. In a word, he and the Father are said to be one, that is, to have Communion in one and the same Divine Nature. In all these high and exalted Senses is Christ the only begotten Son of God. I proceed,

Secondly, To consider our Saviour's Mission; In the Fulness of Time, God sent forth his Son. Tho' this Expression, when applied to God's sending his Prophets, and to our Saviour's authorizing his Apostles to preach the Gospel to the World, signifies no more than the appointing a Person to a particular Office; yet when it is applied to our Blessed Saviour, it must imply his Existence with the Father, before he was sent forth into the World. This the Socinians deny, and yet there is no point of Doctrine more clearly reveal'd
veal'd in the New Testament. *Jesus* said to his Countrymen the Jews, before Abraham was, I am. John viii. 58. Nay, he tells his Disciples, that he was with his Father before the Foundation of the World. John xvii. 5. And now, O Father, glorify me with thine own self, with the Glory that I had with thee before the World was. He was then enriched with all the Perfections of Godhead, and was Partner with his Father, in all his Counsels, concerning the Creation and Redemption of Mankind; he sat with him upon his Throne, and from thence came down into this lower World, to transact the great Concerns of our Salvation; and when he had finish'd his Work, he return'd, and took possession of his original Glory, with all the Advantages of Mediatorial Honours. I came forth from the Father, (says he) and am come into the World; again I leave the World, and go to the Father. John xvi. 28.

To help our Conceptions of this Mystery, some Divines * have thought that the glorious Spirit or Soul which animated the Body of our Saviour upon Earth, and ascended up with it into Glory after his Resurrection, was formed and created before all Worlds, and was united to the Deity before any other Creatures had a Being. That this was the Shechinah or Glory wherein the Son of God appear'd to the Patriarchs, as the Angel of the Covenant; and which at length animated that Body, the Father had prepared for him of the Virgin. Thus (say they) it is easy to conceive, how Christ was the first-born of every Creature, and the beginning of the Creation of God; how he that descended is the same also that ascended; which cannot be interpreted of his Godhead, because that fills Heaven and Earth at the same time,

* Dr. More, Bp. Fowler, Mr. Fleming, &c.
is equally present in both Worlds; but is natural and easy from the Supposition of the Soul of Christ existing in Glory with the Father before the Foundation of the World. Again, thus it appears how he emptied himself at his Incarnation, as the Greek Word [ἐκατέρτωμα] signifies, Philip ii. 7, 8. which cannot be understood of his Godhead, because that can neither be emptied nor filled, humbled nor exalted; but may easily be conceived of his præexistent Soul, which from a State of high Exaltation and Glory in Godhead, humbled itself by the Appointment of the Father, and was inclosed in Flesh; here it was emptied of its original Perfections, and as the Body of Christ grew in Stature, so did his Soul in Wisdom and in Favour with God and Man. Luke ii. 40, 52. Besides, when the Scripture speaks of our Saviour's taking our Nature, 'tis remarkable that it only speaks of his being made Flesh, and of his taking a Body, but makes no mention of the Formation of his Soul; this therefore might descend with its united Godhead from the World of Spirits, and be humbled, and abased, and exceeding sorrowful even unto Death; and after being made an Offering for Sin might ascend again, and repose its primitive Glory, at the right Hand of the Throne of God, with the addition of all its Mediatorial Honours. But whether this be so or not, 'tis most certain that the great and glorious Son of God, who was sent forth into the World, in the Fulness of Time, existed in an ineffable manner with the Father before the Foundation of the World.

Thirdly, We are now to enquire into the Manner of our Saviour's Appearance in Flesh; he was made of a Woman, and made under the Law. 

1. He was made of a Woman, that is, of a Virgin,
gin, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Prophet, saying, behold a Virgin shall be with Child, and shall bring forth a Son, and they shall call his Name Immanuel, which is being interpreted God with us. Matt. i. 23. It was fit that so extraordinary a Person should come into the World, in an extraordinary way; and indeed in some degree necessary, not only to avoid the Corruption of our fallen Nature, but that he might be capable of offering himself a Sacrifice to God, without Spot, and be distinguished from the rest of Mankind: Accordingly his Birth was proclaimed by a Multitude of Angels, by the Appearance of a Star in the East, and by the early Homage and Offerings of the Wise-men. It was infinite Condescension in the Son of God, to take a Body from a Woman; but the Wonder is yet greater, that he should take it of one that was espoused to a poor Carpenter. The Jews were deceived in their Expectations, when they looked for the Messiah, in the Character and Glory of an earthly Monarch, not considering that his Kingdom was not of this World, and that it had been foretold by their own Prophets, that he was to be despised and rejected of Men. Agreeably to these Predictions he appeared in very mean and necessitous Circumstances, being born in an Inn, and laid in a Manger: In his younger Years, he is supposed to work at his Father's Trade, and to have had no considerable Reputation. The Body he inhabited was subject to Hunger and Thirst, to Sickness and Pain, to Weariness and Want, and to all our natural and sinless Infirmities. After he assumed his Ministerial Character, he was destitute of the Conveniences of Life; the Foxes had Holes, and the Birds of the Air had Nests; but the Son of Man
Man had not where to lay his Head. He was tempted by Satan; persecuted by the World; blasphemously vilified by his own Countrymen; and at last, betrayed in the House of his Friends. Thus was the Son of God made of a Woman, and under these amazing Circumstances of Humiliation did he pass through the World. It follows;

2. That he was made under the Law, being circumcised according to the Commandment of Moses, and submitting to all the other Rites of that Dispensation: He was also subject to the moral Law, both as a Rule of Duty, and as a Covenant of Life. Under the former Character, he paid a just Regard to all its Precepts, being holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from Sinners: he knew no Sin, neither was there the least Guile found in his Mouth. His Life was a most perfect and lively Representation of the heavenly Graces of Love, Peace, Long-suffering, Meekness, Charity, and Faith; in all which, he has set us an Example. He obeyed the Law also, as a Covenant of Life, that as by the Disobedience of one Man many had been made Sinners, so by the Obedience of one Man many might be made Righteous. And after a Life of perfect Innocence and Obedience, he redeemed us from the Curse of the Law, by his voluntary Submission to the Death of the Cross; for though he knew no Sin, yet he was made a Sacrifice for Sin, in order to atone the Justice of God for the Offences of Mankind; and having thus magnified the Law, and made it honourable, by obeying and suffering the Requirements of it, he became the End of the Law, as a Covenant to every one that believes.

Fourthly, We are to consider the Time of our Saviour's appearing in Flesh, which was in the exact Period
period foretold by the Prophets of the Jewish Church; but why this particular Time was appointed rather than another, is not for us to determine; 'tis better to resolve it into the Wisdom of God, than to offer our uncertain Conjectures. The Incarnation of the Messiah was foretold in the several Ages of the ancient Church; God was pleased to declare to our first Parents after their Fall, that the Seed of the Woman should break the Serpent's head: to Abraham, that in his Seed all the Nations of the Earth should be blessed: to Moses, that the Lord his God should raise up to that People a Prophet from the midst of them, of their Brethren, like unto him. David and the Prophets have given us clearer Predictions of the promised Messiah: some of them acquaint us with the Dignity of his Person, representing him as the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, and the Prince of Peace; others foretell his Family and Parentage, the very Place of his Nativity, and the humbling Circumstances that should attend it. As to his Education, they declare that he should grow up as a Root out of dry Ground; that he should have no Form nor Comeliness in the Eyes of the World; and tho' he should do such mighty Works, as no Man ever did before nor shall do after, yet that he should meet with the most unkind and ungrateful Usage. They acquaint us further with his several Offices of a Prophet, Priest, and King; that he should preach good Tidings to the Meek, and bind up the Broken-hearted; that he should open the Eyes of the Blind, and unstop the Ears of the Deaf; that he should cause the Lame to walk, and the Dumb to sing; that he should erect a Kingdom in this World, and after a Life of great usefulness, should be betray'd by one of his own Household, and cut off for the Sins of the People; that
The Incarnation of Christ,

that they should cast Lots for his Garments, and that he should rise again from the Dead the third Day. These and many other particular Circumstances foretold by Prophets of different and distant Ages, all concurring in one Person, amount to a Demonstration that Jesus is the true Messiah.

But our Text leads us to consider those Predictions which relate to the time of our Saviour's Incarnation; some of which are more general, and others more express and determinate. It was prophesied in general, that the Sceptre should not depart from Judah, nor a Lawgiver from between his feet; that is, the Jewish Government and Commonwealth should not be dissolved before Shiloh came, Gen. xlix. 10. And that it should be while the second Temple was standing: I will shake all Nations, and the Desire of all Nations shall come, and I will fill this House with Glory, faith the Lord of Hosts, the Glory of this latter House shall be greater than that of the former. Haggai ii. 7, 8, 9. Now the second Temple was far from equaling the first, for it wanted five things which were the Glory of the former; namely, the Urim and Thummim; the Ark of the Covenant; the Fire from Heaven, which burnt continually upon the Altar; the Shechinah, or visible Appearance of the Glory of God; and the Spirit of Prophecy: and yet the Glory of the second Temple was greater than the first, because it was honoured with the presence of the King of Glory, the promised Messiah.

But the most express and determinate Prophecy is that of the Prophet Daniel, chap. ix. 24, &c. Seventy Weeks are determined upon thy People and upon thy holy City, to finish the Transgression, and to make an end of Sin, and to make Reconciliation for Iniquity; and to bring in everlasting Righteousness,
Ser. XIV. *as the promised Messiah.* 271

and to anoint the most Holy: Know therefore that from the going forth of the Commandment to restore and build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince, shall be seven Weeks and threescore and two Weeks; and after threescore and two Weeks shall Messiah be cut off: that is, after seventy Weeks, or 490 Years from the rebuilding of Jerusalem after the Babylonish Captivity, shall the Messiah be made a Sacrifice; at which very time this Prophecy was literally fulfilled, according to the exactest Calculation of Chronologers. These Predictions were so plain, and so well understood, that several of the Wise Men of that Nation expected the Messiah about this time: some, with good old Simeon, were waiting for the Consolation of Israel; and others said, Lo! here is Christ, and Lo! there is Christ! apprehending the Expiration of the Prophecies concerning him was at hand.

Fifthly, Let us now enquire into the Design of God's sending his Son into the World, which was to redeem them that were under the Law, that we might receive the Adoption of Sons.

1. God sent his Son to redeem them that were under the Law, that is, to deliver them from the burdensome Rites of the ceremonial Law, and to introduce a more spiritual and rational Worship; that both Gentiles and Jews might be incorporated into one Family, and become the Sons of God, upon the foot of a better Covenant than that of Mount Sinai. This seems to be the direct Meaning of the Apostle in my Text; but it will appear from other Passages of Scripture, that something further must be intended.

(1.) That he was sent to deliver us from the Curse of the Law of Works, for of this the Apostle speaks, Gal. iii. 10, 11, 12, 13. *As many as are under the Law*
The Incarnation of Christ,

Law are under the Curse, for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the Book of the Law to do them. But that no Man is justified by the Law in the sight of God is evident, for the just shall live by Faith; and the Law is not of Faith, but the Man that doeth them shall live in them. And then it follows, Christ has redeemed us from the Curse of the Law, being made a Curse for us, that the Blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles thro' Jesus Christ. By the Curse of the Law we are here to understand the Sentence it pronounced against those who did not comply with the Requirements of it, which Christ having now performed, is become the Surety of a better Covenant established on surer and better Promises: We are now justified by Faith without the Deeds of the Law, our good Works are no longer the Condition, but the Obedience and Sufferings of Christ are the Purchase of our Salvation, by virtue whereof, All that believe are justified from all things, from which they could not be justified by the Law of Moses. Acts xiii. 39.

Again, (2.) our Blessed Lord was sent into the World to deliver us from the Wrath to come, as the Apostle expresseth it, 1 Thess. i. 10. to wait for his Son from Heaven, even Jesus that delivered us from the Wrath to come. God is pleased to exercise his Patience towards wicked Men in this Life, and to endure them with much long-suffering; but there is a Time at hand, when Wrath will come upon them to the uttermost; when the Kings of the Earth and the Great Men, and the Mighty and Noble, as well as every Bondman and Freeman shall call to the Rocks and Mountains to fall upon them, and hide them from the Face of him that sits upon the Throne, and from the Wrath of the Lamb. This is the Consequence of
of the Curse of the Law, and this is that Wine which shall be poured out without Mixture into the Cup of God's Indignation against reprobate Sinners; the very Dregs of which being given them to drink, shall torment them, as with Fire and Brimstone in the presence of the Holy Angels and of the Lamb. And as the most bitter Ingredient of all it is added, that the Smoak of their Torment shall ascend up for ever and ever, and they shall have no Rest day nor night. Rev. xiv. 10, 11. This is that State of everlasting Misery, which Christ came into the World to deliver us from, and which was happily accomplished by his Sufferings; He was wounded for our Transgressions, and bruised for our Iniquities; the Chastisement of our Peace was upon him, and by his Stripes we are healed. He did not deliver us by setting the Sentence of the Law aside; but by suffering it in our room and stead; the Sword of Divine Justice awoke against the Man that was his Fellow, and put him to death; and by once offering up of himself, he has obtained eternal Redemption for us.

2. Another Design of the Son of God's coming into the World, was, that we might receive the Adoption of Sons, or be entitled to the Privileges of the Children of God. All the Posterity of Adam having cast off their Duty and Allegiance to their Creator, lost his Image, and were turned out of his Family; and being separated from the Divine Presence, they were cut off from all Communion, and Address to him; but the Son of God being constituted Mediator, was sent into the World to make peace by the Blood of his Cross, that they who were sometimes alienated, and Enemies in their Minds by wicked Works, might be reconciled in the Body of his Flesh thro' Death. Thus he recovered the Divine
The Incarnation of Christ,

vine Favour for fallen Man, and opened a Way for his Return to God. O happy Consequence of the Death of Christ! Behold, what manner of Love is this, that we should be called the Sons of God, who were Traitors and Rebels, and by Nature Children of Wrath! It would take up too much time to enumerate all the Blessings of this Relation. Now are we the Sons of God, but it does not yet appear what we shall be; for Eye has not seen, nor Ear heard, nor has it enter'd into the Heart of Man to conceive the Things, that God has laid up for us in the future World; in general we are assured, that if we are Children, we are Heirs, Heirs of God and joint Heirs with Christ; and that when the chief Shepherd shall appear, we shall receive a Crown of Glory that fadeth not away. I shall now conclude this Discourse with some practical Remarks. And,

First, From the Character that has been given of the Son of God, we may learn how perfectly he is qualified for the Office of a Mediator; for tho' God would not accept of thousands of Rams, or ten thousands of Rivers of Oil, he would not refuse the Offer of his own Son, when he said Lo I come to do thy Will, O God. The Honour of the Divine Government and the Demands of Justice required a more adequate Satisfaction, than any Creature could give, but not too great for an incarnate God; the Dignity of whose Person put an infinite Value upon his Sufferings. If a mighty Monarch should give his Life a Ransom for one of the meanest of his Subjects, it would be accounted a more valuable Price than the Life of a private Person; in like manner the Sufferings of the Son of God are so much more precious in the sight of his Father, as his Person is more excellent than the most exalted Creature. The Deity of
of Christ supported him under his Sufferings, and enabled him to conquer Principalities, and Powers, and nail them to his Cross; without this he could not have destroy’d him that had the Power of Death, nor have delivered them, who through Fear of Death were all their Life-time subject to Bondage; but nothing could be too hard for one that was possessed of all the Perfections of God, and was also filled with the Spirit without Measure; such was our incarnate Saviour!

John i. 14. *The Word was made Flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his Glory, the Glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of Grace and Truth.*

Secondly, Let us contemplate the Wisdom of God, in accomplishing the Redemption of Mankind, in a manner consistent with the Glory of all his Perfections. This seemed impossible to our imperfect Reason, for if God should shew Mercy to Sinners, one would think it must be to the dishonour of his Truth, by dispensing with his Law and revering the Sanction, *In the Day thou eatest, thou shalt surely die.* On the other hand, if the Sentence of the Law should take place, there could be no room for the Exercise of Mercy: But the Wisdom of God has removed this Difficulty, and by a surprizing Discovery of the Covenant of Grace opened a Way for Mercy and Truth to meet together, and Righteousness and Peace to kiss each other. This was the Mystery that was hidden from Ages and Generations, but is now made manifest for the Obedience of our Faith. *All have sinned (says the Apostle) and come short of the Glory of God, nevertheless we are justified freely by his Grace, thro’ the Redemption that is in Jesus Christ, whom God hath set forth to be a Propitiation through Faith in his Blood, to declare his Righteousness for the Remission of Sins that are past, through the Forbearance*
The Incarnation of Christ, 

ance of God; to declare, I say, his Righteousness that he might be just, and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. Rom. iii. 24, &c.

Thirdly, How safely may we rely upon such a Saviour, who being God as well as Man, must be both able and willing to save to the uttermost all that come to God by him. If there be not Salvation in any other; yet surely be must be mighty to save. If the Blood of Bulls and Goats could not take away Sin, the Blood of the Son of God must certainly do it, for the Father has given him Power over all Flesh, that he might give eternal Life, to as many as God has given him. And as Christ is an all-sufficient Saviour, he is also kind and merciful to the Souls of Men. How earnestly did he invite Sinners to receive him when he was on Earth? and how pathetically did he mourn over those that would not? Why, the same Tenders of Grace are still made in the Gospel, and proclaimed from time to time by his Ambassadors, who are commanded in Christ's Name to beseech you to accept them. His Arms are always open to returning Prodigals, and whosoever comes to him, he will in no wise cast out. Let not any trample his Blood under foot, nor distrust his Ability or Willingness to save, but cast themselves upon his Mercy by Repentance and Faith, believing that he delighteth not in the Death of a Sinner; but that if the Wicked forsake their Ways, and the Unrighteous their Thoughts, he will have Mercy upon them and abundantly pardon.

Fourthly, The Consideration of this wonderful Scheme of our Redemption, should engage us to an humble Admiration of the inconceivable Love of God the Father and his Son Jesus Christ towards fallen Men. We may justly admire the Love of the Father
Ser. XIV. as the promised Messiah. 277

ther in contriving the Recovery of those, who had so shamefully departed from him, and in accepting the Sufferings of another in their room and place; that for this purpose he should part with his beloved Son from his right hand, and send him into this World of Sin and Sorrow, upon so kind an Errand. God has hereby distinguished his Regards to Mankind beyond the fallen Angels; and amongst Men, he has condescended to give Encouragement to the most unworthy, to hope for Salvation thro' his Son; for not many wise Men after the Flesh, nor many mighty, nor many noble are called; but he accepts of the Weak and the Base, and the Despised, even of the chief of Sinners.

Let us also admire the Love of the Son of God in condescending to be made of a Woman, and made under the Law to redeem them that were under the Law. What Honours did he part with! and what Glories did he leave behind when he put a Vail over his Deity, and took upon him the Form of a Servant! He that was rich, for our sakes became poor; he that was Lord of all, became a Servant; and he that received the Homage and Worship of the upper World, submitted to the infamous Reproaches of the worst of Men. O the Breadth, and Length, and Depth, and Height of this Love of Christ, which passeth Knowledge! To assist your Meditations on this Argument, remember these two Things:

1. The Greatness of the Price he paid, for we were not redeemed with corruptible Things, such as Silver and Gold; but with the precious Blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without Spot or Blemish. Nor was it a common Death that he died, for the near Approach of it put him into an Agony, and made him
him. What Affronts and Indignities did he suffer in the High Priest’s Hall! and how awful were the Triumphs of vindictive Justice, when he hung upon the Cross, and was waiting for the Stroke of that Sword that should make his Soul an Offering for Sin! Universal Nature trembled and shook, the Rocks were rent, the Grave opened, the Vail of the Temple was torn asunder, and Darkness was over the whole Earth from the sixth Hour to the ninth; while our Blessed Saviour was wrestling with Principalities and Powers, and nailing them to his Cross: After which, this great and wonderful Person having commended his Spirit into the hands of his Father, bowed his Head, and gave up the Ghost.

2. Remember the Persons for whose Sakes the Son of God pass’d thro’ these Sufferings. It was for the Ungodly, and for Enemies; there is hardly an Instance to be found among Men of one Man’s offering to die for another, tho’ he were a Friend and a Righteous Man, scarcely for a Righteous Man will one die; but the Son of God laid down his Life for his Enemies; for his Persecutors, even for those very Persons that put him to death. How unmeasurable is this Love, and how deserving of our eternal Praisés! Worthy then is this Lamb that was slain, to receive Power, and Riches, and Wisdom, and Strength, and Honour, and Glory and Blessing; and let every Creature which is in Heaven, and on Earth, and under the Earth say with their loudest Voices, Blessing, and Honour, and Glory and Power be unto him that sits on the Throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever.

SERMON
SERMON XV.

CHRIST's Personal Ministry, Miracles, and Prophetick Office.

JOHN I. 18.

— He hath declared him.

THE Verse, of which these Words are the Close, is Part of John the Baptist's Testimony concerning our Lord Jesus Christ, and it contains three Propositions.

1. No Man hath seen God at any time. Neither Moses, the great Oracle of the Jews, and Giver of the Law, nor any other of the Prophets, hath ever seen God as he is, or seen his Counsels as they are in him, or had a perfect comprehensive Knowledge of him. But,

2. The only begotten Son is in the Bosom of the Father. He, as the eternal, only begotten Son of the Father, is, and ever was, intimately present with him; he knows him as he is, and, like a bosom Friend, is perfectly acquainted with his very Heart, and with all his inmost Thoughts and Designs: No Man knows the Son but the Father; neither knows any Man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him. Mat. xi. 27.
He hath declared him. He, as the great Prophet of the Church, has made such Discoveries of God, as never were made before, and has given us a plain and compleat Revelation of his Mind and Will in all Things necessary to Salvation. In discoursing on these Words we shall, by divine Assistance,

I. Consider Christ's own preaching, or his personal Ministry. And,

II. Take a more extensive View of his Prophetick Office. Let us,

I. Consider Christ's own preaching, or his personal Ministry whilst he was upon Earth.

And here it may be proper to go into some Thoughts about the Contents of his Ministry, the Manner of his fulfilling it, and the Credentials that attended it. We begin with,

1. The Contents of his Ministry.

The principal Subject of it was, that he, the promised Messiah, was come to set up his Kingdom in the World, and to encourage, assist and demand an Acceptance of him, and a Return to God thro' him, answerable to the Nature and Design of that Kingdom: He came preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of God; and saying, the time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand; repent ye and believe the Gospel. Mark i.14,15.

In pursuit of this Design he set himself against the human Traditions, the Hypocrisy and Superstition, the Errors and Corruptions of the Age; explained and vindicated the Moral Law; rescued it from the false Glosses of the Scribes and Pharisees; enlarged our Views of its Spirituality and Holiness; maintain'd
maintain'd its perpetual Obligation as a Rule of Righteousness; and establisht'd it as the unchangeable Law of his Kingdom. He likewise introduced the everlasting Gospel as the last Dispensation, which should set aside that of Moses, and should be preach'd by his Apostles, in all its Extent and Glory, after his Resurrection from the dead. The Spirit of the Lord, said he, is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor; he has sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach Deliverance to the Captives, and recovering of Sight to the Blind; to set at liberty them that are bruised; to preach the acceptable Year of the Lord. This Day is this Scripture fulfilled in your Ears. Luke iv, 18, 19, 21.

He declar'd God’s Nature and Perfections, Authority and Government; open'd the eternal Counsels of his Will for the Salvation of lost Sinners; display'd the Riches of his free and sovereign Grace; and proclaimed the Wonders of his Love in sending his only begotten Son into our World. He applied the antient Prophecies to himself; justified John’s Ministry concerning him; asserted his own Character, as God-man, the true Messiah and the Saviour of Men; spoke of himself as the Medium of our Access to God and of deriving Blessings from him, and as the Procurer of all for us, and Giver of all to us: He intimated the saving Design of his Incarnation, Life, Obedience, Sufferings and Death; cleared up the spiritual Nature of his Kingdom; insisted on the Necessity of Regeneration and Repentance, Faith and Holiness; shew'd the Danger of rejecting him, and assured them of Life who should come to him.

He instructed his Disciples in the great Doctrines of Mortification to this World and Heavenly-mindedness;
edness; of Self-Denial, Humility and Christian Contentment; of brotherly Love, Meekness, Patience, and forgiving Injuries; of Love to our Enemies, and of Alms-Deeds, Fasting and Prayer. He set before them the Difficulties and Dangers they must expect to be expos’d to in the World for his Name’s sake; and acquainted them with the blessed Securities and Supports, Assurances and Consolations he would give them in the way, and with the Riches of the glorious Inheritance he would receive them to at the end.

He delivered various Prophecies of things to come, as particularly concerning his own Death and Resurrection, Ascension to Heaven, Intercession, and Exaltation at the Father’s right Hand; the Effusion of his Spirit; the Publication and Success of his Gospel among the Gentiles; the Infidelity and Rejection of the Jews; the Destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans; and his coming to raise the Dead, to judge the World, and to distribute eternal Rewards and Punishments to the Righteous and Wicked at the last Day. To all this he added the Doctrine of the Sacraments, Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, as the Ordinances of his Kingdom, the Seals of God’s Covenant, and the visible Badges of Discipleship to him; and gave Commission to his Servants to administer them to their proper Subjects, and to preach the Gospel to every Creature, assuring them that he would be with them to the End of Ages. We go on to consider,

2. The Manner of Christ’s fulfilling his Ministry.

Never Man spake like this Man, the Officers themselves being Judges, who came to apprehend him; and the common People could not but observe,
serve, that he taught like one having Authority, and not as the Scribes, and could not but wonder at the gracious Words, that proceeded out of his Mouth. He spake with the Majesty and Authority of a God, introducing and enforcing his Doctrines, not like the Prophets of old, with a Thus saith the Lord, but with a Verily verily I say unto you: And yet he did not seek his own Glory, nor aim at Offentation and Applause; but behaved with all Humility, Meekness, Condescension and Self-Denial in his Ministry. He did not strive nor cry, neither did any Man hear his Voice in the Streets. Matt. xii. 19. He did not preach like one, who came to set up himself, or to vent his own Passions with Noise and Tumult; but like one, whose Kingdom came not with Observation, and consisted not in Word, but in Power. Luke xvii. 20. and 1 Cor. iv. 20. He was unwearied in his ministerial Labours, and was faithful to him who appointed him. All things, said he to his Disciples, that I have heard of my Father, i. e. that I have received in my Commission from him to be communicated, I have made known to you. John xv. 15.

Zeal for the Glory of God, Detestation of all Iniquity, and Good-will to Men, breath'd through all his holy Ministrations: With what Strength and Evidence did he support his Father's Honour, together with his own divine Character, and confute the Cavils of his Adversaries! With what undaunted Courage did he reprove the Vices and Errors of the Age, never fearing the Faces of Men! With what admirable Skill did he point, or soften his Reproofs, as the Occasions of things required! And oh! with what Compassion, Condescension and Meekness, did he mourn over his obstinate Hearers, and grieve at the
the Hardness of their Hearts! Matt. xxiii. 37. and Mark iii. 5.

How tenderly did he expostulate with Sinners of all Ranks and Degrees! how graciously did he invite and encourage the weary and heavy laden to come to him, that they might find Rest to their Souls! And with what Wisdom, Gentleness and Patience, did he bear with the Infirmities of his Disciples, till he gradually cured them! The bruised Reed he did not break, the smoaking Flax he did not quench, till he sent forth Judgment unto Victory. Matt. xii. 20. What pains did he take with them, to instruct, strengthen and comfort them; to remove their Darkness and Prejudices; to teach them, as they were able to bear; to resolve their Doubts; to silence their Fears; to heal their wounded Spirits; to arm them against Difficulties and Dangers; to encourage and assist their Faith and Hope in him; and to unite them together in Love! He gathered the Lambs with his Arms, carried them in his Bosom, and gently led those that were with young. Isa. xl. 11. And he had the Tongue of the Learned, that he might know how to speak a word in season to him that was weary. Cap.l. 4. He knew how and when to speak with Prudence and Caution, in useful Hints and due Reserves, or with open Freedom, Perspicuity and Enlargement; when to speak in Parables, and when to speak plainly, as might best answer the gracious and holy Purposes of his Ministry. He knew the inmost Thoughts and Circumstances of all his Hearers, and how to accommodate his Discourses in the best manner to their respective States and Conditions, Tempers and Designs; hence 'tis often said, that Jesus, knowing their Thoughts, and their Reasonings in their Hearts, replied to them. And he could speak to the Heart itself with such Conviction and Power,
as should bear down all Opposition, and turn the dis-
obedient to the Wisdom of the just.
* The Words he spake were Spirit and Life. John
vi. 63. He could add a quickning Vertue and com-
manding Energy to them, whenever he pleas'd; hence when he said to one and another, follow me, immediately they left all, and followed him. And
as soon as he spoke to Nathaniel, the Woman of
Samaria, and Zaccheus; the first said, Rabbi, thou
art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel.
John i. 49. The second said, Come see a Man, which told me all things that ever I did, is not this
the Christ? Chap. iv. 29. And the third made haste,
and came down from the Sycamore Tree, and receiv'd
him joyfully. Luke xix. 5, 6. Oh! whence was all
this ready Faith and Obedience, but from the divine
Power that attended his Words, who could speak not
only to the Ear, but could likewise speak to the Heart!
And with what an excellent Spirit did he finish his
Ministry, praying for his Enemies, converting a
notorious Malefactor, and commending his own Soul
into his Father's hands at Death, and blessing his
Disciples afterwards at his parting from them, and
going up to Heaven! We are next to consider,

3. The Credentials of Christ's Ministry, whereby
he was prov'd to be of a truth that Prophet, which
should come into the World.

Among these we might reckon the exact Accom-
plishment of many remarkable Types and ancient
Prophecies in him; his miraculous Birth, subsequent
to that of John the Baptist, his Forerunner; the ex-
traordinary Star, that appeared to the wise Men of
the East; the Glory of the Lord, that shone round
about the Shepherds in the Field; and the Attesta-
tion of the heavenly Host concerning him. We
might
might add, his holy, humble, upright, beneficent and self-denying Life; the visible Descent of the Holy Ghost upon him at his Baptism; and his Father's publick Testimony to him, by a Voice from Heaven, saying, 

*This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased*; Matt. iii. 16, 17. which Voice, attended with an illustrious Glory, the Emblem of the divine Presence, was afterwards repeated at his Transfiguration, with this addition, *Hear ye him.* Matt. xvii. 5.

We might likewise take notice, to this purpose, of the spiritual, heavenly and holy Nature and Design of his Doctrine and Kingdom; the divine Power that accompanied his Word to the Souls of them who believ'd, by which they had the Witness in themselves; 1 John v. 10. and its visible Effect upon their Lives, which was a Witness to others, that seeing their good Works, they might glorify their Father in Heaven. Matt. v. 16. But the Proof I am a little more particularly to insist upon, is that of Miracles, during our Lord's Personal Ministry, and at the Close of it, or soon after it. Therefore,

(1. His Ministry appeared to be divine by the Miracles he wrought, whilst he was employ'd in it.

These were innumerable, and of various kinds, and were not done in a Corner, but before all the People, Learned and Unlearned, Friends and Enemies: He changed the Nature of Water into Wine, and increas'd the Quantities of Bread and Fish, by a creating Power, and like the Sovereign Ruler of the Universe, walk'd upon the Sea, commanded the Fishes, the Winds and the Waves, and they obey'd him.

He, in a way evidently and entirely miraculous, heal'd all manner of Diseases, open'd the Eyes of the Blind,
Blind, unstopped the Ears of the Deaf, loosed the Tongues of the Dumb, cured Cripples, cast out Devils by whole Legions at once, and raised the Dead; and all this he did whenever he pleased, in an Instant, by a Fund of Power in himself, or by Virtue that went out of him, and in a sovereign independent Godlike Way and Manner, by a bare Touch, or a Word, like the absolute Lord of all. And he not only perform'd these Wonders himself, but gave Authority to his Disciples, first to the Twelve, and afterwards to the Seventy, to do the same, by his Power and in his Name. And all his miraculous Works were of a merciful and beneficent nature, except an Instance or two, which might be useful for moral Instractions of many Kinds, and particularly for impressing an awful Sense of the Sin and Danger of rejecting him. But, in the general course of his Management, he always went about doing good by the Miracles he wrought, as well as by the gracious and holy Doctrines he preached. How could he do these things at all, if God were not with him, to bear witness to him? And how could he do them with such an air of Sovereignty and Divinity, unless he were such a Teacher sent from God, as was also himself a divine Person? And

(2. This further appeared by the Miracles, that were wrought at the Close of his Ministry, or soon after it.

Surprizing Signs and Wonders were seen at his Death; all Nature seem'd to be flung into Confu-

fion, to express the greatest Abhorrence of their Wickedness who crucify'd him, and to bear witne-
s to him. Luke xxiii. 45. The Sun was darkned at Noon-day by a preternatural Eclipse for three Hours together; the Vail of the Temple was rent in twain, the
the Earth quak'd and the Rocks rent, so that the
Centurion, and they that watch'd with him, fear'd
greatly, saying, truly this was the Son of God. Matt.
xxvii. 51, 54. And he rose again from the
Dead on the third Day, according to his own
Prediction, upon which he had put the whole Cre-
dit of his Character, saying, Destroy this Temple,
and in three Days I will raise it up; speaking of
the Temple of his Body. John ii. 20, 21. This
great Event was attended with the Resurrection of
many Bodies of Saints out of their Graves, who ap-
peared to many in Jerusalem; Matt. xxvii. 52, 53.
and with the Testimony of Angels, saying, He is
not here, but is risen. Luke xxiv. 6. And when
he had shewn himself alive to his Disciples, after his
Passion, by many infallible Proofs, being seen of them
forty Days, Acts i. 3—11. he ascended up to
Heaven in their sight, and ten Days afterward shed
down his Spirit abundantly upon them, in a miracu-
lous way, according to his Promise. Acts. ii. 1—4.
By this Spirit they were enabled, in an Instant,
to speak all Languages that were necessary for the
Propagation of the Gospel in different Nations, to
communicate supernatural Gifts to others, and to
work all sorts of Miracles, in Confirmation of the
Ministry they receiv'd of the Lord Jesus. This leads
us to the next head, which is to

II. Take a more extensive View of Christ's Pro-
phetick Office.

As he had an eternal Pre-existence to his Incarna-
tion, and was set up from everlasting in the Father's
Counsels and Covenant-Transactions with him; it
might be proper, wou'd our Time allow it, to look
a little backward, as well as forward, and shew that
it was he, who made the gradual Discoveries of the Mind and Will of God to the Old-Testament Church; that it was he, who spake with an audible Voice, and appear'd in a Cloud of Glory, or in human Form under the Title of Jehovah, or of the Angel of the Lord; that he gave the Law at Mount Sinai; and that he inspired the antient Prophets, by his Spirit, for all other Communications of Light, suited to the several Dispensations, which preceded his coming in the Flesh. He, by his Spirit, went and preach'd to the Spirits in Prison, (i. e. to the Spirits that were in Prison at the time of the Apostle Peter's writing) which some time were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the Days of Noah, while the Ark was preparing. 1 Pet. iii. 19, 20. And it was the Spirit of Christ in the Prophets, that testified beforehand of the Sufferings of Christ and the Glory that should follow. Chap. i. 10, 11.

But the narrow Limits of a single Discourse permit us only to look forward a little, more particularly, to the brighter Dispensation of Light and Grace, which succeeded our Saviour's personal Ministry. And this may be consider'd with respect to the Ministry of inspired Men, to the Ministry of others, and to his internal Illuminations by means of all external Teachings.

1. Christ teaches by the Ministry of Inspired Men.

During the time of his personal Ministry, he spake the Word to his Auditors, as they were able to bear it: Mark iv. 33. And he said to his own Disciples, I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. John xvi. 12. There were many things, which depended, and would receive farther Light from, his finishing the Work of Redemption.
by his Death and Resurrection from the Dead, and which their present Weakness and Prejudices indispos'd them to receive; such as the great Doctrines of his Atonement, and of Justification alone by Faith in him; the Abolition of the ceremonial Law, and of all distinction of Privileges between the Jews and Gentiles, and the like: And therefore he promised that upon his Departure, he would send his Spirit to carry things further, than it was proper for him then so fully to reveal them. When he, the Spirit of Truth, is come, he will guide you into all Truth; he shall glorify me, for he shall receive of mine and shall shew it unto you. John xvi. 13, 14.

He, by his Spirit threw such Light into their Minds relating to the Old-Testament Types and Prophecies, that they cou'd clearly reason from thence, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead. Acts xvii. 2, 3. And by this Spirit he brought all things to their remembrance, whatsoever he himself had said to them: John xiv. 26. And as he enabled them with great exactness to recollect the things they had heard, so he reveal'd new Doctrines to them, and shew'd them things to come, which they were unacquainted with before. Hence he said to the Apostle Paul, I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a Minister and a Witness, both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in which I will appear unto thee; delivering thee from the People, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, to open their Eyes, and to turn them from Darkness to Light, and from the Power of Satan unto God, that they may receive Forgiveness of Sins, and Inheritance among them which are sanctified by Faith that is in me. Acts xxvi. 16, 17, 18.

He
He put them into Office, and directed them to the Places where they should exercise their Ministry; and he furnish'd them with all Abilities for it, and own'd them in it. He gave them the Spirit of Power, and of Love, and of a sound Mind; 2 Tim. i. 7. and he gave Testimony to the Word of his Grace, and granted Signs and Wonders to be done by their hands. Acts xiv. 3. All was under his infallible Inspiration, Conduct and Influence; and therefore, where-ever they went and preach'd the Gospel, it was called Christ's coming and preaching Peace to them, which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. Eph. ii. 17. It was likewise under his Inspiration and Influence, that they committed so much of the Gospel-Revelation to writing, as might be needful for the Use of the Church in all succeeding Ages. They therein declared the Testimony of God, in the Words which the Holy Ghost teacheth. 1 Cor. ii. 1, 13. And hence they are called the Words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Word of Christ. 1 Tim. vi. 3. and Col. iii. 6. But to proceed,

2. He teaches by the Ministry of others, who are not inspired.

As, When he ascended up on high, he gave Apostles, Prophets and Evangelists, which were extraordinary Officers, endued with miraculous Gifts and Powers for the first Plantation of the Gospel; so he gave Pastors and Teachers, to be standing Officers in the Church, under the ordinary Dispensation of the Spirit, for the perfecting of the Saints, for the Work of the Ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ, till all its Members should be gathered in, and the whole Design of his Grace should be perfected; or till we all come in the Unity of the Faith, and of the Knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect Man.
unto the Measure of the Stature of the Fulness of Christ. Eph. iv. 8, 11, 12, 13. And his Promise, to be with his Servants always, even to the End of the World, Matt. xxviii. 20. looks forward to the Ministers of the Gospel till Time shall be no more. They have their Commission from him as their great Lord and Master, and all their Instructions are contained in his Word; to this they are to confine themselves, and this they are to explain and vindicate, illustrate and improve in his Name, and by Assistances from him.

He fits them for their Work, and inclines their Hearts to it; he gives them Calls, and Opportunities to engage in it, by the Approbation, Acceptance and Encouragement of other Ministers, and of the Churches to which they minister; and he, as Head over all Things to the Church, disposes of them by his Providence in the several Places, where he has Work for them to do, and directs them, by the secret Influence of his Spirit, to such Subjects, and such ways of managing them in their Ministrations, as he designs to own and bless: And this he sometimes does in so remarkable a Manner, that their Words as exactly suit the peculiar Circumstances of their Hearers, as if they knew their very Hearts. And upon these accounts, all their teaching, according to his Word, is his teaching by them. But over and above all this,

3. He teaches by an internal Illumination, by means of all these external Teachings.

By his external Teachings, whether immediately in his own Personal Ministry, or mediately in the Ministry of others, he takes off the Veil from our Hearts, or removes their natural Depravity and Prejudices, with their numerous Indispositions
positions to discern the unveil'd Object, according to the Apostle's Distinction, 2 Cor. iii. 12, — 17. This internal Illumination teaches us to profit, and there is something efficacious and never failing in it; for every Man, who has thus heard and learn'd of the Father, comes to Christ. John vi. 45. But without this internal Work upon the Heart, all external Revelations wou'd be ineffectual, as to any saving Purposes: Hence is that pathetic Expostulation of the Prophet, Who hath believed our Report? to whom is the Arm of the Lord revealed? Isa. liii. 1. 'Tis the Spirit with the Word, that irradiates our Souls with its Glories; and true Believers receive, not the Spirit of the World, but the Spirit which is of God, that they might know the things that are freely given to them of God: But the natural Man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are Foolishness to him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. 1 Cor. ii. 12, 14.

How little Success was our blessed Lord's own excellent Ministry attended with, the Holy Ghost not being then so plentifully given, as afterwards, because Jesus was not yet glorified. John vii. 39. But upon the first remarkable Effusion of the Spirit, Light and Grace shot their Rays into the Souls of Multitudes, and three thousand were converted that very Day. The Gospel then came not in Word only, but in Power, in the Holy Ghost, and in much Assurance: 1 Thes. i. 5. It ran and was glorified, and many believ'd, according as the Hand of the Lord accompanied it, and as the Lord gave to every Man. Acts xi. 21. and 1 Cor. iii. 5. Our Lord Jesus, in the Discharge of his Prophetic Office, undertakes the Work of opening the Heart, as he did the Heart of Lydia, so that he attended to the things which were spoken of Paul. Acts
Christ's Personal Ministry,

Acts xvi. 14. He, by his Spirit, convinces the World of Sin, and of Righteousness, and of Judgment. John xvi. 8. He, by an internal Operation, opens the Eyes of the Understanding, and sets the great Things of his Law and Gospel, in a strong, clear, convincing and impressive Light before the Mind: Thus when the Commandment came to the Apostle, Sin reviv'd in the Convictions of his Conscience, and be died to his former vain Confidence; Rom. vii. 9. and God revealed his Son, not only to him, but in him: Gal. i. 16. Accordingly Christ not only expounded to his Disciples in all the Scriptures the Things that concerned himself, and shew'd them that all Things must be fulfilled, which were written in the Law of Moses, and in the Psalms concerning him; but by a Work distinct from all this, he furthermore opened their Understandings, that they might understand the Scriptures. Luke xxiv. 27, 44, 45. Hence the Apostle John speaking of all true Believers, says, The Son of God is come, and hath given us an Understanding, that we might know him that is true: 1 John v. 20. And ye have an Union from the Holy One, and know all Things, Chap. ii. 20, 27, meaning the necessary Things of the Gospel. And the Apostle Paul pray'd for the Ephesians, that God would give them the Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation in the Knowledge of Christ, the Eyes of their Understanding being enlightened, that they might know what is the hope of his Calling, and what the Riches of the Glory of his Inheritance in the Saints. Eph. i. 17, 18.

USE

1. This shews the Excellence and Necessity of Christ's Teachings.

What glorious and important Schemes of Truth and Duty hath he drawn out in the sacred Oracles!
How complete and illustrious is the Revelation he has made of them! With what Light and Authority, Condescension, Grace and Efficacy does he teach them! And how utterly insufficient were we to attain to such advantageous and exalted Knowledge without his Teachings! Had not he revealed the Mysteries of God’s eternal Counsel and Will, relating to his Glory, and our Salvation; had not he displayed his own unspeakable Riches, and shewn us the Way to Pardon and Peace, Heaven and Happiness, we could never have had any Notions of them; and were he not to enlighten our Minds in the Knowledge of these blessed Truths by his Spirit, we could never have any saving Acquaintance with them.

O how thankful should we be for this great Prophet of the Church! How should we prize and honour him, and yield ourselves up to his Instruction and Influence! How heartily should we bless God for him! And how entirely should we refer the Glory of all our Light and Guidance to him and his Spirit, and to the Father thro’ him! Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he hath visited his People, and given them the Knowledge of Salvation, thro’ his tender Mercy, whereby the Day-spring from on high hath visited us, to give Light to them that sit in Darkness, and in the Shadow of Death, and to guide our Feet in the Way of Peace. Luke i. 68, 77, 78, 79.

2. Behold the Danger of refusing to hearken to this divine Teacher.

To reject him and his Teachings by his Word, and the Ministry of it, or by his Spirit in his Dealings with the Heart, is to reject the Authority, Light and Grace of God himself to our own confusion. For him, says God, shall ye hear in all Things, whatsoever he shall say unto you: And it shall come to pass, that
that every Soul which will not hear that Prophet, shall be destroyed from among the People. Acts iii. 22, 23. O solemn Injunction! and O dreadful Ruin to such as turn a deaf Ear to him! How shall we escape, if we neglect so great Salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by them that heard him? Heb. ii. 3.

The Time is coming, when Despisers will wonder and perish. See then that ye refuse not him that speaketh; for if they escaped not, who refused him that spoke on Earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from Heaven. Chap. xii. 25.

3. Let us be sensible of our high Obligations and Encouragements to attend to all his Teachings.

The Ministers of Christ should keep close to the Commission they have received from him; they should attend to the Voice of his Word, and to the enlightenings of his Spirit according to his Word; and should copy after him in all their holy Ministrations. And let all of us, who sit under the Gospel, receive his Word, as the only Rule of our Faith and Obedience; let us try all Doctrines and Spirits by it, and adhere to the Light and Impressions of his Spirit according to it. To the Law and to the Testimony, if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no Light in them. Isa. viii. 20.

Whatsoever Doubts or Darkness any of us may be under, with respect to religious Doctrines or Duties, or with respect to our own State and Condition before God, to whom should we look, but to this great Prophet, for all the Satisfaction we want? Let us earnestly beg Counsel of him concerning them; and improve by Faith the rich Encouragements we have to expect it from him. He is of quick understanding in the Fear of the Lord. Isa. xi. 3. And 'tis his special Office
Office to give Light to the Gentiles, to open the blind
Eyes, to bring out the Prisoners from the Prison, and
them that sit in Darkness, out of the Prison-house.
Chap. xlii. 6, 7. He has done it for Multitudes al-
ready, and God has promis'd, that under his Conduct,
he will bring the Blind by a way that they knew not,
and will lead them in Paths that they have not known,
and will make Darkness Light before them, and
crooked Things straight. ver. 16.

O let us look to him, that we may be enlightned,
that our Doubts may be resolv'd, and our thickest
Mists of Darkness may fly away, that we may know
the Path of Duty, Truth and Comfort, and that we
may live under the impresive, governing Influence of
all our Knowledge, and so with open Face, beholding
as in a Glass the Glory of the Lord, may be changed
into the same Image, from Glory to Glory, even as
by the Spirit of the Lord. 2 Cor. iii. 18.
SERMON XVI.

The Sufferings and Death of Christ, with the Chief Design of them, the Atonement for Sin, as one Part of his Priesthood.

1 Pet. III. 18.

For Christ also hath once suffered for Sins, the Just for the Unjust, that he might bring us to God.

As the Son of God came into the World, not only to be a Prophet, to reveal his Father's Will; but to sustain and execute the Office of a Priest: so he suffered, not merely to seal the Truth of his Doctrine with his Blood, but to make Atonement for Sin. This is an Article of great Importance in Christianity, therefore we find the Apostles insisting much upon it in their Writings. Peter mentions it in this Place, as an Argument to induce the Followers of Jesus Christ to bear with Patience the Persecutions to which they might be exposed, upon the Account of that Faith in him, and Subjection to him, which they professed: For Christ also hath once suffered
The Sufferings of Christ.

Suffered for Sins, &c. We may observe in these Words,

I. That the Sufferings of Christ are asserted. 
II. The meritorious Cause of them is assigned, he hath suffered for Sins.
III. A material Circumstance relating to his Sufferings is taken notice of, he hath once suffered.
IV. The opposite Characters of Christ, and of those for whom he suffered, are laid down; the just for the Unjust.
V. The great Design of his Sufferings is declared, that he might bring us unto God.

I shall consider these Heads distinctly: Then close with an Application.

I. The Sufferings of Christ are here asserted, Christ hath suffered. He was a Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with Grief. How great, how manifold were the Evils which he sustained? No Tongue can express, nor Heart conceive what he endured. Men and Devils conspired, and exerted all their Strength to distress him. This is your Hour, said our Saviour to those who came to apprehend him, and the Power of Darkness. Luke xxii. 53. He suffered in his Reputation, a very tender Part; the vilest Aspersions were cast upon him: But his Enemies were not satisfied with the Persecution of Tongues, they laid violent Hands upon him. He was put to the most painful and ignominious Death; for Crucifixion was the Punishment of the basest and worst of Malefactors; and Christ was crucified betwixt two Thieves: probably, his Enemies design'd hereby to expose him, as the chief Offender, to signify to the Spectators, that the Crimes of both his Fellow-Sufferers
The Sufferings of Christ.

The Sufferings met in him. The Scripture speaks of his Submission to the Death of the Cross, as a very remarkable Instance of his Obedience, and Humility. Phil. ii. 8. He humbled himself, and became obedient unto Death, even the Death of the Cross: Uncommon Shame attended this; therefore it is said, that he endured the Cross, despising the Shame. Heb. xii. 2. But the Insults of Men, and the Assaults of Devils, did not affect him so much as his Father's forsaking him. Matt. xxvii. 46. Jesus cried with a loud Voice, saying, My God, my God why hast thou forsaken me? It pleased the Lord to bruise him: he hath put him to grief. Isa. liii. 10. Could the View of what he was to suffer from Creatures throw him into so great an Agony, as to give him just cause to say, his Soul was exceeding sorrowful even unto Death? Matt. xxvi. 38. Could this produce Sweat like great Drops of Blood falling down to the Ground? Luke xxii. 44. Such Anguish, as was hereby expressed, may reasonably be supposed to proceed from an higher Cause than any created Power; otherwise our Lord would seem to fall short of some of his Disciples in Courage and Magnanimity under Sufferings; a shocking Supposition to every one that believes the Gospel!

Christ suffered from the immediate Hand of God; he impressed upon his Mind a Sense of his Wrath: It was this that lay so heavy upon him. The Trouble wherewith his Heart was filled was caused by the Sword of divine Vengeance, which was called upon to awake against him, and to smite him. Zech. xiii. 7. But why should God deal thus with his beloved Son? This Inquiry brings me to the

IId Thing observed in the Text, the meritorious Cause of Christ's Sufferings: He suffer'd for Sins.
Ser. XVI. and the Design of Them.

Sin alone is provoking to God; this is the only Object of his Anger. Had the Sufferings of Christ proceeded wholly from the Rage and Malice of the Jews, because he reproved their Vices, exposed their Corruptions, it might be most justly asserted, that he suffer'd for Righteousness sake; but it could not be said with any Propriety, that he suffer'd for Sins. This Expression certainly denotes Christ's bearing the Punishment, which is the Desert of Sins: Of the same Import are those Words in the 2d Chap. of this Epistle, ver. 24. Who his own self bare our Sins in his Body on the Tree.

Our Lord Jesus had indeed no Sin of his own, but he was made to be Sin for us, 2 Cor. v. 21. God imputed to him the Transgressions of his People, and dealt with him according to their Demerit. He bore our Griefs, carried our Sorrows; the Sorrows to which our Offences had rendered us obnoxious, and which we must otherwise have born: He was wounded for our Transgressions, bruised for our Iniquities: All we like Sheep have gone astray: We have turned every one to his own Way; and the Lord hath laid on him the Iniquity of us all. Isa. liii. 4, 5, 6. Thus the Spirit of Prophecy spake concerning the Sufferings of Christ; and the Language of the New Testament is conformable hereto. Rom. viii. 3. What the Law could not do, in that it was weak through the Flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful Flesh, for Sin condemned Sin in the Flesh: By the Sacrifice of his own Son for Sin, in the Likeness of sinful Flesh, God signified the utmost Abhorrence of it. Gal iv. 4, 5. God sent forth his Son, made of a Woman, made under the Law, to redeem them that were under the Law. Christ came under that Obligation, to bear the Penalty of the Law, to which the guilty Children of Men
Men were subject, because of their Breaches of it, that they might be released. It is said, Gal. iii. 13. That Christ hath redeemed us from the Curse of the Law, being made a Curse for us. The Scripture expressly speaks of his Soul being made an Offering for Sin. Isa. liii. 10. The Guilt of the Offenders was transferred to the Sin-Offerings, which the Law prescribed: This was plainly signified by the Ceremony that was enjoin'd, of laying their Hands upon the Beasts, which were to be sacrificed. So Christ was once offered to bear the Sins of many. Heb. ix. 28.

Sin is highly dishonourable to God; it is a gross Affront upon his righteous and wise Government; he is hereby reproached: And when our Saviour stood in the Place of Sinners, underwent the Punishment, that was due to their Transgressions, he thus spoke unto God; the Reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me. Rom. xv. 3. Inasmuch as he condescended to be numbered with the Transgressors, to bear the Sins of many. Isa. liii. 12. God delivered him up to Justice, which did not spare him; he suffered what their Provocations deserved.

III. A material Circumstance relating to the Sufferings of Christ, taken notice of by our Apostle, is now to be considered; Christ hath once suffered. This demands our Observation, being of great Importance; for Christ's suffering but once for Sins, proves the all-sufficient, and perpetual Efficacy of his Sacrifice to take away Sin. We find the Author of the Epistle to the Hebrews laying great Stress upon this, and making much use of it. He argues the Weakness, and Insufficiency of the Levitical Sacrifices, from their frequent Repetition. Chap. x. ver. 1, 2, 3. The Law having a Shadow of good Things to come, can never
never with those Sacrifices, which they offered Year by Year continually, make the Comers thereunto perfect: for then would they not have ceased to be offered, because that the Worshippers once purged, should have no more Conscience of Sins? But in those Sacrifices there is a Remembrance again made of Sins every Year. On the other hand, the Apostle evinces the perfect Virtue of the Sacrifice of Christ to expiate our Guilt, to cancel our Obligations to Punishment, by the Consideration of its being but once offered, Heb. x. 12, 13, 14. We are sanctified through the Offering of the Body of Christ once for all, who after he had offered one Sacrifice for Sins for ever, sat down on the Right Hand of God; from henceforth expelling till his Enemies be made his Footstool: for by one Offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.

Here we should make a Pause, to admire the Excellencies of our great Redeemer. How glorious, how worthy a Person must Jesus be! Who by one Offering could make a compleat Atonement for innumerable Offences, that were very provoking to God; the least of which could not be expiated by all the most costly Sacrifices of the Law, though repeated never so often. Can we entertain too high and honourable Thoughts of him, whose Blood, though but once shed, was effectual, to obtain eternal Redemption for us?

IV. The opposite Characters of Christ, and of those for whom he suffered, come next under Consideration; the Just for the Unjust.

The Character of the Just is given in this Place unto Christ, to guard against a Mistake, which might be occasioned by his being said to suffer for Sins: lest any should imagine, that he suffered for Sins committed by himself, he is stiled the Just. This Title most
most undoubtedly belongs to Christ: As he is God, he is infinitely righteous; and as he is Man, he was perfectly free from all Desilement. The Word was made Flesh, not in the common Way, wherein the rest of Mankind are made Partakers of it, that his human Nature might not be tainted with that Impurity, which they derive from their polluted Head. Luke i. 35. In the Days of his Flesh here on Earth, he fulfilled all Righteousness, did always the Things which pleased God. The Chapter preceding this, whereof my Text is a Part, tells us, that he did no Sin, neither was Guile found in his Mouth. ver. 22. And indeed this was necessary, to render his Sufferings for our Sins meritorious of their Pardon. The Apostle plainly intimates, that if Christ had Sins of his own, which requir'd an Offering to be made for them, as the High-Priests under the Law had, his Sacrifice would have been as ineffectual to take away Sin, as their Offerings were. Heb. vii. 25, 26, 27. Such an High-Priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from Sinners; who needed not daily, as those High-Priests, to offer up Sacrifice, first for their own Sins, and then for the People's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself; for the Law maketh Men High-Priests, which have Infirmities; but the Word of the Oath, which was since the Law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore.

Let us now turn our Eyes to those, for whom Christ suffered. The Reverie of that Character, which is his due, belongs to them: they are the Unjust. All the Children of Adam, while they dwell here on Earth, may apply this Character to themselves: There is none righteous, no not one: Rom. iii. 10. All the World is become guilty before God. ver. 19. By the Disobedience
Disobedience of our common Head and Parent, we were all made Sinners. Rom. v. 19. There appears to be nothing singular in David's Case, which should occasion his laying, Behold, I was shapen in Iniquity, and in Sin did my Mother conceive me: Psal. li. 5. And that corrupt Principle, with which we were born, has produc'd Fruits of Unrighteousness in great abundance. There is not a just Man upon Earth, that doth good, and sinneth not: Eccl. vii. 20. Nay, the Sins of all of us are more than we can number; who can understand his Errors? How unjust has our Carriage been towards God! We have not only witheld from him, that Affection and Obedience, to which he had the strongest Claim; but acted contrary to him. How often have we impoy'd those Members and Powers which he has given us, to his dishonour? We have been so far from continuing in all Things, written in the Book of his Law to do them; that in many things, we have all offended. How truly then, may we be stiled the Unjust? for such Christ suffered; whereby we are not meerly to understand, that he suffered for their Good, but in their stead: To this Sense, his being said, to suffer for Sins, does evidently determine the Words; as thus connected, they can have no other Meaning but this, that Christ stood in the room of the Unjust, and suffer'd the Punishment which their Sins deserv'd.

But some will be ready to ask, where is the Righteousness or the Equity of the Just's suffering for the Sins of the Unjust? To this I answer,

1. That no Injustice was done to Christ, when he suffered for the Sins of the Unjust, because he freely consented to bear their Iniquities. Lo, I come, said he, to do thy Will (O God:) Heb. x. 7. It appears from ver. 10. that the Offering of his Body, was that
Instance of Obedience to the Will of God, which Christ undertook with so much Readiness to perform. As Christ himself was the Sacrifice that was made for Sin; so he was the Priest by whom it was offered. We read, that through the eternal Spirit, he offered himself without Spot unto God. Heb. ix. 14. He declar’d, that he gave his Life a Ransom for many, that he laid it down of himself: Seeing Jesus Christ was so willing to suffer for the Unjust, there was no Wrong done him, when he suffered for their Sins, tho’ he himself was perfectly just.

2. Surely, the great Sovereign of the Universe, might substitute a just Surety, with his own Consent, in the Place of the Unjust, and accept of his Sufferings for their Sins, without any Detriment to the Honour of his Law and Government. Inasmuch, as he, who suffered for the Sins of the Unjust, is God’s own and only begotten Son, the Dignity of his Person gave an infinite Merit to his Sufferings; the divine Law and Justice were hereby much more honour’d and magnify’d, than they would have been, by the everlasting Punishment of the Sinners themselves. In Christ Jesus, Mercy and Truth, Righteousness and Peace meet together, and kifs each other.

V. The Account that is here given of the Design of Christ’s Sufferings deserves our careful Attention: He suffered for Sins, the Just for the Unjust, that he might bring us to God.

The Ends of Christ’s Sufferings are various.

1. He suffered, that he might set us an Example of Patience and Resignation to the divine Will, under the Troubles and Difficulties of this Life. Forasmuch then, faith the Apostle in ver. 1. of the follow-
ing Chapter, as Christ hath suffered for us in the Flesh, arm your selves likewise with the same Mind.

2. Christ suffered, to teach us Self-Denial and Mortification. The Apostle Paul informs us, that the Crucifixion of Christ, had this Effect upon him. Gal. vi. 14. God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom, or whereby the World is crucified unto me, and I unto the World.

3. Christ suffered, that he might exercise tender Compassion towards us, under our Trials and Sorrows. Heb. ii. 17. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his Brethren, that he might be a merciful High-Priest.——But the great End of his Suffering for Sins, the Just for the Unjust, was to bring us unto God. This plainly supposes that our Sins had alienated us from God; had made a Separation betwixt him and us: Now, Christ suffered for our Sins, that we might be brought back to God, in all those Respects, wherein we had departed from him: As particularly,

1. That we might be brought into a State of Peace with God. We had by our Disobedience highly offended our Creator, and most rightful Governor: Our Violations of his holy Law were dishonourable to his Name; and it was very fit, that his righteous Government, upon which we had cast Contempt, should be vindicated. This was undertaken and accomplished by our Lord Jesus Christ: He restored that, which he took not away. Psal. lxix. 4. By what he suffered in our stead, a full Satisfaction was given to the Law and Justice of God; whose Righteousness is said to be hereby declared. Rom. iii. 25, 26. God did set forth Christ Jesus to be a Propitiation through Faith in his Blood, to declare his Righteous-
The Sufferings of Christ, 

nec for the Remission of Sins;—that he might be just, and a Justifier of him, who believeth in Jesus.

Under the Law, almost all things were purged with Blood; and without shedding of Blood there is no Remission. Heb. ix. 22. The Levitical Priests made Atonement for the Transgressions of the People, by the Sacrifices which they offered for them: This was Typical of the Expiation, which our great High-Priest has effected by the Sacrifice of himself; hereby the Wrath of God was appeased, and guilty Creatures reconciled to him. So that all true Christians may boldly say, who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died: seeing he has made Peace by the Blood of his Cross, whereon he did bear their Sins, they are brought nigh unto God by him. Eph. ii. 13, 14. But now in Christ Jesus, ye who sometimes were far off, are made nigh by the Blood of Christ; for he is our Peace.

2. Christ suffered for Sins, the Just for the Unjust, that he might bring them to God by Conversion. The Scripture represents Sin, as a Departure from God: when we became Sinners, we forsook him; we withdrew our Affections and Allegiance from him. It is a Part of the Character, which is given all Mankind, that they are gone out of the way. Rom. iii. 12. They have wander’d from the Path of God, and they are led captive by their Lusts; till divine Grace releases them from their Power, and reduces them to the right Way.

Repentance, which is our Return to God, is his Gift. Sin has so perverted all our Faculties, that the Power of God is requisite to turn us unto him, and to make us his willing People. When our Lord afferts the Necessity of a great Change to be wrought in us, he ascribes this to the Spirit. John iii. 5. Veri-
ly, verily I say unto thee, except a Man be born of Water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God. Now, the Spirit is too valuable a Blessing to be dispensed to rebellious Creatures, but upon the score of a Satisfaction made for their Offences. It is owing to Christ's redeeming us from the Curse of the Law, by being made a Curse for us, that we receive this Blessing. Gal. iii. 13, 14. By giving his Life a Ransom for us, he has purchased the Spirit, by whom we are freed from the Dominion of our Sins, therefore are we said to be redeemed from our vain Conversation by his precious Blood. 1 Pet. i. 18, 19. The Grace which enables us to turn unto God, and to walk with him, he communicates to us, as he is the God of Peace. 1 Thes. v. 23. The very God of Peace sanctify you wholly. That Prayer of the Apostle for the Hebrews, is more particular, and full to our purpose. Now the God of Peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the Sheep, through the Blood of the everlasting Covenant, make you perfect in every good Work, to do his Will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, thro' Jesus Christ.

3. Christ suffered for Sins, the Just for the Unjust, that we might have a Freedom of Access unto God, in the Duties of his Worship.

The Children of Israel, when they contracted legal Uncleanness, were not admitted into the Sanctuary, where God dwelt in a special manner, where he was solemnly worshipped, till they were purified by the Blood of those Sacrifices, which the Law appointed the Priests to offer for them. This Appointment presaged that Liberty to draw nigh to the infinitely holy God, which is procured for us, who are continually defiling our selves with Sin, by that
The Sufferings of Christ,

one Offering which Jesus, our High Priest, hath made of himself for us. If the Blood of Bulls, and of Goats, and the Ashes of an Heifer sprinkling the unclean, faith the Apostle, Heb. ix. 13, 14. sanctifieth to the purifying of the Flesh: How much more shall the Blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot unto God, purge your Consciences from dead Works, to serve the living God? How unfit are such polluted Creatures, as we are, to appear before a Being of spotless Purity! But the Blood of Jesus cleanseth from all Sin; therefore Christians are said to have Boldness to enter into the Holiest, that is, into the Presence of God, by the Blood of Jesus. Heb. x. 19. What sinful Imperfections, and Weaknesses cleave to us in our Approaches to the divine Majesty, who cannot look upon Evil! But we have an High-Priest over the House of God, who hath consecrated for us a new and living Way, through the Vail, that is to say, his Flesh; and can therefore introduce us into his Presence with Acceptance: Eph. iii. 12. In him we have Boldness and Access with Confidence, by the Faith of him.

4. Christ suffered for Sins, the Just for the Unjust, that he might bring us into the glorious Presence of God in Heaven. Herein lies the Consummation of our Happiness: It is in order to prepare us for this Felicity, that we are brought unto God by Conversion in this Life; and that we have a Liberty of Access unto him in the Duties of his Worship. But how unworthy are we, who have prefer'd Vanities to the great God, to dwell for ever with him in the World above, where he is enjoy'd by his Creatures in a manner far transcending our present Apprehensions! Would it not have been a Disparagement to the righteous Constitution of the Governor of the World,
World, which we had violated, to admit us to such an honourable and blessed State, without expressing his Abhorrence of our Trespasses? This was abundantly done by Christ’s suffering for Sin; therefore, it is said, that it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many Sons unto Glory, to make the Captain of their Salvation perfect through Sufferings. Heb. ii. 10.

Heaven is filed the purchased Possession: Eph. i. 14. Christ hath made a Purchase of this for us, with the inestimable Price of his Blood: He died for us, that we should live together with him in Heaven, where there is Fulness of Joy, and Pleasures for evermore. 1 Thes. v. 10. The Children of God long for a nearer Approach unto him, than they are capable of in this present State; this they obtain through the Sufferings of Christ: He gave himself for his Church, that he might present it to himself a glorious Church. Eph. v. 25, 27. or as it is express’d Jude 24. that he might present it faultless before the Presence of his Glory with exceeding Joy.

Let us now apply these things to our selves.

1. Our Hearts should be greatly affected with the Representation which has been made unto us of the Love of Christ. How amazing was his Grace in suffering for the Unjust, who deserv’d to be punished with everlasting Destruction! He commended his Love towards us, in that he died for us, while we were yet Sinners. How grievous were his Sufferings, inasmuch as he suffered for Sins, the Demerit of which must be exceeding great, seeing they are contrary, and dishonourable to the infinitely holy and glorious God! What a vast Load did Christ sustain, when the Iniquities of all his People were laid upon him! How
The Sufferings of Christ, did he, who was the Just, abase himself in vouchsafing to stand in the place of the Unjust, and in submitting to be treated as a Criminal! How should the kind Intention he had herein engage our Hearts unto him! He suffered for Sins, the Just for the Unjust, that he might bring us unto God; whose Favour is better than Life, who is an all-sufficient Good; without whom, we must be miserable, and whose Enjoyment will render us inconceivably happy. How great then are our Obligations unto Jesus! Should not his Love constrain us to love him, and live unto him? Shall we think any thing too much to do, or suffer for him, who endured the heaviest Sufferings for us, unworthy vile Creatures, that we might be rescued from the most intolerable Misery, and be made Partakers of the greatest Glory and Blessedness?

2. How should we hate and abominate Sin! Was this the Occasion of so much Sorrow to our dear Redeemer; and shall we indulge our selves in it? Does it not become us to be deeply abased? Should not our Souls be filled with Grief, because we have done those things, for which he has suffered? Is there so much Evil in our Sins, that the Sufferings of so glorious and excellent a Person, as Christ is, were requisite to expiate their Guilt? What then can be more reasonable than our Abhorrence of all Iniquity, and Departure from it? Does it not behove us to abstain from all Appearance of so great an Evil; and to prefer the greatest Sufferings to the least Sin?

3. Let us draw nigh to God. Did it cost our Lord Jesus Christ so much, to procure this Privilege for us, a Liberty of Access to God, and shall we live in the Neglect of it? Would not this be the vilest Ingratitude, as well as the greatest Folly? They that are far from God shall perish: It is good for us to draw nigh to
Ser. XVI. and the Design of Them. 313

to him. Let us then make frequent Approaches to him. 

Heb. x. 19, 22. Having, therefore Brethren, 

Boldness to enter into the Holiest, by the Blood of Jesus, 

—let us draw near.

4. All our Approaches to God should be through 

Jesus Christ. Did he suffer for Sins, the Just, for 

the Unjust, that he might bring us to God? Will it 

not then be great Presumption in us, to think of ap-

pearing before him out of Christ? He is the Way; 

no Man can come unto the Father, but by him. John 

xiv. 6. Would we be accepted of God in the Duties 

we perform? Would we have Fellowship with him 

in the Ordinances of his Worship? Would we be ad-

mitted to his glorious Presence in the upper World, 

where there is unmixed and everlasting Joy? Let us 

depend upon the Merit of Christ to procure all this 

Blessedness for us; for he is able to save them to the 

uttermost, that come unto God by him.

SERMON
SERMON XVII.
The Resurrection and Ascension of Christ.

Acts I. 2, 3.

Until the Day in which he was taken up; after that He, thro' the Holy Ghost, had given Commandments unto the Apostles whom he had chosen; to whom also he shewed himself alive after his Passion, by many infallible Proofs, being seen of them forty Days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God.

The Subject of the last Discourse was the sad Story of the Sufferings and Death of Christ, our Friend and Saviour. We have attended him in our Meditations to the Cross and to the Grave; we have seen Death and the Powers of Darkness, in all appearance, triumphing over him. Had the Gospel-History of Christ broke off here, it would have been a sad Story to us indeed; for had he perished in the Grave, all our Hopes of Salvation must have sunk and perished with him. But I am now to bring you good Tidings of great Joy, viz. that Christ is risen: That in three Days time he broke the Bands of Death asunder,
Ser. XVII. Ascension of Christ. 315

asunder, and rose again for our Justification; and that after he had stay'd some time with his Disciples here on Earth, he ascended triumphantly into Heaven.

You will observe these three remarkable Points of the History of Christ, which I am to treat of in this Discourse, all couched in the Words of my Text.

The First is concerning his Resurrection from the Dead. He shewed himself alive after his Passion.

The Second is concerning the Time of his Stay here on Earth after his Resurrection, which was forty Days; and what he did during that Time: He gave Commandments unto the Apostles whom he had chosen, shewed himself to them, and spoke to them of the Things pertaining to the Kingdom of God.

The Third is of Christ's Ascension into Heaven, at the Expiration of those forty Days; which is expressed in our Text by his being taken up.

I shall briefly go over these three Articles of the History of our blest Saviour, and endeavour to assist you in making the proper Uses of them.

First, I begin with the Resurrection of Christ from the Dead. He shewed himself alive after his Passion. In the handling of which, I shall first lay before you the Proofs of the Fact, that Jesus was alive after his Passion; or, that he rose from the Dead.

Secondly, Consider the Manner and Circumstances of his Resurrection.

I. As for the Proofs and Evidences of the Fact, that Jesus Christ our Saviour was alive after his Passion; or that he arose from the Dead: They are said in our Text to be not only many, but of infallible Certainty.
The Resurrection and Certainty. He shewed himself alive after his Passion by many infallible Proofs, such as render the matter not only exceedingly probable, but absolutely certain, beyond any reasonable Doubt and Objection. For as Christ himself had, more than once, put the Credit of his Mission from God on his Resurrection from the Dead, and as this was also the grand Evidence, that the Sacrifice which he had offered for our Sins was accepted of God; it was of the greatest Importance to our Faith in Christ, and to our comfortable Hope of Pardon and Salvation thro' him, that we should be well assured of his Resurrection. If Christ be not raised, your Faith is vain, and ye are yet in your Sins. 1 Cor. xv. 17. God did therefore, by a special Providence, so order Matters, in relation to the Resurrection of his Son our Saviour, that no matter of Fact was ever better attested, and with more infallible Proofs and Evidence than this was. That Jesus truly died is out of all question. Pilate the Roman Governour took care to be fully satisfied that he was quite dead, before he would give leave that his Body should be taken down from the Cross: Nor did the most inveterate Enemies of his Religion ever contest it. And that he really rose again from the Dead, and was alive after his Passion, was attested by sufficient credible Witnesses, even the Apostles and other Disciples of our Lord. They declared that they saw him alive again, and conversed with him several times, and on several Occasions after his Death. And there were several Circumstances which concurred to render their Testimony in this Matter unquestionably true and certain; and to furnish us with infallible Proofs of the Resurrection of Jesus our Saviour. As,
1. The Number of the Witnesses was very sufficient; and indeed abundantly more than is sufficient in any common Matter: For there were not only Two, or Three, but Scores and Hundreds of Persons, who all declared, and stood to it, that they saw Jesus alive again after his Passion. **He was seen of Cephas, then of the Twelve, after that he was seen of above five hundred Brethren at once.** 1 Cor. xv. 5, 6. And,

2. These Witnesses had all proper Advantages and Opportunity of knowing the Certainty of the Matter; for most, if not all of them, were Persons who used to attend on Christ's preaching, and were well known to have been familiarly conversant with him before his Death; who therefore must know him well: They declared that they saw him alive after his Death, several Times, and in several Places, in the Day-time, as well as in the Night; that they sometimes touched and handled his Body, and were perfectly assured that it was not a Fantom that appeared to them, but real Flesh and Bones; and that they frequently conversed with him for forty Days together. Further,

3. These Witnesses of the Resurrection of Jesus were very unwilling to be deceived. They were so far from being easy and credulous in the Matter, that they were hardly brought to believe it themselves. When the News was first brought them, that Jesus was risen, they took it for an idle Tale, and believed it not. Luke xxiv. 11. Nay, the first time they saw him alive after his Passion, **they were terrified, and affrighted, and supposed they had seen a Spirit,** ver. 37. They did not hastily credit so strange a thing, but suspended their Belief, till the over-bearing Evidence of its Reality, made it impossible for them to doubt of it any longer. They were not easy nor willing to be deceived; and indeed it was by no means for
The Resurrection and

for their Interest so to be, for their Testimony in this Matter cost them very dear. Let it be observed again,

4. That these Witnesses of the Resurrection of Jesus published it immediately, as soon as the thing was done, which was the properest time to have the Matter examined into; and when, if it had not been true, no doubt but it might easily have been disproved. This Story of the Resurrection of Christ, is not like the Popish Stories of the Miracles of their Saints, which are seldom talked or heard of till a hundred Years or more after they are said to have been wrought; but the Apostles did immediately give Testimony to the Resurrection of their Lord; and they appealed to many living Eye-Witnesses of his being alive again after he was crucified, when they preached this Doctrine to the World. So did the Apostle Paul in the Text before cited, He was seen of above five hundred Brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain unto this present. Again further,

5. The Effect which this their Testimony had both upon themselves, and upon others, is a Circumstance of considerable weight to confirm the Truth of it.

(1.) Upon themselves: They gave the best Proofs, that Men could give, that they firmly believed what they declared and testified, That Jesus was risen from the dead. For they went about, and preached it at the hazard of their Lives, and of all that was dear to them in the World. Upon this they immediately gave up those vain Hopes of worldly Greatness, which they had been full of before; and cheerfully embraced Affliction, Suffering and Death. Many of them actually sealed their Testimony with their Blood; and not one of them could be brought, by any means, to recant it. Now can it ever be supposed that Men, that
that such a Number of Men, could be so far lost to all Reason, and turn such mortal Enemies to themselves, as thus voluntarily to expose themselves to all manner of Injuries from an enraged World, and to Martyrdom and cruel Death, for the maintaining of a Doctrine which they knew to be false, or even which they did not certainly know to be true? If the Apostles and first Preachers of the Gospel had not been very sure of the Resurrection of Christ, we may be very sure they never would have stood to it, and suffered for it, and died for it as they did.

(2.) The Effects which their Testimony produced on others were also very extraordinary. For tho' these Witnesses of the Resurrection of Christ were but a parcel of poor illiterate Fishermen, Men of no Interest and Figure in the World; and the Story which they told, viz. that God had raised up Jesus from the Dead, must needs be very ungrateful to the Jews, who had, with almost one common Voice, condemned him to be crucified; and as for the Gentiles, it was not to be expected but that they would receive such an extravagant Story with sovereign Contempt and Scorn: Nay further, tho' the Doctrine which they preached, and which they grounded on the Resurrection of Jesus, was very unpopular, (for it was no fine Story to humour the Lusts of Men, but quite the contrary; it required a great deal of Mortification, and Self-denial, and promised them no temporal Happiness, but rather taught them to expect Afflictions and Crosses all along their way to some unknown Happiness, in some unseen World:) And, besides all that, wherever the Apostles went and preached they were violently opposed and persecuted; the Magistrates and Rulers everywhere did all they could to silence them, and
and quash their Evidence: Yet under all these Discouragements and Disadvantages, their Testimony was presently received by many Thousands, and nothing could possibly give a Check to it. Their Doctrine broke its way thro’ a sensual World, and all the Powers of Earth and Hell were not able to stand against it. Now to what Power can we attribute such amazing Success, but to the Almighty Power of God? What was this, but a miraculous Testimony which God gave to the Word of his Grace? I will add yet once more,

6. Even the Objections which were made to this Testimony of the Apostles, concerning the Resurrection of Christ, were such as rather serve to confirm the Truth of it. As for the Jews, who lived at the very time, and on the spot where the thing was done, no doubt but they might easily have disproved it, if it had not been true and real. But let us hear what they objected to it. They did not once pretend that Jesus was never quite dead; nor did they offer to produce his dead Body, after the Apostles had given it out that he was risen: All that they could, or did pretend, was, that his Disciples had stole him away by Night, while the Watch slept. The most senseless thing, surely, that could be said; for how could the Watch tell what was done when they were asleep? and was it likely that they should all fall asleep together; or that the Disciples should know the lucky Minute when they were all asleep? Or, supposing all this to be possible, it was still more unlikely that the Disciples of Jesus should contrive to put such a Cheat upon the World, while they would thereby put a worse Cheat upon themselves, making themselves of all Men the most miserable.
As to what the modern Deists object, and say, that the Witnesses of the Resurrection of Jesus were, probably, a parcel of enthusiastic Persons, who were imposed upon by their own distempered Fancies, as some other People have imagined that they have seen Ghosts and Apparitions when there were no such thing: Surely Enthusiasm and Fancy was never known in this World to produce any such Effect as this, on so many Persons at the same Time, and at many Times, and about a plain Matter of Fact too: Nay, and supposing it possible they should be deceived themselves, how vastly improbable is it, that they should be able to spread their Fancy, as they did, and persuade a world of Enquirers into the Belief of so strange a Fact, which they could not certainly prove?

Upon the whole then, you see it is with very good Reason, that the sacred Historian says in our Text, Christ shewed himself alive after his Passion by many infallible Proofs. Thus much for the Proof of the Fact, even the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the Dead. I proposed,

II. To consider the Manner and Circumstances of his Resurrection: as,

I. The Time of his Resurrection is particularly recorded, that it was on the Third Day from his Death. He did not rise immediately after he was buried, lest any should doubt whether he had been quite dead; but then, his Gospel could not be preached till after he was risen, and besides he loved his Disciples too well to leave them long in so sad a Suspense about him; and therefore, when he had lain in the Grave long enough to satisfy every body that his Death was no Sham, but real, he arose and made hast
hast to go and comfort his Friends who were mourning for him. The precise time of his Resurrection was the third Day from his Death. Him God raised up on the third Day, Acts x. 40. and so was Christ's own Prophecy fulfilled, that as Jonas was three Days and three Nights in the Whale's belly, so should the Son of Man be three Days and three Nights in the heart of the Earth. Matt. xii. 40. For the Jews always reckoned the beginning of the Day from the Evening before it, the Evening and the Morning were the first Day. Now our Lord was crucified and buried on Friday in the Afternoon, reckoning that Day from the Evening before, that was one Day and Night; all Saturday was a second Day and Night; all Saturday Night and part of the Lord's Day Morning made a third Day and Night: and thus was Christ literally, according to the Jewish Computation of Time, three Days and three Nights in the Heart of the Earth, or the Grave.

2. Another memorable Circumstance which the sacred History records, concerning the Resurrection of Christ, is the Ministry of Angels in the affair. The Angel of the Lord descended from Heaven, and came and rolled away the Stone from the Door of the Sepulchre, and sat upon it. Matt. xxviii. 2. Two Angels said some time in the Sepulchre, after Christ was risen, to tell the Disciples what was become of their Lord, and to shew the Place where he lay. They had always been ready to serve him, in his mean and humble State; they had attended him in his Temptation, and in his Agony; with what pleasure did they now come to grace the Solemnity of his Resurrection, and to minister to him on so joyful an Occasion? It was with pleasure they had formerly told the good News to the Shepherds, that a Saviour
Saviour was born and laid in a Manger; with what pleasure, must we suppose, they now told the good News to the Women, who came to weep at their Saviour's Grave? He is not here, He is risen.

3. It is recorded, that Christ was accompanied in his Resurrection by several of the Saints departed. The Graves were opened, and many Bodies of the Saints which slept arose, and came out of the Grave after his Resurrection, and went into the holy City, and appeared unto many. Matt. xxvii. 52, 53. Who those Saints were, and what became of them afterwards, we do not read: 'Tis enough for us to know, that they were design'd for Trophies of Christ's Victory over Death and the Grave. Hereby it was sensibly declared, that Jesus by dying had conquered Death; and hereby the Virtue of his Resurrection was intimated, to revive and quicken those that sleep in him.

Thus much for the Proofs and Circumstances of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Before I dismiss this Head, it will be proper to hint at some of the chief Uses we should make of it; as,

1.) To establish our Faith in Christ's Doctrine and Religion. Did God raise up Christ from the Dead? then it is very certain, that he came from God, and that He had taught the Mind of God in truth; for, you may remember, that He had put the Proof of his Mission on this single Point, his Resurrection from the Dead, Matt. xii. 39, 40. When certain Jews demanded a Sign of him, or some miraculous Evidence of his divine Mission and Character, He referred them to his Resurrection, which He there calls the Sign of Jonas the Prophet. Well and did this Sign come to pass, did Jesus actually rise from the Dead? that is Proof enough that He was what he professed
professed himself to be, and that his Doctrine and Religion is all true; for this was the Rule which God gave to the Jews, whereby they might know a true Prophet from a false one. Deut. xviii 21, 22. If a Prophet foretold any thing in the Name of the Lord, and the thing did not follow, nor come to pass; they might depend upon it, that He had spoken presumptuously, and that he was no Prophet of the Lord. It is supposed, on the other hand, that if it actually came to pass, they ought to receive him as a true Prophet of God. Now the thing which Jesus foretold, even his own Resurrection, did actually come to pass, and was therefore a full Confirmation of his Mission from God, and of the Truth of all that He had spoken. And further we may be very sure, that a wise and holy God would not have given so great a Testimony to a Deceiver and Impostor. Upon the Resurrection of Christ therefore you may securely rest your Faith of the whole Christian Religion: and you have this to answer to all the Cavils of Infidels, that He whom God raised from the Dead, most certainly came from God, and taught his Mind and Will in Truth. Let them if they can disprove this one single Fact, The Resurrection of Jesus; 'till they have done that, their Objections against his Doctrines deserve to be treated but as meer Cavils: They shall never shake my Faith in Christ and his Gospel, so long as I am so well, so abundantly assured that God raised him from the Dead.

2.) Let the Resurrection of Christ be improved to encourage our Trust in him, and our Hope of Salvation by him. God raised him up from the Dead, and gave him Glory, that our Faith and Hope might be in God. 1 Pet. i. 21. And how glorious are the Blessings which from hence we may hope for? Is Jesus risen from the Dead? We may then hope for the Pardon of all our Sins, thro' Faith in his Blood; for
for He was delivered for our Offences, and He rose for our Justification. Rom. iv. 25. God the Father has hereby declared his Acceptance of Christ's Sacrifice for us, and by discharging our Surety from the Prison of the Grave, he has let us know that His Justice is fully satisfied by the Payment which Christ has made. Is Jesus risen from the Dead? we may then hope for a glorious Resurrection of our own Bodies in due time; for now is Christ risen and become the first Fruits of them that sleep. And if we believe that Jesus died, and rose, and revived, even so them also that sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. 1 Thes. iv. 14. The Resurrection of Christ, and the Resurrection of Believers are but different Parts of one and the same Design; and so close the Connection betwixt them, that if the dead rise not, then is not Christ risen, 1 Cor. xv. 16. and if Christ be risen, then those that sleep in Jesus shall certainly rise as He did. Again, is Jesus risen? We may then hope for Heaven and everlasting Happiness; for God hath begotten us again unto a lively Hope, by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an Inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for us. 1 Pet. i. 3, 4. Christ rose to die no more; so shall his Members rise to an immortal Life. God the Father raised up Christ, and gave him Glory; so will he, in the proper time, glorify the Members, as well as the Head.

These are glorious Hopes. We do not wonder then, that the Disciples were glad to see their Lord alive again after his Passion: His Birth was good Tidings of great Joy, how much more was his Resurrection! Then he entred on a Life of suffering for us, Now He surmounted all Suffering and Death too, in the Name of all his Saints.
Thus much for the first Branch of the History of Christ, which is contained in our Text, viz. His Resurrection from the Dead. We proceed now to the Second Article, which gives us an Account of the Time of Christ's Stay in this World after his Resurrection, and of what He did during that time. He gave Commandments unto the Apostles, whom he had chosen, and was seen of them forty Days, speaking of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God. It was, no doubt, to answer some very valuable purpose that our Saviour's Ascension to Heaven was delayed so long; and there was such an Interval betwixt the first, and the second Step of his Exaltation. Just before he expired on the Cross, he said, *It is finished.* The Work is done, Justice is now satisfied, Grace is purchased, and the Gates of Heaven are laid open to all Believers. What then should detain our Lord any longer in this lower World? why did he not go immediately to receive his Crown, and enter on his Kingdom? I suppose there were these two Reasons, at least, for the delay of Christ's Ascension.

1. To confirm the Truth of his Resurrection. For we read, that when He first appeared to his Disciples alive after his Passion, they were so transported with Wonder and Joy, that they hardly believ'd the thing was real; while they believed not for Joy and wondered. Luke xxiv. 41. and therefore, if they had not seen him again and again, very likely it would have passed for a Vision only, and they would not have believed that Jesus was risen indeed. But to remove all Doubt and Suspicion about the matter, He was pleased to stay with them many Days. He appeared to them over and over, they saw him with all possible advantage, and that not once or twice only, but often,
Ser. XVII. Ascension of Christ. 327

often, and for a great while together. Thus he confirmed his Resurrection to his Disciples, by many infallible Proofs, being seen of them forty Days.

2. We must believe, that Christ's Love to, and Care of his Disciples detained him with them so long, after his Resurrection. Tho' Heaven was ready for him, and he had obtained for himself a Right of entering there; yet as he knew that his Disciples wanted his Presence with them some time longer here on Earth, He was pleased to stay, and defer his own heavenly Glory for many Days. They wanted to be better instructed concerning the Kingdom of God; they had as yet but very gross and imperfect Notions about it, and knew but little of that Gospel which they were to preach to the World; and therefore Christ stay'd to instruct them better before he went to Heaven. This is the very Account which our Text gives us of our Saviour's Employment and Work during those forty Days, He gave Commandment unto the Apostles whom he had chosen, and spake to them of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God. He stay'd to settle all things for the good of his Church, which he was to leave behind; and when that was once done, as far as was necessary at present, He departed to another World. After he had spoken to them, he was receiv'd up into Heaven. Mark xvi. 19. And so we pass on to the

Third Article of the History of Christ in our Text, and that is, of his Ascension into Heaven, after the expiration of those forty Days, which is here expressed by his being taken up. Concerning this, I will, 1. Give you some Account of the Manner of our Saviour's Ascension, and the most remarkable Circumstances.
I. As to the Manner and Circumstances of Christ's Ascension, we read in the New Testament,

1. Where he ascended unto, He was taken up into Heaven. The Apostles saw him taken up; they saw him mount up high in the Air, till a Cloud received him out of their Sight, and two Angels came and told them that he was gone into Heaven. Acts i. 9, 11. It is elsewhere said, that He ascended up far above all Heavens, Eph. iv. 10. meaning, I suppose, those Heavens which are at present visible to the Inhabitants of this Earth; but where, and how far off that Heaven is, into which Christ ascended, we know not now, we hope to know hereafter: In the mean time, let it be the main Business of our Lives to get ready for Heaven, to get our Souls fitted for the Heavenly State, and we need not fear but we shall find the Place. Christ will send his Angels, to shew our Souls the Way, and conduct them safely thither. Let us but be followers of Christ in this World; and we shall be sure to follow him, where he is, in the proper Season; and that will be soon enough, sooner it may be than we think, or hope for.

2. The Place from whence our Saviour ascended into Heaven, was the famous Mount Olivet. For we read, that as soon as he was ascended, The Disciples returned to Jerusalem from the Mount called Olivet. Acts i. 12. This was the very Place where a little before He had been in an Agony; where he was apprehended, and from whence He was led away to Jerusalem to be crucified; from thence also He now ascended into Heaven. So shall the Believer's sick and dying Bed, where for the present, it may be, he feels much
much Pain, be the Place from whence his Soul shall shortly ascend to heavenly Joy and Glory.

3. The Manner of Christ's Ascension was very honourable. He returned to Heaven as a triumphant Conqueror, after having obtained signal Victories in this World below: and Angels attend to grace the Triumph and praise the Conqueror. When He ascended up on high, he led Captivity Captive, and he was gloriously attended with the Chariots of God, even Thousands of Angels. Psal. lxviii. 17, 18. Eph. iv. 8.

4. We may take notice of the Witnesses of Christ's Ascension, who, besides the Angels were his own Disciples; While they beheld, He was taken up. There was no need of their seeing him rise from the dead, for it was Proof enough of his Resurrection, that they saw him alive again after his Passion; but as they could not see him in Heaven, until they went there themselves, it was more necessary that they should see him ascending up towards it, that they might be Witnesses of his Ascension, as well as of his Resurrection, as far as in the Nature of things they could be.

But we wonder, it may be, that Christ should ascend from a solitary Place, in the Presence of only a few Disciples; and not rather from Jerusalem, from a Pinacle of the Temple, in the sight of Multitudes of the Jews, who, if they had seen him ascending up into Heaven, must surely have been convinced that he came from thence. But as they had wilfully rejected all the Miraculous Evidences, which Christ had formerly given them, of his Divine Mission and Character, it was but just to deny them this last Evidence of all. Nor is it certain that even this would have convinced them: They might as well have said, that he ascended by Magick Art, as that he cast out Devils.
The Refurrection and Devils by Beelzebub. It was in vain to shew them any more Miracles. Therefore Christ would not entertain their Curiosity with a View of his Ascension, but retired with his Disciples to a solitary Place, and in their sight only, he was taken up. I add once more,

5. That He departed with a Blessing in his Mouth. He lift up his Hands and blessed them, and it came to pass while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into Heaven. Luke xxiv. 50, 51. Such was the Manner, and these were the most considerable Circumstances of our Saviour's Ascension. A few Words I will add,

II. Concerning the Ends and Purposes of his Ascension. They were such as These,

1. That he might receive the due Reward of his own past Labours, and Sufferings. Because he humbled himself, and became obedient to Death; therefore God hath highly exalted him. Phil. ii. 8, 9. He had deserved a better Reward, than this low World could possibly furnish out, therefore was he taken up to Heaven, and highly exalted there.

2. Christ ascended up to Heaven, in the View of his Disciples, for their Encouragement and Comfort. How would it animate their Zeal, and enliven their Hopes, when they called to mind what Promises He had made them! Ye cannot follow me now, but ye shall follow me afterwards; and where I am, there shall my Servant be. How encouraging was the sight of an ascending Saviour! From whence we know that Heaven is no devised Fable; there is such a Place, Jesus, our elder Brother, was seen to ascend thither. We know that so glorious an Advancement is not impossible, even to the human Nature; for Jesus,
Jesus, who took part of our Flesh and Blood, and was made in all things like unto his Brethren, is actually entered into Heaven.

3. Christ ascended into Heaven as the Fore-runner of his Friends and Disciples. Whither the Fore-runner is for us entered. Heb. vi. 20. I go to prepare a Place for you, said our dearest Lord, John xiv. 2. As when several Persons travel together, 'tis not uncommon for One to go before the rest, to seek out and provide a convenient Place of Refreshment for them; or, as when several Persons are Coheirs of an Estate, One, it may be, goes and takes possession in the Name of all the rest; so Jesus our Friend has left us here on the Road, and is gone to prepare Mansions for us in Heaven, where we shall rest for ever; so Christ our Elder Brother is gone in the Name of all his Saints, to take Possession of the Heavenly Inheritance for them.

4. Christ ascended up into Heaven, there to intercede for his People, to appear in the Presence of God for them, and to be their Advocate with the Father; which grand Purpose of his Ascension will be considered in the next Sermon.

All that I have now to do further, is to make an Inference or two from the Doctrine of Christ's Ascension; as,

1. That since Christ is ascended into Heaven, it is an absurd thing to look for his bodily Presence any where in this World. How wild is the Popish Notion of Christ's Bodily Presence in the Sacrament! for he is ascended up into Heaven long ago; and there, the Scripture tells us, He will remain until the time of the Restitution of all Things.

2. Is Christ ascended into Heaven, Let us follow our dear Saviour with our frequent Thoughts, and
The Resurrection, &c.

with our warmest Affections. "Forget not, O my Soul! thine absent Friend and Saviour, often think of him, and of the Promises which he made before his Departure, and of what he is now doing in Heaven for thee. Let Faith and Hope bear thee up, above the Fear of Death; and think with Pleasure and Desire of the Day, which will come shortly, when thou shalt depart from hence, and go to that glorious World, to which Jesus is gone before, where thou shalt see him as he is, and see what a glorious Mansion he has prepared for Thee in his Father's House, and enjoy his Presence for ever."
SERMON XVIII.

The Intercession of Christ as another Part of his Priesthood.

Rom. VIII. 34.

—Who also maketh Intercession for us.

The Apostle designing to bring all the Arguments of Consolation, arising from the great Doctrines of Christianity he had been before discoursing on in this Epistle, into one short and full View at the winding up of this Chapter, forms them into a double Chain, closely fasten'd together, and consisting each of four Principal Links.

The First is composed of the Acts of God the Father's Grace, Predestination, Vocation, Justification, and Glorification: as they are enumerated and ranged, ver. 30. The Second is made up of Christ's Mediatorial Transactions, as the grand Means of rendering the former effectual, in a way agreeable to God's Honour and moral Perfections. These are laid together, as now perfectly adjusted to this End, in the Text, and usher'd in with a Triumphant Challenge,
of any to rise up in Judgment against those for whom Christ has thus undertaken. *Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again, who even sitteth at the right Hand of God, who also intercedeth for us.*

'Tis the Intercession of Christ, the last of these Facts relating to him, the End and Perfection of the rest, and the immediate Channel through which all divine Blessings are convey'd to the Heirs of Salvation, which is to be the Subject of the present Discourse; his Death, Resurrection and Ascension into Heaven, having been already insisted on.

In treating of which, I shall consider,

First, Its Nature, or wherein it consists.
Secondly, Its Properties.
Thirdly, Its Uses.

First, Its Nature. As to this, let it be observ'd,
I. That as it implies a Distance subsisting between God the Father with whom Christ intercedes, and those for whom he intercedes as not worthy in their own Persons to come into his Presence, and to receive any Fruits of his Favour; so its Aim and Design is to remove this Distance by degrees, till it be at last perfectly done away. 'Tis Sin, as occasioning this Distance, as offending the Eyes of God's Holiness, as forfeiting his Favour and justly meriting his Anger wherever it is found, and yet always found in every Inhabitant of this World, to the very End of Life, which gives the first Rise, and establishes the constant Use of Christ's Intercession. For it is this which procures the actual Forgiveness of all their Sins for those God has Designs of Mercy to, whereby they are first brought into, and ever after kept in a State of Peace with
with him. So the Apostle lays out the Advocacy of Christ on this Ground. If any Man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ. i John ii. 1. Further, it is employ'd in obtaining for them, the renewing and sanctifying Influences of the Holy Spirit, all needful Supplies of Grace, Strength and Comfort, whereby they may be preserved from the Evil which is in the World, enabled for the Duties belonging to the various Scenes of Life through which they pass, and fitted for Glory, with all the external Means conducive to these Ends, Victory over Death, and a gathering of them one by one into everlasting Habitations.

Finally, the Reception, in one full Assembly into Heaven, of all whom Christ's Intercession concerns, and their being fixed there for ever, in a State of perfect and uninterrupted Communion with himself and his Father, without any the least Mark of Distance and Alienation remaining, is the ultimate Scope and Aim of it. So our Lord himself in his last Prayer on Earth, for those that should believe on him to the End of the World, which is justly esteem'd the Model of his Intercession in Heaven, centers all his Care and Desires here, that they might be all one in us, that they might be perfect in one, and that where I am, they may be with me to behold my Glory. John xvii. 20, 21—24.

II. Christ's Intercession, in order to the attaining these great and glorious Ends, consists mainly and primarily in his presenting continually before God, that Sacrifice he made of himself on Earth. Whether or no it may be considered, and is ever represented under the Notion of his offering himself to God, I will not pretend to determine. But be that
as it will, his voluntary Submission to Sufferings and
Death, here on Earth, is for certain a true and the
most proper Oblation of himself; it was a perfect A-
tonement at once for the Sins, and a meritorious
Price of the compleat Salvation, of those in all Ages
that shall be saved, without needing the Addition of
any thing to give it more value for these Purposes,
than it had from the time it was finish'd on Earth.
His Intercession therefore is built on the Supposition
of this: It is a solemn Recognition, and Display
before God, of what he did and suffer'd here below,
as of everlasting Virtue, that it may be crown'd
and rewarded with the Fruits of Grace and Glory,
from time to time issuing forth to those for whom
it purchased them. All his Pleadings as an Advo-
cate, derive their Virtue and Efficacy from his first
being a Propitiation, as the close Connection between
these two shews, I John ii. 1, 2. and they seem most
formally to lie in Action, in the very Exhibition be-
fore God, of the same Nature which was first sacri-
ficed, and is now glorified for his People. Hence the
Substance of what he is doing for us in Heaven, and
which comprehends the principal Ingredient into his
Intercession, is very significantly express'd by his now
Not, as the Apostle adds, that he should offer himself
often, since he had once appear'd before that, in the
end of the World, to put away Sin by the Sacrifice of
himself. ver. 25, 26. But in the midst of the Throne
he stands as a Lamb that had been slain. Rev. v. 6.
By and with his own Blood he entred into Heaven;
having obtain'd eternal Redemption for us. Heb. ix. 12.
Thither he carried it up in its living Virtue and ex-
tensive Merits, when in our Nature he sat down on
the right hand of God. There it became the Blood of
sprinkling,
sprinkling, as it is called, *Heb. xii. 24.* in allusion to the use made of the Blood carried by the High Priest under the Law into the Holy Place; for it purifies the heavenly things so as that our moral pollutions should not hinder divine Blessings descending from Heaven to us, or our ascending up thither in due time. And there it speaks (as it is represented in the last cited Place) the very best things in favour of those for whom it was shed.

Yet, III. Christ's Intercession may be reasonably presumed to comprehend withal some direct Signification of his Mind and Will to the Father, in a manner worthy of himself, concerning those for whom he intercedes. We are naturally led to conceive thus of Christ's Intercession from the Word itself, which properly signifies Pleading. His Work in Heaven is also sometimes represented under the Notion of his asking and praying to the Father. *Ask of me,* says the Father to him, when exalted to his Throne. *Psal. ii. 8.* And Christ referring plainly to his State in Heaven, promises his Disciples, that even then he would pray the Father for them. *John xiv. 16. Chap. xvi. 26.* But this his asking and praying, is very different from that of all others, or even his own, in the Days of his Humiliation. It is in the Form not of humble Supplication, but of a Petition of Rights, a Claim and Demand of what he solicits for as due to him. The Stile of his Intercession is Imperial and Majestick, as of one who has Authority to challenge what he signifies his Desire and Will about. Thus it runs in his last Prayer on Earth, which is the Plan of his interceding in Heaven; *Father I will,* John xvii. 24. Therefore 'tis observable in that interces-

ory Prayer, he applies to God only under the Titles

Vol. I.
of Holy and Righteous, not of Merciful and Gracious, Father. As to the Manner of Christ's notifying his Will, we may be well content to be ignorant whether it be with or without Words; since 'tis sufficient if his very Desires are understood by the Father. And no doubt there is a more clear, speedy and effectual way of signifying the Mind in the World of Spirits, especially between God the Father and his own Son, than any Forms of human Language. Nor can it be conceived how any Words we are acquainted with could be so used as to represent the numerous Cases which Christ at once is commending to his Father. However, it is no way improbable, that on special and solemn Occasions, which may continually arise, the Intercession of Christ is perform'd in Words, or in Methods of known Significance in Heaven.

IV. It is one constant Branch of Christ's Intercession, to take care of the Prayers and Religious Worship of the Saints on Earth, to commend and present them to God, and to secure Acceptance for them. 'Tis only through him that all our spiritual Sacrifices ascend up to Heaven, and are render'd acceptable to God, 1 Pet. ii. 5. There is enough Imperfection and Sin, in the best Services of the best Saints, to weigh down all the Good that is in them, and to prevail more with God for the Rejection than this can do for the Reception of such worthless Duties, and of their worthless Persons together. But now there is one and the same way for the Acceptance of both, even the much Incense of Christ's precious Merits, which he as the Angel standing at the Golden Altar above, continually presents before God in their Name, and offers with the Prayers of all Saints. Rev. viii. 3. And thus his being represented
represented as an High-Priest over the House of God, consider’d as a Place of Worship, is made the ground of Encouragement, to our free Access to God in religious Services. *Heb.* iv. 14-16. Chap. x. 21, 22. By him we are therefore directed to offer up the Sacrifice of Praise to God. *Heb.* xiii. 15. and to do every thing in his Name. *Col.* iii. 17.

Proceed we now to consider,

**Secondly, The Properties of Christ’s Intercession.**

1. Then, his Intercession is just and right. It is the Intercession of one, who himself is holy, and ever stood right with the Law of God. Such a personal Qualification of Advocates in human Causes and Courts may not always be regarded or insisted on. But it could never be dispensed with in the Management of our Cause with God; since our Cause was bad in itself, and God as infinitely holy and impartially just, equally rejects the Addresses of all Sinners, and will never sure admit one guilty himself, to plead for others.

Christ’s Intercession is also right in itself. For it is not a meer Suit for Mercy and Favour, and this recommended by his unblemish’d and perfect Character; but it is a Plea address’d to Justice, for what he has first purchased, as has been shown. Nor was it undertaken officiously, but by the Warrant and Commission, and with the entire Approbation and Acceptance of the Father. It is also carried on in a perfectly holy manner, and conversant only about those things that are according to the Will of God.

Thus is our Advocate, in all respects, *Jesus Christ the Righteous,* as St. *John* stiles him. *John* ii. 2. And
And on this Character, the Validity and Success of his Intercession for us primarily and mainly depends.

2. It is in common for the whole Household of God, yet distinct and particular for every Member; and in order to this, it is qualified with his perfect Knowledge of what concerns them all. Christ as a publick Agent for the true Israel of God throughout all Ages, bears the Names of their Tribes and Communities on his Heart, for a Memorial before the Lord continually; as the High-Priest under the Law did the Names of the twelve Tribes of Israel, on his Breast plate; and more than this, he thus bears the Name of every Individual. To wrap up all their respective Cases, in one general and promiscuous Application, would not afford full Comfort and Satisfaction to Believers. They are commonly uneasy and griev'd to find their special Wants and Desires dropt, even out of the Prayers of their Friends to whom they have commended them. Yet how frequently does this happen, through human Frailty, which makes us forget also many of our own Errands at the Throne of Grace? But such who have committed themselves to Christ's Patronage, shall have no ground to complain of his Neglect or Forgetfulness. All of them, even the weakest, meanest, and most despicable, and such who have no Friends on Earth may depend on his remembering them before God, as fully and particularly as they can wish, and as if they were the alone Objects of his Care.

His Intercession reaches to all that come to God through him, and as they come, that is, singly and individually. If any Man sin, and regularly trust in him, he will be his Advocate with the Father; as much as if he spoke to him, what he did to Peter, I have prayed for thee. Christ calls and knows his
own Sheep by Name, John. x. 3, 14. And this he does from himself. Earthly Advocates receive from others the Briefs of their Clients Case, and plead on them as they are, without being able of themselves to rectify the Errors or Defects that may be in them. But our Heavenly Advocate, without needing Information from others, has an infallible Knowledge within himself of the very minutest Cases and Concerns of all his Clients, and what are the secret Desires and Inclinations of their Hearts, before they are form'd into Requests, as well as when they are. His human Nature itself has a far greater Penetration, than any created Nature whatsoever: And what is wanting to it as still but finite, is supplied from the Divine in union with it, which as Omnicient nothing escapes.

3. He pleads the Cause of his People with consummate Skill and Prudence, and to the best Advantage. *We often ask and have not, because we ask amiss*, not only when our Ends are grossly corrupt, our Bias to temporal Blessings too strong, and our Spirits too eager, but through Mistake of our real Wants, a wrong Judgment of the different Nature and Value of Mercies, and an ill sorting of our Petitions and Pleas among themselves and to Circumstances. But nothing of this weak and injudicious Conduct falls on our great High-Priest. As he understands thoroughly the Cause of his Clients, he varies and disposes his Pleas according to the Nature and Exigency of every Case. Are they wrongfully accused, or oppress'd by Satan or by wicked Men? Is their Sincerity call'd in question, or are their Faults over-charg'd by themselves or by others? *Behold, he is their Witness in Heaven*, he vindicates and sets in a fair Light their Integrity, he clears up all doubtful and suspicious Passages before God, and he makes
makes way for clearing them to the World, especially to their own Consciences. He mentions in their behalf all concurrent Circumstances and Allowances which are in their Favour. But where all things are bad on their side, and make against them, he wants not a Plea for them from himself and his own Merit; wherewith also he inforces all other Pleas that offer. And as he fully comprehends their Wants, with the Kind, Measure, and fit Season of supplying them, he asks accordingly, not for what seems to them, but for what he better knows to be really best.

4. Christ’s Intercession is most affectionate and earnest. All his People’s Conflicts and Complaints are not only before him, but within him. They enter into his Heart, as well as into his Eye and Ear. He feels, as well as knows what they feel. We have not an High-Priest which cannot be touch’d with the feeling of our Infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without Sin. He suffered once the very same afflictive Evils which we suffer; he possesseth still a perfect Knowledge of the Manner wherein they then affected himself and now do us; hence is he the more able, or powerfully disposed, to succour them that are tempted. Heb. iv. 15, Chap. ii. 18. The sinful Part is indeed all our own. In acting that, he was far from having any Share with us. Yet still as to this, by bearing the Guilt and Punishment of our Sins, he experimentally knew the Agonies and Anguish of a wounded Spirit; and by living among Sinners in the midst of Snares and Temptations, he gain’d a very particular Acquaintance with the Difficulties of fighting against Sin. Now with all this tender Sense of his People’s Trials, has not our blessed Lord also an intimate Love to them, as the Members of his Body, and
and the dear Purchase of his Blood? A Love which engages him to consider their Interests, Sufferings and Wants, as his own, and awakens all the Springs of Compassion in him? O what Force and Vigour must two such powerful Arguments within himself, as Love to their Persons, and a Sympathizing Sense of their Necessities, derive into his Intercession? How far off is it removed from that disinterested Negligence, or only affected Concern, which often appears in those who sollicit the Cause of others in human Courts, whom they know little of, and as little regard; save for their own Profit or Reputation? There is in it all that Fervour, which ought to animate, but is so often absent from the Prayers of Christians for themselves; whose great Coldness and Indifference about them, plead as it were for a Denial. But he retains a quick Sense of their Wants and Ails, when they are stupid, senseless and untouched with them; and he lends them the Aid of his warm and lively Intercession, when they have little or no Spirit to pray for themselves.

5. It is constant and perpetual, as long as there is any Saint left to be brought to Glory. He ever liveth to make Intercession for them. Heb. vii. 25. It commenced with Man's Original Fall and Aproach from God; and was continued ever since, for all the Elect of God in every Age of the World. Yet had it not its proper Formality, its full and perfect Establishment, till he appear'd in Heaven in our Nature with the Blood of his Oblation, the grand Argument of it at all times. But now that he is compleatly and solemnly vested in this Office; he will neither intermit it, nor ever lay it aside, till all its Ends are accomplish'd. Happy Character for us, of our great Patron and Intercessor! The Jewish High-Priests per-
form'd the Service in the most Holy Place, typical of this, but once a Year: And were any of them ever so excellent, faithful and agreeable to the People, they were not suffer'd to continue by reason of Death. But now, this Man our blessed High-Priest, because he continueth for ever, hath an unchangeable Priesthood. Heb. vii. 23, 24. Whatever Benefits we reap and may expect from this Office, (and what may we not?) and as acceptable, as his Person is and ought to be to us, we may be sure of preserving both together.

6. And lastly, it is ever prevalent and successful. This is the certain and natural Result of all the fore-mention'd Qualifications, of the Acceptableness of him and his People together to God, and of the joint Interest and mutual Concern they all have one in another. The Interest of all is wrapt together; the Advocate is a dutiful Son to the Father, a loving Brother to the Client, and God is a tender Father to them both *. Christ is at once worthy and sure to be heard. He knew in the Days of his Flesh, that the Father always heard him. And can the Success of his Prayers or his Confidence of their Success be less, now he has the Price and Pledge of all he asks for in his Hands? But it is time now to proceed,

Thirdly, To the Uses of Christ's Intercession. I am sensible that there are some Difficulties which affect this Doctrine, and at the first View seem to impeach the Intercession of Christ, as though it were needless and impertinent. What Occasion can there be, in regard to the Father, may it be said, for Christ continually to present his Oblation to him who perfectly understands, and has already allowed its Value, or to make use of any Petitions and Pleas for those Blessings which the Father has beforehand decreed,

* Hurrion's Sermons of Christ Glorified, p. 245.
decreed, and his Love prompts him readily enough to communicate? And as to Christ himself, if he as God, Lord, and universal King, hath all Power and Authority in Heaven and Earth, as the Scriptures constantly teach; does it not seem superfluous and inconsistent for him to ask those things of the Father which he is able to do himself? Instead of offering formal Answers to these Difficulties, I go on now to assign the several Ends and Uses of Christ's Intercession, which may be so far collected from the Nature of the thing, according to Scriptural Representations, as fully to satisfy our Minds of the Propriety, Fitness and Decorum of it, whatever Difficulties may be rais'd on it. And yet it must be confess'd, nor is less to be expected, that we shall not be able to comprehend the full Use, Glory or Manner of it, till we come to be Spectators and Witnesses of it as it is carried on in Heaven.

I. One main and important End of it is in respect to God and the Manifestation of his Glory. Is it not divinely meet and congruous, while the Sins of those whom God will justify and save, are continually pleading on Earth against the Favours he is doing and designing for them, that the Blood of perfect Atonement should be alway pleaded in Heaven against the crying Guilt of these Sins, and produced as a just ground of all the ample Largeffes of his Grace to those, who are daily making themselves unworthy of them? Are not the first and continued Justification, the spiritual Renovation, the Comfort and the Admission into Heaven, of Creatures finning all along till they are at the very Borders of that blessed World great and weighty Transactions? Do they not require to be carried on with some special Solemnity?

Which
Which how becomingly does this Method maintain? Does it not give a standing and shining Testimony to God's infinite Purity, to his Hatred of Sin, to his Grandeur and awful Majesty; and make it visible all over Heaven with what strict Regards to his Holiness and Justice, he proceeds in dispensing the Fruits of his Grace? How admirably also does it suit the glorious Oeconomy of the Sacred Three? Let it be further consider'd, that as Christ's human Nature even in its Exaltation is a proper Subject of Worship duly accommodated to that State, so accordingly such Worship is offer'd by him in his Intercession, to God the Father, as sustaining the Character of the Supreme Lord, Judge and Fountain of all Good. Now as the suitable Acknowledgment of divine Perfections, is the great End in respect to God of all our Religious Services, and makes them highly expedient and reasonable in entire consistence with his Love and his Purposes: So the same Principle accounts for the Propriety and Fitness of Christ's heavenly Worship. For this is the grand Design of it, as being perform'd in his People's Name, and grafted into their holy things, to take away the Iniquities of them, and to perfect the Honours of God's Name, which their Services never fully secure, and too often fully. Thus all his Addresses to God, by their exact Conformity to his Will, do Honour to the Divine Holiness, which all our Devotions, being so irregular and impure, eclipse and affront. By their Fervency and Earnestness, they exalt the Riches of God's All-sufficiency and Grace, which are so lightly esteem'd of in our cold and formal Prayers and Praises. By a just and full Confidence in the Promises, and in his own Merits rendering them all valid, they magnify God's Faithfulness
Faithfulness and Truth, which we so much obscure and expose through our Unbelief and Wavering.

II. It serves likewise to manifest and promote his own Glory. As he glorifies the Father in the continual Discharge of this Office, so no less does the Father glorify him in advancing him to it, as Heb. v. 4, 5. O how glorious is it to him, that he by himself in our Nature, should approach to God immediately in the Name of all that shall be saved out of our World, and by his single Interest with the Father, on signifying only his Desire or Will, obtain the Acceptance and Happiness of them all? And, as the Sacrifice he offer'd of himself below, is the grand Support of all this his Interest above; what an Honour is derived on that Sacrifice this way? Tho' his Death and Sufferings, while he underwent them, were indeed of inestimable Price and infinite Value in the sight of God; yet the Merit and Dignity of them did not, and could not be made to appear at that time. He could not himself receive any Honour or Satisfaction from them, till they were finish'd, being wholly taken up and deeply affected with the painful Sensation of them. As to others the Cross of Christ was accounted by all, both Friends and Enemies on Earth, a Matter of Reproach, a dark Cloud on his Character, and a dead Weight on his Undertaking. And perhaps none of the Angels of Heaven understood then the proper Meaning, the full Use and Design of it. Was it not then highly expedient, and suitable to the Honour of Christ, that he should have the full Reputation, Glory and Satisfaction of his Death in Heaven, openly and continually showing it forth there for
for what it really was, the Purchase and meritorious Cause of all the Blessings which from time to time are to be shared out among his Redeem’d? Besides, Christ’s continual Intercession for his People in Heaven, makes for the Exaltation of his Love, Care and Faithfulness to them.

Further, this Branch of Christ’s Priestly Office, fully harmonizes with his Kingly, and is rather an Advance on, than any Diminution of it: For he is not less a King over Men and all things else, for being at the same time a Priest to God. The two different Objects of these Offices, preserve at once a perfect Distinction and Consistency between them. Let it be also consider’d that both of them alike are vested in Christ as Mediator, who acts as such in a constant Subjection to the Father, according to the Divine Oeconomy, and that they are visibly exercised in the human Nature, tho’ they plainly confess a Divinity of Person and Perfection in him, to fit him for the Reception and Discharge of such High-Trusts. Hence therefore the Possession of both together, is apparently a greater Honour to him, than the Possession of either separately. Thus it is expressly made an Article of Glory, additional and inseparably conjoin’d to his sitting and ruling upon his Throne, that he shall be a Priest upon his Throne, Zech. vi. 13. By his officiating as a Priest on his Throne, he manifests his Absolute Dominion and Disposal of all Creatures and Blessings, to depend indeed at first and continually on the Father, yet still so as to be acquired by his own Right of Merit, and not to be a meer Grant of Favour; and then he enjoys the constant Pleasure and Honour of the Father’s Concurrence and Approbation in the Exercise of it. I shall but just hint,

III. That
III. That Christ’s Intercession in Heaven undoubtedly answers many unknown Uses, in respect to the Inhabitants of the invisible World. Some Representation of this, in a way superior to our Conception, is very probably made to the infernal Spirits, at times, to mortify them the more with the sight of Christ’s Victories obtain’d over them, by that very Death, which they themselves by a fatal and wicked Policy were eagerly instrumental to. It serves also to stop their Mouths, to quash and repel all their Charges against the Saints, and to cause them to retire with Shame and Confusion, when and howsoever they present themselves before the Lord, to move him against them to destroy them, and to accuse them before God day and night; as we read of their so doing, Job i. 7. Chap. ii. 1—13. Rev. xii. 10. As for the Saints and Angels in Heaven, they are always present to and Beholders of the whole Transaction. And who can tell how large a part of their Happiness and Pleasure may arise from the Sight of Christ’s performing his Temple-Service in the midst of them? What noble Materials may not this supply continually to their Songs of Praise, wherein they admire and celebrate the Wisdom, Holiness and Love of God and the Redeemer? And what brighter Flames may it not add to their Devotion, tho’ never waxing cold and languid?

IV. I would now attend to the Uses of Christ’s Intercession, as to those on Earth to whom it is reveal’d; with which I shall close, as the

APPLICATION.

And First then, We hence learn what profound Humility
Humility and Reverence becomes us toward God at all times, and in all our Addresses to him; and how certain and dreadful Destruction awaits all those, who have not Christ to recommend them to the Divine Favour? O! the awful Distance at which God keeps even the best of his Friends and Saints here below! Because Sin still remains in them, tho' it be sincerely hated, mourn'd over and striven against, none of them shall be admitted into his Preference, to offer up one Prayer, and to receive one Smile of his gracious Countenance, or any Blessing at his hands, but through the Appearance of his own Son, the greatest and nearest to himself of any in Heaven, or Earth, before him in their Behalf? Should not this Thought awe our Spirits into a Reverential Frame, whenever we think, whenever we speak of, or to, the Blessed and Holy God? What a Dash likewise does this give to the presumptuous Hopes of Sinners, who live without God, and without Christ in the World? How surely and terribly will the Fire of his Holiness, Justice and Wrath, break out and utterly confound those, who being in themselves no better than fit Fuel for the devouring Flames, neglect the only Screen that can protect them; and who, by an ungrateful Rejection of the alone Advocate that can plead with Success for them, provoke him to plead against them? O! how should this quicken the Flight of every Christless Sinner for Refuge, to lay hold on the Hope set before him, renouncing at once his Sins and his Self-confidence?

2. On the other hand, this Doctrine has the most powerful Tendency to incourage Hope in God's Mercy and Grace for our Salvation, together with frequent and cheerful Addresses to the Throne of Grace,
Grace, if we come but with a true Heart, and relying wholly on the Name and Merits of Christ. Though none, no not the best of the Children of Men, can come to God, so as to be accepted, without him; yet all, and even the worst of Sinners, may come and be accepted through him. *His Blood shed on Earth and pleaded in Heaven, cleanseth from all Sin those that exercise Faith in it.* Neither will Christ himself *in any wise cast out,* or thrust from him, *any that cometh to him,* committing his Soul to his Protection; nor will the Father refuse any whom the Son presents and recommends to him. Christ's Office is full Security for both. *He is able to save them to the uttermost,* the uttermost of their Guilt, Miseries, Wants, Desires, and Capacities, *that come to God by him,* seeing he ever *liveth to make Intercession for them.* Heb. vii. 25. Let the awaken'd and convinced Sinner take heart at this, and never doubt of finding Mercy with God, equal to all his Sins, if he penitently and believingly seek it through Christ. Let the true Christian also maintain a daily Confidence and Hope of continual Forgiveness, and Peace with God, thro' the constant and all-prevailing Intercession of Jesus his Saviour and Advocate; and let him renew the special Exercises of his Faith to this end, when fresh and deeper Guilt has stain'd and distress'd his Soul. And far from neglecting Prayer, or contenting our selves with a slight and careless Performance, because Christ is always and successfully interceding for his People: Let us, from this Consideration, as sure we ought, be animated to come often and boldly, with Delight and Liberty, with Zeal and Fervency to the Throne of Grace, where we have so great a Friend to secure us a Welcome, and whose assiduous Attendance
The Intercession

The tendance there for our Benefit, is at once a Pattern and a Motive to our thus coming. In this manner, the Apostle improves the Doctrine of Christ's Heavenly Priesthood. *Heb.* iv. 14—16. Chap. x. 19—22.

3. Christ's Intercession is of effectual Use, to ascertain his Church, and all the particular Members of it, safe and eternally happy, and so to comfort them under all the Difficulties, Dangers and Troubles of the present State. As long as Christ preserves his Interest in Heaven, he can never fail of an Interest on Earth; or lose that which he has once had in the Heart of any of the Sons or Daughters of Men. Till he hath dropped all Affection and Regard for our World, and those given him out of it; till the Father hath cast off all Affection and Regard for him his only begotten Son, who has ever done the things that pleased him; till the Merits of his Death are quite exhausted; a Seed shall spring up to him in our World, and not one of the spiritual Seed born to him, shall perish or fall short of Heaven. O! what a noble Cordial is this to raise the Spirits of Christians, when they are drooping and ready to sink within them, because of the low and declining State of Religion in the World, or in their own Souls? And, O! what a sweet and reviving Spring of Consolation may it be to the Saint in every hour of his Sufferings, Pains, Slights and Distresses, to think that he has so glorious a Friend in Heaven, who knows and sympathizes with him in all; who will afford him proper Supports under them, who will secure their Co-operation to his best Interest, and will effect for him in due time a compleat Deliverance from them all?

4. Christ's
4. Christ's Intercession naturally and powerfully suggests our loving, cleaving and living to him. How brightly does his Love shine through the Glories of his Exaltation, as before it did through the Condescensions of his Humiliation? It was not enough for his Love once to want all things, and to sacrifice one Life for us; but it now ingages him to spend his new Life of compleat Honour and Happiness in promoting our Interest! O what Returns of warm and vigorous Love, Esteem and Gratitude, Gratitude to him, and Gratitude for him, does this his own Love, and the Father's in giving him for us, demand at our hands? How near should he lie to our Hearts, who bears us always on his own Heart? And should not this Love of Christ constrain us to live, not to our selves, not to sin, (a wilful Indulgence of which is an Abuse, directly contrary to the End of his Intercession;) but to him who first lived and died on Earth, and now lives over again, and will for ever in Heaven for us? Should not his Interest be dear to us? Should not his Name and Honour be vindicated, and his Cause be pleaded by us both with God and Men, and imploy all our active Powers to promote it, even as our Cause is thus undertaken for, and happily managed by him? Should we not also adhere to his Intercession, without joining any Partners to him, as the Papists through a vain Superstition and a false Humility vailing a real Pride, have added many? Finally, from the Consideration of this his Office, as securing all the Ends of Religion, let us be induced to hold fast our Christian Profession, as the Apostle on this Motive exhorts us. *Heb.* iv. 14. Chap. x. 21—23.

**Lastly,**
Lastly, How strongly and sweetly does the Intercession of Christ attract the Hearts of Christians from Earth to Heaven, and point their supreme Views and Desires thither? This is the grand Inforcement, used by the Apostle, of the Duty of Heavenly-mindedness. Seek, says he, Set your Affections on these things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Col. iii. 1, 2. 'Tis Heaven itself into which our great High-priest is enter'd, and where he appears in the Presence of God, for us. Nor is he gone up with design to dwell there all alone, as none might accompany or follow after the High-priest under the Law, into the most Holy Place, where he perform'd his most solemn Ministrations once a Year. But Christ is enter'd as our Fore-runner, into the heavenly and better Sanctuary, wherein are many Mansions, to prepare a Place for us there, that all his People may come after, and be happy together where he is, which is the ultimate End of his Intercession. Does not this also disarm Death of its biggest Terrors, that Christ, our Patron and Advocate, will receive under his own Protection the departing Soul, which has been entrusted with him, and present it to the Father with all the Advantage of his complete Merit and Interest with him for certain Acceptance. To conclude, methinks our very Love to him should prompt and inflame in us longing Desires to be with him; that we may see Face to Face that amiable Person we are so much indebted to; that with delightful Wonder we may behold how he speaks and acts in favour of his Saints; and that, kindling into Raptures unknown before, at the Sight, we may sing in full Harmony with the Celestial Choir a new Song.
Song. To him that sitteth on the Throne, and to the Lamb, who is Worthy, who was slain, and has redeemed us to God by his own Blood, be Salvation, Blessing, Honour and Glory, Might and Dominion for ever and ever. Amen.
SERMON XIX.

The Exaltation of Christ to his Kingdom, and his sending down the Holy Spirit.

Acts II. 33.

Being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the Promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.

It was a strange Amazement that seiz'd the Hearts of the Multitude who came up to Jerusalem at the Days of Pentecost, when they heard the Apostles speak so many new Languages: The Jews and the Gentiles of various Nations were struck with one general Surprize, when they found Fishermen, and Persons of no Learning, declare in every Tongue the wonderful Works of God and his Grace: And while they were busly in their Enquiries into the Cause of this great Event, Peter standing up with the Eleven, lift up his Voice as their Speaker, and beginning with the Prophecy of Joel concerning the pouring out of the Spirit upon all Flesh, preaches to them the Life and Death, and Resurrection of Christ,
Ser. XIX. Christ exalted.

Christ, and assures them, that these Miraculous Gifts descended upon the Apostles from that Jesus whom the Jews had crucify'd and slain: But we are Witnesses, says he, that God has raised him from the dead; and being exalted by the right hand, or Power of God, he has shed forth these wondrous Gifts of the Holy Ghost, which the Father had promised him, and of which your own Eyes and Ears are present Witnesses.

The two great Subjects of my appointed Discourse, are evidently contained in this Text, (viz.) The Exaltation of Christ to his Kingdom, and his pouring down of the Holy Spirit.

In pursuit of the first of these, I shall shew you wherein consists the Exaltation of Christ, and what are the several Parts of it; and here I might take notice,

I. That at his Ascension to Heaven there was a glorious Change past upon his Body to make it fit for the heavenly State: For tho' Christ was raised from the dead, yet being design'd to continue forty Days on Earth, he was not raised in a glorify'd Body. Luke xxiv. 39. He pronounces his Body to be Flesh and Bones, and bid his Disciples handle him: but St. Paul affures us, 1 Cor. xv. 50. That Flesh and Blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God, nor Corruption inherit Incorruption; and therefore the Bodies of the Saints at the Resurrection must be all changed into spiritual and incorruptible, i.e. such as are fit for the Services of a glorify'd Spirit, and for an immortal Life. Such a Change past upon the Flesh and Bones of our Blessed Lord, when the bright Cloud received him out of the sight of his Disciples,
Disciples, and convey'd him upward to the Mansions of Light and Immortality.

II. I might also take notice in the next place, That it is part of the Exaltation of Christ to be deliver'd from all possible Sorrows and Pains and Temptations, to which he was expos'd in our World, to be placed above the Reach of the Malice of Earth and Hell, as well as to be deliver'd from all mortal Infirmities, and to be fill'd with inward Satisfaction and Joy unspeakable. He is exalted to the right Hand of God, where there are Pleasures for evermore. Psal. xvi. ult. His holy Soul, which once endured such terrible Conflicts and Agonies, now sits triumphant in eternal Peace, never to be ruffled and disquieted again. He now enjoys those sweet and sacred Satisfactions of Heart, which arise from the Review of his own finish'd Labours and Sufferings; tiresome Labours indeed, and tremendous Sufferings, but never more to be repeated! He is now for ever drinking in fuller Pleasures from the indwelling Godhead, from the Smiles of his Father's Face, and shall never more complain, My God, why hast thou forsaken me? He, for the Joy that was set before him, endured the Cross, and despis'd the Shame, Heb. xii. 2. and these are the Joys which he is now possesst of as a just and divine Recompence.

III. He has Authority given him by the Father, to govern the World as long as it stand, and to judge it at the last Day. He is exalted to be both a Prince and a Saviour, to give Repentance to Men and Forgiveness of Sins. Acts v. 31. He calls those who are given him out of the World, and makes them parts of his Church: He changes their sinful Natures,
Natures, he makes 'em the Children of God, and pardons all their Iniquities. Nor doth his Kingdom reach only to his own Church, who are his willing and joyful Subjects, but it extends over the whole World; the rebellious and infidel Nations are under his Reign and Control. His Lordship not only includes all Mankind, but it reaches over Angels and Devils, over all the Regions and the Inhabitants of Heaven, Earth and Hell: All things are put into his Hands, and placed under his Dominion. He is Lord of all. Matt. xxviii. 19. Acts x. 36. He doth not reign only in Sion as heretofore, and as King of the Jewish Nation, but the Heathens are now made his Inheritance, and the utmost ends of the Earth his Possession: Psal. ii. 8, 9. Not only his own Followers and Friends are under his Government, but every Creature is made subject to him: His People are his willing Subjects in this day of his Power, and his Enemies shall be made his Footstool. Angels, Principalities and Powers, are put under him as his Ministering Servants, for the purposes of his Government over the Church and the World. Psal. cx. 1, 2, 3. Eph. i. 20. Heb. i. 4. Rev. iii. 21.

And yet further; he is not only the appointed Heir and Lord of all, but he is constituted the final Judge of the Living and the Dead: He who stood once at the Bar of Pilate and the High-priest as a Transgressor, hath a Throne of Judgment preparing for him, and the High-priest and Pilate shall be arraign'd there: All the Tribes of the Earth shall be gather'd together before him, and shall receive their eternal Sentence from his Mouth. Matt. xxv. 31, 32, 34, 41. God the Father hath appointed a day wherein he will judge the World in Righteousness, by
that Man whom he hath ordain'd, and has given Assurance of it to all Men by raising him from the Dead. Acts xvi. 31. The Father judgeth no Man, but hath committed all Judgment into the hands of his Son, and hath given him Authority to execute Judgment, because he is the Son of Man. John v. 22, 27.

IV. Our Blessed Saviour must have a most extensive Knowledge and Power to execute this vast Authority, and to fulfil this glorious Trust.

Let us first consider his Extensive Knowledge. He has not only the Kingdoms of Nature and Grace committed to his Care, but the Book of the Decrees of God is put into his hands, that he may govern these Kingdoms according to the Father's Will. So that Text is generally explain'd, Rev. v. 1--9. The Lamb in the midst of the Throne came and took the Book out of his Father's hand. He must know what God hath ordain'd, that he may execute all his Father's Counsels with regard to the Church and the World, and that he may send his Prophets to reveal to his Church, so much as is needful for them to know. The whole Book of the Revelation, is an Instance of this Knowledge communicated to him by the Father. Rev. i. 1. The Revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave unto him, to shew unto his Servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signify'd it by his Angel to his Servant John. The Day and Hour of the last Judgment, which were unknown to the Son in the days of his Flesh, Mark xiii. 32. and were reserved in the Father's hand, are now laid open before him in this Book of divine Counsels. Both as a Priest and a King he must know the Hearts of Men. He must see
fee their secret Thoughts, that he may govern and judge them aright, 1 Cor. iv. 5. And he must know all the Groans and Breathings of holy Souls, that he may present them in the Sympathy of his Affection before the Father, and may have a Fellow-feeling of their Infirmities and Sorrows. Heb. ii. 18. and iv. 15.

Again, He must be acquainted with the hidden Iniquities of Men and Devils, that he may counter-mine their pernicious Plots, that he may sometimes prevent the Mischiefs which they design, and sometimes permit them to accomplish their wicked Purposes for the Trial of his People. All the dark Perplexities of Providence, and the whole Maze and Labyrinth of human Events lies open before him, and the secret things in the Heart of Man; for he must bring to light the hidden things of Darkness, he must manifest the Counsels of the Heart, and reward every one according to their Works. 1 Cor. iv. 5. Rev. xxii. 12.

But besides all this, we must remember in the next place, that he is possessed of active Power equal to this extensive Knowledge. What could the Name of such a sublime Authority do toward the Government of all things, even if he had sufficient Knowledge, without a correspondent Power? It would be but a splendid Title, and a mere Shadow of Kingship. But Jesus our King has Universal Royalty, and has Power to support it. He must not sit like a shining Cypher on the Throne of Government, nor on the Tribunal of Judgment. Rev. v. 6. The Lamb who had been slain appears in the midst of the Throne, with seven Horns and seven Eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the Earth. Whether this denotes the seven chief Angels,
gels, which are prime Ministers in the Court of Heaven, employ'd by our exalted Saviour, or whether the Number Seven signifies a Perfection of Knowledge and Power, described by Eyes and Horns; still it must imply, either such outward Mediums of Power and Knowledge, or such inward Capacities, as the Son of God is furnish'd with, in order to govern the ends of the Earth, and execute his Father's Decrees. The Sun and Moon with all their Attendant Lights, the Earth, Air and Sea, with all their Millions of living Inhabitants; Nature and Time, with all their Wheels and Motions, are put under his Control: All move onward in their constant Courses by his Word, and they shall stop at his Command, and finish their last Period, Then shall he call to the Graves to give up their dead, the Graves shall obey the Son of Man, and the dead shall arise in Millions at his Call. John v. 26. And indeed, without such all-commanding Power, which can subdue all things to himself, how can he execute the Office of being Head over all things for the good of his Church? How can he fulfil his Father's Decrees? How is it possible he should transact the important Affairs of the last Day, that he should judge the intelligent Creation, that he should reward his Friends and Favourites in the Heavens, and send his implacable Enemies to the second Death? I do not presume here to impute or ascribe all these things to the human Nature of Christ as the Agent*: 'Tis sufficient if his human Nature be made

* Yet if I should have ascribed all this to the human Nature of Christ, consider'd as united to Godhead, that great Man Dr. Tho. Goodwin would abundantly support and vindicate me, in his Discourse of the Glories and Royalties of Christ as God-man. Vol 2 in Fol. where he exalts the Knowledge and Power of the Man Jesus Christ in many Pages together to far higher Degrees. Some of his Expressions
made the constant and conscious Medium whereby the indwelling Godhead shall exercise these Powers.

V. The last Instance I shall mention wherein his Exaltation consists, is this; That he is invested with Honours suitable to his Power and Grandeur. While he was on Earth he was obscure and unknown: and tho' he was the Son of God, yet the Sons of Men knew him not. 1 John iii. 2. He was in the World, and the World was made by him, and the World knew him not. John i. 10. And instead of doing Honour to him, agreeable to his Character and Dignity, the Princes and People of this World join'd to affront and blaspheme him: He was reproached, he was buffeted, he was scourged, he was put to a shameful and cruel Death; The Princes and the People join'd to crucify the Lord of Glory. Acts iv. 27. 1 Cor. ii. 8. But the Son of God must not always be the Mockery of sinful Men. There were Honours then reserved for him, which he is now possess'd of, such as became his native Perfections, and his acquired Merit. The Scriptures are full of these Honours which are paid to the Son upon his Exaltation. Phil. ii. 8, 9. Because he humbled himself and became obedient to Death, even the Death of the Cross,
Christ exalted, and

Crofs, therefore God hath highly exalted him, and
given him a Name above every Name, that at the
Name of Jesus every Knee should bow, of things in
Heaven, and things in Earth, and things under the
Earth; and that every Tongue should confess, that
Jesus Christ is Lord to the Glory of the Father. And
you find all the Creation actually joining to pay him
these Honours, in Rev. v. 12, 13. And the Angels
and the Elders say with a loud Voice, Worthy is
the Lamb that was slain, to receive Power and
Riches, &c. and every Creature in Heaven, Earth
and Sea, echo to the Song, Blessing and Honour,
and Glory and Power, be to him that sitteth on the
Throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever. Ac-
cording to the Tenor of Scripture, I think the Man
Jesus is not capable of receiving these Honours,
without such a Personal Union to the Godhead, as
makes him a God-Man or one with God: And up-
on this foot, I allow, with the learned and pious
Dr. Owen, and other Protestant Writers, that the
human Nature of Christ, in the Person of the Me-
diator, and consider'd as God-Man, may be wor-
thipped and receive its own Share of these Honours,
so far as is possible for a Creature in so close a Union
with the eternal Godhead.

Before I proceed to the Second general Part of
the Subject which is appointed me, I would make a
few Remarks or Inferences from the First.

Rem. 1. Is Christ exalted to such Glory, then all
the real Scandal of the Crofs ceases: It vanishes away
and is lost, when the Crucify'd Man is all glorious
at the right hand of God. The Scandal ceases from
Christ, and it ceases from his People too: it is no
longer a matter of Shame or Folly to be a Believer
or Follower of such a Jesus. The Power and Gran-
deur
deur of the Son of God, sitting on so illustrious a Throne, takes away and annihilates all the Scandal of a Man hanging on a Tree. The time is coming, and it hastens apace, when the Jews shall be ashamed of their Reproaches cast upon him, and the Sons of Men shall be confounded at the Thoughts of their former Mockery of the Son of God. If we keep this Thought warm at our Hearts, we shall never be ashamed of the Profession of the Cross of Christ.

Rem. 2. Is Christ exalted by the Father's right-hand, then his Doctrines are worthy of our Belief, his Promises are worthy of our Trust, and his Laws of our Obedience. His Doctrines are certainly worthy of our Belief; for never would God the Father have exalted his Son to such Honours, if he had brought one Doctrine to the World which was not divinely true. Had he not been a faithful Prophet in delivering all his Messages from God, he had never been raised to be a King. We may venture therefore safely to receive all the Lessons that he teaches us.

And we may safely rely on his Promises too, for when Jesus, the faithful Witness, is exalted to be Lord of all, he can fulfill every Promise he has made. We may venture to trust him, in our most important Interests of Heaven and Eternity. Does he assure us, that they who believe on him shall never perish? John vi. 40. Then we may rejoice with St. Paul, I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded he is able to keep that which I have committed to him till the great day. 2 Tim. i. 12. Does he promise his Followers, that he will raise them from the dead, and give them eternal Life? John vi. 24. Then we may safely commit our Bodies to the
the Grave under his Care, for these dead Bodies
shall hear the Voice of the Son of God and live:
The Grave shall resign its Prisoners at his Command:
He has the Keys of Death, and the Gates of Eternal Life are in his keeping:

And as his Promises are worthy of our Trust, so
are his Laws of our Obedience; for in this exalted State, he can enforce them powerfully with temporal and eternal Rewards, with temporal and eternal Punishments. Heaven, Earth and Hell, with all that belong to them, being placed in his power, the Blessings and the Vengeance are within the Reach of his hand, he shall distribute eternal Recompences to Men and Angels, as the righteous and mighty Judge of all. Psal. ii. 11, 12. Serve the Lord with fear, kiss the Son, or adore him with Love, lest you perish upon the Spot, if his Wrath be kindled but a little: But blessed are all they that put their trust in him.

Rem. 3. Is Christ exalted, then his faithful Followers have a Pledge and Pattern of their own Exaltation, tho' not to equal degrees of Pleasure, Honour or Power. 'Tis as their Forerunner he is enter'd within the Vail, and is dignify'd with many Glories, as their great Representative. Is his Body of Flesh and Blood by some glorious Change made fitter for the heavenly World, and better suited to be the Mansion or Instrument of a glorify'd Spirit? Such shall be the Bodies of all his People, for they must be like him: He will change their vile Bodies till they are made like his own glorious Body. Phil. iii. 21. Is his holy Soul fill'd with all Joy and Blessedness in the Presence of God, and in the Review of his past Labours and Sufferings? Such shall be the Felicity of their Souls, for they must be like him when
Ser. XIX.  

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when they shall see him as he is: They shall rejoice for ever, and their Joy shall no Man take from them. 1 John iii. 1. John xvi. 22. Is he exalted to Power and Dominion, to a Crown and a Throne, and to royal Honours? His Followers also must have a Crown of Life and Righteousness, they shall sit upon Thrones to judge the Tribes of Israel, they shall have Power over the Nations, and share according to their Measure and Capacity in the Honours of an exalted Saviour. Rev. ii. 10, 26. and iii. 21. Matt. xix. 28. Fix the Eye of your Faith on a glorify’d Jesus, and behold there a Pattern of your own Joys and Glories; such Honour have all his Saints. But again, I say, remember that your Character and your Share is far inferior to his; you are but Members, he is the Head: You are but Sinners saved, he is the Saviour and without Sin: You are but adopted Children, he is the Original Son: You are but Creatures made in time, he the Son of God before the Creation: In the beginning he was with God, and he was God. In all things he must have the Pre-eminence.

Rem. 4. Is Christ exalted, then he can secure to himself and to his People, whatsoever Honours or Blessings his Humiliation has purchased, for himself or for them. He offered up himself a Sacrifice for the Sins of Men, and thereby, according to the ancient Covenant with his Father, he procured a Seat of Glory and Power, at his right hand for himself, and eternal Salvation for all his People. He is risen from the Dead, he is possess’d of these promised Powers, he can vindicate his own Honours, and infure Grace and Glory, and all the Blessings of the purchased Salvation to all his People.
Is Christ exalted to the Kingdom, then the Plots of all his Enemies in Earth and Hell against his Church are but vain Devices. His Enemies must submit to him or perish before him. When God has set his Son *Jesus* as King on his holy Hill Zion, *Psal. ii.* and given him the Heathen for his Dominion; 'tis but a vain and fruitless Rage, that the Princes or People can discover against his Kingdom. Let the Kings of the Earth be wise, let them serve the Lord with fear, and bow before him, or he shall crush them with a Rod of Iron, and dash them as a Potter's Vessel. The Church of Christ may rejoice in her lowest Estate, having such a Ruler and such a Saviour on high. He will never forget nor forsake her Interests, till he has fulfilled all his Father's Promises, and made her all glorious and blessed for ever.

I proceed now to the Second general Head of my Subject; and that is, to consider the pouring down of the Spirit at the Exaltation of Christ. This was Matter of Astonishment to the Jews, and to the Inhabitants of all Nations who were gather'd together at the Feast. This is generally represented, and with great Propriety, as the noble Donatives which a Conqueror distributes on the Day of his Triumph, or the Royal Gifts of a King scatter'd among his People at his Coronation. Thus it is prophesy'd in *Psal. lixvi.* 18. Thus it is recorded in History, *Eph. iv.* 8. *He ascended on high, he led Captivity Captive,* he triumphed over the Powers of Darkness, which had led captive the Nations of the Earth, *he received Gifts for Men,* faith the Prophet, even for the rebellious or heathen World, that the Lord God might dwell amongst them as he dwelt
of old in Sion. The Apostle interprets this Verse, that he gave Gifts to Men, even the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, to make Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors and Teachers, for the Conversion of Sinners, and the Edification of the Church. These are the glorious Blessings, or Gifts of the Spirit, which he received of the Father, and which he shed forth on his Disciples, under the visible Emblem of Tongues of Fire. Let it be first observed here, that these divine Donatives, these Influences of the Holy Spirit are generally distinguished into Gifts and Graces; and tho' in truth they are all really Gifts of the Spirit from the Grace of an exalted Saviour, yet 'tis chiefly those new Capacities or Powers of Action, which are usually called Gifts, and are reckon'd among his extraordinary Operations, because they belong chiefly to the Primitive Times; whereas the Christian Virtues are more frequently call'd the Graces, or Fruits of the Spirit, and are attributed to his ordinary Influences, because they continue thro' all Ages of the Church.*

Let it be observed in the second Place, that these extraordinary Gifts of the Holy Spirit did not necessarily carry with them Christian Virtues or Graces; for in Matt. vii. 22. our Saviour declares, that some who prophesy'd in his Name and cast out Devils by virtue of these Gifts, were Workers of Iniquity, he will not know them, he will at the last Day bid them depart from him, and banish them for ever from his Presence: and on the other hand, the Graces of the Spirit are bestow'd on thousands in every Age, where these extraordinary Gifts were never

* I grant my Text speaks chiefly, if not only, of the extraordinary Gifts of the Spirit; but as the Graces proceed also from the Spirit of Christ exalted, I thought it not proper to omit them here.
never receiv’d; tho’ some suppose that in the primitive Days all that were converted by the Apostles themselves, receiv’d some or other of these Gifts by the Imposition of their Hands.

Give me leave now briefly to set before you, the several Kinds of these Gifts and Graces of the Spirit of God, which were pour’d down from Heaven upon Men by our exalted Saviour; together with a Hint of the chief Designs or Uses of them, and then I shall conclude with some Remarks upon them.

The Extraordinary Gifts are of various Kinds; they are represented by the Apostle Paul, 1 Cor. xii. 8, &c. and explain’d by learned and ingenious Writers. In the first place, the Word of Wisdom, or an extensive Acquaintance with the Mysteries of Christianity, the Doctrines and Duties of the Religion of Christ. This eminently belong’d to the Apostles, that they might be able upon all Occasions to preach the Gospel in all the substantial and necessary Parts of it, and answer the Questions of Importance which were proposed to them. The next was the Word of Knowledge, which may imply such an Insight into the Old Testament and the Writings of the Prophets, as to cite them and happily apply them by way of Interpretation or Allusion, to illustrate or confirm the Gospel of Christ, and to refute the Jewish Abuses and Perversions of them. The third is the Gift of Faith, that is probably a peculiar Impulse that came upon them from Heaven, when any difficult Matter was to be perform’d, which inwardly assure’d them, that the Spirit of God would enable them to perform it. Then follows the Gift of healing of various Distempers by a Word of their Mouth, or a Touch of their Hand, and the Gift of
working other Miracles also, even the Power of inflicting Diseases or Death it self upon Offenders. So St. Paul not only healed the Maladies of Men, but struck Elymas the Sorcerer blind; so St. Peter not only bid Tabitha arise from the dead, but he also pronounced sudden Death upon Ananias and Sapphira. Another of these Gifts was Prophecy, which taken in general signifies a Power to speak by Inspiration: And perhaps it may include the Gift of Utterance or Freedom of Speech: But in a more particular Sense implies the foretelling of things to come. So Paul foretold the rise of Anti-Christ, i Thes. ii. 7. And Agabus, a Christian Prophet, predicted the Famine in the Days of Claudius Caesar. Acts xi. 28. Besides these, there was the Gift of discerning Spirits; that is, either of discovering the Heart of a Man, which on some Occasions might be necessary in those early days of the Gospel, or of discerning the Temper and Talents of a Person, that it might be better judged in what Service to employ him. And after these follow the Gifts of Tongues and the Interpretation of Tongues, whereby one Person could speak several foreign Languages which he never learn'd, that he might preach the Gospel to Persons of distant Nations: And another could interpret Tongues, or explain to the bulk of the Assembly, what was spoken in a strange Language, for the use of Strangers who might come amongst them. Besides all these, we might reckon also the Gifts of singing Psalms and praying by the Spirit, which parts of Worship were perform'd by Inspiration, in those Primitive Times. Thus much of the Gifts.

The Graces of the Holy Spirit are also of various Kinds, for they include all those Christian Vertues or Principles of Holiness, which are wrought in the
Hearts of Men by the Influence of the Holy Ghost; such as, Faith, Repentance, Love to God and Man; add to these, Meekness, Temperance, a well-grounded Hope, holy Joy, Patience in suffering, and Courage to profess the Name and Religion of Christ, even in the face of Death or Martyrdom. See the Fruits of the Spirit reckon’d up by the Apostle, Gal. v. 22.

The Design of the extraordinary Gifts of the Spirit, which were shed forth by our ascended Saviour, was to spread the Gospel more speedily in the World, to diffuse an over-powering Evidence of it among Men, and to establish this new Religion in the Earth. Heb. ii. 3, 4. This great Salvation at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirm’d unto us by them that heard him; God also hearing them Witness both with Signs and Wonders, and with divers Miracles, and Gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own Will. St. Paul assures the Corinthians, that when an unlearned Man, or an Unbeliever came into their Assemblies, and heard them speak by Inspiration the Doctrines of the Gospel in a proper manner, he is convinced, he is judged, the Secrets of his Heart are made manifest, and falling down on his Face, he will worship God, and will report that God is in you of a truth; 1 Cor. xiv. 24. And indeed, without these Demonstrations of the Spirit attending the Gospel in the first Publication of it, it was not to be supposed, that so new and strange a Religion should make its way like Lightning thro’ the Nations, in opposition to the Prejudices of Mankind and the Power of Princes, and in a few Years illuminate so many dark Countries, which had lain for long Ages under the Shadow of Death. When Christianity was well establish’d
blish'd in the World, these extraordinary Gifts died away by degrees.

As for the Graces of the Spirit, the Design of them was directly to change Sinners into Saints, and to raise a Church for Christ among Men. These were communicated sometimes in an extraordinary Manner and Degree in the primitive Days, in order to give the Gospel a more speedy Success, after the Exaltation of our blessed Lord: but these are continued also in following Ages, and sent down among Men daily, by our blessed Saviour in his glorify'd State, who is exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, that he may maintain an everlasting Kingdom on Earth, thro' all Ages, by bestowing Repentance on Men, and Forgiveness of Sins. It is by these Influences new Converts are made, Sinners are call'd and sanctify'd, Churches are rais'd or continued in a long Succession, and the Family of Christ restor'd, when 'tis diminish'd by the Persecution of Tyrants on Earth, or by calling away the Saints to Heaven by Death in the Course of Nature.

Thus I have given you a very brief account of the Influences of the blessed Spirit, both with regard to Gifts and Graces, which were promised by the Father, and shed forth by our exalted Saviour, together with the most eminent and important Uses and Designs of them. Permit me now to conclude with these four Remarks.

Rem. 1. Since the Gifts of the Spirit are shed forth, in a way of Promise and Prediction, they more plainly appear to be divine. It is the promised Spirit which our Saviour gave to Men. It can never be said they were Casual Events, or they happen'd by Chance, for they were foretold by the ancient Prophets,
Christ exalted, and

prophets, by John the Baptist, and by our blessed Saviour: They were promised to Christ Jesus by his Father, and he promised them to his own Disciples, and bid them wait at Jerusalem, till they received them. Luke xxiv. 49. There is a long shining Track of divine Promise and Faithfulness, and a blessed Harmony of Grace and Truth, that runs thro' all this Event of the pouring down of the Holy Spirit, and we may trace it thro' the Writings of the Prophets and Apostles with sacred Delight. Is the Spirit sent down to Men in this wondrous manner, then God has not fail'd of his Promises to the Jews and Gentiles, made by his ancient Prophets; then the Father hath not fail'd of his Promise to his Son Jesus, nor has the Son of God fail'd of his Promise to his Disciples and Followers. Acts ii. 16, 17. Luke xxiv. 49. John xv. 26. Acts i. 8. compar'd with my Text.

Rem. 2. Are these wondrous Gifts of the Spirit sent down to publish and confirm the blessed Gospel; then surely it demands our firmest Faith, since it was propagated at first by such divine Miracles, and has been established by such surprizing and glorious Gifts. How wisely has God ordain'd these visible and sensible Wonders, to prove the Exaltation of his Son Jesus, when he left the World, and became invisible to Men? He hath shed forth all this which you see and bear; and this is the last and the greatest Witness to Christianity, and it confirms all the rest. Our Saviour wrought many Miracles indeed, and he spoke as never Man spoke; yet he assure'd his Disciples, that after his Departure they should not only do the same Works, but greater Works than these shall ye do, because I go to my Father. John xiv. 12. Our blessed Lord cast out Devils, healed Diseases, and raised
raised the Dead; what greater Works then can we suppose were left for the Apostles to perform, or what greater Gifts than these can be conferred upon them? May I have leave to express a Conjecture here, that these might be the Word of Wisdom and Knowledge, and the Gift of Tongues. We grant it was indeed a Miracle, to heal the Bodies of the Sick with a Word; but does it not seem a more astonishing thing, that the Souls of Persons, who were in a great measure ignorant of divine Truths, should be at once illuminated with a Word of Wisdom, should be furnished so soon with such an extensive Knowledge of the Mysteries, Doctrines and Duties of the Gospel, that they were able to preach them to an ignorant World; and that they should be so fully persuaded of these Doctrines at once, in opposition to many former Prejudices which reign'd in them, that they could now venture their Lives in the Defence of these divine Truths, which they learn'd from Heaven by such an Inspiration? It is granted again, that 'tis a Miracle to make the Deaf to hear, the Dumb to speak, to put Life into a dead Body: But is it not a more amazing Event, that the Mind of a Fisherman who knew nothing but his Mother-Tongue, should at once be furnish'd with a Million of Words, even the Languages of various Nations, and that his Organs of Speech should be enabled to pronounce them right, which would be the Learning and Labour of two or three Ages; and that they should speak to every Man in their own Tongue the wonderful Works of God? And yet still this Wonder is greater, when we consider, that the Apostles not only spake with strange Tongues themselves, but they communicated this Gift of Tongues to others also, which was never done by our Saviour himself
himself in his own Life-time. Such were the Attestations to the Gospel of our blessed Lord, and so bright was the Evidence that was shed over it by these Gifts of the Spirit, that this is appointed to be the Supreme Seal to the Truth of it, and he that blasphemes the Holy Ghost, and renounces this Evidence, after it has been convincingly set before him, and obstinately attributes these divine Wonders to the Sleights of Men, or to the Craft of the Devil, is seal'd up under Condemnation by the Lips of the Saviour of the World; and there is no Forgiveness for him. Matt. xii. 31, 32 *.

Rem. 3. Tho' Jesus the Founder of the Christian Religion submitted to Death, yet the Christian Church was never design'd to die, because Jesus lives again in an exalted State, and hath all the Gifts and Graces of the Holy Spirit in his hand, which have been the Life and Soul of the Church. When he left the World, he sent down his Spirit, both in the Gifts and Graces of it, to raise and maintain a Temple or Dwelling for himself in it so long as the World should stand: He hath promised that his Spirit shall abide with it for ever, at least for the ordinary Communication of Gifts, and the Influences of special Grace, and therefore the Gates of Hell or Death shall not prevail against it.

And it might be added here also, that this is the Reason why Believers persevere in Faith and Holiness, because Jesus their exalted Head has the Fullness of the Spirit in him, and 'tis from him that the Members derive their Life, and all their Support. He that was dead is alive, and behold he lives for ever.

* Of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, and the Efficacy and Power of them, to prove and confirm the Gospel of Christ; see the best Account that ever I read, in Miscellanea Sacra. Essay I.
ever. Rev. i. 18. And because I live, says our blessed Lord, ye shall live also. John xiv. 19.

Rem. 4. This Thought points to us whither to direct our Eyes and Hopes, when the Spirit of God is withdrawn from amongst us. Since Jesus ascended to Heaven, the great God communicates his promised Spirit to Men only thro' the hands of his Son. Let Ministers, let Christians, let Churches learn, whence to derive new Supplies, new Gifts, new Graces and Influences, when spiritual things run low in the midst of them. 'Tis from the Hand of an exalted Saviour that we must receive all these Blessings: 'Tis he must give new Life to all his Churches under their dying Circumstances, and new Zeal and Vigour to our Souls under all their Witherings and Decays.

Thus all-glorious and divine is our Salvation, from the original Love, Power and Promise of God the Father, thro' the Sufferings, the Death and Exaltation of Jesus Christ his Son, and by the Gifts and Graces of the blessed Spirit. Hence arise the Talents and Furniture of Ministers, and hence the Faith and Hope, the Life and Holiness, the Joy and Comfort of Christians. Nor can I put a sweeter Period to such a Discourse as this, than in those Words of the great Apostle, which unite the divine Springs of our Salvation, May the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Love of God the Father, and the Communion of the Holy Spirit, be for ever with you. Amen.
SERMON XX.

Effectual Calling, with its Fruits; viz.
Regeneration, and Sanctification by the Holy Spirit.

2 Timothy I. 9.

Who hath saved us and called us with an holy Call-
ing, not according to our Works, but according
to his own Purpose and Grace, which was given
us in Christ Jesus before the World began.

THE Apostle begins this Epistle with Express-
sions of Affection and Esteem for his Son
Timothy: assuring him, that he mentioned him con-
stantly in his Prayers, and desired greatly to see him,
forasmuch as he was filled with Joy, when he re-
membred the unsignified Faith which was first in his
Grandmother Lois and his Mother Eunice, and he
was persuaded dwelt in him also. It is a very great
Blessing to be born of religious Parents, and to in-
herit the Graces of pious Ancestors. The Apostle
proceeds in the next Words, to exhort him to stir up
the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, which he had received
by the putting on of his Hands; and not to be a-
shamed of the Testimony of the Lord, nor of Paul
his
his Prisoner, but to submit to the Afflictions of the Gospel, according to the Power of God, [which was given him for this End;] who hath (says he) designed us for Salvation from Eternity, and in pursuance of that Design hath called us with an holy Calling, not according to our Works, but according to his own Purpose and Grace, which was given [that is, determined to be given] us in Christ Jesus before the World began.

From these Words I propose to consider,

First, The Nature and Extent of the Gospel-Call,

Secondly, Its Author.

Thirdly, The Properties by which it is distinguished.

And, Fourthly, The Happy Fruits and Consequences of it.

First, We are to consider, the Nature and Extent of the Gospel-Call, which is either general, or more particular and special.

1. We read in Scripture of an universal or general Call, directed to all that live under the Gospel. The Invitation runs in the most comprehensive Terms, that none may think themselves excluded. *Come unto me All ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.* Matt. xi. 28. *God so loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son, that Whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting Life.* John iii. 16. *The Spirit and the Bride say Come, and let him that heareth say Come, and let him that is athirst come, and Whosoever will, let him take the Water of Life freely.* Rev. xxii. 17. Salvation by Faith in Christ
Christ was first propos'd to the Jews, but upon their peremptory Refusal, it was offered without Distinction to the Gentiles, who received it gladly; from which time the Partition-Wall has been broken down, and in every Nation, they that fear God and work Righteousness, may be accepted of him. This was represented by the Parable of the Wedding-Supper, Matt. xxii. to which the King sent his Servants once and again, to call them who were first bidden, [that is, the Jews; but they despising the Invitation, and abusing his Messengers, He was wroth, and commanded them to go into the high-ways, and gather together as many as they could find, both good and bad, that is, Jews or Gentiles. So that after the Resurrection of Christ, and the Descent of the Holy Ghost, neither Circumcision availed any thing, nor Uncircumcision, but the New Creature. Our blest Saviour, when on Earth, went thro' the Cities of Judæa and Samaria, inviting the Inhabitants to believe in him; and though his Personal Ministry was confined to the Jews, yet after his Death, the Gospel was intended to spread over the whole World; for thus it is written, And thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the Dead the third Day, that Repentance and Remission of Sins might be preached in his Name among all Nations. Luke xxiv. 46, 47.

The Offers of Salvation are not only made, but urged upon Mankind in general, with the most persuasive Arguments and encouraging Promises. And the Apostles, after the Ascension of our Lord, were authorized to preach the Gospel to every Creature, and to beseech them in the most earnest manner, to be reconciled to God. In the Execution of this Commission we find them frequently disputing both with Jews and Gentiles, arguing from the Scriptures, that Jesus
Jesus is the Christ, and making use of the most powerful Motives to persuade them to embrace the Christian Faith, upon his Assurance, that now, there was neither Greek nor Jew, Circumcision nor Uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but that whosoever would come to Christ, should in no wise be cast out.

But here it must be carefully observed, the Gospel-Call is of a moral Nature, and addressed to our reasonable Powers: The blessed Jesus does not force Men into his Service, by offering Violence to their Understandings and Wills; but convinces the former, by setting the important Truths of Religion before it, in a just and amiable Light; and influences the latter, by Motives and Arguments proper to dispose it to act agreeable to such Conviction: for which purpose, there are left on Record a Number of exceeding great and precious Promises; and if these have not their proper Influence, the awakening Terrors of a future Judgment are revealed, as the certain Portion of the finally impenitent and unbelieving. If Men complain, their Powers are broken, and that of themselves they cannot comply with the Calls of God in his Word, He has directed them where to seek for necessary Assistance, and has exalted his Son Jesus to give Repentance, as well as Remission of Sins. So that if Men finally refuse the Gospel-Salvation, it will appear to have been owing more to a want of Will than of Power. God will be justified in his Proceedings, and the Creature must stand speechless and without Excuse.

2. Besides this general Call of the Gospel, there is a more particular and personal Call, when the Holy Spirit shines into the Mind with such irresistible Light, as convinces the Judgment, awakens the Conscience,
Conscience, and engages the Will to a Compliance with every part of its Duty. This may in a Sense be called the Demonstration of the Spirit, as it is attended with such a divine Power, as subdues all Opposition, and brings every Thought into his Obedience; I thank God without ceasing, says the Apostle to the Thessalonians, that when ye received the Word of God, which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the Word of Man, but as it is in truth, the Word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe. The Word of God does not work upon the Mind in a way of physical Influence, but, as I observ'd before, in a manner suited to our rational Faculties; which becomes effectual when it makes a sanctifying and saving Impression upon the Heart by the superior Agency of the Holy Spirit.

This I conceive to be the Doctrine of Scripture, and very consistent with the Reason of things; for does God do any Injury to the rest of Mankind, when He distributes his peculiar Favours to a few? Do we charge Him with unrighteousness, when in the course of his Providence He pulls down one and sets up another without any apparent Motive? Why then should this be thought unreasonable in the manner of dispensing Spiritual Blessings?

Besides, the Efficacy of divine Grace is proper, if not necessary, to secure the Purposes of his Favour towards his Elect: How else could we be sure that all that the Father had given to his Son should could come to him? Might not the Will of Man, under its present disaffection to Virtue and Goodness, frustrate and disappoint the Purpose of God?

If Men were left to their depraved Appetites and Passions, might not the Son of God die in vain? For tho' the Doctrines of the Gospel have so appa-
rent a Tendency to the good of Mankind, yet we are assured that the preaching of the Gospel was a Stumbling-block to the Jews, and Foolishness to the Greeks; that the wise and learned Men of ancient time universally rejected it, and that it would never have prevailed in the Hands of the Apostles without the powerful Operation of the Holy Spirit, the Weapons of their Warfare being mighty thro' God to pull down the strong-holds of Sin.

The effectual Agency of the divine Spirit in Conversion is further necessary to secure the Glory of our Salvation to its great Author; for when the Apostle had said, We are justified freely by divine Grace, thro' the Redemption that is in Jesus Christ; he adds, Where then is boasting? It is excluded (says he,) by what Law? By the Law of Works? No, but by the Law of Faith. 'Tis the very Genius of the Gospel to hide pride from Man, and set the Crown of his Salvation upon the head of the Redeemer, who for this purpose is made of God to us Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification and Redemption, that no Flesh might glory in his Presence but according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord. 1 Cor. i. 30, 31. Upon the whole, let Men dispute as long as they will about the Strength or Weakness of their moral Powers, it must remain an undeniable Truth, that we are saved by the free favour and grace of God, and that No Man can come to Christ except the Father draw him.

Secondly, We are to enquire into the Author of effectual Calling, which my Text says is God. If Ministers had the Tongues of Angels, they could not of themselves prevail with Sinners to believe and obey.
bey the Gospel; even our Saviour himself, who was the best Preacher that ever lived, did not persuade his Countrymen to receive him as the Messiah; the Charms of Oratory may touch the Passions, but have not force enough to penetrate the Heart and give Life to a dead Sinner: This is the Prerogative of God alone, as appears from numberless Passages of Holy Scripture; *We are born not of Blood, (says the Evangelist) nor of the Will of the flesh, nor of the Will of man, but of God.* John i. 13. And the Apostle speaks the same Language; *He that has wrought us for this self-same thing is God.* — *We are his Workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to good Works.* Sometimes this Work is ascribed to Christ, who is called by the Apostle to the Hebrews the Author and Finisher of our Faith; but it is most frequently attributed to the Holy Spirit, whose peculiar Office it is to awaken the Conscience, and to dispose the several Faculties of the Soul to a cheerful Compliance with their best Interests. 'Tis he that strives with the Sinner by his secret and powerful Operations on the Mind, tho' he does not always prevail. If men resist him, He is grieved, and after some time departs; but if they comply, He comes into the Heart, and makes it an holy Habitation for himself; He sways the Sceptre, and having dethroned the Powers of Darkness, adorns his own Temple with the rich furniture of Faith, Love, Peace, Joy, and other divine Graces, and abides in it for ever.

By the Representation the Scripture gives of the deplorable Condition of fallen Man, it is further evident that his **Effectual Calling** must be from God; for it says, "that his Understanding is darkned, and "alienated from the Life of God." That his Will and
and Affections are under invincible Prejudices against Virtue and Goodness, and strongly biased to Sin and Folly; nay, that he is a Slave to the Devil, and carried captive by him at his pleasure. Now is it reasonable to suppose that a Creature under such unhappy Circumstances should be able to deliver himself from the bondage of Corruption, and translate himself into a State of Light and Liberty? Can he by the feeble Remains of his natural Powers change his own Heart, remove his Prejudices, subdue his Corruptions, destroy the Habits of Vice that are wrought into his Nature, and make himself a new Creature? Is it not more reasonable to conclude the necessity of a divine Agency, in order to accomplish the mighty Change?

Besides, Effectual Calling is compared in Scripture to those wonderful Works that are peculiar to God himself. It is called a New Creation, and a Resurrection from the Dead; nay, 'tis compared to the mighty Power of God, which was wrought in Christ when he was raised from the dead. Eph. i. 19.

If then we will speak the Language of Scripture, we must conclude, that it is God alone who calls Men effectually into a State of Salvation, and that except they are born of Water, and of the Spirit, they cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.

Thirdly, We are now to consider the Properties by which this Call of the Spirit is described. And,

1. It is Secret, God does not call Sinners with an audible Voice, but by secret and powerful Impressions upon their Souls; As the things of a man knoweth no man, but the Spirit of a man that is in him; even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. 1 Cor. ii. 11. The word of...
the Gospel sounds alike upon the Ears of all the Hearers, but does not equally affect their Hearts: For to some (says the Apostle,) we are a Saviour of Life to Life, and to others a Saviour of Death to Death; and whence can this arise but from the secret and powerful Impressions of the Holy Spirit? What other Reason can be given why the same Sermon should enter the Heart of one Hearer, when it hardens, or at least makes no considerable Impressions upon another? Can this arise merely from the Force of Words, or the different Disposition and Temper of the Mind? Was there any good Disposition towards our Saviour in the Heart of Saul, when he was travelling to Damascus, to persecute the Saints, and bring them bound to Jerusalem? Or in those of St. Peter's Hearers, who had crucified the Lord of Life and Glory, and yet were prick'd to the Heart by his awakening Sermon? The Change must therefore arise from the Influences of that Spirit, who can speak divine Life into a dead Sinner, in a manner that no Ear can hear, nor Eye discern; for the Kingdom of God cometh not with Observation, that is, the Kingdom of God within you. Luke xvii. 20, 21.

2. It is a personal Call; Ministers draw the Bow at a venture, but the Spirit of God directs the Arrow to the Breast where it is to enter. Saul was singled out from the rest of his Company who were travelling with him to Damascus, and heard a Voice directed to himself, saying, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? when they that were with him heard not the Voice that spake. Indeed this was an extraordinary Case; but if God has chosen certain Persons to Salvation, such must be effectually called; or if He has given any to Christ as his peculiar
cular Charge, they must be brought in; for he hath said, that of all that the Father has given him, He will lose nothing; and when He gives up the Kingdom to the Father, he will appear at the head of his whole mystical Body, and say, Behold I, and the Children that God has given me.

3. Effectual Calling is under the direction of the sovereign Will and Pleasure of God, as to the Time, and Manner, and Means of it. Some are called into the Vineyard at the third hour; others at the sixth, and others not till the eleventh hour. Some, like good Obadiah, have feared the Lord from their Youth, or like young Timothy, from Children have been acquainted with the Holy Scriptures; when others are born out of due season. The Manner of God’s calling men into the Kingdom of Grace is no less various: Some are drawn with the Cords of Love, and like little Samuel can hardly distinguish the Voice, or declare at what time or manner the happy Change began; others have been called in a more remarkable manner, and like the Goaler have been struck to the Ground, and made to cry out trembling and a-ftonished, What shall I do to be saved? The like Variety may be observed in the Means of effectual Calling: Some have been awakened by a Sermon, others by a remarkable Providence: Some by reading the Holy Scriptures, or Books of Devotion; and others by religious Conversation, Meditation, and Prayers; Examples of which, are upon Record in Scripture, and in the Lives of the Saints in the several Ages of the Church: And therefore we may venture to apply the Words of our Saviour to this Argument, John iii. 8. The Wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence
whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

4. Effectual Calling is without any regard to our Works: so says the Apostle in the Text, He has called us not according to our Works. If God had called men for the sake of their good Works, then the wise Philosophers, and ancient Moralists would certainly have been preferred to a number of poor Fishermen; whereas the Scripture says, not many Wise men after the Flesh, nor many Mighty, nor many Noble are called; and our Saviour gives thanks to his Father, because He had hid these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them to Babes. God is pleased sometimes to call the very chief of Sinners, and such as are farthest from the Kingdom of Heaven, as, Mary Magdalen, and those Members of the Church of Corinth, who were so far from being disposed or prepared for the Grace of God, that to the very time of their Conversion they were Fornicators, Idolaters, Adulterers, Effeminate, Thieves, Covetous, Drunkards, Revilers and Extortioners; and yet by the effectual Working of divine Grace they were washed and sanctified and justified in the Name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of God. 1 Cor. vi. 10, 11. But these remarkable Instances of Conversion are not designed to encourage men to continue in a Course of Sin and Impiety, but to prevent Despair, and to encourage a speedy Repentance in those who have been so unhappy as to abuse the divine Patience for a long time: By Grace therefore we are saved thro' Faith, and that not of our selves, it is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast.

5. The effectual Calling of the Holy Spirit is always successful. He strives sometimes with Sinners by
by his Word and Providences without Effect; but
when he comes to accomplish the Purposes of divine
Grace upon the Heart of a chosen Vessel, He rides
conquering, and to conquer, and makes all Opposi-
tion fall before him. Tho' the stubborn Sinner may
frequently have grieved the Holy Spirit, and stifled
his common Operations: Tho' he may have set at
nought his Counsels and Reproofs, yet when the set
time to favour him is come, the Spirit by his almighty
Arm will beat down every high Imagination, and
make every Mountain a Plain, according to the Pro-
phesy, Zach. iv. 6, 7. Who art thou, O great Moun-
tain? Before Zerubabel thou shalt become a Plain,
and He shall bring forth the Head-stone thereof with
Shoutings, crying Grace, Grace to it. Then the
Eyes of the Blind shall be opened, and the Ears of
the Deaf unstopped; the Creature shall be made
willing, and the great Revolution in the Soul of man,
superior to the feeble Powers of Nature, shall be ac-
complished at once, not by Might nor by Power, but
by the Spirit of the Lord.

Fourthly, We are to consider the Fruits and Con-
sequences of effectual Calling; which may be repre-
sented with advantage, by comparing the sad State of
Mankind before their being received into the King-
dom of Grace, with their happy Condition after-
wards.

Before their Conversion they were in a State of
Darkness, Slavery, Corruption and Death; now they
are delivered from all this Misery, and made Parta-
kers of the Privileges of the Children of God. But
the more immediate Consequences of effectual Cal-
ling may be comprehended under these three Parti-
culars.
1. The first is, Regeneration, or the new Nature. For as by the Offence of One, Judgment came upon all men to Condemnation; even so, when men are effectually called, the free Gift comes upon them to Justification of Life; the Sentence of Death is then reversed; there being no Condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, because the Law of the Spirit of Life, or the new Life given them by him, has made them free from the Law of Sin and Death. Rom. viii. 1, 2. Our Sins are then pardoned, and by virtue of our Interest in the atonement of our great High-Priest, we are justified from all things from which we could not be justified by the Law of Moses.

Moreover, when we pass thro' the new Birth, the Powers of the Soul are quickned and changed; the Principles of all heavenly Graces and Virtues are implanted; and the Byas of the Affections turned towards God and things above; in a word, no sooner are we born again, but old things within us pass away, behold all things become new. 2 Cor. v. 17. and we are restored in part to that divine Image in which our first Parents were created. As the Spirit of God, by moving upon the Face of the Chaos, brought the World into the beautiful Order in which we now see it, by the same almighty Influence upon the Hearts of Men, He forms the new Creature, commanding Light to shine into the dark Mind, regulating the Will and Affections, quickning our feeble Powers, and assisting them in the discharge of their Duty. Men may reform some Irregularities of Life by the Improvements of Reason and Resolution; but no man can change his own Nature, or infuse the divine Life into his Soul.

2. Sancti-
Sanctification by the Holy Spirit is another Consequence of effectual Calling. He hath saved us, and called us with an holy Calling; the Kingdom of Satan, into which all Mankind are born, is full of Impiety, and the Subjects of it are Enemies to God by wicked Works; but Christ has set up another Kingdom in this World, the Subjects of which are an holy Nation, and a peculiar People zealous of good Works. When Persons enter into this Kingdom, they return to their Duty, and become the obedient Subjects of him who has bought them with his Blood. Then the Image of God and Holiness begins to revive; Corruptions are mortified, and the Love of God and Religion gains ground: The work of Sanctification is Progressive; it begins at Conversion, but will not be perfected 'till we come to Glory; the Habits of Vice will not be entirely destroyed at once, but Grace and the new Creature will prevail by degrees; for every one that is born of God overcometh the world, and this is the Victory by which we overcome, even our Faith. 'Tis the distinguishing Character of all who are effectually called, that they are Saints, that is, holy Persons, being called to Virtue as well as to Glory; the new Principle within them will influence their Lives, and dispose them to a cheerful Compliance with every part of their Duty. The Service of God will appear not only reasonable but delightful, for there is a Beauty in Holiness, which strikes the Mind of a real Christian with eager desires after the largest measures of conformity to God. The Morality of the Heathens did not carry them this length; for tho' their wife Men commended the Practice of Virtue, and exposed the Vices of the Age in which they lived, they had no Notion of inward Religion or a change of
of Heart, which is the distinguishing Character of Gospel Sanctification, and without which no man can see the Lord.

3. A certain Prospect of Salvation. He hath saved us. (says my Text) that is, designed us for Salvation; and in order to this, has called us with an holy Calling: There is a Chain of Salvation which begins in the divine Purpose, and secures the final Happiness of those who come within the Compass of it, whom he predestinates, them he calls; and whom he calls, them he justifies; and whom he justifies, them he also glorifies. Rom. viii. 30. 'Tis not in the power of Satan or his Emmissaries to pluck a Believer out of the Kingdom of Grace; they may disturb his Peace, and give him many a deadly Wound, but shall not be suffered to destroy his Title to eternal Life, because the great Advocate and Intercessor of his Church is always praying that his Peoples Faith may not fail, and by his Interest in the Court of Heaven has engaged the Powers of the Godhead on their side; My Father that gave them me is greater than all, and none is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand. John x. 29. What an unspeakable Privilege then is effectual Calling! which not only delivers us from all the miserable Effects of the Fall of our first Parents, but recovers us to the divine Favour, restores us to his Image, and secures the Possession of eternal Life and Happiness.

We proceed to make some practical Remarks on this Discourse; and,

First, We may observe that the Doctrine of effectual Calling, as it has been explained, is not inconsistent with any of the moral Perfections of God, neither with his Justice, Goodness, Sincerity or
or Truth: If it were, it could be no Doctrine of Revelation; because God cannot deny himself, nor renounce any of his essential Attributes. But certainly it cannot be inconsistent with the Justice of God to bestow undeserved Favours on some of his Creatures, when He does no real Injury to the rest; may he not do what he will with his own? We allow this in the Distribution of temporal Blessings, and why not in spiritual? Surely God may be merciful to whom He will be merciful, and have Compassion on whom he will have Compassion, when he deals with the rest of his Creatures in a most righteous and equitable manner, according to their Deserts.

Nor is it inconsistent with Goodness, for all Mankind having forfeited the divine Favour, and exposed themselves to his Wrath, He might reserve them all with the fallen Angels, under Chains of Darkness, to the Judgment of the great Day: But if He is pleased to shew Mercy to some, and bring them into a state of Salvation by a Redeemer, what reason have the rest to complain? especially when He has shewed his good-will to all that enjoy the Gospel, by affording them such means and advantages, that it will be their own fault if they are not happy; for this will be the Condemnation of the unbelieving World, that they will not come to Christ that they may have Life.

And thus we may reconcile the effectual Calling of some, with the Sincerity and Truth of God, in sending Invitations and Offers of Grace to all who fit under the Gospel; for tho' it is not in Men's own power to convert themselves, sufficient Assistance may be had from Christ, in whom it has pleased the Father that all fulness should dwell. But it may be replied, Will the Redeemer of Mankind give his Spirit
Effeætual Calling.

Spirit and Grace to them that apply for them with sincere Importunity? Yes certainly, for whoever comes to him He will in no wise cast out; and, If ye being evil know how to give good Gifts to your Children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the holy Spirit to them that ask him? Luke xi. 10, 13.

To impeach the Sincerity of God in the Offers of his Grace, is neither better nor worse than to make him a Lyar; but is there any Inconsistency between his securing the Salvation of some by effectual Calling; and leaving others to make what use they will of the common Offers of his Grace in the Gospel? May he not invite all, so as to leave them without excuse, and yet powerfully constrain some to come in? Let not therefore the secure Sinner deceive himself with false Reasonings about the Decrees of God, nor imagine that the Spirit is to do every thing, and himself nothing; but let him strive to enter in at the strait Gate, and make the best use of his Powers, calling in the aids of divine Grace, that he may lay hold of eternal Life; for no Man will be able to plead in excuse of his Infidelity, that he did his utmost, but was denied the necessary Assistance for his Salvation; but this will be the Condemnation of every unbelieving impenitent Sinner, that he loved darkness rather than light, because his Deeds were evil.

Secondly. This Doctrine gives Encouragement to all sorts of Sinners, to wait at Wisdom's Gates, and to knock at the Posts of her Doors; for who can tell but one time or other he may be effectually called? Attend therefore to Reading, to Exhortation and Prayer: Be constant in publick Worship, for there the Spirit works with the Word, and very often makes it powerful to Salvation; Remember the multitude of
of impotent Folks, of Blind, of Halt, and of Withered that lay by the Side of the Pool of Bethesda, waiting for the moving of the Waters; For (says the Evangelist) an Angel went down at a certain Season and troubled the Waters, and whosoever first stepped in after the troubling of the Waters, was healed. Patience and Diligence are necessary to our obtaining the Grace of God; but in vain do Men expect to be effectually called, that seldom or never come under the means of Grace; or that look their Faces in the Glass of the Word, but go away and forget what manner of Persons they are. If we are earnest in our Pursuits of eternal Life, we shall hear the Word with Diligence, and follow it with Prayer: We shall impress it upon our Minds by Meditation, and endeavour that by beholding as in a Glass the Glory of the Lord, we may be changed into the same Image from Glory to Glory as by the Spirit of the Lord. Blessed are they that watch daily at Wisdom's Gates, after this manner, and wait at the Posts of her Doors, for these will in due time find Life, and obtain favour of the Lord.

Thirdly, Learn hence, that the Success of the Gospel depends upon the concurrent Agency of the Divine Spirit. Paul may plant, and Apollos water, but God gives the Increase; Ministers may awaken your natural Powers, and cause a shaking among the dry Bones; but 'tis the Holy Spirit that must breathe into them the Breath of Life. The wise Philosophers and ancient Moralists were more susceptible of Reason and Argument than the common People, and yet These did not receive the Gospel. Let Ministers therefore and People pray earnestly for the Presence and Operations of the Holy Spirit with the Ordinances.
Effe\textsuperscript{t}ual Calling.

Effectual Calling.

Effe\textsuperscript{t}ual Calling.

ces of the Gospel, that it may be said from time to time, \textit{this and that Man was born there.}

Fourthly, Let such as are effectually called into the Kingdom and Grace of Christ, acknowledge their Obligations to God, and give him the Glory; for \textit{tis He} that has called you with an \textit{holy Calling}, and has done it, not for the sake of your Deserts, but according to his Purpose and Grace which was given you in Christ Jesus before the World began. Consider what a miserable State you are called out of, and what a glorious Prospect is now before you: You are called from Death to Life; from Darkness to Light, from Sin to Holiness, from Bondage to Liberty, and from Hell to Heaven. \textit{O glorious and happy Change!} You who in time past was an Enemy, a Rebel, and under the Curse of Almighty God, are now reconciled by the Blood of Jesus, called effectually by his Grace, adopted into his Family, and made an Heir of the Kingdom of Heaven. Stand upon the Shore, \textit{O Christian}, and look back with Wonder at the Shipwreck thou hast escaped, while Thousands of thy Fellow-Creatures are carried away by the Floods of the wrath of God, into the Lake that burns with Fire and Brimstone; and then look forward towards the Land of Joy and Happiness that is before thee; and let the overflows of a thankful Heart break forth in the Language of the Psalmist, Psal. lxxxvi. 12, 13. \textit{I will praise thee, O Lord my God, with all my Heart, and I will glorify thy Name for evermore; for great is thy Mercy towards me, and thou hast redeemed my Soul from the lowest Hell.}
SERMON XXI.

Pardon of Sin, Justification and Adoption.

Romans III. 24, 25.

Being justified freely by his Grace, thro' the Redemption that is in Jesus Christ; whom God hath set forth to be a Propitiation thro' Faith in his Blood.

The principal Design of the former Part of this Epistle is to prove, that Jews and Gentiles are all under Sin, or that all the World is become guilty before God, and that therefore by the Deeds of the Law, there shall no Flesh be justified in his Sight, ver. 19, 20. Hereupon the Apostle proceeds to speak of the Gospel-Way of Recovery and Salvation, both for the Jew and Gentile, thro' Faith in Christ, and the Righteousness brought in by him: ver. 21, 22. But now the Righteousness of God, without the Law is manifested, being witnessed by the Law, or by the Writings of Moses, and the Prophets; even the Righteousness of God, which is by Faith of Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all them that believe; for there is no difference: The Jew in
in this case has no advantage of the Gentile; for all have sinned, and come short of the Glory of God, 
ver. 23. And therefore, if any are brought into a 
State of Salvation, it must be in the gracious Me-
thod of the Gospel, Being justified freely by his 
Grace, thro' the Redemption that is in Jesus Christ; 
whom God hath set forth to be a Propitiation, thro' 
Faith in his Blood. In these Words we have,

I. The Benefit spoken of, and that is Justifi-
cation.

II. Its original Spring, or first moving Cause; 
the free Grace of God.

III. Its meritorious, or procuring Cause; the Re-
demption that is in Jesus Christ.

IV. The Ordination of God about it; he hath set 
forth Christ to be a Propitiation. And,

V. The Way, in which we are made Partakers of 
it; thro' Faith in his Blood.

Our Discourse will proceed upon these several 
Points in their order, as God shall assist us. We 
begin with,

I. The Benefit spoken of, and that is Justifi-
cation.

Justification is a Law-term, signifying a judicial 
Discharge of one who has been accused of a Crime. 
This is the proper Sense of the Word, and the Sense 
in which the Scripture uses it, Deut. xxv. 1. If 
there be a Controversy between Men, and they come 
unto Judgment, that the Judges may judge them, 
then they shall justify the righteous, and condemn the 
wicked. And, He that justifieth the wicked, and he 
that condemneth the just, even they both are abomina-
tion
If an accused Person is innocent of the Crime laid to his Charge, nothing more is necessary to his Justification, than upon legal Evidence to pronounce or declare him to be so: But if he is guilty, and comes under a Law-sentence of Condemnation, a legal Declaration of a Pardon, and of a restored Right to forfeited Privileges, must be his Justification; and even this can hardly be called Justification, unless it proceed upon terms of Righteousness.

This is the case of those, whom God justifies; they were all ungodly, and what things soever the Law said, it said to them: Rom. iv. 5. And therefore, Gospel-justification, which is Justification of Life, includes Forgiveness of Sins, and Restoration to Favour, or Acceptance with God to eternal Life, in a way of Righteousness. And, Adoption being one part of my appointed Subject, we may not improperly consider it, as standing in close Connexion with this Benefit.

1. In Justification there is the Forgiveness of Sins.

This the Apostle intimates in the Words immediately after our Text, where God is said to declare his Righteousness for the Remission of Sins. Sin is a Transgression of the Law, and Forgiveness of Sin does not make it cease to be a Transgression, or to be less criminal, or less offensive and provoking to God in its own nature, than it was before; for the very Notion of Forgiveness supposes an Offence, but it takes off the Law-sentence, which condemned us, and releases us from Law-obligation to wrath, on Sin's account. It is God's not charging it upon us, and condemning us for it; or it is his not imputing it
it to us, so as to deal with us according to its Demerit. Stephen's Prayer for his Enemies, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge, Acts vii. 60. is of the same Import with Christ's Prayer for his Crucifiers, Father forgive them, Luke xxiii. 34. Hence Pardon of Sin is sometimes represented, as God's not marking Iniquity, and not entering into Judgment with us: Ps. cxxx. 3. and cxliii. 2. At other times it is called his blotting out our Transgressions, his casting them behind his Back, Is. xliii. 25. and xxxviii. 17. passing them by, and casting them into the Depths of the Sea, Mic. vii. 18, 19. and his being merciful to our Unrighteousnesses, and remembering our Sins and Iniquities no more, Heb. viii. 12. And, in the Chapter after our Text, it is described by God's covering, and not imputing Sin; Blessed are they whose Iniquities are forgiven, and whose Sins are covered; Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute Sin. Rom. iv. 7, 8.

None of these Expressions are to be understood as any way detracting from God's Omnisciencce, or from his detestation of Sin; for that would be utterly inconsistent with the infinite Perfection of his Knowledge and Rectitude: But they are to be consider'd with respect to his proceeding, as a Creditor, or as a Judge, in not exacting our Debts upon us, nor dealing with us according to our Sins: He passes them by, as if they never had been contracted or committed against him. And this is the Sense of his gracious Declaration, where he says, The Iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the Sins of Judah, and they shall not be found; for I will pardon them, whom I reserve. Jer. i. 20. O how full and perfect is God's Pardon! He forgives all Trespasses; Col. ii. 13. There is now no Condemnation.
tion to them that are in Christ Jesus; Rom. viii. 1. nor shall they come into Condemnation; for they are passed from Death unto Life. John v. 24.

2. In Justification there is a Restoration to God's Favour, or Acceptance with him to eternal Life.

This is more than bare Forgiveness, or than a bare Restoration to former Privileges which were forfeited. A King may pardon a Criminal, and restore him to former Privileges, 'tho' we don't use to say that he accepts him as Righteous, and justifies him; and tho' he don't make him a chief Favourite, and exalt him to the highest Honours of his Court. And a Creditor may forgive a Bankrupt, and discharge him from Prison, 'tho' he don't enrich him, or shew him any other Favour.

If God had merely pardon'd Sin, the most that a bare Pardon could have restored, would have been only the uncertain state of Probation, from which we fell; for Adam himself, before the Fall, was neither properly justified nor condemned: He had not acquired a Right to Life; nor could he, by the Terms of the Covenant he was under, have been accounted righteous in Law, so as to have a Claim to Life, till he should have perfectly fulfill'd the whole Course of Obedience prescribed to him in his state of Probation: But he was condemned upon his first Transgression, and we now are involved in Guilt and Condemnation with him; for Judgment was by one to the Condemnation of all men. Rom. v. 16, 18.

But Gospel-justification don't barely take off the Guilt of Sin, and reverse the Sentence of Condemnation by a Pardon, and so restore us to a State of Probation, which might issue in a State of Condemnation again. It likewise pronounces us right-
teous, and brings us into a State of present and personal Acceptance with God to eternal Life, whereby we have, according to the Constitution of the Gospel, a sure, an actual, and abiding Claim to it: It brings us into a new and compleat Title to Life, beyond what Man ever had before, and into greater Nearness to God, and higher Dignities and Blessings in his Favour and Love, than belonged to the first Covenant, for the Transgression of which we were condemned. Christ is come, that we might have Life, and might have it more abundantly. John x. 10. And he that believes in him hath everlasting Life. Chap. iii. 36. The free Gift comes upon us to justification of Life, and we shall reign in Life, by one Christ Jesus. Rom. v. 17, 18. And whom God justifies, them He also glorifies. Chap. viii. 30. Hence,

3. In close Connexion with Justification, stands the Adoption of Sons.

There is indeed a Difference in the precise Notions we have of Justification, and Adoption; one is the Act of God as a Judge, and the other as a Father; by one we are discharged from Condemnation, and accepted as righteous, and by the other we are made the Children of God, and Joint-heirs with his eternal Son; by one we are taken into God's Favour, and by the other into his Family. But Adoption may be looked upon, at least, as an Appendix to Justification; for 'tis by our being justified, that we come into a Right to all the Honours and Privileges of Adoption. And as Adoption is a relative Blessing, perhaps it may not be improper to say, that it is included in Justification: For what is Adoption, but God's graciously accepting us as his Children in Christ, and making us Heirs of eternal Glory
Glory in his Right, and together with him? He sent forth his Son, made of a Woman, made under the Law, that he might redeem them who were under the Law, that we might receive the Adoption of Sons: Gal. iv. 4, 5. And as many as received him, to them gave he Power to become the Sons of God, even to them that believe on his Name. John i. 12.

He likewise gives them a noble Patrimony worthy of the Dignity to which he raises them; for if Children, then Heirs; Heirs of God, and Joint-heirs with Christ. Rom. viii. 18. And O who can conceive the Riches of the Glory of that Inheritance, which he has adopted them to, and will put them in possession of! All the Honours, Excellencies and Delights, that will attend the glorious Resurrection of the Just, are only the Consummation of our Adoption, which is called the Redemption of the Body. Rom. viii. 23. Having thus taken a View of the Benefit spoken of, we go on to consider,

II. Its original Spring, or first moving Cause, and that is the free Grace of God. We are justified freely by his Grace.

Grace signifies God's free Favour unto the Exclusion of all Merit of our Works, as the Apostle states the Notion of it, saying, If by Grace, then it is no more of Works, otherwise Grace is no more Grace; but if it be of Works, then it is no more Grace, otherwise Work is no more Work. Rom. xi. 6. But lest we should take the Term Grace in some laxer Sense, as it is concerned in our Justification it is further said in our Text to be freely by his Grace, to exclude all Conceit, as if there were any thing in us, for which this Favour of God is extended to us. And in the following Chapter, the Apostle excludes
Pardon of Sin,

excludes all our Works from having any Share in our Title to this Blessing, that the Reward may be reckoned to be of Grace, and not of Debt; and speaks of God's justifying the Ungodly, to shew what their Character was, till he justified them. Rom. iv. 2—5. And what but Grace could move him to justify Persons of that Character? Accordingly in the next Chapter, he seems to strain the Powers of Language to set out the Freeness, and the Riches of this Grace, calling it the Grace of God, and the Gift by Grace, which has abounded unto many, and the free Gift, in delivering from many Offences unto justification. Chap. v. 15, 16.

If therefore we have Forgiveness of Sins, it is according to the Riches of his Grace: Eph. i. 7. The greater and the lesser Sinner having nothing to pay, he frankly forgives them both: Luke vii. 42. And having no Worthiness or Merit in themselves to induce his Favour, he blotteth out their Transgressions for his own fake, and will not remember their Sins; II. xliii. 25. If we are justified, 'tis entirely by his Grace, that we might be made Heirs according to the hope of eternal Life. Tit. iii. 7. And if God takes us into the number of his Sons and Daughters, He predestinated us to the Adoption of Children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the Good-pleasure of his Will, to the Praise of the Glory of his Grace. Eph. i. 5, 6.

The Grace of Adoption is so high an Instance of God's Love, that the Apostle John speaks of it with holy Surprize, saying, Behold, what manner of Love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the Sons of God! Considering what we had made ourselves by Sin, how provoking and odious, how guilty and how vile, God might have said with Scorn
Ser. XXI. Justification and Adoption. 405

Scorn and Detestation to the Apostate Race, one and all, How shall I put thee among the Children? And yet he says, in the Greatness of his Love to his People, thou shalt call me my Father, and shalt not turn away from me. Jer. iii. 19.

Thus all, that can be reckoned to our Justification, is everywhere ascribed entirely to God's Grace, and to the Riches and Freeness of his Grace. But as this may seem to be inconsistent with the Rights of his Justice, Holiness and Truth, and with the Honour of his Law and Government; and as many Objections on this account might be apt to rise in the Mind of an awaken'd guilty Sinner, to discourage his Hopes of ever obtaining this Benefit, therefore we have

III. Its meritorious or procuring Cause, and that is the Redemption that is in Jesus Christ.

Redemption, properly speaking, is a Deliverance obtained by Price, and the Redemption here spoken of is evidently of this Kind; for it is the Redemption that is in Jesus Christ. It is in him, as its original Subject; he paid the Price, the Honour of it belongs to him, and all the Merit of it resides in him, that it may be applied in God's Way and Time to us; and it is such a Redemption, as includes a Propitiation thro' Faith in his Blood; Eph. i. 7. Hence in other Places it is called Redemption thro' his Blood; and Redemption by the precious Blood of Christ. 1 Pet. i. 18, 19. He laid down his Life for his Sheep, John x. 15. and gave his Life a Ransom for many; Matt. xx. 28. and thereby he obtained eternal Redemption for us; Heb. ix. 12. This is the Redemption that is in Jesus Christ, thro' which God justifies us freely by his Grace, so as at the same time

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to declare his Righteousness, that he might be just and the Justifier of him who believes in Jesus. Hereby the Demands of God's Justice are secured, together with the Glory of his Grace, that he might do no Injury to himself and to his Law, whilst he extends the Riches of his Mercy to us.

But, as we have seen that Justification is more than a bare Pardon; so, I apprehend, that more was necessary to procure it in a way of Merit, than a bare Atonement for Sin; and that therefore this Redemption includes the whole of that Righteousness of God, which is by Faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all them that believe, as the Apostle had express'd it in the Verse next but one before our Text. (v. 23.) If we were only forgiven, and so restored by Justification to a State of Probation, which Man was in before the Fall, and in which he had not acquired a Right to Life, nor could be properly said to be justified; the Atonement of Christ by his Blood would have been all that Justice could have insisted on for this Purpose: But, as in Gospel-Justification we are brought into a State of Acceptance with God, are deemed righteous in Law, and actually entitled to eternal Life, which could not be said of Man in the State from which he fell, Justice required that a perfect Righteousness, consisting of sinless Obedience to the Precepts of the Law, as well as of suffering its Curse, should be fulfilled for us, as in our Room and Stead, and should be placed to our Account, or imputed to us for Justification unto eternal Life.

Accordingly it became Christ to fulfil all Righteousness: Matt. iii. 15. He came not to destroy, but to fulfil the Law, declaring that till Heaven and Earth pass, one jot or Tittle should in no wise pass from the Law, till all were fulfilled. Chap. v. 17, 18.
18. Hence we are not only said to be justified by his Blood, because that was the principal, and finishing Part of the Redemption he wrought out, when he became obedient unto the Death of the Cross; but we are likewise told, that as by one Man's Disobedience many were made Sinners, so by the Obedience of one shall many be made or constituted righteous; Rom. v. 19. and that Christ is the end of the Law for Righteousness, to every one that believeth. Chap. x. 4. And on this account he is called the Lord our Righteousness, Jer. xxiii. 6. In him we have Righteousness, and are justified. Isa. xlv. 24, 25. And he is made of God Righteousness to us. 1 Cor. i. 30. All this is included in the Redemption thro' which we are justified, in Correspondence to the Debt we owed to God, and to the several Benefits that go into our Justification.

If any hereupon should ask, how the Merit of Christ's Obedience and Death, and the Freeness of God's Grace can be reconciled in our Justification? The Answer in a few Words is, that 'tis all entirely free to us, tho' Christ paid a full Price for it: For we neither wrought out nor procured this Redemption for our selves; nor did we deserve that it should be procured for us: Nay, could we have provided one to give himself a Ransom for us, God might justly have refused to admit of a Substitute, especially of one so dear to himself as the Son of his Love, and might have insisted that we, the hateful Offenders, should bear the just Punishment of our own Iniquities. And yet such are the Riches of his Grace, that he not only admitted of this, but from his own meer Motion, appointed, provided and accepted his only-begotten Son, to give his Life a Ransom for us: He made him to be Sin for us, that we
might be made the Righteousness of God in him. And the same Grace has laid out the Way of making over his Righteousness to us; and gives us the Faith whereby we are made Partakers of it.

So that with regard to us, Justification is as absolutely free, as if there were no Purchase of it made for us: And the Glory of God's Grace shines with more surprizing and endearing Eminence, in delivering up an only begotten, and infinitely beloved Son, to the deepest Humiliation in our Nature, and to the worst of Deaths, that it might make its Way to us, than if he had pardoned and justified us by a meer Act of sovereign Will and Pleasure; or on the Account of a less valuable Redemption, than that which is in Christ. Hence, we have

IV. The Ordination of God about it. He hath set Christ forth to be a Propitiation.

It is his own gracious Act and Deed. The Word (ἰλασθησάνωι) here rendered Propitiation, signifies the Mercy-Seat, where God shew'd himself propitious to his People, with a manifest Reference to his being appeased by a propitiatory Sacrifice, whose Blood was sprinkled upon the Mercy-Seat in the great Day of Atonement; accordingly Christ is said to be the Propitiation, 1 John ii. 2. and iv. 10. (ἰλασμός) the appeasing Sacrifice, or the Atonement for our Sins. And God hath set him forth, as such: The Word (τοποθέτησε) here translated set forth, signifies to purpose, to propose, and to prefer; and may intimate the three following things.

1. God hath purposed in himself, that Christ should be a Propitiation for Sin.

He appointed him to this in his eternal Counsels, according to his Good-pleasure which he purposed in himself.
himself. Eph. i. 9. And Christ was foreordained before the Foundation of the Word, to redeem us by his precious Blood. I Pet. i. 18, 19, 20. Thus the Remedy was provided in the gracious Purpose of God, before the Disease, that needed it, came upon us; the Saviour was appointed from all Eternity, before we became Sinners; and the Grace of Redemption had a Place in the Heart of God, before the Wickedness of a Revolt had a Place in the Heart of Man: And all this gracious Appointment was made concerning us under the clearest Foresight, how guilty, vile and provoking, how miserable and helpless we should make ourselves by Sin: O wonderful Grace, that was thus beforehand in its rich Designs to loft Sinners! God herein prevented us with his Love. Hence,

2. He has exhibited and proposed Christ to us, to be a Propitiation.

He set him forth beforehand, as such, in the Promises, Types and Prophecies of the old Testament; and so witnessed to him by the Law and the Prophets. v. 21. Moses wrote of him. John v. 46. Yea, to him give all the Prophets witness, that thro' his Name, whosoever believeth in him, shall receive Remission of Sins. Acts x. 43. And when the Fulness of Time was come, God actually exhibited him in the Flesh, he sent forth his Son made of a Woman, made under the Law, to redeem them who were under the Law, that we might receive the Adoption of Sons. Gal. iv. 4, 5. Then the great Decree broke forth, and the promised Saviour came to take away Sin by the Sacrifice of himself. And he is now set forth as a Propitiation in the clear Discoveries which are made of him in the Gospel; He is manifested in these last Times, who was foreordained before the Foundation
Pardon of Sin,

Foundation of the World: 1 Pet. i. 20. And that Righteousness of God, which was witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, is now more openly manifested by the Gospel. Rom. iii. 21. Here Jesus Christ is evidently set forth amongst us, as crucified; Gal. iii. 1. And all the Lines of the Gospel meet and centre in him. 1 Cor. i. 23. and ii. 2. Here the Nature and Design of his Death are set before us, as he once suffered for Sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God: 1 Pet. iii. 18. And this is proposed to our Faith, for the Remission of our Sins, and Acceptance with God to eternal Life; for herein is the Righteousness of God revealed from Faith to Faith, Rom. i. 17. To us is the Word of this Salvation sent, with Assurances of Pardon and Justification to every one that believes in Christ; for throu' him is preached to us the Forgiveness of Sins, and by him all that believe are justified from all Things, from which they could not be justified by the Law of Moses. Acts xiii. 38—40. Hence,

3. God has preferred Christ, as a Propitiation, to all Things else.

Sin had brought us all under Condemnation, as the Apostle had prov'd in the foregoing Discourse: Hence a Propitiation was necessary to obtain a Discharge from it; and God has provided one, which he prefers to all that ever cou'd have been named or imagined, one of infinite Worth and Dignity, and one every way answerable to his righteous Demands, and his gracious Designs for bringing us back again into Favour with him. There is none like this, and none that God wou'd accept as a Propitiation besides it: The Sacrifices under the Law cou'd not possibly take away Sin. God did not approve of them, nor take any Pleasure in them for that
that Purpose; but Christ came to do his Will, in offering his Body once for all. Heb. x. 4—10. In him his Soul is well pleas’d; and his Offering for Atonement, is an Offering and Sacrifice of a sweet-smelling Savour to God. Eph. v. 2. Yea, this Offering was so highly acceptable to him, that he chose to take Satisfaction to his Justice in this Way, rather than seek it in the Destruction of the Sinner himself: Hence he is Gracious unto him, and says, deliver him from going down to the Pit; for I have found a Ransom. Job xxxiii. 24. This brings us to the last Thing in our Text, which is,

V. The Way in which we are made Partakers of this Benefit; and that is, thro’ Faith in his Blood.

It will be of no saving Advantage to us, to hear of God’s justifying freely by his Grace, thro’ the Redemption that is in Jesus Christ, or of his setting him forth to be a Propitiation, unless we know the way of deriving its Virtue, that it may terminate upon our selves. No Remedy can take effect, unless it be applied; an Atonement made by another, can’t be effectual to the Remission of our Sins, unless it is accepted for us and placed to our Account; and the Righteousness of another can’t answer for us, to discharge us from Guilt and Condemnation, and set us in a state of Peace and Acceptance with God, unless it is made over or imputed to us for Righteousness. And this, our Text tells us, is thro’ Faith in Christ’s Blood, or by believing in him, as he is set forth to be a Propitiation. We are sometimes said to be justified by God’s Grace, to lead us to the original Spring or first moving Cause of our Justification; and at other times, to be justified by Christ, and to be justified by his Blood, to lead us to the meritorious
meritorious procuring Cause of it, or to that, on the account of which we are justified: But at other times we are said to be justified by Faith, and by the Faith of Christ, and not by the Works of the Law, to lead us to the Gospel-Consti tution, as to the Way of God's Appointment, in which we come to be partakers of Christ, and to have his Righteousness made over to us for Justification.

God from Eternity decreed to justify his Elect in this way; and they may be said to be fundamentally or virtually justify'd at the Resurrection of Christ, he, as their Head and Surety, being then discharged: But it is very improper and unscriptural to say, that they are personally and actually justified before they believe; for then their Justification would precede their effectual Calling, contrary to the Order, in which the Apostle puts them. Rom. viii. 30. Hence the Scripture, which is the Rule of Judgment, pronounces Believers, and such only, to be justified. It abundantly speaks of all Unbelievers without Exception, as under the Law, and guilty before God, and as in a State of Condemnation and Wrath; and speaks of Justification as a future Benefit, which should come unto such of them as thou'd believe. It is one God, who shall justify the Circumcision by Faith, and the Uncircumcision thro' Faith. Rom. iii. 30. Righteousness shall be imputed to them, if they believe, &c. Chap. iv. 24. As by one Man's Disobedience many were made Sinners; so by the Obedience of one shall many be made righteous. Chap. v. 19. By his Knowledge shall my righteous Servant justify many. In the Lord shall all the Seed of Israel be justified and glory. Isa. liii. 11. and xliv. 25. And the Scripture foretold, that God would justify the Heathen thro' Faith. Gal. iii. 8.
All this speaks of the Benefit itself, which should come upon them by Imputation of Righteousness, and not barely of the Manifestation of it. For all other Graces and evangelical Obedience, as well as Faith, are Evidences of our Justification; and yet we are not said to be justified by them before God, but by Faith, to the Exclusion of every Thing else found in us, or done by us; nor doth our Evidence ordinarily come in by the first Act of Faith, but after it. After ye believed ye were sealed, &c. Eph. i. 13. And the Evidence of Justification, so far as it is brought in by Faith, is more or less perfect according to the Degrees of our Faith; but surely the Justification by Faith, which the Scripture so much speaks of, is not such a defective and variable Thing.

And 'tis plain to me, the Apostle must mean more than a Manifestation, when he said, Gal. ii. 16. Knowing that a Man is not justified by the Works of the Law, but by the Faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the Faith of Christ, and not by the Works of the Law; for by the Works of the Law shall no Flesh be justified, or justified in God’s Sight, as it is Psal. cxliii. 2. the Place referre to, and Rom. iii. 20. another Quotation of it. It cou’d not be said that they knew good Works were of no use to manifest their Justification; but they were assured in themselves, by the Conviction of God’s Spirit, that their State under the Law was a State of Condemnation, and that no Works of their own cou’d ever justify them in God’s Sight; and therefore they believ’d in Christ, that they might be deliver’d from that dreadful State, and be justified thro’ Faith in him, or justified by him, as it follows v. 17. And this is usually the Sense of Things, that is fix’d upon the Conscience.
Pardon of Sin,

science of a convinced Sinner, when he is concerned about believing in Christ, for Righteousness to Eternal Life. We must therefore, as far as I see, either rob the Spirit of the Glory of this part of his Work in convincing of Sin and of Righteousness, and say that the Sinner is therein under a Mistake, and under a Delusion of his own, or of Satan's; or else we must allow that the Conviction is just, and that, as the Holy Spirit causes him to apprehend concerning himself, he really is in a State of Condemnation, till he believes in Christ, and that 'tis only thro' Faith in him that he can be justified.

Upon the whole, we may conclude from the Scripture-Account of this Matter, that unless a Man be justified by the Faith of Christ, the Sentence of Justification is not pronounced upon him in the Word of God; and if 'tis never pronounced upon him in God's Word, he never will be justified at God's Bar, whatever he may imagine concerning himself: But if he hath true Faith in Christ's Blood, he is, and for ever shall be, justified by the Word, and at the Bar of God, tho' he sometimes may not be so at the Bar of his own Conscience, or may not have the Evidence of it in himself.

A few practical Remarks on what has been offered, shall close the present Discourse.

REMARKS,

1. This gives us a lively View of the great Evil of Sin, and the exceeding Riches of God's Grace.

How desperately malignant must Sin be in itself, and how highly provoking to God, that Grace must make its Way thro' the Blood of Christ, if it wou'd deliver us from it; that the beloved Son of God himself must obey and suffer, bleed and die, to answer
swer the Demands of Justice, and set Grace, at liberty to distribute Pardons, and receive us to Favor! And oh how exceeding glorious and endearing must that Grace be, which would work thro' all this Difficulty, and be at all this high Expence, to appoint, provide and accept the great Ransom, and place it to the account of Sinners, that they might be justified thro' Faith in the Blood of Jesus!

How odious then should all Iniquity appear in our Eyes, that we may be deeply humbled for it, may have no manner of Friendship or Fellowship with it, but may entirely abandon it, and depart from it! And how should we admire and rejoice in the exceeding Abundance of Divine Grace! How should we prize and exalt it, as the rich Fountain of all Forgiveness and Acceptance with God, and of all the Blessings that come in with Justification of Life!

But,

2. Here is no room for any to encourage themselves with Hopes of Pardon and Acceptance with God, while they go on in Sin.

He that regards Iniquity in his Heart, and practises it in his Life, can have no Claims to Justification, by God's free Grace, thro' the Redemption that is in Jesus Christ: For he gave himself to redeem us from all Iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar People, zealous of good Works: He came to save his People from their Sins, as well as from the Wrath to come, and Sin shall not have Dominion over them, who are not under the Law, but under Grace.

Whatever Pretences any may make to Faith in the Blood of Christ, it is not the Faith of the Operation of God, if it don't purify the Heart, work by Love, and overcome this World: Nor can there be a stronger Symptom of Delusion in a Man's Hopes of
of Acceptance with God thro' Christ's Redemption, than his taking Encouragement to fin that Grace may abound, or because it does abound to the chief of Sinners. But,

3. Here is a blessed Ground of Relief for poor convinced Sinners, who are discouraged with Fears, as if there cou'd be no Pardon for their Sins.

The Freenefs of God's Grace in justifying Sinners, thro' the Redemption that is in Jesus Christ, opens a Door of Hope, O Sinner, for thee: How great or multiplied foever thy Transgressions have been, thy Case is not desperate, there are Riches enow in the free Grace of God, and there is Virtue enough in the Blood of Christ, for the Remiffion of all thy Sins; and a Flag of Mercy and Peace is held out in the Gospel, to encourage thy Returns to God thro' Christ, in Hopes of obtaining it.

Here is a sovereign Balm for thy wounded Spirit, a reviving Cordial for thy fainting Soul, and an everlasting Provision for Deliverance from thy Sins, for Acceptance with God, and for Help against thy desponding Fears. This, brought home to thy Heart by the Holy Spirit, will put Strength into it to apply with Earnestness, and with humble Boldness, to the Riches of divine Grace, thro' a redeeming Saviour; and this will silence thy guilty Fears, as if God would not be propitious to thee, or would not have mercy upon thee. For Christ is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him; and whoever comes, he will in no wise cast him out.

4. Here are the richest Consolations, and the highest Obligations to those, who have obtain'd this Blessing.

Has
Has God justified thee freely by his Grace, thro' the Redemption that is in Jesus Christ? Hast thou Faith in his Blood for the Remission of thy Sins? And art thou enrolled among his Children? Happy Soul! Thou hast passed from Death to Life, and shalt not come into Condemnation: And thou may'st joy in God thro' our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom thou hast receiv'd the Atonement, and rejoice in Hope of his Glory: Thou art the blessed Man whom the Psalmist describes, and shalt be blessed for ever.

The great God is reconciled to thee by the Blood of Jesus; his Justice is no longer a Bar against thee, but is become thy Friend to concur in saving thee, and his richest, tenderest, everlasting Mercies are towards thee, to deliver thee from all thy Sins and Sorrows, and to make thee compleatly happy for ever. O how shouldst thou exalt this rich, free and glorious Grace thro' a Redeemer? How shouldst thou daily live by Faith upon it, and live in all holy Obedience answerable to it? How shouldst thou look upon thy Self as redeemed from all Iniquity, that thou may'st never serve Sin, and as redeemed to God by the Blood of Christ, that thou may'st ever glorify him with thy Body and thy Spirit which are his?

Think of what thou formerly wast in thy natural State, and now art by Grace; that thou, who wast once unrighteous, art now wasb'd, sanctified, and justified, in the Name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. I Cor. vi. 9, 11. Thou art hereby form'd for Obedience, as well as brought into a State, in which thou may'st acceptably perform it. O! think whose thou art, and whom thou oughtest to serve, and what Bonds of Authority
Pardon of Sin.

Authority and Love oblige thee to live to him, who was delivered for thy Offences, and raised again for thy Justification; and who died for thee, that thou mightest live and die, not to thy self, but to him, who died and rose again, that he might be Lord of the Dead, and the Living.
SERMON XXII.

PEACE of CONSCIENCE, HOPE, and HOLY JOY.

ROMANS XV. 13.

Now the God of Hope fill you with all Joy and Peace in believing, that ye may abound in Hope, through the Power of the Holy Ghost.

THE Apostle proves in the foregoing Verses, that the Privileges of the Gospel were not to be confined to the Jews, by quoting several Passages out of the Old Testament, which speak of the Messiah's reigning over the Gentiles, in whom they are required to trust, and rejoice with his People. In the Text he addresses God on the behalf of the Romans professing the Christian Religion, who were Gentiles, that he would fill them with all Joy and Peace in believing, that they might abound in Hope through the Power of the Holy Ghost. St. Paul directs this Prayer unto God under the Character of the God of Hope: He is thus styled, either to denote, that he is the Author of that Hope which is found in true Christians; this is ascribed to him, as the Giver of it, 2 Thess. ii. 16. God, even our Father.
Peace of Conscience, Hope,
there hath given us everlasting Consolation, and good
Hope through Grace: Or to signify, that God has
made such a Revelation of himself by the Gospel,
as encourages both Jews and Gentiles to hope in
him.

The Divine Glory was display'd in so terrible a
Manner, when the Law was delivered to the Chil-
dren of Israel, as to leave a deep Imression of Fear
upon the Minds of those who beheld it; which was
in some measure communicated to their Posterity:
While that Dispensation was in force, a Spirit of
Bondage unto Fear prevailed in them. But Hope in
God is very agreeable to the mild and gracious Re-
presentation which the Gospel gives of his Excellen-
cies: He appears herein as the God of Peace, and
of all Grace. Yet, such is the Weakness of his
Children in this Life, that they need his kind Influ-
ences to make their Souls joyous and peaceful:
The Apostle therefore intreats God to fill those, to whom
he writes, with all joy and Peace in Believing, that
is, by the means of their Faith in the Gospel; and
that they might abound in Hope, through the power-
ful Operation of the Holy Ghost: He mentions Be-
lieving, and the Power of the Holy Ghost, as having
a concern herein, to intimate that the Peace and Joy,
wherewith he desired they might be filled; and the
Hope, wherein he prays they might abound, were
Spiritual and Holy.

It is my present Business to treat of Hope, Peace
of Conscience, and Holy Joy, as Gospel-Blessings,
which are bestowed by God in an eminent degree
upon his People, under the Christian Dispensation;
this is plainly supposed in the Apostolical Prayer pre-
fixed to my Discourse. I shall begin,

I. With
I. With Hope: This is a very pleasing and useful Affection of the Soul; it is a powerful Spring of Action; it mitigates Troubles, and, in respect to the Things of this World, its Pleasures do often exceed those of Enjoyment. But, that Hope which is a Christian Grace, is by far the most excellent, seeing it has the noblest Objects, and the surest Grounds. With what affectionate Gratitude does the Apostle acknowledge the Mercy of God in granting this to such as believe in Jesus Christ? 1 Pet. i. 3. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to his abundant Mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively Hope. We read of the Patience of Hope, 1 Thess. i. 3. it helps to bear up our Spirits, and to keep us from fainting in the Day of Adversity. This is compared to an Anchor, which preserves the Soul firm and steady amidst the Tempeasts and Trials of the present World. Hope is spoken of as necessary to our Salvation. Rom. viii. 24. We are saved by Hope. It is hereby we are encouraged to encounter our spiritual Enemies, and to hold on in the Path of Life, when surrounded with Difficulties and Dangers. The Hope of true Christians maketh not ashamed. Rom. v. 5. Shame attends the disappointment of Hope, either because it argues an Incapacity to examine things thoroughly, and to pass a right Judgment upon them; or a neglect to make a due Enquiry, which is very shameful, especially in Matters of great Consequence: And Hope is disappointed, not only when the Things expected do not come to pass, but when they do not answer Expectation, or do not compensate the Pains and Charge we have been at, in order to obtain them. Now, upon neither of these Accounts shall the Hope of real Believers make them ashamed. The
Peace of Conscience, Hope,

Happiness they hope for is well secured to them; and it far surpasses their highest Expectations, and largest Desires. As they shall not fall short of Glory, so they shall find it in the Enjoyment to be much greater, than they can now conceive. The Sufferings of this present Time are not worthy to be compared with the Glory, which shall be revealed in them. A great deal of it remains yet to be revealed.

I shall shew what Provision is made in the New Testament for raising and supporting the Hope of God's People.

1. Herein the glorious Objects of their Hope are set in as clear a Light, as their present Capacities will bear. The Heathens had very dark and dubious Notions of the future State: Therefore the Apostle speaks of them, as having no Hope. Eph. ii. 12. It was the Word of the Truth of the Gospel, that made them acquainted with the Hope which is laid up for them in Heaven. Col. i. 5. Indeed the Church of God was not wholly ignorant of this before the coming of Christ: But Heaven was then represented in such a figurative and typical manner, as must unavoidably be attended with Darkness. Hence it is that our Saviour Jesus Christ is said, to have brought Life and Immortality to light, through the Gospel. 2 Tim. i. 10. He has hereby given a brighter Discovery of immortal Life, than was made before. It must be acknowledged, that it doth not yet fully appear what we shall be; but we are told, that when the Lord shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. 1 John iii. 2. And is not this most justly styled a blessed Hope? Titus ii. 13. looking for that blessed Hope, the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ.

The
The Hope of the Disciples of Jesus is not confined to the Things of this Life: Sad would be their Case, if they had nothing better in view, if they had no higher Expectations. The Word of Christ proposes to them enduring Substance, an incorruptible Inheritance, a Crown of Life and Glory, which fadeth not away: It speaks of an exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory, in comparison of which the heaviest and most lasting Afflictions of this Life are light, and endure but for a Moment.

The Gospel does not set the Happiness of the unseen World at a great distance of Time from Believers: They may be confident, that they shall be present with the Lord, as soon as they are absent from the Body. 2 Cor. v. 8. But, the bare Representation of a State of great Glory and Blessedness, is not sufficient to awaken Hope in us. Is there not abundant Reason that we should despair of being admitted into it? Do not our Sins render us unworthy of the least of God’s Favours? And will it not be great Presumption in us to expect to be made for ever glorious and happy? No, the Gospel affords rich Encouragement to the faithful Followers of Christ, to hope that the Felicity it describes shall be theirs; as will appear, if we consider,

2. The Account it gives of the Divine Grace. Christ the only begotten Son of God hath declared the Father. John i. 18. He has made him known under that tender Relation, which greatly encourages the Children of Men to hope in his Mercy. The Supreme Being is represented in the Gospel as seated on a Throne of Grace, to which indigent undeserving Persons are invited to come boldly, that they may obtain Mercy, and find Grace. Heb. iv. 16. What a glorious Declaration of the Grace of God is made by
Peace of Conscience, Hope,

the Apostle! Rom. v. 20. Where Sin abounded, Grace did much more abound. This is said in the 21st ver. to reign through Righteousness unto eternal Life. Grace shines with such Lucre throughout the Gospel, that it is stiled Grace, and the Grace of God in the Scripture. The Praise of the Glory of his Grace, plainly appears to be his great Design in the contrivance of that Method of Salvation, which is hereby revealed.

When we reflect upon our manifold and aggravated Sins, our Spirits may justly sink within us under fearful Apprehensions of falling into the Hands of the living God; but when we consider his much more abundant Grace, it forbids Despair, and encourages our Hope of Pardon, and Acceptance with him. What may we not expect from the Riches of his Grace? Can any thing be too great for this to bestow?

But, it may be ask'd, is not God just? How then can Sinners hope, that he will be so gracious to them, as to receive them into his Heavenly Kingdom? This Difficulty will be removed, if we attend,

3. To what the Gospel speaks of the Mediation of Christ. It tells us, that as by the Offence of one, Judgment came upon all Men to Condemnation; even so by the Righteousness of one, the free Gift came upon all Men to Justification of Life: for as by one Man's Disobedience, many were made Sinners; so by the Obedience of one, shall many be made Righteous. Rom. v. 18, 19. God has given the most undoubted Testimony of his Satisfaction in what Christ has done and suffered in the room of sinful Men, by raising him from the Dead. For this Reason it is declared in the 1 Pet. i. 21. that he was raised from the Dead, that our Faith and Hope might be in God.
Our risen Mediator has entered within the Vail as the Forerunner of his People; he has taken possession of Heaven in their Name, where he officiates continually as their High-Priest; and their Hope is hereby greatly established. Heb. vi. 19, 20. Which Hope we have as an Anchor of the Soul, both sure and certain, and which entereth into that within the Vail, whither the Forerunner is for us enter'd, even Jesus made an High-Priest for ever, after the Order of Melchisedeck. Was the Death of Christ effectual to reconcile us to God, of which his Resurrection is an undeniable Proof? May we not reasonably hope to be saved by his Life, seeing he ever lives to intercede for us, to plead the Merit of his Obedience unto Death? This Consideration should prevent Despair upon the account of the fresh Guilt, which we are too apt to contract. It is proposed with this view by the Apostle, 1 John ii. 1. My little Children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not: And if any Man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

As our Lord Jesus Christ, by fulfilling all Righteousness, and giving his Life a Ransom for us, has made way for the divine Grace to lay out its Riches upon us, consistently with the Honour of Justice; so the Gift of him, to be our Mediator, was an astonishing instance of God's Grace, by which our Hope in it should be mightily strengthened. In this was manifested the Love of God towards us, because that God sent his only-begotten Son into the World, that we might live through him. 1 John iv. 9. What can be a greater Expression of Love than this was? How free and undeserved was it! Does not such Love afford the most solid Ground for the highest Expectations? Rom. v. 8, 9. God commend-
Peace of Conscience, Hope,

Ed this Love towards us, in that while we were yet Sinners, Christ died for us: much more then being now justified by his Blood, we shall be saved from Wrath through him. It is not possible we should want any thing more valuable in itself, or dearer to God, than his own Son; and if he spared him not, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all Things? Rom. viii. 32. We may hence conclude, that he will not only with great readiness bestow upon us what is needful here on Earth, but make us for ever happy in Heaven.

4. The Gospel-Covenant is a sure Foundation for the Hope of true Christians. The fallen, guilty Race of Mankind have no reason to expect any Blessing from God, by that Covenant of Works, which he made with them in their innocent State; for it has been violated by them, and they are wholly incapable of fulfilling its Conditions. But God, who is rich in Mercy, has published a Covenant of Grace by the Gospel, of which his Son Jesus Christ is the Surety and Mediator. It is ratified in his Blood; for which Reason this is stiled the Blood of the everlasting Covenant. Heb. xiii. 20. It is ordered in all things and sure; it contains all the Salvation, and all the Desire of those who lay hold upon it; who sincerely give up themselves to God through Christ, and take him to be their God. The Promises of this Covenant are exceeding great and precious; they include all things that pertain unto Life and Godliness. 2 Pet. i. 3, 4. 'Tis true, temporal Promises do not take up much room in the Christian Dispensation of the Covenant of Grace: yet it gives sufficient Encouragement to the Children of God to expect from him, what is necessary for them in this Life: And it is established upon the better Promises of
of Grace and Glory. *Heb.* viii. 6. While their Hope of these is well secured, surely they should not be very solicitous about the Concerns of this lower World.

It is amazing Condescension in the great God, to lay himself under Obligations to any of the rebellious Children of Men. Hence it is that we find his Goodness and Truth mentioned together in the Scripture: His Truth binds him to fulfil those Engagements, which free Grace dispos’d him to take upon himself. We have the covenanted Mercy of God to rely upon. A most firm Ground for Hope! He will certainly perform every Article of his gracious Covenant to such as heartily accept of, and comply with the most reasonable Terms of it; for his Faithfulness shall never fail. Though they find within themselves a great deal of Matter for Humiliation and Sorrow; though all things about them should have a threatening Aspect: yet they should not give way to Despair; nor in the least suspect, that God will ever be unmindful of his Covenant.

5. God confirms the Hope of Christians by the Gift of his Spirit. The Gospel is the Ministration of the Spirit. This is mentioned by the Apostle, as one of its distinguishing Glories. *2 Cor.* iii. 8. A more plentiful Effusion of the Holy Ghost ensued the Ascension of Christ, than ever was known before: And it is his Office to establish the Hope of Christians; the Prayer in the Text implies this, that ye might abound in Hope through the Power of the Holy Ghost. When we would satisfy those, to whom we ingage our selves, that we intend to fulfil our Contracts, we seal them, and give Earnest. In allusion hereto, the Scripture speaks of Believers being sealed with the holy Spirit of Promise, which is the Earnest of their Inheritance. *Eph.* i. 13, 14.
The Impression of the holy Image of God, which
is made upon them by the Spirit, manifests to them,
when they are enabled to discern it by his enlightning
Influence, their Adoption into God's Family, and
their Interest in his Promises: He is said to bear
Witness with their Spirit, that they are the Children
of God. Rom. viii. 16. Those divine Graces, which
the Spirit works in them, are as it were part in Hand
of what God has covenanted to bestow upon them,
which is the proper Notion of an Earnest; and
their Hearts may be hereby assured, that the whole
of it shall be perform'd, that in due time they shall
be bless'd with the full Enjoyment of the promised
Inheritance.

The Second Blessing I propos'd to consider, is
Peace of Conscience. Next to God, Conscience is
our best Friend, and our worst Enemy: When this
accuses and condemns, it is called an evil Conscience
in the Word of God: When it acquits and approves,
it is stiled a good Conscience. It is very probable, that
a guilty Conscience is meant by that never-dying
Worm, mentioned by our Saviour as a great Tor-
menter of the Damned. Mark ix. 46. Their Case
therefore must be wretched in this Life, who are
condemned by their own Hearts. A stupid feared
Conscience, as the Scripture expresses it, 1 Tim. iv. 2,
is exceeding dangerous; but happy they, who enjoy,
upon just and solid Grounds, Peace of Conscience!
This inestimable Blessing true Believers obtain by
means of the Gospel of Christ: Without question
this is included in that Legacy, he bequeath'd to his
Disciples, John xiv. 27. Peace I leave with you, my
Peace I give unto you. Rest from the heavy and
grievous Charges of Conscience is intended in that
Promise.
Promise of his, Matt. xi. 28. Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you Rest. Those who believe, do enter into this Rest. For,

1. The Gospel pronounceth them justified who believe in Jesus Christ. It speaketh on this wise, with the Heart Man believeth unto Righteousness: Rom. x. 10. by Christ Jesus all that believe are justified from all things: Acts xiii. 39. There is no Condemnation to them which are in him, who walk not after the Flesh, but after the Spirit. Rom. viii. 1. Now, Conscience is, as it were, God's Vicegerent within us: This ought to acquit and approve those, who are acquitted and approved by him in his Word. Our Consciences, if they are not stupified to such a Degree, as to lose all Sense of things, tell us that we are sinful Creatures; and the Law of God, which we have violated, levels its dreadful Curses against us upon this Account. But, the Gospel is the Ministry of Reconciliation; this reveals God unto us, as in Christ reconciling the World unto himself, not imputing their Trespasses unto them. 2 Cor. v. 19. He passes herein a Sentence of Absolution from the whole of their Guilt upon all those, who receive the Atonement which Jesus has made: They are hereby admitted into a State of Peace with him. Rom. v. 1. Being justified by Faith, faith the Apostle, we have Peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Conscience therefore should cease to condemn them; it ought to speak Peace to their Souls. Is it not highly fit, that what satisfies God should pacify Conscience? And in as much as he has plainly signified in the Gospel his Acceptance of the Sacrifice of Christ, as sufficient to take away Sin, the Application
Application of his Blood by Faith unto the Heart, must sprinkle it from an evil Conscience.

While Christians are in the Body, they are compassed about with many Infirmities; Sin too often prevails over them: But, they may at all times have recourse to the Laver of Christ's Blood, which cleanseth from all Sin. 1 John i. 7. Hereby their Peace shall be maintain'd; for as this takes away Guilt from the Soul, it delivers the Conscience from Trouble.

I must observe here, that Humiliation and godly Sorrow for Sin, are so far from being inconsistent with Peace of Conscience, that this cannot be enjoy'd, according to the Tenour of the Gospel-Covenant, without some Degree of these. Repentance and Remission of Sins are herein connected. This is the Language of the New Testament, repent ye, that your Sins may be blotted out. Acts iii. 19. Therefore, if we would be bless'd with a peaceful Sense of the Pardon of our Iniquities, we must be exercising Repentance towards God, as well as Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. The Gospel assures Believers of God's Acceptance of their sincere, though imperfect, Services through Jesus Christ. Conscience, if it be not grossly misinformed, will let us know, that the Duties we perform fall vastly short of what God requires: It will be ready to condemn us for the Sins of our holy Things; not only for our acting contrary to the divine Commands, or an utter Neglect of them; but for the defective Manner wherein they are obeyed by us. Now, the Gospel provides Relief in this Case, for those who have obtained precious Faith. True Christians are said to offer spiritual Sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. 1 Pet.
1 Pet. ii. 5. A great deal of sinful Weakness attends their strongest Graces, and best Services in this Life; their Righteousnesses are sadly defiled: But their Robes are washed and made white in the Blood of the Lamb. Rev. vii. 14. So that those, whose Hearts do not condemn them of Insincerity, have confidence towards God, through Christ, that he will accept of the Duties they perform, notwithstanding their many Infirmities.

The Gospel speaks not one Word of Peace to those who persist in a Course of Sin, and continue negligent of God: But it gives the utmost Encouragement to such as are humbled under a Sense of their Weaknesses and Imperfections; who always exercise themselves to have a Conscience void of Offence towards God, and towards Men, to expect the gracious Approbation of their great Judge. Is there not good Reason then, why their Hearts should be placid, and their Souls should dwell at ease? Though the faithful Followers of Christ should reckon upon Tribulation in this World; yet in him they may have Peace.

I come, in the Third Place, to discourse of Holy Joy, another Blessing which the People of God are made Partakers of, by the Means of the Gospel. This teaches them to rejoice in the Things of Time, as though they rejoiced not. 1 Cor. vii. 30. But it requires them to rejoice in the Lord alway. Phil. iv. 4. The Christian Dispensation has not only provided for the Peace, but Joy of Believers. The Primitive Christians found it effectual to this purpose; even such of them, as had not seen Jesus Christ, rejoiced in him, with joy unspeakable, and full of Glory. 1 Pet. i. 8. If such Joy is rarely to be
Peace of Conscience, Hope.

be discern'd at present amongst those, who profess Faith in Jesus, it is because the Power of Christianity is not so prevalent in them, as it was in those by whom it was at first embrac'd. The Gospel is well adapted to fill them with holy Joy, as will appear if we consider,

1. What is the Hope of their Calling. God has called them to the Fellowship of his own Son, Jesus Christ their Lord; to a Participation in some respect of his great Honours. 1 Cor. i. 9. They are directed by the Gospel to hope for the Glory of God; not only the Glory which he gives, but such as will render them like unto him. Surely those who have this Hope, have abundant Reason to be joyful. Rom. v. 2. We rejoice in Hope of the Glory of God. How great is the Salvation, of which Jesus Christ is the Author! The Views hereof cheer'd the Hearts of Christians in ancient Times, when their outward Circumstances were very sorrowful. 1 Pet. i. 5, 6. Who are kept by the Power of God, through Faith unto Salvation, ready to be revealed in the last Time: wherein ye greatly rejoice, tho' now for a Season (if need be) ye are in Heaviness through manifold Temptations. But, the greater the Good is, we have in prospect, the more grievous Anxiety it is apt to give our Minds, if we are under an Uncertainty, as to the Possession of it: But this is not the Case of true Believers with respect to the Salvation of the Gospel. It will be evident, that their Joy should be full, if it be consider'd,

2. That as their Hope is very exalted, so it is well founded. Indeed the Promise of God is alone sufficient to support the highest Hope: It needs no additional Security; yet in condescension to our Weakness, he has vouchsafed to ratify it with an Oath, which
which is the most solemn Engagement; and this he has done for the greater Comfort of those who believe. Heb. vi. 17, 18. God willing more abundantly to shew unto the Heirs of Promise the Immutability of his Counsel, confirmed it by an Oath; that by two immutable Things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong Consolation, who have fled for Refuge to lay hold upon the Hope set before us. Every thing is possible to God that does not imply a Contradiction, or that is not inconsistent with his Perfections; but to violate his Word or Oath, would be the greatest Weakness, of which the infinitely perfect Being is utterly incapable. And has he promised, has he sworn that he will bless sincere Believers? Doubtless it shall be performed. Does their Hope of Happiness stand upon such firm and unshaken Grounds? Surely then, it should give them Consolation sufficient not only to bear up their Spirits under the heaviest Troubles of Life, but to make them triumphant in Death. Yet God, in his great Goodness, makes a further Provision for the Joy of real Christians.

3. He gives them his Spirit to be their Comforter. This Character he bears in the Gospel: He is given to the Disciples of Jesus as a Spirit of Adoption, enabling them to cry Abba, Father. Rom. viii. 15. How should their Souls exult at the Thoughts of their standing in the near Relation of Children to the great God! We read of Joy in the Holy Ghost, Rom. xiv. 17. While Christians walk with God in all his Ordinances, and avoid whatever is grievous to his holy Spirit, he generally dispenses to them so much Comfort, as is sufficient to encourage and strengthen them to hold on their Way; and sometimes he sheds abroad the Love of God in their Hearts, that

Vol. I.
they glory in Tribulations. Rom. v. 3, 5. He gives them hereby strong Foretaastes of the Joys of Heaven. But such Cordials are reserved for some special Favourites, Seasons and Occasions. I shall close with a few

REMARKS.

1. Rem. Despondency, and slaveish Fear are very unbecoming Christians: They disgrace their Profession by giving way to these. It is fit they should mourn under a sense of their Sins: Their daily Infirmities should be the Matter of their frequent Lamentation. But, this is very consistent with Hope, Peace of Conscience, and Joy in the Mercy of God through Christ.

It must be own'd, that these Gospel-Blessings have their Counterfeits, by which Multitudes are deceived to their utter Ruin. The Hope of many is a vain Confidence; they know not how they came by it; nor can they give any good Reason of it: Their Peace is nothing but Stupidity; while they boast of this, sudden Destruction cometh upon them. 1 Thes. v. 3. Their Joy is flashy, and is soon turned into Sorrow. Certainly then it behoves Persons to be upon their Guard, lest they be imposed upon, and mistake false Appearances for real Blessings. But, if after a close Reflection, we find nothing in our selves that the Gospel has declared to be inconsistent with the Favour of God; and we see Reason to think, that those Characters belong to us whereby the Persons are described, to whom it promises Salvation; we should take the Comfort hereof; and not distress our selves by indulging Scruples, and Doubts without Ground, and without End; but endeavour, by a cheerfull Performance of our Duty, to adorn the Doctrine of God our Saviour.
2. Rem. None should be deterred from professing Faith in Christ, by an Apprehension that hereupon they must abandon themselves to a sour and melancholy Life. The Ways of Christianity are Ways of Pleasantness, and all its Paths are Peace: This forbids no Mirth, no Delight, but such as would be hurtful to our best Interest. There are no Persons on Earth that have so much Cause for Gladness of Heart, as the sincere Disciples of Jesus. The Gospel has the utmost Tendency to sweeten to them the Enjoyments of Life, and to disarm Afflictions, and Death of their Terrors: They have herein the most solid Grounds for Hope, Peace, and Joy; so that they may rejoice evermore. I Thes. v. 16.

3. Rem. Would we have Hope, Peace, and Joy, which are greatly to be desired? Then we should be much in the Exercise of Faith. Let us often look to those Things, which are unseen, which are eternal: Let us often renew our Hold of Christ, and our Dependance upon the Promises of the Gospel; for it is in believing, that Christians are filled with Joy and Peace. But, we must always remember that the Faith, from which genuine lasting Joy and Peace flow, purifies the Heart, and is productive of good Works. If our Temper, and Behaviour be not becoming the Gospel of Christ, the spiritual Consolations to which we may pretend, can be no better than the Effects of an heated Imagination. The Kingdom of God is Righteousness, and Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghost. Rom. xiv. 17. Can we suppose, that the Holy Spirit will favour us with his comforting Influence, while we go on to grieve him by our sinful Neglects, and Indulgences? We must keep a strict Guard over our selves; watch against Temptations;
Peace of Conscience, &c.

Temptations; and carefully discharge all the Duties of Holiness, if we would enjoy his Comforts.

To conclude, let us with Frequency, and Earnestness, beseech the Father of Mercies, the God of all Comfort, to impart to us his Consolations, which are not small. We are now passing thro' a dangerous World; we greatly need divine Comforts to fortify us against its Terrors and Attractions. It is very proper therefore we should put up this Request for our selves, That the God of Hope would fill us with all Joy and Peace in believing; that we may abound in Hope, through the Power of the Holy Ghost.
SERMON XXIII.

TEMPORAL BLESSINGS, SUPPORT UNDER TROUBLE, AND SANCTIFIED AFFLICTIONS.

I TIMOTHY IV. 8.

Godliness is profitable unto all things, having Promise of the Life that now is, and of that which is to come.

ONE of the most common Prejudices which a carnal World has received against Religion, is, that it spoils the Pleasure of the present Life, and is very ill calculated for Men's temporal Interest. As for the Happiness which it proposes hereafter, every Man would be glad of it: Who does not wish to die the Death of the Righteous, and to have his last end like his? But the Mortifications and Self-denials that Religion requires, the Sufferings and Troubles which it is supposed to expose Men to, while they live in this World, are what many Persons can by no means brook: And hence it is, partly, that they are for putting off Religion to the end of their Lives; they propose to devote a few of their last Days to it, and by that means they hope to obtain eternal Happiness, without foregoing the Pleasure of this present
Temporal Blessings, and present Life. But now our Text assures us, that this is all a mistaken Notion, and that there is no manner of Reason for this vulgar Prejudice against Godliness; for in reality it is so far from spoiling the Pleasure of Life, and hurting Men's temporal Interest, that it tends to promote both. Godliness is profitable unto all things, having Promise of the Life that now is, as well as of that which is to come.

The Word Godliness is sometimes used in Scripture in a more limited, and sometimes in a larger Sense. It sometimes signifies our Duty to God, as distinguished from the Duty we owe to our Neighbour, and to our Selves; as Titus ii. 12. The Grace of God teacheth us that we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present World. Soberly as to our selves, Righteously towards our Neighbour, and Godly towards God. But sometimes the word Godliness includes all these, and whatever belongs to our religious Faith and Practice; as when St. Paul speaks of Persons professing Godliness, 2 Tim. ii. 10. and when we read of the things that pertain unto Life and Godliness, 2 Pet. i. 3. And I make no doubt but the Word should be taken in the same Latitude here in our Text, Godliness or Religion is profitable unto all things, and has Promise of both Worlds.

The Topick which falls to my Lot to treat of in this Sermon is, concerning the Temporal Blessings of the Gospel. I am to shew you what the Profit of Godliness is like to be for the Life that now is; and how the sincere and conscientious Practice of it will tend to promote even our temporal Interest.

It is profitable unto all things, says our Text; yet perhaps this all must be taken with some sort of Restriction:
Sanctified Afflictions.

For who can say but God could have annexed yet mightier Blessings to Godliness, if he had so pleased, than he has done? But by all things we are to understand all that, upon the whole, and all things considered, God, who is infinitely wise and good, sees are best for us. Now these all things, so far as they respect the Life that now is, may be summed up in three Articles; and the present Profits of Godliness may be made to appear,

First, For obtaining all temporal good things that we stand in need of.

Secondly, For supporting us under Troubles when ever they befall us.

Thirdly, For securing to us a sanctified Use of Afflictions, as well as a happy Issue of them.

First, Godliness is profitable for the obtaining of all temporal good things that we stand in need of. In that Catalogue of the Christians Possessions and Treasures, which St. Paul has drawn up, 1 Cor. iii. 22. I find the World and Life, and things present, as well as things to come, and all are yours, says he: All things which this World can bless you with, all present good things, which can be truly profitable to you, are and shall be yours if you are godly Persons.

The good things of this World might be drawn out into a very long Catalogue; for how many are the temporal Wants which some Men complain of! how is the Heart of a Lover of this World divided upon a thousand Objects! And yet all may be reduced to a few Particulars, viz. The Lust of the Flesh, the Lust of the Eye, and the Pride of Life, which are all that is in the World. 1 John ii. 16. that is, Pleasures, Riches, and Honours; which when
they are longed after and loved inordinately, prove dangerous Snares to Souls. But so far as any of these can be really good for us, Godliness is not only no Bar to our Possession of them, but it has a manifest tendency to obtain them, and to promote our Comfort in them. If it be asked, what advantage hath the Christian as to the Life that now is? and what present Profit is there in Godliness? it may be answered, much every way. We will come to Particulars.

I. As to Riches. A Word of common found, but of uncertain meaning. Riches are what Men generally covet, and yet few seem to know in what they consist. I cannot find that there is any certain Sum, or quantity of worldly Substance that will certainly make a Man rich; for some Men, who have large Estates, are yet always in want; their Income does not come up to their Expences, and in the fulness of their Sufficiency they are in Straits; and can that be called Riches which does not set Men above Poverty and Want? There are others whose worldly Substance lies in a narrow Compass, and yet they are in no Straits at all; they have sufficient for all their Occasions: and are not these the richer Men? most certainly they are. So that Riches do not consist in a certain Sum, or Estate, or Revenue; but rather in such a quantity and proportion of worldly Substance, be it more or less, as is sufficient to answer a Man's Necessities, to set him above Straits, and to afford him a comfortable Subsistence, according to the Rank and Station of Life in which Providence has placed him. The Man that has this, has enough; and especially if he has more than so, or some overplus beyond what his Necessities require, he may well be called a rich Man. Now take
take but the true measure of Riches, and you may easily see that to be godly or religious, is the most ready way to be rich: both as Religion contains in it several Duties which have a natural tendency this way, as particularly Industry and Diligence in our lawful Callings; and also as it prevents those wasting Sins which tend to Poverty, such as Idleness, Pride, Uncleanliness, and Intemperance; and above all, as it engages the Blessing of God, upon which all our good Success depends, in our temporal as well as in our spiritual Interest. The blessing of the Lord it maketh rich. Prov. x. 22. To all this we may still add, that Religion brings Contentment to the Mind, and Godliness with Contentment is great Gain. 1 Tim. vi. 6. If it does not bring the Estate to the Mind, it brings the Mind to the Estate; and that is much the same thing, it is altogether as well. The Man that is always contented has always enough, and who need desire to be richer than so? Thus it is that a little that a righteous Man hath, is better than the Riches of many wicked. Psal. xxxvii. 16. And he is truly richer with a little, than the others are with a great deal. So that the Riches of this World, if you take the true Measure of them, may fairly be reckoned amongst the Profits of Godliness. The World is yours. Let us proceed,

II. To Honour and good Reputation. A Blessing which the wise Man rates at a higher Price than Gold and Silver, or any of the Riches of this World. Prov. xxii. 1. A good Name is rather to be chosen than great Riches, and loving Favour than Silver and Gold. It is a good Gift of God to us, when he gives us Favour in the Eyes of Men; and it is a Talent that may be improved to very considerable Usefulness. Now what is there that can render a Man
Man so worthy of Esteem and Honour as true Religion does? It forms Men into a Godlike Temper, and makes those who have it, to be indeed the excellent of the Earth, and a Blessing to the World about them: It is certainly the most worthy Accomplishment that any Man can attain. Religion abounds in lovely Virtues, such as naturally tend to gain the Good-Will and Esteem of Men; as Meekness, Kindness, Charity, and a readiness to do good unto all as we have Opportunity. Did Christians but more excel in these Virtues of their holy Religion, they would surely have more Friends and fewer Enemies than they commonly have. They would however be sure of the hearty Respect and Love of all that are wise and good; for the good Man honoureth them that fear the Lord. Psal. xv. 4. And I am satisfied, that notwithstanding the seeming Contempt which wicked Men cast on the Godly, yet they cannot but have a secret Respect for such Persons; or whence is it that there are so many Hypocrites in the World? So many wicked Persons who endeavour to counterfeit Godliness, and to disguise themselves under a Pretence and Shew of it; but that they account Godliness to be a praise-worthy Thing. Men often endeavour to counterfeit Gold and precious Jewels; but not worthless Pebbles and Lead. And whence is it that wicked Parents generally desire that their Children should prove sober and good? but from an inward persuasion of the excellency of Sobriety and Goodness. Thus it appears that true Religion has a Testimony in every Man's Breast: And therefore what Solomon said of this divine Wisdom long ago, holds true in every Age, Prov. iv. 8. Exalt her and she shall promote thee, she shall bring thee to Honour when thou dost embrace her.
her. Godliness will most certainly engage the hearty Respect of all good People; and it will in a manner force the Reverence and Esteem even of wicked Men. So that Honour and good Reputation in this present World, is to be reckoned amongst the Profits of Godliness. And so is,

III. Pleasure. Her Ways are Ways of Pleasantness, and all her Paths are Peace. Prov. iii. 17. Religion does not debar us of any worldly Pleasures, which are reasonable and good for us; but it teaches us to use them with Safety, and with the truest Comfort. There are two Things, more especially, which are greatly conducive to our true Enjoyment of any worldly Pleasure, both of which are good Fruits of Godliness; the one is bodily Health, the other is a peaceable Mind.

1. As to bodily Health, without which we can neither enjoy our selves, nor any thing. Certain it is that Temperance, Sobriety and Chastity, which are Duties of Religion, are some of the best Preservatives of Health. Religion also affords the most powerful Remedies for Anxiety and Sadness, for inordinate Care and Fear, and for all that Sorrow of the World that worketh Death; and which has actually wore down many a Man to his Grave. It calls us to rejoice always, and gives us the best Reason so to do. And a merry Heart or cheerful Mind, doth good like a Medicine. Prov. xvii. 22. It is no material Objection against this, that godly Persons are not always the most healthy; for we must allow for the difference of Constitutions; some are naturally of a weak and feeble Frame: And besides, good People are liable to various Accidents, which may prejudice their Health, as well as other Men. But it is evident that Religion does generally, and according to the
the nature of Things, tend to preserve and promote the Health of our Bodies; and that vicious Men are most liable to sad Diseases. Hence it is said, Psalm lv. 23. That bloody and deceitful Men shall not live out half their Days. So far therefore as Health is conducive to Pleasure, which is indeed a great way, it is certain that a godly Life bids fairest to be a pleasant Life. The other mighty Ingredient in all true Pleasure is,

2. A peaceable Mind. If the Mind be not in Tune, the sweetest Harmony will make no Musick in our Ears: But as he that taketh away a Gar- ment in cold Weather, and as Vinegar upon Nitre, so is he that singeth Songs to an heavy Heart. Prov. xxv. 20. It is only teasing and vexatious. So Bel- phazzar's sumptuous Feast could yield him no Plea- sure, while his Mind was uneasy, and his Heart did meditate Terror. In short, there is no enjoying any thing without a peaceable Mind: But this also is a good fruit of Godliness. It is that alone which is capable of pacifying the Sinner's Conscience; of bringing the Soul into a full Ressignation to the Will of God; and of inspiring us with comfortable Hopes beyond Death and the Grave. When the Peace of God, which passeth all Understanding, keepeth the Heart and Mind, it is always in Tune for Pleasure; and therefore a godly Life must needs be the pleasantest Life that a Man can live in this World. What Man is he that loveth Life, and would see good Days? Let him practise Godliness: that is the Way, the sure, the only Way to solid Pleasure and substantial Joy.

I must not here pass by an Objection or two, which may possibly be made against the Pleasant-ness of Religion.
One is, that it requires some difficult and distasteful Duties, as Repentance, Self-denial and Mortification. But as we'll may one object against the Pleasantness of Health, because it may be sometimes necessary to take distasteful Medicines, either to recover or to preserve it. Tho' the first entrance on a godly Life may be somewhat troublesome, yet the after Progress is easy and pleasant; and even these more distasteful Duties are not without a secret Pleasure attending them, such as will overmatch the Pleasures of Sin and Sensuality.

Another Objection against the Pleasure of Godliness, is taken from the uncomfortable Lives of some godly Persons. It is said, they have hardly ever looked brisk and cheerful since they first applied, in good earnest, to Religion. I am very sorry if this be true of any godly Persons. It is pity they should thus disgrace Godliness, and prejudice others against it; and it is pity they should be such Strangers to their own Privileges. But surely the Sorrow and Sadness of some good People can never be owing to their Religion; for the Kingdom of God is Righteousness, Peace and Joy. Godliness bears no such bitter Fruit as this: No, but it must be owing to their want of Religion, to their Failings, and sinful Defects: It is probably some remainder of their natural Corruption, not yet sufficiently mortified, that gives them all this Trouble, and makes them cry out, with St. Paul, Rom. vii. 24. O wretched Man that I am, who shall deliver me from the Body of this Death! The true way to get above such a sad and dejected Frame, is to grow more in Godliness; and the more holy they are, the closer they walk with God, the more comfortable will their Lives ordinarily be. It remains a Truth therefore, a Truth
Truth which has been confirmed by large Experience, that to live godly is the true Way to live pleasantly in this present World.

Thus you have heard how Godliness is profitable unto, and has promise of the Life that now is, with respect to the obtaining of temporal good Things. I have instanced in Riches, Honours and Pleasure.

Secondly, Godliness is profitable for the Life that now is, to support us under Troubles and Afflictions whenever they befall us.

We do not pretend, that Godliness will exempt any Man from worldly Afflictions. Here every Man is born to Trouble; and the Godly must take their share of it, as well as others. Nay, perhaps they may sometimes be exercised with peculiar Afflictions, which do not befall other Men. They are sometimes persecuted for Righteousness sake. However, Godliness affords them peculiar Supports and Comforts, which others are Strangers to. It was a Thing well known in Job's time, that it was usual for God to give such inward Supports to good People, in their Afflictions, as made them fit easy on their Minds: And therefore Eliphaz was surprized to hear Job, whom he had taken to be a good Man, utter such bitter Complaints as he did, and curse the Day of his Birth. Are the Consolations of God small with thee? says he, Job xv. 11. David speaks of the Comforts of God which delighted his Soul, in the multitude of his sorrowful Thoughts, and in his sad Circumstances. Psalm xciv. 19. In the New Testament we find that the Experience of godly Persons was still the same; and that ordinarily they had such inward Supports in their Afflictions, as made all easy, and kept their Minds in peace. We are troubled on every
every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in Despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroy'd. 2 Cor. iv. 8, 9. As the Sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our Consolation also aboundeth by Christ. 2 Cor. i. 5. Their inward Supports made their outward Afflictions feel light and easy to bear.

Here let us enquire what those peculiar Supports under Afflictions are, which are the proper Fruits of Godliness. They are chiefly these:

1. The Testimony of a good Conscience. This St. Paul tells us was his rejoicing in all his Tribulations, and at last in the near Views of Death, 2 Cor. i. 12. Our rejoicing is this, the Testimony of our Conscience, that in Simplicity and godly Sincerity, not with fleshly Wisdom, but by the Grace of God, we have had our Conversation in the World. And the same has been a great Support to many a suffering Saint. It is a mighty Satisfaction to the Mind in any worldly Affliction, that our Conscience can testify we have not brought it upon our selves by Sin. How uncomfortable is the Reflection, which many a wicked Man cannot avoid, when he is in Pain, or Sickness, or Poverty! "This "I have brought upon my self, this alas! is the "Fruit of my Intemperance and wicked Life." But especially if Conscience should, at the same time, be terrified with a dread of Almighty Vengeance, that is the saddest Circumstance of all worldly Sorrow. The Spirit of a Man will sustain his Infirmities, if he has nothing else to grapple with. But a wounded Spirit who can bear? Prov. xviii. 14. A good Conscience, on the other hand, prevents such bitter Reflections, which add a heavy Weight to outward Troubles: It keeps the Burden from becoming intolerable,
intolerable, and bears up the Mind from being pressed
down under it. A good Conscience is always plea-
fant, whether in Prosperity or in Adversity. It is
in it self a continual Feast.

2. A Sense of Pardon and Reconciliation with
God, is a further Support under worldly Troubles.
Pardon takes away the Curse from Affliction, and a
Sense of Pardon is a sovereign Balm to ease the An-
guish of the Mind. *Son be of good cheer, thy Sins
be forgiven thee,* said Christ to a poor afflicted Man.
Matth. ix. 2. Be his Circumstances what they
would, in other Respects, yet this alone, that his
Sins were forgiven him, was enough to make him
very cheerful. A Sense of Pardon will set a Man
above complaining of almost any thing. *The Inhab-
itant shall not say I am sick, for the People that
dwell therein shall be forgiven their Iniquity,* Isaiah
xxxiii. 24. Then Pain and Sickness are easily born,
they are hardly worth speaking of. "Let this feeble
" Frame of Nature shake and decay; what harm
" is it? Now I know that God is not angry with
" me. Sickness and Death can only bring me near-
" er to my God." This it was that set David a-
bove Vexation and Sorrow, amidst the Disorders
of his Family, and the sad Prospect which he had con-
cerning his Posterity. *Although my House be not so
with God, yet he hath made with me an everlasting
Covenant, ordered in all things and sure.* 2 Sam. xxiii.

5. To know that God was reconciled to him, and
that he had made his Covenant with him, set his
Soul at ease, and overballanced all his Troubles.
Now this Support under Affliction does Godliness
yield. Not indeed that all godly Persons are so hap-
py as to have it: *No alas! some of God's Children
in this World still walk in Darkness,* and see not
the Light of their Father's Love. But were Christians as diligent in making their Calling and Election sure as they should be, Assurance would be a more common thing. It may be obtained, we are exhorted in the Scripture to get it, and many godly Persons have actually been in full Possession of it; by means of which they have been able to bear very heavy Afflictions, not only without much Dejection, but, in a manner, without any Interruption of their usual Comfort. Thus we read of some Persons who took joyfully the spoiling of their Goods, knowing in themselves that they had in Heaven a better and a more enduring Substance. Heb. x. 34. This brings me to mention another Support under Affliction, which Godliness also yields, viz.

3. The comfortable Hope of Heaven, where these present Afflictions shall be felt no more, and where they shall be abundantly compensated with fulness of Joy for ever. With this Hope, St. Paul tells us, both He and his Brethren were mightily supported in those times of Persecution: We look not unto the things which are seen, which are temporal, but unto the things which are not seen, which are eternal. And then how light did they make of all the Afflictions of this present Life! Our light Affliction which is but for a Moment, so they rated it, 2 Cor. iv. 17. And we reckon the Sufferings of this present time, are not worthy to be compared with the Glory which shall be revealed in us. Rom. viii. 18. Now this is one of the good Fruits of Godliness, even a well-grounded and lively Hope of Heaven. I add,

4. There are the supporting Influences of the good Spirit of God, which are promised in the Gospel to all Believers. I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you
for ever, was one of the parting Promises which our dear Saviour made. *John* xiv. 16. It is by the Influence of this heavenly Comforter, that all the Supports and Consolations of the Gospel are made effectual. He seals our Pardon, and *beareth witness with our Spirit that we are the Children of God*. He sheds abroad the Love of God in the Hearts of his People, and works in them a full Assurance of Hope unto the end.

These are the chief of those peculiar Supports under Trouble, which Godliness affords to good People; and in this Matter it is evident that Godliness is very profitable for the Life that now is: It affords the best Supports under Troubles and Afflictions. I mentioned a further Profit of Godliness, *viz.*

Thirdly, *That it secures a sanctified Use of Afflictions, as well as a happy Issue of them*; which is therefore a present, as well as a future Benefit. By a sanctified Use, I mean their being made a Means of doing our Souls good, and of promoting our best Interest. That all the present Afflictions of the Godly are thus sanctified, might be proved from many Scriptures. There they are represented as fatherly Chastisements, which God lays upon them merely for their own Profit; they are said to proceed from the Love which he bears to them: And it is expressly asserted, *that all things work together for Good to them that love God*. *Rom.* viii. 28. And the People of God have actually found it to be so a thousand times over.

I will here give you a few Instances of the sanctified Use of Afflictions, and shew you to what particular Purposes of Grace and spiritual Good they are often made subservient: as,

1. They
1. They are of use to try the Saints of God in this their present state of Infirmity and Imperfection. This is said in Scripture to be one of God's Designs in suffering the Afflictions of his People. *I will bring them through the Fire, and try them as Gold is tried.* Zech. xiii. 9. *Blessed is the Man that endureth Temptation; for when he is tried he shall receive the Crown of Life.* Jam. i. 12. The Godly are sometimes tried by Affliction, as Jewels are tried whether they be true or counterfeit. And we often find, upon such a Trial, that our Hearts are much otherwise than we took them to be. We could not have thought that we had so much Pride, and Impatience, and Unbelief yet remaining in our Hearts: We thought we could have submitted to the Will of God much better than we find we can do. On the other hand, many a timorous Christian has found, upon the Trial, that he has more Strength than he suspected: And he has experienced such divine Supports in the Day of his Trouble, as very much help him against discouraging Fears all his Life afterwards; Sometimes God's People are tried by Afflictions as *Gold is tried in the Fire* to refine it. So we read of *refining them in the Furnace of Affliction.* Isa. xlviii. 10. And it may often be seen, that good People do actually come out of their Afflictions with their Corruptions more mortified, and their Graces more improved. *Tribulation worketh Patience, and Patience Experience, and Experience Hope.* Rom. v. 3. Persecution has only served to blow up the Sparks of divine Love, which were kindled in their Hearts before, into a brighter Flame: And the more they have suffered for Christ's sake, the more has their Zeal for his Interest been warmed and confirmed.

G g 2

Thus
Thus Afflictions are many times sanctified for the Trial of the Godly.

2. They are sometimes sanctified, to guard and preserve them from Temptation and Sin. As when St. Paul had been favoured with that heavenly Rapture, which he gives an Account of, 2 Cor. xii. He was in danger of being exalted above measure, or of growing proud of it: and therefore there was given him a Thorn in the Flesh, a Messenger of Satan to buffet him, lest he should be exalted above measure. ver. 7. Very possibly this may be the Design of God in other Afflictions of his People: It is to preserve their Innocence, and to keep them from some dangerous Snare.

3. Present Afflictions are sometimes sanctified to the People of God, to prepare them for heavenly Glory. What a long Train of Afflictions besel St. Paul in the course of his Life and Ministry? What a sad Catalogue of them has he drawn up? 2 Cor. xi. 23. as Labours, Stripes, Prisons, mortal Dangers, and Perils of various kinds, Weariness, Painfulness, Hunger, Thirst, Cold, Nakedness, &c. Those who knew not the Character of the Man, might be apt to judge, as the barbarous People at Melita did, no doubt this Man is a Murderer, whom Vengeance pursues where-ever he goes. But the Apostle himself was able to give a better Account of the Design of God in all those his present Afflictions: He knew that they were designed to prepare him for greater Happiness and Glory in Heaven. Our light Affliction, which is but for a Moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory. 2 Cor. iv. 17. His God had designed for him one of the noblest Crowns in the heavenly Kingdom; and this Way he took to prepare him for it: He exercised
cised his Graces with a variety of uncommon Afflictions, to improve them into brighter Glory.

These are some of the sanctified Uses and good Fruits of the present Afflictions of the Godly: And possibly God may have other gracious Designs in many of them, which we can no more guess at now, than the Man who was born blind, or his Parents, could have guessed at the true Design of that Affliction of theirs. It is not improbable but they might have thought of such a Question many a time as the Disciples asked, John ix. 2. *Why was this Man born blind?* "Why was I denied the use of one Sense, which almost all Men enjoy? Why was I thus doomed to perpetual Darkness? Or why was our Son born blind? Why was he thus destined to unavoidable Poverty and Wretchedness?" But in vain were all their Inquiries: Neither the Son, nor the Parents could ever have found out the true Reason, before it was plainly told them; which was that Christ, the Son of God, might have an Opportunity of manifesting his divine Power in opening his Eyes by a Miracle. ver. 3. So God may have many wise and gracious Designs and Views in the present Afflictions of the Godly, which they can know nothing of, nor ever will until all the dark Scenes of Providence come to be laid open, in that Life and World which is to come.

Now the Use we should make of this Subject, is so natural and plain, that I need but hint it in two or three Particulars.

1. *From hence let us learn to vindicate the Goodness of God, in all his dealings with good Men.* For tho' he afflicts them in this Life, as well as others, and sometimes suffers them to be persecuted as others are
Temporal Blessings, and are not; yet it is always with some wise and kind Design. He has provided for them present Supports and Comforts, which other Men are unacquainted with: And he will turn all their Afflictions into Blessings in the end. Never then let us think hardly of God, as if he dealt hardly and unkindly with us, or with any of his Children. Let us learn to bless a taking, as well as a giving God; and adore his Goodness and Love thro' all the Dispensations of his Providence towards us.

2. Let this quiet our Minds under Affliction. However dark the Providence may be at present, and however grievous the Affliction that lies upon us; yet who knows to what good Purposes it may be designed? And what Happiness may afterwards issue out of it? Let us endeavour to persuade our selves into a more firm Belief of this comfortable Truth, that God does all things wisely and well; and that all things shall work together for good unto them that love and fear him. Let our first and great Care be, to make this God our Friend, thro' Faith in Christ, his Son; and then, we may depend upon it, that all shall be well with us, and happy for us.

3. Let me, upon the whole, exhort those who are Strangers to a Life of Godliness, to make trial of it. You will find that not one half of the Advantages and Profits; the Comforts and Blessings of it has yet been told you. To live godly in Christ Jesus, is the way to Riches, Honours and Pleasures: It is the way to make you most truly comfortable in this Life, and most completely happy for ever. Happy will you be when you are once in such a Case, happy will you be when your God is the Lord.
SERMON XXIV.

Assistance in D U T Y, Perseverance in G R A C E, and Preparation for G L O R Y:

COLOSSIANS I. 9, 10, 11, 12.

For this cause we—do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye may be filled with the Knowledge of his Will, in all Wisdom and Spiritual Understanding: That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good Work, and increasing in the Knowledge of God: Strengthen'd with all Might according to his glorious Power, unto all Patience and Long-suffering with Joyfulness: Giving Thanks unto the Father, who hath made us meet to be partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light.

HOLINESS is no less a Blessing, than a Duty; and a Blessing it is, not only as the Ornament and Perfection of our Nature and a necessary Means to our Happiness, but as a Gift coming down from above, and depending in its Principles, Continuance, Exercises and Improvements, on the Influences of Divine Grace.

Sanctification in the beginning of a spiritual and holy Life, has been already consider'd as a Gospel-Blessing, the Effect of God's Power and Grace.
Some other Branches relating to the Progress of the Life of God toward its final Consummation, in virtue still of the same powerful Grace, are the allotted Subjects of the present Discourse. And they are these three; Assistance in Duty, Perseverance in Grace, and Preparation for Glory: All which are taken into the Apostle's Prayer in the Text for the Colossian Converts.

And certainly this Prayer of one, who so fully understood the Christian Scheme, and which was dictated by the Spirit of Inspiration, must be allow'd at once conformable to the constant Wants of all Christians, and to the stated Methods of divine Grace for the supply of them, and to be equivalent with the most express Promise in respect to what is the Subject Matter of it. I begin then to consider,

First, The Assistance in Duty which God has graciously promised to Christians, and which they are encouraged to seek and expect from him.

Now this is amplified in a rich Variety of Language in the Text, which carries it through all the Faculties of the Soul, and settles for its Effect a course of holy and good Fruits through the Life, walking worthy of the Lord to all pleasing, and being fruitful in every good Work.

We may distinctly and regularly trace it through these following Particulars.

I. It includes an Illumination of the Mind, that it may discern or recollect what is real Matter of Duty in the various Circumstances of Life, and what goes into the full and exact Discharge of every one.

How many of our Duties consist in a nice Medium between culpable Extremes, which is often no less hard to settle in our Judgment, than to hit in our Practice?
Practice? Is it not thus difficult to manage the great Duty of Self-examination (to instance only in that among many of this sort) so as not to set the Marks of Grace too high or too low, and fairly searching out the true State of our Souls, to give Judgment without too much Favour toward, or unreasonable Prejudices against our selves? Into this Duty in particular the Apostle introduces the Spirit, as witnessing with our Spirits, to bring it to a determinate and right Issue. Rom. viii. 16.

Is not Prayer (as well as other Religious Duties) of such extent, and requiring withal such Intenseness of Mind, that after a diligent Preparation the most experienced Christians find it a work of great Difficulty to gather up orderly into their Thoughts, as well as to preserve on them without Diffipation, all the Materials they would take into it when attempted in any Compass and Fulness? Does not therefore the great Apostle expressly make the right Discharge of Prayer, even as to the Mind’s due Comprehension of the Matter, depend on the Spirit’s helping our Infirmities? for we know not, says he, what we should pray for, as we ought. Rom. viii. 26.

What must we say to many Duties of the social Life wherein our Concern lies with others, and our acting a becoming Part toward them, will depend very much on our observing their Tempers? What, to new Duties perpetually accruing from new Relations and new Circumstances of Life? What, to a multiplicity of Engagements lying on a Person at once, as where Providence allots a large and extensive Sphere of Action? Is not human Wisdom in such Cases put hard to it to discover the Place and Time, the Kind or Nature, the Measure and Method of each in-
incumbent Duty, and ready to wish for and seek a Direction superior to it Self?

What must we say to the Choice of our Way and Undertaking in some important Turns of Life, that it may comply with the Design of Providence; where a false Step in our setting out will naturally betray us into more afterward, nay, a Doubt about it will distract and dispirit us? Yet is not the Path of Duty in these and other Dispositions of Providence, often embarras'd with many Perplexities and intricate Circumstances, so as not easily to be discern'd? and are not the wisest and best of Men sometimes extremely puzzled to determine, what is the Course which is agreeable to the Will of God when they are most sincerely dispos'd to take that which they know to be so?

Once more, what a Difficulty is it for the Mind to keep in view, as often as it ought, the Glory of God as the great End of all our common and civil, as well as religious Actions?

Who now that knows himself, will not freely acknowledge on such accounts as these, and in a thousand Cases of Duty and Conduct, with the Prophet, Jer. x. 23. That the Way of Man is not in himself: it is not in Man that walketh to direct his Steps? and will he not see Reason to pray with David, Show me thy Ways, O Lord, teach me thy Paths, Psal. xxv. 4. and elsewhere often; and with his Son Solomon, Give thy Servant an understanding Heart, that I may discern between good and bad. 1 Kings iii. 1, 9?

How many also are the Promises which assure this Mercy to the humble and believing Petitioner, and having rais'd the Expectation by their Proposal, have fully answer'd it by their Accomplishment? Is it not declared,
declared in general, that all the Children of Zion shall be taught of the Lord? Isai. lv. 13. Is it not made an express part of the Office of the Spirit, to teach Christians and to bring to their remembrance all things which Christ has said that they have a Concern in? John xiv. 26. Is it not said of that practical Wisdom, which we are directed to ask of God from the Sense of our want of it, that it shall be given to him that asks in Faith? Jam. i. 5. And in consequence of acknowledging God in all our ways, that he shall direct our Paths? Prov. iii. 6. And what Man is he, says the Psalmist, that seareth the Lord? him shall he teach in the Way that he shall choose. The Meek will be guide in Judgment: and the Meek will be teach his Way. Psal. xxv. 9, 12. See also Psal. xxxii. 8. Isai. xliii. 16.

Let now the Christian witness from his own Experience, whether these Promises have not in some Seasons of his Life been remarkably fulfill'd, while under much Darkness and Perplexity hanging about his Mind and surrounding his Way, he has in humble Dependance on them earnestly sought Counsel and Direction from God. Let him say, if some clear and bright Ray of heavenly Light darting at once into his Mind, or certain Circumstances of things unexpectedly arising and concurring, have not disintangled his Way, which before was all intricate and involved, and pointed it out to him with full Evidence and Satisfaction. Thus his Ears have heard as it were a Word behind him saying, This is the Way, walk in it, when he has been before turning to the right hand and to the left, wholly at a loss what to resolve on, according to that Promise. Isai. xxx. 21. What secret Hints and seasonable Suggestions for many occasional Services, will not the observing Saint
Saint see Reason to own himself indebted to the good Spirit for? And how often will he perceive his Mind inlarging its Views to an easy, clear and copious Comprehension of those things that belong to the due performance of many Duties, when they had been for some time much contracted and confused, and insuperable Difficulties appear'd to clog his Attempts? Nor will he scruple to refer this to the same divine Source.

II. This Assistance affords a practical and experimental Knowledge, an impressive and lively Sense on the Mind, of those divine Truths which are the grand Motives to all Duties, and the Materials which employ many of them.

Not only are our Minds weak to retain and collect the great Truths of Christianity; but even when we have them lying before the View of our Understanding, how feeble and languid is the Force wherewith they strike our Minds, while we are left to display and manage them our selves with our own Spirits? After all our quickening up the Powers of our Souls to attend to and apply them, we can derive no vital Warmth from them on our Hearts. Are not these the frequent Complaints of sincere Christians, that the great things of God's Law and Gospel appear as strange, flat and insipid things to them? They hear and read of them, they converse with them in their Devotions, they meditate on them, but alas, it is without any clear View of their transcendent Lustre and Glory, without any Relishes of their Sweetness, without any powerful Impressions left by them on their Souls. At such Seasons they can scarce form a Notion of their having been affected otherwise, as they fear also they never shall, with these glorious Truths, and seem to themselves as if they
they had never learn'd Wisdom, or had the Knowledge of the Holy. But now when at other times, and it may be a little after such a falling off of spiritual Apprehensions and Sensations, these same divine Truths shall break in at once on the Eye of the Mind with a marvellous Light and Glory so as to fill the Soul with Rapture and Wonder, and shall spread their pleasent Savour and their powerful Virtue all over the Heart; Whence this Difference? What can it be attributed to, but God's shining into the Heart, to give the Light of the Knowledge of the Glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, as 2 Cor. iv. 6. his opening the Eyes that they may behold wondrous things out of his Word, as Psal. cxix. 18.

Thus the Apostle takes notice of the Love of God (the strongest and sweetest Motive to Duty) as shed abroad in the Hearts of Primitive Christians, by the Holy Ghost which was given to them. Rom. v. 5. And he thus prays for the Thessalonians; The Lord direct your Hearts into the Love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ. 2 Thess. iii. 5. And for the Philippians; This I pray, that your Love may abound yet more and more in Knowledge and in all judgment; (Sense or Feeling it is in the Original.)

III. A Readiness for and in the Duties incumbent on us is another Fruit of Divine Aids and Influences.

The best of Christians cannot always say with the Apostle, that even to will that which is good is present with them, so as to find an actual present Inclination to the performance of it. Rom. vii. 18. No, this Faculty shares as sensibly and deeply in the Original Weakness and Depravity of human Nature as any, and retains it in a considerable Degree even after Conversion, wherein it is, but imperfectly renew'd. 'Tis then the Work of God by his Spirit to incline our
our Hearts to the several Duties of our Calling more common or special, and to keep them inclined, for which **David** so often prays, particularly **Psal. cxix.** 'Tis the good Spirit that quickens and prepares us for every good Work; it is he who disposes and suits our Spirits for Prayer with other Religious Exercises and all the Offices of Life, that bringing a right Frame with us to them, we may be better fitted to go through them well. He excites holy Motions, inspires with humble yet lively Resolutions, preserves them warm and steady on the Soul, and at last enables us, to execute them. Conquering all Reluctancies, and bearing down all Delays, by his secret Influence he sweetly and powerfully draws our Wills to our appointed Work. And, as we soon grow weary in well-doing, as the good Dispositions we at any time carry with us into the Work of the Lord quickly flag in the prosecution; 'tis he who maintains us in Frame for a patient continuance in the Service till it be happily finish'd. At every turn he awakens anew our drooping Inclinations, nay, and sometimes springs up a mighty Readiness and Alacrity in the middle, which was wanting at the beginning of a Duty. Thus 'tis **God**, as the Apostle expressly affirms, Phil. ii. 13, who worketh in us both to will and to do, of his good pleasure. Now this we may justly apprehend to be the ordinary Method wherein God works up the Will into a suitableness to the Duties we are to ingage in. He impresses on the Mind divine Truths and Promises, and among these, the Assurances of his own upholding and strengthening Presence, which put Life into our first and renew'd Efforts, that would else be soon given over under the pressing Sense of Difficulties; and then he affords present or revives former Tastes of the Pleasure and Delight attending them.
them. Yet may he not also sometimes give secret Touches to the Will itself, which to be sure whenever vouchsafed never violate, but rather perfect the Freedom of its Choice and Determinations?

IV. God assists us in Duty by weakening and suppressing the evil Motions of our Hearts. *When we would do good, evil is present with us,* striving to bear down and master all spiritual Inclinations, and to defeat the End and Effect of them. Rom. vii. 21. *The Flesh lusteth against the Spirit,* the former draws us as powerfully off from God and our Duty as the latter does to them, and labours to hinder all its Efficacy; *so that we cannot,* of our selves, *do the things that we would.* Gal. v. 17. 'Tis the hard Task of Christians here, that while they are working for God and their Souls, they must hold themselves in readines to fight and resist their spiritual Enemies who are always at hand to disturb them in their Work; just as it was with Nehemiah and his People, who when they were employ'd in building the Walls of Jerusalem, *with one of their Hands wrought in the Work and with the other held a Weapon.* Neh. iv. 17. And who then is sufficient of himself for both these Concerns together, and does not need constant Succours from above, to carry on his Labours through such Difficulties and Oppositions to a comfortable Issue? Therefore the settled Method of our living to God in a Course of holy Obedience is thus laid out by the Apostle, Rom. viii. 11. *If ye through the Spirit mortify the Deeds of the Body, ye shall live.*

V. This Assistance is compleated by God's exciting and quickening into Exercise those holy Affections and gracious Principles which are proper to every Duty. There is an inward spiritual Part must mix with and run through the outward of all Duties; or they are spoil'd,
spoil'd, being no better than a dead Body without a Soul. The Absence of suitable Graces in some degree of lively Exercise out of our Works, makes them not perfect before God; Rev. iii. 2. they are not then filled up as the word signifies, that is, with those Graces which are to be the animating Ingredients of them. Now are not all holy Qualities the Fruits of the Spirit? as they are call'd, Gal. v. 22. And he is therefore denominated from his Concern with them all together, and with particular leading Graces, the Spirit of Grace, of Faith, of Love.

How many of these must come together and contribute their respective Share to the several parts of Prayer? And is not the Spirit design'd and promised to help our Infirmities in the manner as well as matter of our Prayers, that we may pray as, and notonly for what we ought? Rom. viii. 26. Whenever we pour out our Hearts before God, in awful yet delightful Adoration of his sublime and incomprehensible Glories, in a flow of penitent Affections for our Iniquities, in warm and fervent Breathings after spiritual Blessings, in an easy Resignation of all our temporal Concerns to his Will, in the various Pleadings of Faith judiciously and powerfully enforcing all our Requests, and in the liveliest Emotions of Love, Gratitude and Joy while we acknowledge his Benefits; the Spirit of Grace and Supplications has been first pour'd upon us, and been moving all along on our Hearts, to give us this Liberty and enlarged Emmanation of spiritual Affections and Graces. The same must be said of that large Train of Graces which an Attendance on the Table of the Lord calls for; and so of those that are to be mix'd with hearing or reading God's Word and singing his Praises; when they are exercised in any good measure agreeably to the
the Demands of these Ordinances. Nay, and as all Self and Social Duties are to be qualified with a certain Temper of Mind fitted to each; as the Faith, with the Love and Fear of God in general, should regulate and animate our whole Conduct that whatever we do may be done with Singleness and Cheerfulness of Heart as unto the Lord, with upright Aims and Tendencies to his Glory: so God is only able to make all Grace to abound toward us, that thus having all Sufficiency in all things, we may abound to every good Work: 2 Cor. ix. 8. In order to our doing Works of Liberality, as we ought, out of the unfeign’d and intense Love of a pure Heart to the Brethren, our Souls must be purified through the Spirit, as 1 Pet. i. 22. 'Tis God to whom we are to apply, to fulfil in us the Work of Faith with Power: 2 Thess. ii. 11. To give to our Patience her perfect Work, that it may be intire, lacking nothing: Jam. i. 4, 5. To purge off from our lawful and good Actions corrupt Self-Ends of Pride or outward Interest, which are apt so closely to adhere to them, and to make them Fruits of Righteousness unto his own Glory and Praise: Phil. i. ii. In a word, to make us perfect in every good Work to do his Will, working in us that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ. Heb. xiii. 21.

I shall just drop a few practical Reflections on this first Head of my Discourse, before I pass on to the second.

First then, Is divine Assistance in such a variety of Instances necessary, even to one who has a Principle of Grace and Holiness in his Heart? What awful Conviction may this give to the Sinner who is without it, of his utter Inability to do any thing truly pleasing to God, whatever Profession he makes, whatever religious Services he performs, whatever...
moral Virtues he practises? Let him not then any longer be secure in a Course of dead and spiritless Works, or value himself on going over a Round of Duties, which yet to neglect would make his Case still worse. But as sensible that he is very far off from doing any thing spiritually and acceptably, let him earnestly implore the Gift of the Spirit, as the Author first of new Hearts, and then of new Fruits. And is he not promised to them who ask for him? Luke xi. 13.

2. Let the Christian see that he never denies or disowns the Reality of Divine Operations, because the manner of the Influence may be so secret, as not to be sensibly perceived, and attempts it self to the rational Nature, which acts with entire freedom and consciousness.

Is not the Word of God by so frequently and clearly interesting the Power and Grace of God in all the good Works of Christians, a sure and full Warrant to induce our Belief of it, and to ingage our Ascription of Praise and Glory to him for every good thing found in or done by us, though we have no sensible Demonstration within our selves of his Power working on us? And yet what Christian, by consulting his own different Experiences, is not furnish'd with a Witness within himself to the internal Operations of God's Grace? Does not Piety and Humility dictate, that the Difference for the better should be attributed to God, and that for the worse to our selves as a Measure or Rule whereby to judge what we should at other times and always be, if left alone to the meer Workings of our own Spirits? Are we then ever so conscious to the free Motions of our
our own Minds and Hearts, in choosing and pursuing after Holiness? Let us nevertheless not scruple to believe and own that God has been working with us, though we knew it not. Let us also remember for our Satisfaction and Direction, how extremely cautious the Holy Apostle was, not to detract any thing from the Glory of God's Grace, while he mentions his own abundant Labours in the Gospel. By the Grace of God, says he, I am what I am, and his Grace bestowed upon me was not in vain: but I laboured more abundantly than they all; yet not I, but the Grace of God which was with me. 1 Cor. xv. 10.

3. We may remark the true way of improving this Doctrine to the regulation of our Conduct, against these two Extremes of sitting still and doing nothing till we find a sensible Presence of God with us, and of going on to our various Duties presumptuously, without any dependance on the Spirit of God. Duty binds us in the same manner whether we are disposed or indisposed to it. It must then be our Care and Business at all times to stir up the Powers of Nature and Grace to lay hold on God, and to do with all our Might what is matter of present Duty to us. This is the likeliest way of our receiving, and the only way wherein we can expect Divine Assistances, whose tendency and design is not to supersede, but to refine and perfect our own Operations, with which they insensibly mix. Hence they are proposed to encourage our attempting even the most difficult Services. Phil. ii. 12, 13. And therefore on the other hand, let us take care that we never flight or overlook the Grace of God, presuming on our own fancied Readiness and Ability; but pursue every Duty.
Perseverance in Grace.

Duty with a continual Eye to it, and so resolve with the Psalmist, to go in the strength of the Lord God. Psal. lxxi. 16. But I proceed now,

Secondly, To consider Perseverance in Grace, as a Blessing undertaken for and promised by God to his Saints, and which they may humbly and comfortably expect from him. This I take to be meant by the all Patience and Long-suffering in the Text, even as the same Words are applied to holding on in a Course of Faith and Obedience. Heb. vi. 15. Rom. ii. 7. And thus in another place our Apostle pursues his Prayer for Sanctification to this Issue of a final Preservation. 1 Thes. v. 23. The very God of Peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God, your whole Spirit and Soul and Body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I shall endeavour the brief Explication and Confirmation of this important, and most valuable Privilege of the Saints in the following Propositions,

I. The Perseverance of Saints, must be understood in respect to the Grace or Favour of God toward them, and the Grace of God or the Principles of Holiness within them, as inseparably subsisting together and neither apart from the other. They both commence together; every one at the same time he is admitted into a State of Acceptance with God and Relation to him as a Father, has a Principle of Holiness infused into him; and they must either continue or cease together. None shall be preserved in the Favour of God, who have not preserved in them the Image of God, as none shall ever lose the former who do not the latter.

Now from this Connection we may conclude, not that there are no peremptory Assurances of God's Love to any enduring for ever, when we actually find
find such in Scripture express'd in the strongest manner; but only that a Regard will be had to the Character of those, in whom they are to be made good, and therefore God himself will take effectual Care that they shall persevere holy as a necessary means of their abiding in his Love. Must we not thus understand the Triumphs of the Apostle, and his declared Persuasion that none of the particulars he mentions, no nor any other Creature or Thing shall be able to separate those who love God, being the called according to his purpose, from the Love of Christ and of God in Christ Jesus our Lord? Rom. viii. 28, 34, 39. Is not the Character and Happiness of Christians here fixed together? Does not the Assurance of God's unchangeable Love to them necessarily imply and secure the continuance of their Love to God as flowing from the former, and without which God's Love to them would undoubtedly cease? The Words plainly and strongly represent an absolute certainty of the Event. They must therefore mean more than this; that nothing shall shake the Interest of Christians in God's Love, as long as they maintain their own Love to God. For thus the Issue would be left altogether uncertain: Nay, and thus, after so solemn and pompous a defiance of all Enemies which might threaten to separate Christians from God's Love to them; they would lie exposed without any guard on the side of their greatest or only Danger and Apprehension, which is left their Enemies should prevail to extinguish their own Love to God. Do they not well know that Violence without Seduction can never be their Ruin, nor God's Heart be alienated from them any other way than by the alienation of their Hearts from him?
II. Perseverance belongs not absolutely to what is either less or more than habitual Grace. Whatever Faith of Assent, Profession, Convictions, common Operations and Gifts of the Spirit, outward Reformation and Regularity of Manners, are attain'd apart from true Sanctification, these indeed may be lost and quite wither away. In this manner several Cases and Examples of Apostacy mention'd in Scripture are certainly to be understood. The Stony-ground Hearers, who for a while believe, and in time of Temptation fall away, are said to have no Root in themselves, no honest and good Heart. Luke, viii. 13, 15. As to those who are supposed capable of falling away even to an impossibility of Recovery, Heb. vi. no gracious Principle is found among the high things ascribed to them; there are better things, even things accompanying Salvation, expressly spoken of, as in contradistinction to them, v. 9, 10. Thus when some are said to depart, to fall, and to turn aside from the Faith or from Grace; it is meant, only of the Doctrines of the Gospel, which are also sometimes accurately distinguished from real Principles of Grace and Holiness, as never had by the chief of these Apostates. From which latter, named just before, says the Apostle, some havingswer'd (having missed or fallen short of them, as the Original Word \( \Omega \nu \tau \iota \varepsilon \zeta \rho \alpha \omicron \sigma \mu \omicron \omicron \upsilon \) properly signifies) have turn'd aside to vain jangling. 1 Tim. i. 5, 6. Which, that is, a good Conscience, some having put away \( \tau \nu \tau \iota \varepsilon \zeta \alpha \pi \omega \sigma \alpha \mu \epsilon \iota \omicron \nu \) (or thrust from them without ever entertaining it, as the Word is understood * elsewhere) concerning Faith have made shipwreck. v. 19. They went out from us, says another Apostle, but they were not of us, they were never led and acted by the same Spirit of Grace.

* See Acts vii. 27. chap. xiii. 46.
Grace and Holiness, the Union which abideth in them who receive it, 1 John ii. 19, 27. So when those great Apostates in 2 Pet. ii. are compared to a Dog return’d to his Vomit, a Sow that was wash’d, to her wallowing in the Mire, ver. 22. a real Change of their impure Natures must surely be none of the Fruits of their former Profession.

On the other hand, there is a constant Protection only for the Seed or Principle of Grace itself, but not against its Decays, a temporary Suspension of its Exercise, and the Commission of many and sometimes very great Sins. Several Declarations and Promises in Scripture take up and provide for these Cases, as more or less incident to all Saints, that they may not so far prevail as to divide them from God and unsettle their Foundation of Grace within. Though the good Man fall, as he may seven times, Prov. xxiv. 16. be shall not be utterly cast down: for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand, Psal. xxxvii. 24. Thus he upheld the Psalmist in a fore Temptation which had almost overset him. Psal. lxxiii. 23. Thus David, in praying God after his notorious Fall, not to take his holy Spirit from him, virtually own’d that he never had wholly departed from him. Psal. li. 11. Thus Peter had security given him by the Prayer of his Lord and Master, that his Faith should not fail. Luke xxii. 32. Thus when Solomon committed Iniquity, God as still his Father would chasten him with the Rod of Men, but never suffer his Mercy to depart away from him. 2 Sam. vii. 14, 15. And the same gracious Provision is promised in like Case to all the spiritual Seed of Christ. Psal. lxxxix. 30—35. And hence so many Promises of God’s healing his People’s Backslidings.

Ser. XXIV. Perseverance in Grace. 471
III. The same Reasons hold for the Perseverance of all, as of any, who have obtain'd precious Faith and Sanctification: And yet doubtless many of them actually endure to the end and are saved. Were it indeed left to Believers to preserve themselves, (in which Case only it can be imagin'd how the final Issue should be different in one and another) the Consequence may be well presumed fatal to them all. But the Scripture fixes it not here, but on the Power of God, 1 Pet. i. 5. Jude 24. on their Relation to him, and on his special Knowledge, Love and Care of them. 2 Tim. ii. 19. Rom. viii. 31, 39. chap. xi. 1, 2. And has not God the same Love and Care for all his Children alike? has he not the same Power to keep one as much as another? and is it not our Heavenly Father's Will, that not one even of the little ones in his Family should perish? Matt. xviii. 14. It is also in Christ Jesus that they are to be preserv'd who are effectually called. Jude 1. And has not he the same Affection and Regard for them all, as the dear Members of his Body, the Travel of his Soul, and the promised Reward of his pouring it out unto Death, which he was so to see as to be satisfied? Isai. liii. 10. And would he be satisfied with less than his full Reward? Has he not also receiv'd them, for his Charge, with acknowledged Instructions that of all which the Father had given him he should lose nothing? John vi. 39. And is he not then concern'd in Honour and Faithfulness, to employ that full Power which he likewise owns to be given him for this end, in order actually to give eternal Life to them all? John xvii. 2. Of which Power being really and successfully so exercised, his Intercession is a Proof. For as this is the Way in which his Mediatorial Power becomes effectual, so it is made in common for such as
as truly believe on him, that they may have his Spirit to abide in them for ever, and be preserv’d safe to Glory. John xiv. 16. chap. xvii. Therefore,

IV. A constant and final Perseverance in Grace unto Glory, is expressly declared and absolutely promised in many passages of Scripture. 'Tis represented by our blessed Lord, as a thing impossible to deceive, that is, so as to draw away to Ruin the Elect. Mat. xxiv. 24. Again, he speaks of the gracious Principles imparted by him under the Metaphor of a Well of Water that shall be in the Receiver, springing up into everlasting Life. John iv. 14. What stronger Security for all his Sheep being preserv’d safe to eternal Life can Words contain, than these which he utters of them? I give unto them eternal Life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my Hand. John x. 28. Here the End is ascertain’d to absolutely and universally as to admit of no Exceptions, no not that of the Sheep’s wresting themselves through their own Perverseness and wandering Disposition out of his Hands; the prevention of this belongs to the Pastoral Care; it must be also implied in Christ’s guarding his Sheep against the Assaults of others, since there is indeed little or no Danger of anything separating them from him without their own Consent. Does not the Apostle connect Glorification with Justification and effectual Calling as inseparable? Rom. viii. 30. Does he not express a full Confidence about the Saints at Philippi (equally applicable to all everywhere) that he who had begun a good Work in them, that is of Grace, wherein they were partakers with himself, will perform it until the Day of Christ? Phil. i. 6, 7. These few, instead of many more Passages which might be brought out of both Testaments, may abundantly satisfy us that Per-
Perseverance is a Blessing promised and assured to the Saints.

And is it so? Let us then admire the Grace of the New Covenant, which has so comfortable an Article in it, that the Old one was without, and for want of it quickly failed. Let us earnestly desire and make sure of a real Work of Grace which has so great a Blessing in it. Let us not however, through a vain and fond Expectation of Perseverance as a promised Privilege disregard all the Commands and Exhortations to it as a Duty incumbent on us with the awful Threatnings to those who draw back. The true use of these, far from overthrowing the abundant Evidence we have for the Doctrine, is this; they serve as proper Means in a way suitable to our rational Nature, for God to fulfil his own Purpose and Promise. Therefore in compliance with this Use and Design let us attend to the Practice of Grace and Holiness with all Diligence and godly Fear, trusting wholly (as such a Fear dictates) in the Lord, as only able to keep us effectually from falling; and so doing we may indulge a joyful Frame, in lively Hope that he whose Mercy and Truth endure for ever, will perfect what concerns us, and never forswake the Work of his own Hands.

It remains to add one Word on,

Thirdly, The Saints Preparation for Glory. This as the Result of their being preserved and assisted in holy Obedience, the Apostle last mentions in our Text. And he mentions it in the Form of Thanksgiving; because as the Fruition of future Glory will fill them with Joy unmixed and unspeakable, so the well-grounded Hope of it while they are fitting for it, may exalt their Joy to a very high pitch.

Thus
Thus then the actual Exercises of the continued Principles and Habits of Holiness, in a Course of all proper Duty and Service holding on to the end of Life, constitute a due Meetness for Heaven, only with the Addition of a peculiar Turn of prevalent Desires and Hopes to the Mansions above. And it is God who works his People to this self-same thing, even an Heavenniness of Frame, an habitual or an actual Willingness rather to be present with the Lord, than in the Body, superadded to their Fruitfulness and Activity in every Grace and good Work suited to their Station on Earth. 2 Cor. v. 5, 6, 8.

Of him then let us continually seek this whole Disposition for Heaven, yet in the Use of all appointed Means, and of our most watchful vigorous Endeavours, by blessing which, he produces and maintains it. Let us press, with the Apostle Paul, toward the Mark for the Prize of the high Calling of God in Christ Jesus. Phil. iii. 14. And, according to St. Peter's Exhortation, 2 Pet. i. 5–11. let us give all diligence, by adding the regular Exercise of one Grace to another, to make our Calling and Election sure: For so, an Entrance shall be ministered to us abundantly into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.
SERMON XXV.

The Perpetual Obligation of the Moral Law; The Evil of Sin and its Desert of PUNISHMENT,

I John III. 4.

*Sin is the Transgression of the Law:*

And ROM. VI. 23.

*The Wages of Sin is Death.*

The blessed God has an undoubted Right to command and govern his Creatures, and when he makes known his Will or lays the knowledge of it within their reach, this becomes a Law to them, this determines what is their Duty; and a transgression of this Law or disobedience to it is Sin; and Sin carries in it the Notion of moral Evil, which deserves some penalty to be inflicted on the Sinner.

Now that the Moral Law is such a Law as I have described, and has such Consequences attending the Transgression of it; I shall endeavour to shew in the following Method.

I.
SER. XXV. Of the Moral Law. 477

I. I shall consider what we mean by the Moral Law, and where this Law is to be found.

II. I shall prove that it reaches to all Mankind, and is of perpetual Obligation.

III. That Sin, or the Transgression of it, is a very great and heinous Evil.

IV. That it justly deserves Punishment from the hands of God. I shall pursue each of these in their order.

The first Enquiry is, What we mean by the Moral Law. To which I answer, The Moral Law signifies that Rule which is given to all Mankind to direct their Manners or Behaviour, consider'd meerly as they are intelligent and social Creatures, as Creatures who have an Understanding to know God and themselves, a Capacity to judge what is right and wrong, and a Will to choose and refuse Good and Evil.

This Law, I think, does not arise meerly from the abstracted Nature of things, but also includes in it the Existence of God and his Will manifested some way or other, or at least put within the reach of our Knowledge; it includes also his Authority, which obliges us to walk by the Rule he gives us.

The Commands or Requirements of the Moral Law may be represented in different views, but all agree in the same Design and Substance.

Sometimes the Moral Law is represented as requiring us to seek after the Knowledge of that God who made us, as obliging us to believe whatsoever God discovers to us, and as commanding us to perform those Duties he prescribes, and to abstain from those things which he forbids.

Sometimes again this Moral Law is represented by distinguishing it into those Duties which we owe to God, to our Neighbours and to our Selves.
Of the Moral Law,

Duties which we owe to God are Fear and Love, Trust and Hope, Worship and Obedience, Prayer and Praise, doing every thing to his Glory, and Patience under his Providences in Life and Death. The Duties which we owe to our Neighbours are Submission to our Superiors, Compassion to our Inferiors, Truth and Fidelity, Justice and Honesty, Benevolence and Goodness toward all Men. The Duties which we owe to our Selves are Sobriety and Temperance; and in general the Moral Law requires a Restraint of our natural Appetites and Passions within just bounds, so that they neither break out to the dishonour of God, to the injury of our Neighbour, or to hinder us in the pursuit of our own best Interests.

There is yet another general Representation of the Moral Law, which is used in Scripture both in the Old and New Testament. It is mention’d by Mosèς, Deut. vi. 7. Lev. xix. 18. and repeated and confirm’d by our blessed Saviour, Matth. xxii. 37. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart and Soul, and thy Neighbour as thy Self; on these two Commandments hang all the Law and Prophets: and therefore St. Paul, Rom. xiii. 10. tells us, Love is the fulfilling of the Law. For he that loves God and his Neighbour as he ought, will perform all necessary Duties toward them, as well as govern himself aright in Obedience to God his Maker.

Having explain’d what I mean by the Moral Law, we come to enquire Where it is to be found? I answer, It is found in the Ten Commands given to the Jews at Sinai; it is found in the holy Scriptures, scatter’d up and down thro’ all the Writings of the Old and New Testament, and it may be found out in the plainest and most necessary parts of it, by the sincere and diligent Exercise of our own reasoning Powers.
Powers. It was written by the Finger of God in the Tables of Stone, 'tis written by the Inspiration of God in the Holy Bible, and it is written in the Hearts and Consciences of Mankind by the God of Nature. The Voice of God from Heaven proclaim'd this Law, the Voice of the Prophets and Apostles confirm it, and the Voice of Conscience, which is the Vice-gerent of God in the Heart of Man, speaks the same thing *. See Rom. ii. 14, 15. which must be thus explain'd. When the Gentiles, who have not the written Law, are admonish'd by Nature, and their own Consciences, to do things contain'd in the written Law, their Hearts and reasoning Powers are a natural Law to themselves, which shews or discovers the work of the written Law or ten Commands impressed on their Hearts; their very Consciences bearing Witness for or against themselves, and accusing, or excusing them, according as they have obey'd or broke that Natural Law within them.

The Second general Head of my Discourse leads me to prove that this moral Law is of universal and perpetual Obligation to all Mankind, even thro' all Nations and all Ages. The Will of God their Maker

* That which is in the Heart of Man is called the Natural Law, because it arises from our natural Principles of Reason; that which was given at Sinai is more frequently term'd the Written Law: both are call'd the Moral Law, yet with these few Differences. (1) The Written Law is more clear and express in ten particular Commands; the Natural Law is more secret and less evident, especially among the greatest part of Mankind. (2.) The Written Law was a more peculiar Favour of God given to the Jewish Nation: the Natural Law lies within the reach of all Men whose Consciences are not grossly blinded or hardened by Sin. (3.) The natural Law contains nothing but moral Precepts or Rules of Life for Men as intelligent, sensible and sociable Creatures: the written Law includes in it something Ceremonial, i.e. the Seventh-day Sabbath, and other Modes of Expression peculiar to the Jewish State and People. But the grand Requirements and the Design of both these are the same, as appears in many Scriptures, especially Rom. ii, 15, 16,
ker concerning their Conduct being revealed to them or laid within the reach of their knowledge, as I said before, becomes a Law or Rule of Life to Men. Now this Moral Law is so far discover’d to all, whether Jews, Gentiles or Christians; both by the Light of Reason and by the Writings of the old and new Testament, and thus it becomes an Universal Law which requires the Obedience of all Mankind.

And as it hath Universal Authority over all Men, so its Obligation is perpetual and everlasting: there cannot be any dissolution of it, nor a release from its Commands or Requirements, which will appear if we consider the following Reasons.

1. 'Tis a Law which arises from the very Existence of God and the Nature of Man: it springs from the very relation of such Creatures to their Maker and to one another. Every Creature must owe its all to him that made it; and therefore all its Powers ought to be employ’d so as to bring some Honour to its Maker-God. He is the supreme Lord and Ruler, and he ought to be reverenced and obey’d: He is Alwise and Almighty, he ought to be fear’d and worshipped: he is in himself the most excellent of Beings as well as merciful and kind to us, and the Spring of all our present Comforts and our future Hopes; he ought therefore to be loved above all things, and to be addrest with Prayer and Praise: nor can it ever be said that a Creature is under no Obligation to love and obey, to fear and worship his Creator, or to render what is due to his Fellow-Creatures, even according to his utmost powers.

2. This Law is so far wrought into the very Nature of Man as a reasonable Creature, that an awakened Conscience will require Obedience to it for ever. Wheresoever the reasoning Powers of Man
are diligent and sincerely attentive to his most important Concerns, he must acknowledge the great God demands our best Obedience, our Honour and our Love, and he deserves it: every Conscience acting on reasonable Principles must confess that Truth and Honesty ought to be practised towards our Neighbour, and Temperance and Sobriety with regard to our selves; that we are bound to restrain our vicious Appetites and Passions within the Rules of Reason, and our better Powers; that we must not be savage or cruel to others, nor must we abuse our Understanding and our Senses which God has given us for better purposes, and by drowning them in Wine and strong Liquors or by any intemperance behave like the Brutes that perish. As long as Man is Man, and Reason is Reason, so long will this Law be a Rule to Mankind.

3. This Law must be perpetual, for it is suited to every State and Circumstance of human Nature, to every Condition of the Life of Man, and to every Dispensation of God: and since it cannot be changed for a better Law, it must be everlasting. 'Tis suited to the State of Man in innocence, and of Man fallen from his Happiness: 'tis suited to every Tribe and Nation of Mankind: all are required to yield their utmost Obedience to the Commands of God. It began in Paradise as soon as Man was created, and it will never cease to oblige in this World or the other. Neither Jew nor Gentile, neither Saint nor Sinner on Earth, nor Enoch, nor Elijah, nor the blessed Spirits in Heaven, nor the Ghosts of the Wicked under the Punishments of Hell, are released from their Obligation to this Law which requires them to love and honour God, and to be faithful and just to Man: for if any Persons whatsoever were
Of the Moral Law,

were released from the bond of this Law, they would not be guilty of Sin, nor do amiss in neglecting the Practices of Virtue and Godliness.

4. It appears yet further that this Law is perpetual, because whatsoever other Law God can prescribe or Man can be bound to obey, 'tis built upon the Eternal Obligation of this Moral Law. Every positive Command of Rites and Ceremonys and Sacrifices given to the Patriarchs or the Jews, every Command of Faith in the Messiah, Trust in the Blood of Jesus and Obedience to him in his exalted State, every Institution of the Old Testament and the New, Circumcision and Baptism, the Feast of the Passover and of the Lord's Supper, with all the Forms of Worship and Duty toward God and Man which ever were prescribed, receive their force and obligation from the Moral Law. 'Tis this Law which requires all Men to believe whatsoever God shall reveal with proper Evidence, either by the Exercise of their own Reason or by his divine Revelation: 'tis the Moral Law that requires our Heart and Hands to yield obedience to all the positive Laws God has given to Men: Some of those Rites and Ceremonys, so far as we can discover, seem not to be of any great importance in themselves; but a willful neglect of the least of them is a disobedience to the great God and a violation of this Law: and I think we may say that if this Law were abolish'd, no other could bind us: for it is one of the first and strongest requirements of this Law, that a Creature must obey his Maker in all things. And for this reason it was that our blessed Saviour, who had no need to be washed from Sin, yet submitted to Baptism under the Ministry of John his Forerunner, even when John seem'd to dissuade him from it.
Matth. iii. 15. Suffer it to be so now, said he, for thus it becomes us to fulfil all Righteousness, i.e. to obey whatever God commands.

5. I would add in the last place, that Scripture asserts the Perpetuity and Everlasting Obligation of the Moral Law, Luk. xvi. 17. It is easier for Heaven and Earth to pass away, than for the least tittle of the Law to fail; and our blessed Saviour declares, Matth. v. 17. that he came not to destroy the Law, but to fulfil it: by which he cannot mean the Jewish Ritual which was soon abolish’d, but he means eminently the Moral Law, for 'tis the Precepts of that Law he proceeds to explain. And it is in conformity to this Doctrine the Apostle Paul makes use of this Law to convince Jew and Gentile, and all Mankind in all Ages, that they are sinners and guilty before God, in the 2d and 3d Chapters to the Romans. By the Law is the knowledge of Sin, whether the natural Law of the Heathens, or the written Law of the Jews: all have broken this Moral Law of God, every Mouth is stopp’d, and all the World lies guilty before God.

I know that there are some contrary Opinions rising up in the Heart of Man against this Doctrine. Some have objected here, that since the fall of Adam no meer Man is able perfectly to comply with the demands of it, for it requires Universal Obedience in Thought, Word and Action, and a perfect abstinence from every Sin: but since no Man is able to yield this Obedience, it can never be supposed that a righteous and a gracious God can continue to require it.

To this I answer, First, that Man has not lost his Natural Powers to obey this Law; he is bound then as far as his Natural Powers will reach: I own
his Faculties are greatly corrupted by vicious Inclinations or sinful Propensities, which has been happily called by our Divines a Moral Inability to fulfil the Law rather than a natural Impossibility of it. But tho' the Powers of Man be viciated, and his Inclinations to Evil are so strong, that they will never be effectually subdued without divine Grace, yet the great and holy God continues still to demand a Perfection of Obedience; he cannot give an imperfect Law, or a Law that requires but an imperfect Obedience to it. His Title as the Creator and the God of Nature demands the best service that our Natural Powers can perform: our Understanding and Will, our Heart and Hand and Tongue owe him their utmost Obedience.

Besides, if the Law did not continue to require our best and highest Obedience, we should not be guilty of Sin where we fall short of Perfection; that is, if we loved God in part, if we serv'd him in part, tho' it was not with all our Mind, with all our Soul, with all our Heart, and with all our Strength, yet we should not be Transgressors: but this I think is a very absurd supposition.

I answer in the second place, that the Moral Law may continue still to demand perfect Obedience of all Men, tho' since the Fall they cannot perfectly fulfil it; for the Grace of the Gospel which is reveal'd in Scripture, and which runs thro' every Dispensation since the Fall of Adam, has not abated the Demands of the Law, tho' it has provided a Relief for us under our failings. And tho' we do not fulfil what God requires in this Law, yet he condescends in this Gospel to pardon and to accept the humble, the sincere, the penitent Sinner, on the account of the perfect Obedience and atoning Sacrifice of his own Son.
Son. It is granted indeed that all Men who have been saved in the way of the Gospel have yielded but a very imperfect and defective Obedience to this Law, yet still the Law of God demands a Perfection of Holiness according to our utmost natural Powers and Capacities; the Law demands that we sin not at all; but the Gospel says, *if we sin we have an Advocate with the Father, even Jesus Christ the righteous, who is a Propitiation for the Sins of the World:* 1 John. ii. 2. *

I i 3 Having

* There is also another Objection against this Doctrine which some raise from the words of Scripture. Does not the Apostle tell Timothy that the Law is not made for a righteous Man, but for the Lawless and Disobedient, for the Ungodly and for Sinners? &c. 1 Tim. i. 9. But this is readily answer'd, by considering what is the Apostles meaning here. 'Tis only to shew, that disobedient and ungodly Men have need of particular and express Laws or Precepts, with Threatnings and Terrors annexed to them, in order to restrain them from iniquity; but the Righteous Man hath a sanctify'd Nature, and an inward aversion within Himself, to all evil Practices; and therefore tho' his Conscience acknowledge him to be under the Commands of this Law, yet he does not so much need the express and publick Proclamation of it in order to secure him in the practice of Duty.

It has been objected again, that St. Paul comforts the Christians and encourages them to Holiness by telling them they are become dead to the Law, and they are deliver'd from the Law, that being dead where-in they were held, Rom. vii. 4, 6. To this I answer, that the Apostle allows that Christians are deliver'd also from the Law as to its cursing and condemning Power by their Pardon and Justification in Christ Jesus; they are deliver'd also from the unhappy effect which the Law may sometimes have upon the Hearts of Sinners to irritate, awaken and provoke Sin in them, by lusting for things forbidden; but he does not allow even himself or the belt of Christians to be deliver'd or releas'd from the Commands of the Law; for in this very place, he is persuading Christians to Holiness or Obedience to the Precepts of the Law; and in 1 Cor. ix. 21. he declares he is *not without Law to God, but he is under the Law,* as it is in the hands of Christ. Not an Apostle nor an Angel from Heaven can release Creatures from the demands of Duty to their Creator, for while we are the Work of the Hand of God, and continue to be Creatures, this Law never ceases to command perfect Obedience to the God that made us, (viz.*) that we must love him with all our Soul, and with all our Strength.
Of the Moral Law,

Having proved the perpetual Obligation of the Moral Law, I proceed to the third part of my Discourse, and that is briefly to represent the Evil Nature of Sin. Our Text informs us wherein it consists. Sin is the Transgression of the Law. When a Creature transgresses any Command that God hath given, he commits Sin: but this chiefly refers to the Moral Law, because it is this Law upon which all others are founded, and which gives force and authority to them all. Now there is a heinous Evil contain'd in the Nature of Sin, if we consider the following Characters of it.

1. 'Tis an affront to the Authority and Government of a wise and holy God, a God who has sovereign Right to make Laws for his Creatures, and has form'd all his Commands and Prohibitions according to infinite Wisdom. Every Act of wilful Sin does as it were deny the Sovereignty of God over us and the propriety that God has in us, according to the expression of those profane Sinners, Psal. xii. 4. Our Lips are our own, who is Lord over us? Wilful Sin against God renounces his right to govern us and pours high contempt upon his Wisdom and his righteous Dominion; it denies his Laws to be wise and righteous, as tho' they were not fit to be injoin'd of God or practis'd of Men.

2. Sin carries in the Nature of it high ingratitude to God our Creator, and a wicked abuse of that Goodness which has bestowed upon us all our Natural

Nor do all the lessening expressions which the Apostle uses in his Epistle to the Hebrews against the Law, give us a release from the Moral Law, for his Design is only to shew the weaknes and unprofitableness of the Jewish Law or Covenant of Sinai in comparison of the glorious State of the Gospel and the new Covenant, when the Moral Law shall be written on the Hearts of Men. Heb. vii. 8. and viii. 10, 13. This is the Law that mufl land, for ever, when the Jewish Covenant vanishes and is abolisht'd.
Powers and Talents, our Limbs, our Senses, and all our Faculties of Soul and Body. Such a Creator, who has furnish'd his Creatures with so many excellent Faculties, may reasonably expect and demand of them a return of Love and Obedience: but to employ these very Talents and Powers for the dishonour of him who gave them, is abominable in itself and highly provoking to that God who form'd us.

3. Sin against the Law of God breaks in upon that wise and beautiful Order which God has appointed to run thro' his whole Creation. Prov. xvi. 4. God has made all things for himself and his own Glory; but if we set up our selves and our own Honour as the chief End of all, and neglect to pay our Duty and Honours to the blessed God, we run counter to this divine Appointment, and place our selves in the room of God. He has ordain'd that his Creatures should be mutually helpful to each other, and that Man should love his Neighbour; but if Malice and Envy and Falsehood prevail in us, and if Cruelty and Injustice be practised toward our Fellow-Creatures, the proper and beautiful Harmony between the intelligent Creatures is broken, and it is a hateful thing in the Eyes of God to see those Rules of Order violated, renounced and trampled upon, which he has establish'd with so much Wisdom and Justice. Yet further, God has ordain'd Reason in Man to govern his Appetites and Passions and all his inferior Powers: But Sin brings shameful Confusion into our very Frame, while it exalts the Appetites and the Passions to reign over our Reason, to break the Rules and Dictates of Conscience and transgress all the bounds of reasonable Restraint. Sin working in the Heart...
Of the Moral Law,
gives a loose to those licentious and unruly Powers of
Nature, and spreads wild disorder thro' all the Life.

4. As 'tis the very nature of Sin to bring Disorder
into the Creation of God, so its natural Consequences
are pernicious to the sinful Creature! Every Act of
wilful Sin tends to deface the moral Image of God in
the Soul, and ruin the best part of his Workmanship.
It warps the Mind aside from its chief Good, and
turns the Heart away from God and all that is holy.
Sin forms itself in the Heart into an evil Principle
and Habit of Disobedience: one Sin makes way for
another, and increases the wretched trade of Sinning.
A frequent breaking the Restraints of Law and Con-
science, not only strengthens the Inclination to Vice,
but it enfeebles the Voice and Power of Conscience
to withhold us from Sin; it sets Man a running
in the Paths of Intemperance and Malice, Folly
and Madness, down to Perdition and Misery:
It many times brings painful Diseases upon the
Body, and it is the Spring of dreadful Sorrows
in the Soul: All these are the natural Consequences
of Sin.

5. In the last place I add, Sin provokes God to
anger, as he is the righteous Governor of the World;
it brings Guilt upon the Creature, and exposes it to
the Punishments threatened by the broken Law.
When Sin entred into the Nature of Man, there
was an end of all the friendly Converse between him
and his Maker. Man is afraid of God, and God is
angry with Man. Sin throws him out of his
Maker's former Favour, and exposes him to the
Wrath and Indignation of a Righteous and Almighty
God, who will vindicate the Honours of his own
Law. He is a God of purer Eyes than to behold In-
iquity, and he is angry with the Wicked every day.

Psal.
Psal. vii. 11. The great Creator and Governor of the Universe will not always bear to be affronted by such contemptible little Worms as we are: If we turn not from our evil Ways, he will whet his Sword, he has bent his Bow and made it ready, he hath prepar'd for him the Instruments of Death, and the Soul of the Sinner shall feel his Arrows.

And yet further, as God has set up Conscience in the Bofom of Man to be a Witness for God there, and to put Man in mind of his Maker's Law and his own Duty, so this Power called Conscience is also ordain'd to be a Judge in the Heart of Man in the room of God, and to sentence and condemn the guilty Creature, and to begin the Execution of this Sentence with sharp Anguish of Heart, with inward Reproaches and bitter Terrors. This homebred Torment is a Hell upon Earth, and it often begins before the Sinner dies.

Who sees not the dreadful Evil of Sin, in the wretched Change that is introduced by it into the Creation of God in the upper and lower Worlds? It has turn'd Angels of Light into Devils and Spirits of Darkness: It has thrown Millions of glorious and happy Beings out of their heavenly Habitation: It made our first Parents afraid of their Maker even in Paradise, and turn'd them out of that happy Garden. It brought many Curses upon human Nature, many Sorrows and Sufferings of every kind. It is Sin that has run thro' every Generation, and expos'd us to all the Evils that we feel, and to all that we fear, either from the hand of God or our Fellow-Creatures. While Man stood innocent and obedient, nothing could hurt him; but he broke the Law of his God and renounced his Government, and the Bonds of Love between Mankind are broken, and
and the Brute Creatures have broke their Subjectation to Man in a great degree. He who was made to govern them is afraid of them, and has often been destroy'd by them: Innocence had been a sure and everlasting Defence. All the Desolations that have been made by Famine and Pestilence, and Wars and Earthquakes, and by the Rage of wild Beasts from the beginning of the World, are owing to the Sin of Man.

But these Thoughts bring me down to the fourth General Head of my Discourse, which is to consider the proper Demerit of Sin, or what is the Punishment it deserves. This I shall represent under these four plain Propositions.

Prop. 1. *When God made Man at first, he design'd to continue him in Life and Happiness so long as Man continued innocent and obedient to the Law, and thereby maintain'd his Allegiance to God his Maker.* This is agreeable to the Terms of the Law represented in Rom. ii. 7. If he had patiently continued in well doing he should have enjoy'd Glory and Honour, Immortality and Eternal Life: And the blessed God seems to have promised it to Man, at least by way of Emblem and Sacrament, in giving him the Tree of Life, and perhaps also by a more express Promise of Life, which thro' the design'd Brevity of the History Moses might not mention.

Prop. 2. *By a wilful and presumptuous Transgression of the Law, Man violated his Allegiance to God his Maker, and forfeited all good Things that his Creator had given him and the Hope of all that he had promised.* Every Sin incurs a forfeiture of Life it self, and all the present and future Comforts of it, according to the express Words of the Threatning, Gen.
Gen. ii. 17. In the Day that thou eatest of the forbidden Fruit thou shalt surely die, i.e. thou shalt become mortal and liable to Death *. And the Apostle tells us, Rom. vi. 23. The Wages of Sin is Death. Nor is such a Forfeiture of Life and the Blessings of it by Sin, utterly unknown to the Hea-
then World, as St. Paul declares, Rom. i. 32. Who knowing the Judgment of God, that they who commit such things are worthy of Death; And I think the very Light of Nature might find out this; for it would be strange indeed if God the Creator should be bound to continue Life or any Blessing to a Creature which had broken his Allegiance to his Maker, and by a wilful and presumptuous Offence, had as it were renounced the very End and Design for which he was made.

Prop. 3. This Forfeiture of Life and the Blessings of it by Sin, is an everlasting Forfeiture. Every Sin is usually and justly supposed to increase its de-
merit or desert of Punishment, according to the digni-

* Death in its original, and most proper and natural Sense, signifies the loss of Life, and together with it the loss of all its Blessings and Comforts. This is the common if not the universal Sense of the Word in the Writings of Moses: And in the Sanction of a Law it is reasonable to suppose the Word is used in its most natural and proper Sense. Death in Scripture is used sometimes for the loss of Privileges, Blessings and Comforts, even where Life remains: In this Sense it signifies the Soul's loss of the Image of God, of Holiness and Peace: this is called Spiritual Death. Thus the Ephesians are said to be dead in Trespasses and Sins. Ephes. ii. 1. Sometimes Death signifies the loss of Blessings in the World to come, together with positive Sorrows and Sufferings both in Soul and Body for ever. So in Rom. viii. 13. If ye live after the Flesh ye shall die. And John vi. 50. This is the Bread which came down from Heaven, that a Man may eat thereof and not die. In Rev. xxii. 8. this is called The second Death. Now Death in all these Senses is either the natural Con-
sequent of Sin, or it is the legal Punishment of it, according to its se-
cral Aggravations, as will appear afterward.
a Father or a Prince carries greater Guilt in it, than that which is committed against a Neigh-
bour or a Servant: And in this way of argument
Sin against God appears to have a sort of infinite E-
vil in it, because it is committed against the infinite
Majesty of Heaven: and on this account every Sin
deserves a sort of infinite or everlasting Punishment,
i.e. an everlasting loss of Life and all the Blessings of
it, which are eternally forfeited thereby. And per-
haps this is the lowest Punishment that ever is in-
flicted for the lowest degree of Sin or Guilt, where
the Law of God is suffer'd to take its proper Course
in executing the Penalty; for the mere loss of Life
is a less Punishment than the continuance of it in
any degree of Misery.

Prop. 4. There is scarce any actual, i.e. wilful
Sin, but carries with it some particular Aggrava-
tions, and these deserve such further positive Punish-
ments as the Wisdom and Justice of God shall see
reason to inflict. Hence arises the penal continuance
in Life with the loss of all the Comforts of it, i.e.
the Pains and Sorrows of the future State *. God
is the righteous Governor of the World, his Ju-
stice weighs in the nicest Balances every Command
of his own Law, and every Grain of the Sinners
Offences, with all their Circumstances of Guilt and
Aggravation; and strict Justice distributes Sorrows
in proportion to Sins: this appears in the Punish-
ment of Babylon, Rev. xviii. 6. God hath remem-
ber'd the Iniquities of Babylon, and rewarded her
as she rewarded his Saints: double Vengeance unto
her, according to her double Malice and Persecution:
How much she hath glorify'd her self and lived de-
liciously, so much Torment and Sorrow give her.

* This is usually call'd Eternal Death, or the Punishment of Hell.
And this proportion of Sorrow to Sin will terribly appear in the last Judgment and the final Punishment of Sinners in the World to come *

'Tis time now to conclude this Discourse with some few Reflections.

Reflect. 1. Is the Law of God in perpetual force and is every Transgression of it so heinous an Evil; then let us take a survey how wretched and deplorable is the State of Mankind by Nature. We have all broken the Law of our God, which we have been all bound to obey; we are still bound to obey it, and are still breakers of it. Our daily Thoughts, our

* Now from the Desert of Sin and the Punishment due to it being set in this Light, I would humbly enquire whether we may not better learn the meaning of the Apostle, Rom. v. 12, &c. when he says, Death entered into the World by Sin, and passes upon all Men for that all have sinned, i.e. Sin is imputed to all, and Death reigns over them, even over those who have not sinned after the Similitude of Adam's Transgression, which is generally interpreted concerning Infants, who have committed no actual personal Sin as Adam did: Yet here is a Forfeiture of Life and its Blessings derived to the Children of Adam, and they come under a Sentence of Death by original imputed Sin, which we may suppose to be the lowest kind of Guilt. But in Rom. ii. 8, 9. Indignation and Wrath, Tribulation and Anguish are denounced against every Soul of Man that doth Evil, i.e. that doth commit wilful actual Sin, because there are special Aggravations, some of a greater and some of a lesser kind, that belong to all actual Iniquities.

Whether therefore Sin has any particular Aggravation attending it or not, there is an everlasting Forfeiture of Life incurred by it, and an eternal loss of the Blessings of it; and whatsoever further Aggravations the Sin carries in it, so much further Pain or Anguish does it deserve in Body, or in Mind, or in both, i.e. it requires so much further continuance in Life and Being, as to sustain that degree of Anguish and Sorrow which is due to the Sinner: And therefore the Life of a wicked Soul is continued in Sorrows, in the other World after the death of the Body as a Punishment for Sin; and therefore also at the last Day shall be raised again, that all wilful and impetent Sinners may sustain Punishments according to the various Dispensations of God under which they have lived, and the several Aggravations of their Sins; and all these Things shall be perfectly adjusted by the Wisdom and Righteousness of God, who is the Judge of the whole Earth, and always does what is right.
Of the Moral Law,

our Words and our Deeds sufficiently shew us that we are Transgressors, and there is in our Nature a perpetual propensity to transgress. Where is the Mortal that has lived according to the Purity and Perfection of this Law? There is none righteous; no, not one. Rom. iii. 10, 12. Where is the Son or Daughter of Adam, that is not pronounced guilty and condemn’d by it? Every Mouth is stopp’d, and all the World is guilty before God. What a miserable Region is this Earth, overspread with sinful Inhabitants, criminal Creatures, who are all transgressors against the Law of the God that made them, and by the Sentence of that Law stand condemn’d to Death, consider’d in their Natural State?

Reflect. 2. Is the Moral Law of such constant Obligation, and is Death the due recompence of every transgression of it; then ’tis necessary for Ministers to preach this Law, and ’tis necessary for Hearers to learn it. We should all know our Duty and our Danger. Not the best of Christians are arrived at a Dispensation above the Knowledge and the Practice of this Law. There is no honour done to the Gospel by explaining it in such a manner as to release us from the Duties of the Moral Law; for ’tis one great Design of the Gospel to restore us again to a cheerful and regular obedience to it. To release Christians from the Precepts of the Law is to make Christ the Minister of Sin, and to turn the Grace of our God into wantonness, which the Apostles Paul and Jude speak of with Detestation and Abhorrence. Gal. ii. 17. Jud. ver. 4. To pretend that Obedience to the Moral Law is needless for Christians who believe the Gospel, is to deny and destroy as much as in us lies the great End for which Christ and the Gospel came into the World, which is
is to redeem us from all iniquity that we might be zealous of good Works. Tit. ii. 14. to deliver us from the Curse of the Law, and the Condemnation of it, that we might love the Precepts of the Law, and practise them with delight and newness of Heart.

'Tis not therefore our Preaching of the Law to promote the Gospel, that deserves the Reproach of a legal Sermon; but to preach the Law instead of the Gospel, or to preach the Gospel as a Law of Works. Christ and St. Paul well understood the Gospel, and yet they both preach'd the Law in the Commands and Terrors of it. We must learn the Law if we would be acquainted with our own Guilt and Danger, or if we would know our Duty, and practise Religion and Virtue. By the Law is the Knowledge of Sin, and by the Law our Feet are guided into the Paths of Righteousness. 'Tis in the Glass of the Law of God that we see the Sinfulness of our Hearts and Lives: it discovers every blot in our Souls, and every blemish in our Conversation: it lays us under guilt, it makes us know our Misery, it humbles us to the dust before God, and is made use of by the blessed Spirit to drive us out of our selves, and all our own pretences to Righteousness, that we may seek the appointed Salvation of Jesus, and fly to our better hope.

Reflect. 3. What a holy Regard and Jealousy has God shown for the honour of his everlasting Law, and what a sacred indignation has he manifested against Sin, when he sent his own Son to obey this Law, and to suffer for our Disobedience to it? Not the Son of God himself when he came into Flesh and Blood was exempted from the Duties of this Law, and he magnify'd it and made it honourable by his
his practice of it in perfection: and when so glorious and divine a Person condescended to become a Sacrifice for our Transgressions against this Law, he gave the highest instance of his own veneration for it as well as of the just Resentment of God his Father against every Sin. The great and glorious God, the Governour of the World, thought it more necessary and becoming his Majesty that the Son of his Love should be put to a painful and shameful death to make a Propitiation for our Sins against this Law, than that any one Transgression should be pardon'd without an Atonement. These awful Sentiments should be an everlasting Caution to us against entertaining slight Thoughts of the Evil of Sin. 'Tis no trialing matter to indulge the least Sin, when it awakens the Resentment and Wrath of the eternal God. Fools are they indeed that make a mock of Sin, Prov. xiv. 9. when the Son of God must die, before it could be pardon'd.

Reflect. 4. How glorious is the Wisdom and the Mercy of the Gospel, which does honour to the Law in every respect, which prepares an honourable Atonement and Pardon for guilty Rebels who have broken this everlasting Law, and provides Grace and Power to renew our Nature according to the demands of it. It not only pardons returning transgressors, but it promises to write this Law in the Hearts of Men, that it may be better observed and obey'd. A double and complete Salvation. Read the Language of the Gospel and rejoice in it, Heb. viii. 10. This is the Covenant, faith the Lord, that I will make with Men; I will put my Laws into their Hearts, and in their Minds will I write them, and their Sins and their Iniquities will I remember no more. And
'tis repeated Heb. x. 16, 17. The Law of God requires universal and everlasting Obedience, and 'tis an unspeakable Blessing to have this Obedience made natural and easy by sanctifying Grace.

Reflect. 5. Happy is the World above, where such natural and such easy Obedience is for ever paid to this Law of God without the least transgression. The Moral Law carries all its demands up to that blessed Country, and whatsoever other Laws are in force there, 'tis this eternal Law that gives Authority to them all, and every Inhabitant answers all the demands of it by a free and cheerful Obedience. Happy World indeed, where so pure and so perfect a Law of the Creator cannot charge one Creature with transgression and guilt! A World without Sorrow and without Sin! A strange unknown Blessedness to Creatures such as we, who were born and brought up in this dark Region of Sins and Sorrows! 'Tis the Office of the Law here on Earth to give us the Knowledge of Sin; but there it shall lose this Office, it shall convince us of Sin no more; for it shall dwell in us, to discover the Beauty of Holiness and to make us for ever holy. O when will the Day come, that we shall be sanctify'd in this complete degree? When shall that blessed State commence, and the Law be wrought into our Nature with such Power, and be practised with such Perfection, that it will be able to bring no charge of Sin against us either in thought, word or deed for ever? While we groan here, being burden'd under the remainders of Corruption, while the Law of God which works in our Consciences gives us many a severe Reproof and Heart-ake, let us look forward with hope and desire toward that State where our Hearts shall be moulded
moulded into the very form of this Law by the Efficacy of divine Grace, where Sin shall be banish'd from all the Powers of our Souls, and Pains and Sorrows and Death, and all the bitter Fruits of Sin, shall be done away, and shall be found no more for ever. Amen.
SERMON XXVI.

Repentance and Conversion to God:

Acts III. 19.

Repent ye therefore and be converted, that your Sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the Presence of the Lord.

Repentance and Conversion to God are the first and most necessary Duties of Religion: our blessed Saviour began his Ministry with preaching them, to his Country-Men the Jews, and the Apostles in their Travels went about testifying, both to the Jews and Greeks, Repentance towards God, and Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. These are not Points of Speculation, but fundamental Articles of Christianity; for without Conversion, there can be no hopes of Salvation, and except we repent, we shall all likewise perish. The Apostle Peter having cured a lame Man in the Name of Jesus of Nazareth before a Multitude of Jews, lays hold of the Opportunity to convince them of their Wickedness in putting to death the Prince of Life, whom God had raised from the Dead, and thro' Faith in whose Name the lame Man was made found in the presence of
of them all: He admits that they did it thro' ignorance, as did also their Rulers, but exhorts them at the same time to repent and be converted, that this, and all their other Sins might be blotted out, when the times of refreshing should come from the presence of the Lord; that is, when Christ shall come a second time to put an end to the Sufferings and Persecutions of his People, and give them rest with Himself. In speaking to these Words, I shall,

First, Explain the Duties recommended.
Secondly, Consider their Necessity and Importance. And,
Thirdly, The Arguments or Motives by which they may be enforced.

First, I shall explain the Duties of Repentance and Conversion, which are inseparable from each other, and imply a Change of Mind wrought in us by the Spirit of God; whereby, from a Conviction that our Course of Life hitherto has been evil and sinful, being now heartily grieved and troubled; we resolve by divine Assistance to turn to the service of God and Religion for the future.

This Description may be explained in the following Particulars.

1. True Repentance always implies a Conviction of Sin; for where there has been no Sin, there is no Foundation for Contrition or Sorrow. I came not (says Christ) to call the Righteous, but Sinners to Repentance. Matth. ix. 13. In order therefore to excite this devout Passion, let us consider with our selves, whether we are Sinners, and in what degree we have been so: Let us seriously review our past Lives, and compare them with the Holy and Righteous
Ser. XXVI. Conversion to God.

Serious Law of God, for I had not known Sin (says the Apostle) but by the Law; I had not known Lust, except the Law had said thou shalt not covet. Let us look into our Hearts, and recollect how many vain and sinful Imaginations have passed thro' them, and how often we have coveted, desired, and wished for things expressly forbidden. And if after this we would review the Course of our Actions, with their several Circumstances, and remember how frequently we have acted against the Checks and Con- victions of our own Consciences, against the Admo- nitions and Reproof of others, and against the Strivings of God's Holy Spirit; we should certainly ab- hor our selves, and repent in Dust and Ashes. 'Tis for want of Recollection that Men forget their Sins, and by degrees imagine that God will overlook them too; and because they are unacquainted with the Spirituality of the divine Law, they indulge their vicious Lusits and Appetites, as if they did not fall within the compass of it. But if ever we repent and are converted, the Spirit of God will set our secret Sins, with their dreadful Demerits, in order before our Eyes.

2. Evangelical Repentance is always attended with Shame and Sorrow. Sin is the greatest folly in the World, as it is a dishonour to the humane Nature, and a reproach to our Reason and Understandings. Are the Laws of God just and reasonable, and every way suited to the Relation we stand in to him? Has he laid us under the strongest Obligations to observe them in the Course of his Providence, and given us Encouragement to hope for the Acceptance of our sincere, tho' imperfect Obedience, thro' the Inter- ceSSION of his Son; and shall not this kindle a holy Indignation in our Breasts, when we remember that
our Lives have been filled up with Acts of Disobedience and Rebellion against them? Shame and Sorrow are the genuine Fruits of Repentance. If therefore we are true Penitents, we shall remember our own evil Ways and Doings that have not been good, and shall loath our selves in our own fight for our Iniquities and Abominations. Ezek. xxxvi. 31. When the Prophets Jeremiah and Daniel were confessing their own Sins and those of the People, they express themselves in the following mournful Language; We lie down in our Shame, and our Confusion covers us, for we have sinned against the Lord our God: O Lord, Righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us Confusion of Face, because we have sinned against thee. And if we are thoroughly ashamed of our Sins, our Souls will be filled with Grief and Sorrow in proportion to our Guilt: They that have been the chief of Sinners, will be most humbled and abased; as when Peter was made sensible of the greatness of his Sin in denying his Master, he went out and wept bitterly; and when Mary Magdalen's Sins, which were many, had been forgiven her, she washed her Saviour's Feet with her Tears, and wiped them with the Hairs of her Head. Not that Tears are absolutely necessary to Repentance, for some Constitutions cannot give themselves vent this way, even when they are more inwardly and sensibly grieved; but the Sacrifice of God is a broken Spirit, a broken and contrite Heart he will not despise. Psalm li. 17.

3. Confession of Sin is another necessary Ingredient of Evangelical Repentance; for he that covereth his Sins shall not prosper, but he that confesses and for-
give them, and to cleanse us from all Unrighteousness. But to whom must we confess? Why certainly to him against whom we have offended; if we have wronged our Neighbour in his Property or good Name, we should acknowledge our Offence to him, and make all reasonable Satisfaction; but for as much as Sins against our Neighbour, are also Violations of the Law of God, we ought likewise to confess them to him, and rely upon his Mercy for Pardon.

There is no mention in the New Testament, of a Power delegated to any Order of Men, to dispense with the Laws of God, or to absolve Men from their Sins against him, upon such Conditions or Penances as they shall appoint. The Popish Doctrine of Confeffion in the Ears of a Priest, has no Foundation in Scripture or Reason, but is built upon a false Supposition of a Power in the Priesthood, which God has reserved to himself; Who can forgive Sins, says the Evangelist, but God only? Mark ii. 7. I, even I am he (says God) that blotteth out thy Transgressions for my own sake, and will not remember thy Sins. And it was allowed by the Jews to be an undeniable Argument of our Saviour's Pretensions to Godhead, that he claimed a Power on Earth to forgive Sins. Confession to God is therefore a necessary Branch of Evangelical Repentance, and the most effectual Means of obtaining Forgiveness. While I kept silence, says the Psalmist, my Bones waxed old thro' my roaring all the day long. But I acknowledged my Sin to thee; mine Iniquity have I not hid, I said I will confess my Transgressions to the Lord, and thou forgavest the Iniquity of my Sin. Psalm xxxii. 4, 5.
4. Conversion from Sin to the Practice of Religion and Virtue, is another inseparable Branch of Repentance, without which all the foregoing will be of no account: for is it reasonable to suppose that a wise Prince should be satisfied with the Sighs and Tears of his rebellious Subjects, unless they give some good Assurances of their dutiful Behaviour for the future? If this would be esteemed a defect of Wisdom in an earthly Governor, it cannot be expected from the only wise God. Sorrow and Grief may arise only from fear of Punishment, or an Apprehension of the near approach of Death, which in some Criminals, that have been reprieved, has appear'd to be no better than the morning Cloud and early Dew which passeth away; nor will a meer Abstinence from the outward Acts of Sin, demonstrate the Truth of our Repentance, without a Change of Heart. True Penitents are converted from the Love of Sin as well as the Practice of it; nay, the Delight they have taken in the Pleasures of it, is turned into Hatred. In a word, as Evangelical Repentance arises from an inward Grief and Sorrow of Heart, for all the past Miscarriages of Life; so it is attended with a Turn of all the Affections of the Soul to God and our Duty; the Apostle therefore joins them together, in that noble Account he gave of his Doctrine before King Agrippa, Acts xxvi. 20. I first shewed to them at Jerusalem, and throughout the Coasts of Judaea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for Repentance. Indeed this Conversion of Mind is not within our own power, but is represented as one of those Blessings of the New Covenant that we are to apply to God for: A new Heart will I give you, and a new Spirit will I put within you, and I will cause you
you to walk in my Statutes, and ye shall keep my Judgments and do them. Ezek. xxxvi. 27. Sometimes we are commanded to turn our selves, as when the Prophet says, *Wash ye, make ye clean, put away the evil of your doings, cease to do evil and learn to do well*; and again, *Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die, O House of Israel?* But this can mean no more, than that we should use our best Endeavours, together with an humble Application to God by fervent Prayer, for the supernatural Aids and Auffistan- ces of his Holy Spirit; *Turn thou me and I shall be turned* (says Ephraim) *for thou art the Lord my God.* If Sinners do thus apply to God throu' Christ for converting Grace, and at the same time use their best Endeavours to conform to his holy and righteous Laws, they will not fail of Succes. Let the Wicked forfake his Ways and the Unrighteous his Thoughts, and return to the Lord, and he will have Mercy on him; and to our God, and he will abundantly pardon.—*If the Wicked will turn from all his Sins that he has committed, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die.*

Secondly, I come now to represent the Necessity of these Duties. It cannot be denied but they are unpleasant to corrupt Nature, like the searching of a Wound, or taking Phyfick; but being necessary to our recovering the Favour of God, they must be submitted to: otherwise *when Lust has conceived, it will bring forth Sin, and Sin when it is finisb'd will bring forth Death.* This is evident,

1. *From the Light of Nature,* for if we are con- vinced that we have finned, and thereby provoked the Anger of God, Reason will tell us that if there be
be a possibility of Pardon, it must be by Repentance and Reformation of Life. Indeed if Men had good Reason to believe that God would not be merciful to them upon their Repentance, then the Obligation would cease; but the goodness of the divine Nature gives very reasonable Grounds for Hope, and this should induce them to make a Trial. Upon this Presumption the Ninevites proclaimed a Fast, and put on Sackcloth from the highest to the lowest, when the Prophet told them their City should be destroyed after forty Days; and the King commanded the People to cry mightily to God, and to turn every one from the Evil of their Ways, and from the Violence that was in their Hands, and all this upon very uncertain Hopes of Forgiveness; Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce Anger that we perish not? Jonah iii. 9. It is too late for the Damned in Hell to repent, because they have no Expectations of Pardon; but such are the direful Effects and Wages of Sin in this World and the next, that a bare possibility of avoiding them, should put us upon attempting every Method that Reason or Revelation may suggest to us.

2. But these Duties are most expressly enjoined in the Holy Scriptures, which have not only revealed the blessed God as a merciful and gracious Being, but have assured us in express Terms of the Forgiveness of our Sins upon our Repentance and Conversion; the Light of Nature and Revelation join to enforce these Duties upon all that live under the Gospel, which heightens the Obligation, and will render our final Impenitence more inexcusable. The Times of Ignorance God winked at (says the Apostle) but now he commandeth all Men every where to repent. It is also the Command of the Lord Jesus Christ,
Christ, the great Prophet and Teacher of the Church, who began his Ministry with this Injunction, *Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand*; so that if we who enjoy the Gospel Revelation do not comply with our Duty, the Men of Nineveh will rise up in Judgment against us and condemn us, because they repented at the Preaching of Jonas, and behold a greater than Jonas is here, *Matth. xii. 41.* The Obligation to this Duty is so plain and strong, that without Repentance, all Claims to the Benefits and Blessings of the New Covenant are declared to be vain: *We must sow in Tears, if we will reap with Joy.* When therefore the Apostle was taking his last farewell of the Church at Miletus, he tells them he had kept back from them nothing that was profitable; and as a Demonstration of this, puts them in mind, that he had taught publicly from House to House, and had testified both to the Jews and Greeks, *Repentance towards God, and Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ,* *Acts xx. 21.*

3. **Without Repentance and Conversion we can have no friendly Converse with God on Earth, nor Expectation of enjoying his Presence in Heaven.** As soon as our first Parents had sinned, they were turned out of the earthly Paradise, and cut off from all friendly Correspondence with their Maker. They lived without God in the World, till He was pleased to discover his Purposes of Pardon and Reconciliation by Repentance and Faith in the Messiah. In like manner, all their Posterity being born in Sin, and continuing in the Love and Practice of it, must continue in a State of Separation from God; for what Communion has Light with Darkness, or what Fellowship has Righteousness with Unrighteousness? Nor is there any possible way of Reconciliation but by
by Repentance and Faith in Jesus Christ, who died the just for the unjust, that he might bring us unto God. By this Method we may be restored to the divine Image, and recover his Friendship, but it is impossible to obtain it any other way; for there remains no more Sacrifice for Sin, but a fearful looking for of Judgment. And if God will not be reconciled to impenitent Sinners in this Life, much less will He admit them into his Presence in the next: for nothing that defileth, or worketh abomination, or maketh a Lye, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. Indeed, some that have been very great Sinners in this Life have been saved at last, but then it has been in the Method I have been explaining: They have been washed and sanctified, and justified in the Name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of God, having obtained the Graces of Repentance and Faith in their dying Hours; for otherwise they could not be presented to himself, holy and unblameable, and unreprovable in his sight, Col. xxii.

4. We are assured in Holy Scripture, that except we repent we shall certainly perish: Luke xiii. 3, and that the Soul that sinneth shall die. Which includes not only the Dissolution of the Frame of Nature, but the everlasting Separation of the Soul from God: Happy would it be for the impenitent Sinner, if Death would put an end to his Existence, and return him to his primitive Nothing; but alas! there is a horrid and dreadful Eternity beyond the Grave, and a Lake that burns with Fire and Brimstone, to receive the condemned and despairing Spirit, where the Smoak of its Torment shall ascend up for ever and ever: Nor is there any possible way of escaping this Misery, but by a speedy Repentance and Conversion to
to God. How solicitous then should we be for these Gifts! and how earnest in our Applications to the Throne of Grace! If God should cut any off in their Sins, and reproach them at his Bar with saying, I gave them space to repent, but they repented not; with what bitter Despair and Anguish of Soul, would they sink down into the Bed of Tribulation! Let us not then dare to be quiet any longer under the power of an unbelieving and impenitent Heart, but endeavour in good earnest to repent and be converted, that we may be delivered from the Wrath to come, and have good reason to hope that our Sins shall be blotted out, when the Times of refreshing shall come from the Presence of the Lord.

Thirdly, We are to offer some Arguments or Motives to the Duties in our Text.

1. And the first shall be taken from the Worth and Excellency of the Soul, which does not die with the Body or sleep in the Grave, but is to be happy or miserable in a separate State; when the Dust returns to the Earth, as it was, the Spirit ascends to God that gave it, in order to receive its final and everlasting Sentence. Now if the Righteous shall scarcely be saved, what will become of the impenitent and unconverted Sinner! What other Sentence can he expect; but go ye Cursed into everlasting Burnings, prepared for the Devil and his Angels? Go from my Presence, and from this blessed Society of the Spirits of just Men made perfect. Take him away, Angels, and hurl him down into yonder bottomless Pit among Devils and damned Spirits, and there let him weep and despair for ever: the Gain of the whole World with all its Entertainments and Pleasures, can be no Compensation for such a Loss.

When
When the rich Man, who had fared fumpfuouly every day, died and lift up his Eyes in Hell, he was so fenfible of his Folly, that he prayed Father Abraham to fend a Messenger to his five Brethren upon Earth, to testify to them, left they should come into that Place of Torment, Luke xvi. 27, 28. The like warning is now fent to you, O impenitent and unconverted Sinners, the Judge is at the door, and Hell with all its Torments is ready to receive you except you repent; fly therefore from the Wrath to come, and endeavour to lay hold of eternal Life. Heaven and Hell are real Things, and if you don't obtain a Title to the one, your precious Souls will quickly be swallow'd up in the other.

2. Let the Goodness of God lead you to Repentance. Consider how many Years he has waited upon you, and how many of your Companions in Sin have been cut off and sent into Eternity, while you, tho' a Rebel, are continued in Life; how many Deliverances has God wrought, and how many undeserved Blessings has he bestowed upon you in the Course of his Providence? His Ways have not been according to your Ways, nor his Thoughts to your Thoughts? How many awakening Calls and Warnings have you had from the Ministers of God's Word, and from a variety of Providences, attended with the frequent Strivings of his holy Spirit? How unwilling has he been to give you up, and put an end to the Day of his gracious Visitation? And is all this Goodness to be trampled upon and abused to the dishonour of God, and the Violation of his righteous Laws and Government? Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish People and unwise? And will ye go on still to weary him out with your Iniquities, and make him serve with your Sins? You may then be assured that his Patience
Patience will quickly be at an end, and his despised Goodness be changed into the hottest Displeasure; he will then give you up to a reprobate Mind, and as when Esau had sold his Birthright, you will find no place for Repentance, tho' you seek it diligently with Tears; but as yet you have the Tenders of Pardon and Reconciliation, God is still inviting and drawing you by the kind and gentle Methods of his Goodness: To-day therefore, even while it is called to-day, harden not your Hearts.

3. The Repentance and Conversion of a Sinner is very acceptable and pleasing to God, who delights not in the Death of him that dies, but had rather that he turn from his evil Ways and live. When the penitent Prodigal arose and went towards his Father's House with a Resolution to abandon the Follies of his Youth, his Father had compassion on him, and when he saw him afar off, ran and fell on his Neck and kissed him, and having given him the highest Marks of his Favour by bringing forth the best Robe, and putting a Ring upon his Finger, and Shoes upon his Feet, he commanded the fatted Calf to be killed and made ready; for (says he) it is meet that we should make merry and be glad, for this my Son was dead, but is alive, he was lost and is found. There is Joy in Heaven (says our blessed Saviour) over one Sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just Persons that need no Repentance. It is delightful to God the Father, as it makes way for the flowing down of the Riches of his Mercy to miserable Creatures: It is pleasing to Christ, as it is the Fruit of his Death, and encreases the number of his Friends and Disciples; and 'tis no les! joyful to the Angels and Spirits of just Men made perfect, as it gives them new Occasion for
for Songs of Praise and Thanksgiving for the Victory of divine Grace over the Powers of Darkness.

4. Great Advantages will arise to your selves from your Repentance and Conversion. As,

1. Your Sins will then be blotted out: When the Sins of the wicked shall be set in order before their eyes, and receive a just Recompence, Yours shall be forgotten; not that the Tears of a sincere Repentance can make amends for your Violations of the divine Laws, for if your Head was Water, and your Eyes Fountains of Tears, they could not wipe out the Stain or remove the Guilt of one Sin: But this is the Gospel Constitution, that if we confess our Sins, God will be faithful and just to forgive them, for the sake of his Son whom he hath set forth to be a Propitiation thro' Faith in his Blood, to declare his Righteousness for the Remission of Sins that are past.

2. A second Advantage is Peace of Conscience: The Minds of Sinners must be sometimes troubled and uneasy, while they are conscious they have not complied with the Gospel-Proposals of Pardon, for there is no Peace, faith my God, to the wicked. They may harden themselves against the Terrors of the Lord, by the Business and Diversions of Life; or by imaginary Hopes of Pardon upon a Death-bed Repentance: but in the mean time, every Fit of Sickness, or unexpected Apprehension of Death, will give them Uneasiness; nay, even in the midst of Laughter the Heart will be sometimes sorrowful, for the Worm will never die, but by degrees will make its way into the Soul, and overwhelm it with inexpresible Anguish and Despair. Thus when wicked Cain was declared a Fugitive and a Vagabond for the Murder of his Brother Abel, he cried out, his Punishment
ment was greater than he could bear; and while Heman suffered the Terrors of the Lord, he was distracted. Nor is there any Remedy in this Case, but that which the Gospel proposes, of Repentance towards God, and Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, who is anointed and sent by his Father to bind up the broken-hearted, and to give the Oil of Joy for Mourning, and the Garment of Praise for the Spirit of Heaviness: In him only we may hope for Peace.

3. The last and principal Advantage of Repentance and Conversion is a certain Title to eternal Life. Evangelical Repentance is therefore called in one place, Repentance unto Life, Acts xi. 18. and in another, Repentance to Salvation, 1 Cor. vii. 10. And the Scripture declares once and again, that there is no Condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus;—that nothing shall be laid to their charge, or separate them from the Love of God; nay, that such as repent and believe the Gospel, shall certainly be saved. And is not Salvation and eternal Life worth securing upon any Terms? The Pleasures of Sense can continue no longer than the present Life, but there is a vast Eternity beyond the Grave, that has neither Bounds nor Limits of Duration; where the Impenitent and Unbelieving are tormented day and night in the presence of the holy Angels, and of the Lamb; and there is a Heaven of Rest and everlasting Joy, where the true Disciples and Followers of Christ are possessed of unspeakable Pleasure and Delight, and where they are triumphing and rejoicing in his immediate Presence, where there is fulness of Joy, and at whose right hand are Pleasures for evermore. Now lay these things together; the worth and value of your immortal Souls; the many Obligations God has laid you under to repent

Vol. I. L 1 and
and be converted from the Error of your ways; the
Joy it will occasion in Heaven; and the singular
Advantages it will bring to your selves, both in this
Life and the next; and I persuade my self you will
not hazard your Salvation any longer, by persisting
in a Course of Rebellion against God, or Neglect of
the Offers of Gospel-Pardon.

From the foregoing Discourse we may make the
following Remarks.

1. That Evangelical Repentance is the Gift of
God. Can the Æthiopian change his Skin, or the
Leopard his Spots? (says the Prophet.) No more
can they that are accustomed to do Evil learn to do
Well. The Byas of corrupt Nature is too strong,
and the Habits of Vice too stubborn for us to remove:
The Scripture therefore always leads us to God and
Christ, as the Authors of this and every other Change
in the Soul: Him has God exalted to give Repentance
to Israel, and the Forgiveness of Sins. Acts v. 40. and
when Cornelius and others of Caesarea were convert-
ed to Christianity by the preaching of the Gospel,
the Apostles at Jerusalem make this Remark, Then
has God also granted to the Gentiles Repentance unto
Life: So that tho' Repentance and Conversion are
Duties incumbent on us, they are nevertheless the
Gifts of Heaven.

2. What Reason have we to be thankful for the
Gospel-Revelation, which promises Pardon to repent-
ing Sinners: This could not be learnt from the
Light of Nature, nor the Law of Innocence which
acquainted us with our Duty, and the Punishment
annexed to Disobedience, but gave no Assurance of
Pardon in case of Repentance; it was obscurely re-
vealed by the Sacrifices and Oblations of the old Law;
but the New Testament, by leading us to the Atonement and Satisfaction of Christ, and by assuring us that he has finished Transgression, and made Reconciliation for Iniquity, on behalf of all that repent and are converted, has set this matter in the strongest Light. So that now the Pardon of a repenting Sinner does not depend upon the mere Compassion of the divine Nature, but upon his Justice, and Faithfulness to his Son, who died for many, for the Remission of Sins: We have now all the Assurance of this Truth we can desire, not only from the Mercy of the Divine Being, but from the Merits of Christ; the Covenant of Grace; and the Promise and Oath of God himself. What an Encouragement is this to apply for Pardon, and how thankfully should we receive the joyful Tender!

3. Repentance and Conversion are the Christian’s daily Work: For if through the Remains of corrupt Nature we daily commit new Sins, ’tis but reasonable that we should continue our Repentance; Confession of Sin therefore should be a part of the Christian’s daily Prayer, and Conversion from it his constant Endeavour. But there are some special Seasons which call for a more solemn Discharge of these Duties, by setting apart solemn Days for Repentance and Humiliation for Sin; as when the Judgments of God are abroad in the Earth, and our native Country is under threatening Symptoms of the divine Displeasure, by Famine, Pestilence, or a destructive War: It is no less proper when the Hand of God is stretch’d out in an unusual manner against our Persons and Families, by Losses, by the Death of Relations, or a Blast upon our Undertakings: Or when we are to make our solemn Approaches to the Table of the Lord, that our Iniquities may not separate between
him and us, and prevent the Communications of his Grace and Love. *If thou bring thy Gift to the Altar, (says our Saviour) and there remembrest that thy Brother hath ought against thee, leave there thy Gift before the Altar, and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy Brother, and then come and offer thy Gift.* Matth. v. 23, 24. But above all, it is most necessary when in a Course of Nature we are not far from that awful Account we are to give of our Actions to God the Judge of all. In a word, until we can live without Sin, we must never think of laying aside the Duty of Repentance, and that will not be till we come to Heaven.

4. *How great is their Sin and Folly who delay their Repentance to a sick or dying Bed? Are you sure that you shall then have leisure for these Duties? How easily may you be surpriz’d with the Arrest of Death, and in the midst of your Security have your Hopes cut off for ever? You stand upon the Brink of a Precipice, where the Ground is sinking under your Feet; the next Sound you hear may be a Summons to the Tribunal of the great God, and how inexpressible would be your Amazement, if you should appear there laden with the Guilt of all your Sins! But if God should favour you with the Use of your Understandings in your last Hours; is that a proper Time for so solemn a Work? when the Pains of Death are upon you, and the Terrors of Hell encompassing you about? Besides, are you sure God will accept the Tears and Groans of a dying Sinner, who has wilfully resisted all Exhortations and Admonitions to Repentance thro’ a long Course of Life? When Esau had sold his Birthright, he found no place for Repentance, tho’ he fought it diligently with Tears. ’Tis hardly possible to judge of the Sin-
Sincerity of a Sick-bed Repentance: What Floods of Tears have fallen from the Eyes of many in such Circumstances! How earnestly have they pray'd for the Pardon of their Sins? What Advice and Warning have they given to their Friends, and what Solemn Promises and Vows have they made of Reformation, if God would spare their Lives! and yet when they have recover'd, they have relapsed, and been more harden'd than before. The Tears of a Malefactor going to Execution, may move Pity in the Spectators, but the Efficacy of them to his Acceptance with God is very uncertain, there is but a single Instance of it in Scripture.

5. Suffer me therefore to urge you to an immediate Compliance with these Duties; for behold, now is your accepted Time and your Day of Salvation: And that your Endeavours may be successful, pray for the holy Spirit, whose Office it is to break the Rocky Heart in pieces, and to cause you to remember your own evil Ways which have not been good, and to loath your selves for your Iniquities and Abominations: Consider how long you have been treasuring up to your selves Wrath against the day of Wrath; and what numbers of Sins are upon Record against you in the Book of God's Remembrance: Call to mind the Follies of your Youth, and the innumerable Miscarriages of later Years, with the exact Account you must give of every thing you have done in the Body, and then you will see the necessity of breaking off your Sins by Repentance and Righteousness, and your Iniquities by shewing Mercy to the Poor; you will then look with earnestness to the Blood of the Redeemer, as to a Fountain set open for Sin and Uncleanness, and say with the Psalmist, *I acknowledge my Transgression, and my Sin is ever before*
Repentance, &c.

before me; Lord, wash me from mine Iniquities, and cleanse me from my Sins; Make me to hear Joy and Gladness, that the Bones which thou hast broken may rejoice. Psalm li. 2, 3, 8.

Behold, I have now set before you Life and Death, Blessing and Cursing: The Gospel proclaims Pardon of Sin and eternal Life upon the most reasonable Terms; if you accept them, you are happy; but if they that despised Moses's Law died without Mercy, how will you escape if you neglect so great Salvation? Even Delays in this Case may be fatal, therefore take the Advice of the Angel to Lot, when the Lord was raining down Fire and Brimstone upon the Cities of Sodom and Gomorrah; Make haste, escape for thy Life, look not behind thee, neither stay, lest thou be consumed. The Duties I have been recommending are of the greatest Consequence, for except we repent and are converted in this Life, we are lost and undone for the next. But on the other hand, what Reason have they to be thankful, to whom God has granted Repentance unto Life! how comfortably may they live, and with what humble Boldness may they appear before the great Tribunal, when they have their Pardon in their Hands, sealed with the Blood of the Gospel-Covenant! Now unto him that has loved us, and washed us from our Sins in his own Blood, to him be Glory and Dominion for ever and ever. Amen.
SERMON XXVII.

GOD only to be worship'd, and how.

MATTHEW XV. 8, 9.

This People draweth nigh unto me with their Mouth, and honoureth me with their Lips, but their Heart is far from me. But in vain do they worship me, teaching for Doctrines the Commandments of Men.

We have in these Words a Quotation from the Prophet Isaiah, by which our Lord disproves the Hypocrisy of the Scribes and Pharisees, who made high Pretences of honouring God, but in reality did not treat him like a God: They would not give him the inmost Obedience of their Souls; they drew nigh to him with their Mouths, and honoured him with their Lips, but their Hearts were far from him: Nor would they make his Prescriptions the only Rule of their Religion, teaching for Doctrines the Commandments of Men. The Object of their Worship was indeed right, but the Manner of their performing it was all wrong; and therefore, in vain they worship'd God. These Words offer a proper Occasion for my Design, which is,
I. To state the true Object of religious Worship.
And,
II. To direct the right Manner of performing it, that it may be acceptable.

I. We are to state the true Object of religious Worship, which is here called drawing nigh unto God, and honouring him.

Of all invisible Beings, we can draw nigh, and pay our Honours, to none but God; for we can't fingle out any other of them from the rest, and say that we are got so nigh to him, as to make him know that we honour him; and therefore none but God can be the true and proper Object of religious Worship. The infinite Perfections of his Nature are the only Foundation for it, and the Relation we stand in to him, with our Dependence upon him, Receits and Expectations from him, are the Motives and Obligations to it; accordingly the Scripture makes it a prime Article of our Faith and Obedience, that God alone is to be honoured with divine or religious Worship. This stands at the Head of the ten Commandments, that were so remarkably written on Tables of Stone, and deliver'd with such awful Pomp at Mount Sinai, Thou shalt have no other Gods before me. Exodus xx. 3. In the Explanation of this Precept it is said, Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and serve him; ye shall not go after other Gods. Deut. vi. 13, 14. He that sacrificeth unto any God, save unto the Lord only, he shall be utterly destroy'd: Exodus xxii. 20. And thou shalt worship no other God; for the Lord, whose Name is Jealous, is a jealous God. Chap. xxxiv. 14. He will not give this Glory to another, but hath reserv'd it entirely to himself; and it is such a perpetual and
unalienable Prerogative of Deity, that he has expressly charg'd us not to believe the highest Pretences, even to a divine Mission, or to Miracles themselves, that would encourage the Worship of any other God whatsoever. If, says he, there arise among you a Prophet, or a Dreamer of Dreams, and giveth thee a Sign or a Wonder, and the Sign or the Wonder come to pass whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other Gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; thou shalt not hearken unto the Words of that Prophet, &c. Deut. xiii. 1, 2, 3.

No Credentials offered to prove that any one speaks from God, no Miracles themselves can be made more evident than God has already made it, that no religious Service or Worship is to be paid to any but himself; and therefore we may be sure that he will never set the broad Seal of Heaven to countenance our going after other Gods, and serving them. Hence, when our blest Saviour and his Apostles appear'd with numerous and undoubted Miracles, to attest their divine Mission, they were so far from teaching any Doctrine contrary to this, that they further confirm'd it. Our Lord himself, alleging the unchangeable Law of Worship, says, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. Matt. iv. 10. The Apostle Paul charg'd it as the Error, and the Crime of the Gentiles, that they had Gods many and Lords many, 1 Cor. viii. 5. that they worship'd and serv'd the Creature, more than, or besides, the Creator, Rom. i. 25. (ποιμένα τοῦ ανθρώπου) and did service to them that by Nature were no Gods. Gal. iv. 8. And when the People at Lystra went about to offer Sacrifice to Paul and Barnabas, under an Apprehension that the Gods were come down to them in the Likeness of Men, they rent their
their Clothes, in token of the utmost Grief and Abhorrence, and said, Why do ye these Things? We preach unto you to turn from these Vanities unto the living God, which made Heaven and Earth, and the Sea, and all things that are therein. Acts xiv. 11—15. The Thessalonians are spoken of as sincere Converts, in that they turned to God from Idols, to serve the living and true God. 1 Thess. i. 9. The Apostle John closes his first Epistle with a strict Injunction to keep our selves from Idols. 1 John v. 21. And when he himself attempted to offer religious Worship to an Angel, either thro' surprize, or thro' a Mistake of him for Jesus Christ, the Angel said unto him, See thou do it not; worship God, Rev. xxii. 8, 9. thereby intimating that God alone is to be worship'd.

Thus the Scriptures, both of the Old and New Testament, every where confine all religious Worship to God, as the only Object of it. And as to the Distinctions which some have made of Worship, into supreme and subordinate, or absolute and relative, one to be paid to God, and the other to Creatures; I don't find any foundation for them in the holy Oracles: On the other hand, the Charge upon the Heathens was for paying any sort of Worship to them, that were not by Nature Gods; and when Satan demanded only what some call relative and subordinate Worship to be paid to him, under pretence that the Kingdoms of the World were given to his Disposal, our Lord refused the Claim, not, as he justly might, because he made a false Pretence, and was a wicked Spirit, but because it was directly contrary to the fundamental and eternal Rule of all religious Worship, which is this, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. Mat. iv. 10.

And
And when the Apostle John was going to worship the Angel, tho' none can suppose but that he ultimately design'd it for God's Glory, the Angel absolutely refused it, and order'd him to direct his Worship to God himself.

Neither Saints nor Angels, nor any other Creatures are to have this Homage; it is only the God of all infinite Perfections, the Creator, Preserver and Benefactor, the Sovereign Lord and Governor of the World, that is to be honoured with it, and that because he is so. The very Notion of religious Worship, as represented in Scripture, is, that 'tis an Acknowledgment or Expression of the Veneration, Honour and Esteem, which are due to God; and therefore all Worship must be Supreme, and must be given to God only.

It is natural to conclude this Head with the following Remark:

If Christ himself were not God, we may be very sure religious Worship would never have been order'd to be paid to him, as it is in the holy Scripture.

The Object of Worship is not an arbitrary thing, it is necessarily and immutably the same, and therefore we can't suppose that God himself should, on any account whatsoever, order this Prerogative of Deity to be paid to any one who is not God; no, not to his own Son, unless he were God equally and together with his Father. The next general Branch of our Discourse is,

II. To direct the right Manner of performing religious Worship, that it may be acceptable to God.

Here lay the grand Defect of the Scribes and Pharisees; and it is of high Importance to be set right about this Point; otherwise all our Devotion, tho'
directed to its proper Object, will be a vain Oblation, unacceptable to God, and unprofitable to our selves: 
I would therefore humbly attempt to shew, how he is to be acceptably worshipped, in the following Particulars.

1. God is to be worship’d in the Way of his own Appointment.

He only has a Right to give the whole Law of Worship, because it refers only to him. The Discoveries he has made to the Heathen about it, by the Light of Nature, are the Rule of Worship to them; and their Sin, in not glorifying him as God, lay in this, that they held the Truth in Unrighteousness, and became vain in their Imaginations; they smother’d the Notices God had given them, and follow’d their own Inventions. Their foolish Hearts were darkened; their Self-Conceit, their perverse Wills and corrupt Affections blinded their Minds, and defaced the Light and Impressions God had favour’d them with, and so professing themselves to be wise, they became Fools; they fell into the most absurd Conceptions, as if God might be represented by visible Objects, and be applied to by them, as Mediums of their Worship, or as if he were not accessible, but by means of some inferior Deity of their own framing; and thus they chang’d the Glory of the incorruptible God into an Image made like to corruptible Man, and to Birds, and four-footed Beasts, and Creeping Things: And chang’d the Truth of God into a Lye, and worship’d and serv’d the Creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Rom. i. 21, 22, 23, 25.

But the Word of God has given us clearer Discoveries of his Mind and Will, relating to the Way in which he will be worship’d; and every thing about it is to be adjusted according to that Word, by every one.
one who has the Benefit of it. Divine Institution must be our Rule of Worship, and whatever we may imagine to be useful, fit and decent, must be examin’d and determin’d by this Rule: Faith, and not Fancy, the Authority of God, and not the Authority of Man, must lead the way to all our religious Services.

If we are so vain and foolish as to suppose, that some external Representations of God by Images are proper to direct or excite our Devotions; we must attend to God’s own Prescription and Command, Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven Image, or any Likeness of any Thing, that is in Heaven above, or that is in the Earth beneath, or that is in the Waters under the Earth, thou shalt not bow down to them, nor serve them. Exod. xx. 4, 5. If we suppose that some ceremonious Ornaments should be added to Institution, to make up the Decency of divine Worship, we should remember what God said about the Altar he appointed to be made to him, An Altar of Earth shalt thou make unto me, and if thou wilt make me an Altar of Stone, thou shalt not build it of hewn Stone; for if thou lift up thy Tool upon it, thou hast polluted it: ver. 24, 25. One step beyond Institution defiles the Worship. If we imagine that it is left to human Prudence to make any Alterations in, or Additions to God’s own Appointments; we should remember that they worship him in vain, who teach for Doctrines the Commandments of Men, and that every Plant which our heavenly Father has not planted, shall be rooted up. Mat. xv. 9, 13.

And, as we live under the Gospel-Dispensation, all our Worship must be regulated by Gospel-Institution, that it may be perform’d according to the Ap-
God only to be

Appointment of Christ, as King of the Church. Ministers should strictly adhere to the Terms of his Commission, to teach Men to observe and do whatsoever he has commanded, as ever they would hope for the Benefit of his Promise, Lo, I am with you alway, to the end of the World. Mat. xxviii. 20. And every one, who would serve God acceptably, should keep his Eye upon Institution, that, like Zacharias and Elizabeth, he may walk in all the Commandments and Ordinances of the Lord blameless. Luke i. 6. If ye be dead with Christ from the Rudiments, or Constitutions, of the World, why, as tho' living in the World, are ye subject to its Ordinances, such as, touch not, taste not, handle not, which are to perish with the using, after the Commandments and Doctrines of Men? Col. ii. 20, 21, 22.

2. God is to be worship'd with the whole Man, with our Bodies and Spirits, which are his.

To worship him only with our Bodies is Hypocrisy, and to worship him only with our Souls is Partiality; they were both created by him, and for him, and are both to be devoted to him; they were both redeemed by the Blood of Christ, and we hope for the Salvation of both in Heaven, where they will be unitedly employ'd in everlasting Hallelujahs; and therefore we should glorify God in our Bodies and Spirits, which are God's. 1 Cor. vi. 20.

The Bodies of Believers are the Temples of the Holy Ghost, and their Members are to be Instruments of Righteousness unto God. Social Worship cannot be perform'd, Gospel Ordinances cannot be celebrated, and the Honour we owe to God cannot be visibly notified, or express'd without the Body. And, as far as the Body is concern'd in Worship, its Posture should be serious, grave and humble, answerable
Ser. XXVII. worship’d, and how.

able to the Reverence we would pay to God our Maker: Men should uncover their Heads while they appear before the Lord, and all should stand or kneel, as may be most convenient, and as far as natural Infirmity will permit, while they are making their Addresses to him. The Voice must necessarily be used in Acts of publick Worship, and our Lips, like Hannah’s, should move in secret Prayer, when it may not be proper for the Voice to be heard; distinct pronouncing of the Words that express our Thoughts, tho’ it be but with a Whisper, helps the Attention of our Minds; and it may be sometimes proper to lift up our Eyes and Hands to Heaven, and at other times to prostrate our Bodies before the Lord in some solemn Acts of private Devotion.

But bodily Service profits little, unless the Heart be engaged in it; hence is that Reproof to Ephraim, They have not cried unto me with their Hearts, when they howled upon their Beds: Hosea vii. 14. To draw nigh with the Mouth, and honour God with the Lips, and have the Heart far from him, is Mockery and Deceit, highly unworthy of that God, who is a Spirit, and provoking to him, who knows all our Hearts, who has a Right to our Best, and who can’t be glorified, as God, if our Souls are not engag’d in presenting our Tributes to him. The Lord ponders the Hearts, and weighs the Spirits of Men, and he desires Truth in the inward Parts: We should therefore keep our Hearts with all Diligence, and ever think we hear him saying to us, My Son, give me thy Heart. Prov. xxiii. 26. It should be our solicitous Concern that he would unite our Hearts to fear his Name, that we may attend upon him without Distractions; that all the Powers of our Souls may be engaged with Fixedness and Fer-
...and with the utmost Seriousness in every divine Ordinance, and that we may serve him with our Spirits, and may love him with all our Hearts, with all our Souls, and with all our Might.

3. God is to be worship'd by the Assistance of his Spirit.

We can never duly engage our own Hearts to him, without the gracious Aids and Influences of the holy Spirit; for we are insufficient of our selves, to think any thing as of our selves: But God has promised the Spirit of Grace and Supplication to help our Infirmities; when we know not what we should pray for as we ought, and to make Intercession for us with groanings that can't be utter'd.

Sometimes when we would fain go to God, and pour out our Hearts before him, we find our selves straitned and confus'd; cold and careless, giddy and trifling, worldly and entangled in the Frame and Temper of our Spirits; so that we know not how to order our Thoughts or Speech before him: But where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is Liberty; he quickens us to call upon his Name; he enlarges our Hearts to run in the way of his Commandments; he fixes their Attention, brightens their Views, refines their Taste, and enables them to unbofom themselves with an holy Freedom to him. At other times Guilt in the Conscience covers the Soul with Shame, awakens its Fears, stops its Mouth, keeps it at a Distance from God, and makes it shy of approaching him; so that it restrains Prayer, and other Acts of Worship, or else addresses him more like a Stranger than a Friend, more like an Enemy than a reconciled God and Father in Christ: But when the blessed Spirit is given to us, as a Spirit of Adoption, he delivers us from a Bondage-Frame of Spirit; and enables
enables us to cry *Abba, Father,* The Spirit himself bearing witness with our Spirits, that we are the Children of God. Rom. viii. 15, 16. And we have Access thro' Jesus Christ, by one Spirit to the Father.

When God's Love is shed abroad in the Heart by the Holy Ghost, when he gives the Soul a Sense of pardoning Grace, and enables it to mortify the Deeds of the Body, when he enlightens, quickens, strengthens and sanctifies us, and seals us to the Day of Redemption, what glorious Liberty of Access to God, and holy Communion with him; what Freedom, Spirituality and Heavenly-mindedness in pouring out our Requests, our Confessions, our Thanksgivings and Praises to him; what Fervour and Propriety in our Pleas with him; and what humble Confidence and Satisfaction in him, does he introduce us to! We can then fill our Mouths with Arguments, and compass God's Altar with Joy and Praise. This is *worshiping God in the Spirit,* Phil. iii. 3. and *praying in the Holy Ghost.* Jude 20. This is *praying with all Prayer, and Supplication in the Spirit,* Eph. vi. 18.

4. God is to be worship'd in the Exercise of all suitable Graces under the Influence of his Spirit.

The various Graces he adorns our Souls with, and attends with his Aids, are to be awakened and applied to their proper Uses in every Approach we make to God. We shou'd labour after a ready Concurrence with his Spirit to exert them, and to improve the free Assurances he affords for their lively Exercise, that we may call upon the Lord out of a pure Heart, and may worship him in the Beauties of Holiness: We shou'd summon our Souls, and all that is within us to bless his holy Name.
till we may be able to say, My Heart is fixed, O God, my Heart is fixed, I will sing, and give praise; awake up my Glory, I my self will awake early. Psal. lvii. 7, 8. We shou’d stir up the Gift which is in us, that we may render to the Lord the Glory due to his Name, as often as we go to pay him the divine Honours we owe him: We shou’d consider him as on a Throne, to make us keep our Distance; and as on a Throne of Grace, to embolden our Approaches: We shou’d seriously think of his Greatness and our own Nothingness, of his Holiness and our Vileness, of his Righteousness and our Guilt, of his transcendent Excellence and our Unworthiness, of his Althifticiency and our Necessity, of his Incomprehensiblefs and our Darkness; we shou’d take a Survey of these Things to aggrandife him in our Eyes, and lay us low before him: And we shou’d reflect on the Riches of his Grace in Chrift, and the various strong Encouragements he has given us in him, and in the Promifes of his Covenant, to relieve us under a Sense of our multiplied Discouragements in our selves.

We shou’d consider how much we have to do with God, more than with all the World besides; how important our Concerns are with him; and how entirely we are in his Hands for Happiness or Misery, both here and for ever hereafter: We shou’d think with our felves what near Approaches we profefs to make to him in every Act of Worship, how immediately we then fet our felves in his Presence, and under his all-feeing Eye, how open we lie in the inmoft Thoughts of our Hearts to his critical Observation, and how jealous he is of his Glory: And, surrounded with fuch Thoughts as these, it shou’d be the touching Concern of our Souls,
S E R. XXVII. worship’d, and bow. 531

Souls, that we may have Grace whereby we may serve him acceptably with Reverence and godly Fear.
Heb. xii. 28.

We can’t sufficiently adore and exalt, admire and bless his glorious Name, or lie sufficiently prostrate in all Humility and Self-Abasement at his Footstool; our Minds shou’d be posses’d with awful and delightful Thoughts of him, that we may fear the Lord and his Goodness; and our Desire shou’d be to his Name, and the Remembrance of him. Isa. xxvi. 8. We shou’d look by Faith to an atoning Saviour, and yield up our selves to stand in his Righteousness before the Throne of God, and so go to him in Christ as our God, as the Father of Mercies, and our Almighty Friend. We shou’d likewise relent with Brokenness of Heart, with ingenuous Shame, and Evangelical Repentance, for our multiplied and aggravated Offences; and shou’d surrender our selves, and all our Concerns for Time and Eternity, into our Father’s Hands, and be ready to do and suffer his Will in all Things. Our Hearts shou’d rise above this World, and enter by Faith, Hope, Desire, Love, and Joy, into that within the Vail, whither Jesus, our Forerunner, is enter’d for us; and we shou’d be making the best of our way to that blessed World, with humble, firm Dependences on God’s Covenant-Faithfulness and Love, that all things shall work together for our Good, and that he will guide us by his Counsel, and afterwards receive us to Glory: And all this shou’d be done with Earnestness and Fervour, with Integrity and Uprightness of Heart, that we may be sincere and without Offence till the Day of Christ. Phil. i. 10. This is the Worship, that is most agreeable to the holy Nature and Will of God, who
God only to be

is a Spirit; and they that worship him must worship him in Spirit and in Truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship him. John iv. 23, 24.

5. God is to be worship'd with an eye to his Glory, as our ultimate End.

Of him, through him, and to him are all things, to whom be Glory for ever, Amen. Rom. xi. 36. And whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, all shou'd be done to the Glory of God. 1 Cor. x. 31. Every thing in Religion shou'd be performed with a Conscience toward God, and with a Reference to him, that he may be glorified. He has made all things for himself. Prov. xvi. 4. His own Glory is his highest End, he can't propofe an higher to himself, 'tis unworthy of God to suppose he shou'd; for that wou'd be to prefer something to himself, or to set something else above himself. And 'tis highly fit that, as he is the first Cause, he shou'd be the last End of all things. Were we to propofe any End superior to his Glory in our Worship, this wou'd be to juftle God out of the Throne, and set up an Idol of our own in his stead; but they that best know him, abound moft in all Ascriptions of Glory to him. Thousands of Thousands f tand before him, and ten thousand times ten thousand minifter unto him: They vail their Faces in his Presence; they reft not Day and Night, faying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come. They give Glory, and Honour, and Thanks to him; they fall down and worship him that lives for ever and ever; and cast their Crowns before the Throne, faying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive Glory, and Honour, and Power; for thou haft created all Things, and for thy Pleafure they are and were created. Rev. iv. 8—11. They unite
in the same exalted Adoration of the Father and Son, saying, Blessing, and Honour, and Glory, and Power be to him that sits upon the Throne, and to the Lamb for ever. Chap. v. 13.

What solemn, magnificent Acts of Worship are these, to the Glory of God and our Saviour! We should copy after them, and humbly attempt to raise our Strains like theirs, that God in all things may be glorified: We should exalt him in our Thoughts, proclaim his Praises with our Lips, and shew forth his Glory in our Lives. All our Views in sacred Worship should be to honour him like a God, in the most awful, cheerful and exalted Conceptions of him, and in Ascriptions of all possible Glory to him: These should be the Dispositions of our Hearts towards him, in our most retired Dealings with him, when God and we are alone, and no other Eye is witness to the Transactions, that pass between him and us; and it should be our governing View and Aim, in our Families, and in the Church, in all social and publick Worship, that he may be glorified by a professed Submission to him, as the supreme Object of our Faith and Hope, Love and Obedience, as our chief Good, our Sovereign Lord, and highest End.

In his Temple doth every one speak of his Glory. Psal. xxix. 9. There he makes the most illustrious Manifestations of himself, and there his People unite, to own, exalt, and praise him. How solemn soever our Professions and Appearances may be, yet if our Ends are not right, if we don't, at least habitually, aim at glorifying God in our Worship, it spoils the Offering: Or if low, mean, sinister Views intermingle and govern it, they are like
God only to be

like the dead Flies, that cause the Ointment of the Apothecary to send forth a stinking Savour. Eccles. x. 1.

Hence we are told that the Sacrifice of the Wicked is Abomination, how much more when he brings it with a wicked Mind? Prov. xxi. 27.

6. God is to be worship'd in the Name of Christ, as our only Mediator.

There was a Reference to the Messiah in the Old-Testament Worship, and all its Acceptance depended upon him. The Temple, Mercy-Seat, Altars, Sacrifices, and Incense were typical of him; and praying towards God's holy Oracle was directive of Israel's Faith to Christ, and to God, as propitious on a Mercy-Seat through him: And must we not suppose that David's Thoughts turn'd this Way? when he said, I will worship toward thy holy Temple, and praise thy Name for thy Loving Kindness, and for thy Truth; for thou hast magnified thy Word above all thy Name. Psalm cxxxviii. 2. And, Behold, O God our Shield, and look upon the Face of thine Anointed. Psal. lxxxiv. 9. And, Let thy Hand be upon the Man of thy right hand, upon the Son of Man whom thou hast made strong for thyself, so will not we go back from thee. Psal. lxxx. 17, 18. In like manner Daniel pray'd, that God wou'd cause his Face to shine upon his Sanctuary, which was desolate, for the Lord's sake. Dan. ix. 17.

But as, under the Gospel-Dispensation, we have much clearer Discoveries of Christ in his Person and Offices, Mediation, Righteousness and Grace, and particularly under the Character of our great High Priest and Advocate, who has offered up himself a Sacrifice for Sin, and lives in Heaven to make continual
continual Intercession for us, we are instructed and obliged more explicitly to make mention of his Name, in all Addresses to the Throne of Grace. We are to gather together for religious Services in his Name, as ever we wou’d have him graciously present with us: Matt. xviii. 20. And we are to ask every thing in his Name, with Faith in him, and a Reliance upon his Interest with the Father, as ever we wou’d have Audience and Acceptance, and wou’d glorify God in the Way, wherein he delights to be honoured: Whatsoever ye shall ask, says our Lord, in my Name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son; if ye ask any thing in my Name, I will do it. John xiv. 13, 14. And, Verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my Name, he will give it you; hitherto have ye asked nothing in my Name. Ask and ye shall receive, that your Joy may be full. Chap. xvi. 23, 24. Thro’ him we have Access by one Spirit to the Father. Eph. ii. 18. And, In him we have Boldness and Access with Confidence by the Faith of him. Chap. iii. 12.

We must go to God thro’ him, as his Father and our Father, that we may be blessed with all spiritual Blessings in heavenly Things in Christ, Eph. i. 3. and that our God may supply all our Need, according to his Riches in Glory by Christ Jesus. Phil. iv. 19. We must look upon our selves, as utterly unworthy to be call’d his Children, or to receive any Favour from him, and must plead and depend upon the Merit and Righteousness of his Son, to recommend us and our Offerings to his Acceptance, that all our Prayers may ascend up before God in a Cloud of Incense out of the Angel of the
536 God only to be

the Covenant's hand: Rev. viii. 4. Hence the Gospels-Church is spoken of, as a spiritual House, an holy Priesthood, to offer up spiritual Sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. 1 Pet. ii. 5. And, by him we are to offer the Sacrifice of Praise to God continually, that is, the Fruit of our Lips, giving Thanks to his Name. Heb. xiii. 15.

He is the grand Medium of all holy Converse with God, we can have no Safety or Comfort, no Liberty or Success in our Dealings with God in any other Way, and therefore all our Prayers and Praises must be presented in his Name: We must derive our Encouragements to them, and our Arguments for them from him, and must form our Expectations of Acceptance only for his sake. Having therefore, Brethren, Boldness to enter into the Holyest by the Blood of Jesus, by a new and living Way which he has consecrated for us thro' the Veil, that is to say, his Flesh; and having an High-Priest over the House of God, let us draw near with a true Heart, in full Assurance of Faith. Heb. x. 19—22. And, seeing that we have a great High-Priest who is passed into the Heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us come boldly unto the Throne of Grace, that we may obtain Mercy, and find Grace to help in time of Need. Chap. iv. 14, 16. This gives our Worship the Nature and Form of Evangelical Worship; and this, together with the things before mention'd, makes it spiritual and well-pleasing in God's sight; such Worship as he approves and will smell a sweet Savour in, on account of that one Offering of Christ, by which he has perfected for ever them that are sanctified. Heb. x. 14.
Two or three practical Reflections shall close this Discourse.

1. How must every one, more or less, stand reprovd for Defects in Worship!

We see that God is to be worship’d, and what sort of Worship is acceptable to him; but alas! how short do the best of us fall of the Gospel-Plan, and how often have we cause to be much ashâm’d of the low, mean, spiritless Offerings we present to him? How much more reprovable still are they, whose Worship is only customary, formal and lifeless, or hypocritical and superstitious, and who are contented to have it so? God may justly say of such Service, who hath required this at your Hands, in vain do ye worship me. But what shall we think or say of them, that are gross Idolaters in their Worship on one hand, or that make no Attempts to own and honour God on the other, but cast off religious Fear, and restrain Prayer before him? The Indignation of the Lord will surely smoke against them. But,

2. How becoming, glorious and delightful must it be to offer up such Worship to God, as is agreeable to his Will!

This is our reasonable Service; ’tis a Debt we all owe to the God, who made us, and performs all things for us; a Debt from which we never can be, and never should desire to be discharg’d; ’tis the first and highest Debt that lies upon us, and we shou’d surely make as much Conscience, at least, of paying this, as any other Debt whatsoever. Here is an unquestionable Fitnefs of things, as well as a clear Notification of God’s Will in his Word: And human Nature acts most worthy of it.
God only to be self, when 'tis most engag'd with Spirituality and En-
largedness of Heart in this divine Service.

It is our Honour and our Glory to treat the
great and blessed God honourably and acceptably
to him, and 'tis as delightful, as 'tis glorious; the
Pleasure of approaching him, and being approv'd of
him in Christ; the Pleasure of glorifying his Name,
in the Exercise of every Grace, and Performance
of every Act of solemn Worship, according to his
own Appointment; and the Pleasure of an holy In-
timacy of Communion with him, is the most ex-
alted and refined that we are capable of: It is the
beginning of heavenly Devotions and Joys, 'tis a live-
ly Resemblance, and assuring Earnest of them; it
leads the Way to them, and will certainly issue in
them. We therein come by Faith, even now, un-
to an innumerable Company of Angels, to the gene-
ral Assembly and Church of the First-Born, which
are written in Heaven, and to God the Judge of
all, and to the Spirits of just Men made perfect,
and to Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant, and
to the Blood of Sprinkling, which speaketh better
Things than that of Abel. Heb. xii. 22—24. Our
Communion with all these is begun in Evangelical
Worship here, and shall be perfected when we come
to join the heavenly Worshippers in the better State
and World.

3. What gracious Provision has God made in the
Gospel to assist this noble Homage!

Here the Object of Worship is clearly settled, and
presented to us in awful and endearing Glories; here
the Rule of Worship is set before us; here the
Grounds, Reasons, Motives and Obligations to it
are recommended, and enforc'd upon us; here its

highest
higheft End, and the Manner of performing it are directed; here the Way of its Acceptance thro' Jesus Christ is laid open; here the Promises of effectual Assistance for it are made over to the Believer; here we have the Ministration of the Spirit which gives Life, and enables us to worship God in Spirit and Truth; and here we have the joyful Prospects of a blessed State to come, where we shall serve the Lord at a better rate, free from all the natural and sinful Infirmities that now attend us. O glorious Dispensation of Grace! Upon these engaging Discoveries of divine Favour, upon these promised Assurances and Encouragements, let us bring our sacred Tributes to our God, and honour him with our humble and fiducial Adorations, to whom be Glory for ever and ever, Amen.

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